

**OUR FOOD
OUR FUTURE**

**YOUTH LAB
MANIFESTO**



As part of the **Our Food. Our future project**, the partners conducted several Youth Labs – workshops with youth, in order to present the problems of food production and consumption and its consequences for the environment and human rights. The main goal was to empower European youth to be actively engaged in changing their societies for the better by taking action.

We compiled a manifesto based on the Youth Labs, which contains young people's demands for a sustainable, more equitable and fairer future for all.

ABOUT THE PROJECT



MOST OF THE FOOD WE BUY AT SUPERMARKETS and discount stores involves human rights violations, environmental degradation, and various forms of injustice. It reaches us via supply chains that exploit smallholders and workers (especially women) while exacerbating the climate crisis through land grabbing and the misuse of land by the agro-industry. Many workers in global food supply chains are migrants who make a living in precarious, exploitative and dangerous conditions.

While supermarkets and big food companies – unbound by human rights and environmental due diligence laws – benefit from these conditions, smallholders and migrant workers fight for their existence! These conditions have to end!

We are an international coalition of civil society organisations raising our voices in a call for justice. In solidarity with migrant workers, smallholders and human rights activists around the world, we are challenging the status quo and standing up against these intolerable conditions. Our vision is a socially just and sustainable food system and a food system that is human rightsbased and agroecological. In this new system, food sovereignty will become a reality.

Our Food. Our Future aims to become a movement that is supported by the creativity, empathy, vision of change and unity of the European youth. Because we are hungry for justice!

ABSTRACT

“ We developed campaign ideas for the European Parliament vote on Due Diligence, which we later used for actually campaigns.”

THE OUR FOOD. OUR FUTURE PROJECT explores the interrelationships between food, climate change, and human mobility. The correlation between climate change, food consumption, food sovereignty and human mobility manifests itself in different ways. First, climate change is projected to have a high influence in terms of substantial increase of population movement on a global level. Furthermore, climate change will affect many regions and threats to food security will be visible through impacts on food production, ocean acidification and fishery yields, infrastructure, the ability of countries to import food, and the ability of households to produce and purchase food.

In the manifesto, we present the most popular demands developed by the youth through various activities across Europe. Besides specific opinions and demands, the youth criticised the abusive system capitalist and neoliberal system we live in, which puts profit before the planet and human rights.

The youth also called for binding legislation – for the creation, ratification and implementation of clear supply chain laws at national, international, and global levels and for essential changes in our economic system, which would enable ethical and fair relations in food supply chains, efficient respect of all human rights and the environment and actions against climate change.

The implementation of the Youth Labs within **Our Food. Our Future** was possible thanks to the engagement of various organisations: WW-GWC, Acoge, Südwind, Slow Food, Oxfam Germany, MIJARC Europe, KLJB, Focus, IMVF, CIR, AAF, Mai Bine, BRF, TVE.



ABOUT **SUSTAINABLE** **FOOD SYSTEM**



THE FOOD SYSTEM, AS DEFINED BY THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION of the United Nations (FAO), is “a system which includes the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded”.

Therefore, a sustainable food system is a food system that delivers food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised.

There is still a long way to go in terms of transformation toward a fair, respectful and sustainable food system. According to young people (elaborated from the discussions, sessions and interactive tools, e.g. Mentimeter), sharing information could be the key to making people aware of the importance of consuming local products, respecting food seasonality and making better and ethical food choices. Ethical food refers to the choice of food based on the “moral consequences”. The concerns considered are related to the negative impacts on the environment, exploitative labour practices, food shortages, bad treatment of animals, land grabbing and threats to self-sustaining food production and the various effects of food policy. Moreover, informed and aware people can demand changes and actions at all levels, moving from being a consumer to being an active citizen. In this way, all the stakeholders, not just consumers, can contribute to the transition to a fair and sustainable food system. As mentioned above, the food system consists of several actors who have to contribute from different perspectives in order to achieve a sustainable food system.

“ De mon côté je veux aussi qu'on parle de nos problème en Afrique les situations que nous rencontrons dans la protection de l'environnement.

YOUTH DEMANDS ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE FOOD SYSTEM

- ➔ Wider inclusion of the problems of our food system and the impacts of food consumption in education: information about the topics covered by the project should be disseminated by formal education (e.g., schools, universities and the educational system in general should be more committed to organising informative sessions on these topics, starting at the very early stages of the educational system), group discussions, street actions, following information and social media channels and others;
- ➔ Consumer engagement: support for local products, including the use of products produced at the local or regional level rather than those made by multinationals;
- ➔ “Real” pricing: inclusion of the hidden costs (exploitative labour relations, impact on the environment) in “unfairly” produced and imported food, which would set similar prices to locally produced food. Also, fair trade products should be available at the same or similar price as the other products on the market;
- ➔ Support for local and small-scale producers through greater financial assistance;
- ➔ Sustainable subsidies: more control over harmful subsidies in the food system on a global level;
- ➔ Policy intervention at different levels: Policy measures have to be taken in order to switch to a fairer and sustainable food system. Increased interaction between the different actors (consumers, producers, supply chains, national governments, European Union and others) is needed in order to share the responsibility in terms of change and improvement of the conditions. The political system (at local, national and European levels) has to show strong intentions and move toward the solutions for the global food broken system and take an important position in promoting its transition towards a fair, respectful and sustainable food system;
- ➔ Awarenessraising: about the production of types of food consumed on a daily basis that are not essential for good nutrition but have a strong impact the people involved in the production and other phases and the environment, taking into account the problematic production and power relations within the supply chains stretching beyond the borders of the European Union (e.g., coffee, chocolate or processed snacks).

“ Ich nehme vom Youth Lab mit, dass sich viel tut und ich mit einem positiven Gefühl nach Hause fahren kann.

ABOUT FOOD SYSTEM AND CLIMATE CHANGE



CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS NEARLY ALL ASPECTS OF FOOD SECURITY – from production and availability to the stability of food supplies, access to food, and food consumption.

Participants at Youth Labs made a deeper link between food consumption and the impact on the food supply, in particular highlighting the consequences of climate change and its negative aspects. The industrial food system has a big influence on climate change, which can be seen through deforestation, increase of greenhouse gases caused by transportation of food, farming, agrochemicals, the enormous amount of energy used for food production and processing, and others. On the other hand, climate change has a huge impact on the possibility of growing crops.

**“ Cette journée était formidable ;)
Ce serait top qu’on porte une même campagne avec tous nos comptes ça pourrait avoir un petit impact.**

DEMANDS IN THE FIELD OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- ➔ Fair distribution of resources: fair distribution of resources and land, where large corporations should be punished for land occupation and should not grab indigenous land and restore the ownership of land to local communities;
- ➔ Consumer behaviour needs to be changed: less food waste and reduced meat consumption (e.g., to raise awareness about intensive farming, the impact on animal wellbeing, the impact on food waste);
- ➔ Trade agreements: should be changed and push for sustainable food systems and fair relations among actors in the food supply chain. Free trade agreements such as the Mercosur Agreement should only be ratified and implemented if the partner countries have made legally binding commitments to environmental, social and human rights protection that can be implemented and verified.;
- ➔ Mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence: Commitment of food companies towards ethical supply chains in the production and distribution process should be put in place. They should be able to analyse their business and ask themselves if and how their behaviour can contribute positively to environmental sustainability and fair relations;
- ➔ Integrate topics such as nutrition, sustainability and conscious consumption more strongly into education;
- ➔ Stimulate the promotion and consumption of environmentally friendly products (e.g., less and biodegradable packaging). The goal is to raise awareness about the environmental impact that people have through the consumption of plastic-wrapped foods such as snacks, showing the environmental consequences. It should promote the conscious consumption of food, especially fruit and vegetables, and the awareness that the perfect appearance of food products does often hide a lot of food wasted and is not connected to the taste itself.
- ➔ Development of alternative marketing systems based on community ownership, regional and local agriculture, partnership farming etc.;
- ➔ Protection of agricultural land through a transformation in the agricultural sector which would include different actions such as: prohibition of toxic chemicals, reliance on biodiversity and climate-friendly farming methods, preservation of the diversity of natural environments, food and rural traditions in Europe, a transition from an intensive agricultural model to a biodiversity-enhancing model based on natural cycles, a transition of our agricultural model toward agroecology, biological replacement of agrochemicals and investments in plant breeding for better temperature and pest resistance;
- ➔ Uniform legislation (e.g., against pesticides) at the global level.

ABOUT FOOD SYSTEM AND MIGRATION

“Fands insgesamt mega gut! Super viele neue Inhalte und Ideen und Ansätze. Ich hoffe ich schaffs da jetzt dran zu bleiben und das auch umzusetzen.”

GLOBALLY, THE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD is permeated with huge paradoxes: the co-existence of hunger and obesity and of farm surpluses with food waste. Nowadays, migrations hit the record and one of the main reasons is connected with the current forms of large-scale monoculture agriculture, food system and rural development, which causes land grabbing, uneven access to food, land and changes in agriculture (e.g., mechanisation and higher unemployment rate; education about sustainable and diversified farming adapted to changed climate circumstances, resilient farming).



DEMANDS ON FOOD SYSTEM AND (FORCED) MIGRATIONS

- ➔ Food sovereignty for all: the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food, produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own sustainable food and agriculture systems;
- ➔ Raising awareness about the right of people to get more information about the food they are buying/eating (e.g., labels with transparent information about the origin of the products, the workers who made the products, their working conditions), to establish new tools for preventing labour exploitation by the companies;
- ➔ Cooperation between different actors such as local organisations and civil society organisations in producing countries in order to achieve equal participation, make realistic demands and create space for encounters;
- ➔ Fighting the causes of migration in the homelands: e.g., support for small and family farms, local farming initiatives, women on farms, land distribution;
- ➔ Regulation of mass production and multinational companies: agrochemicals, working conditions, fair supply chains, impact on local environment and health impact of food production;
- ➔ Stricter monitoring and extension of control systems in agriculture and food production: compliance of the regulation with human rights. This would include changing structures in order to achieve equal human and labour rights and creating laws that will ensure the respect of human rights, workers' rights and environmental rights (e.g., minimum wage, supply chain law);
- ➔ The economics of the food system should contain criteria beyond financial profit by focusing on social and sustainable gains and by adjusting variables;
- ➔ Legal processes regarding migrations to the EU should be more accessible and transparent, granting legal opportunities;

“ *A academia apresentou-se não só como uma transmissora de conhecimentos, mas como uma criadora de debate. Estes debates eram de grande interesse pois os convidados levavam a sua experiência e o seu conhecimento. Acredito, genuinamente, que o meu conhecimento nessas áreas aumentou, devido à qualidade dos convidados e das discussões. Destaco o tema da justiça social como aquele no qual aprofundei mais o meu conhecimento e mais impactou a minha vida.* ”

MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CAN THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE BE THE ONLY FACTOR that drives people to leave their region or country? In October 2021, on the occasion of COP26 (the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), the United Nations stated that greater resource scarcity, desertification, risks of droughts and floods, and rising sea levels drive many millions of people to migrate. According to the UN estimates, there could be more than 1 billion environmental migrants by 2050.

All of the above are the consequences of human activities such as greenhouse gas emissions, urbanisation and industrialization of agriculture, accompanied by the harsh living and working conditions and displacement of people due to serious droughts or floods, but also of the impossibility of keeping the subsistence agriculture alive, by being displaced and having the land stolen for the purpose of large-scale monoculture plantations.



“ It was interesting to learn to take responsibility in a collective, to create ideas together and not only in an individual activist setting.

DEMANDS ON MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- ➔ Information and awarenessraising on the complexity of the interconnected issues, such as migration, climate change and our food system: e.g., the outdated understanding of people as being sedentary only and not moving;
- ➔ Policies in the Global North should support highly impacted and vulnerable countries around the world. Adaptation to changed climatic circumstances should be supported through global cooperation on equal terms – global justice;
- ➔ Fair distribution and sharing of innovations: Innovations must reach people in different regions of the world and make their local supply systems more resilient to climate change (e.g., cultivation methods, technical innovations, communication systems, dispersed energy systems);
- ➔ Support resilient agriculture: Create diversity in agriculture to avoid unfavourable agricultural structures. Rather, promote rural and resilient agriculture and create financial incentives for it.



“ I joined the project Koritarji to gain experience in planning and implementation of ideas in the field of environmental protection. There was a quick and great connection within the group. We soon realised we aim towards similar green goals. We came up with the idea to create Koritarji – a group that would take care for abandoned troughs and inspire others to do the same – to green and plant the troughs of Ljubljana. Who would not want the most beautiful city in the world – Ljubljana - full of flowers?.”

CLOSING WORDS

“THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ORGANISING THE YOUTH LAB, it was by far the best online event I ever participated in. The inputs from activists, facilitation, discussions in smaller breakout groups, drawings and visuals, evening activities to strengthen the group dynamic and getting to know the other people – it was just perfect! I am looking forward to the next Youth Lab”

We would like to conclude by expressing our thanks to all parties involved and especially to more than 1,200 young people that participated in the National and the International Youth Labs.

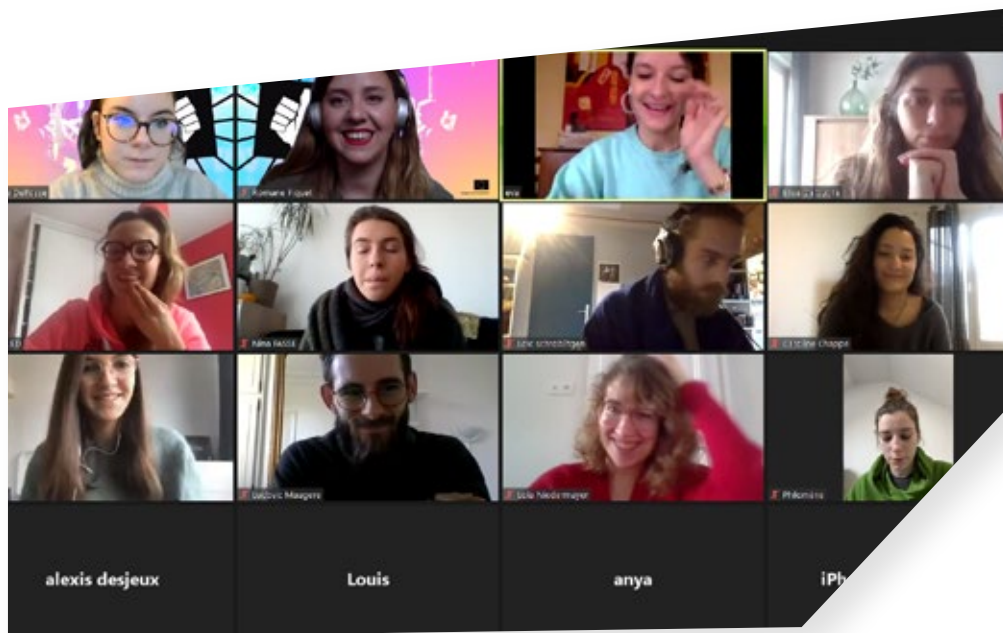
This document cannot contain all the ideas and debates that emerged during more than a year of preparation and implementation of all the spaces for discussion, learning and action. Nevertheless, it sums up the main discussions that took place as well as some of the main ideas and demands proposed by the youth.

It clearly shows that real societal change and the achievement of social justice for all and the environment require the participation of young people. This is exactly what we wanted to deliver with the Youth Labs.



“ A Academia de Ativismo contribuiu de forma positiva para o enriquecimento pessoal das temáticas ligadas às alterações climáticas, sistemas alimentares justos e justiça social.

IMPRESSUM



OUR FOOD. OUR FUTURE. YOUTHLAB MANIFESTO

The youthlab manifesto is a result of a series of workshops with youth across Europe.

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