

August 12

International
youth day



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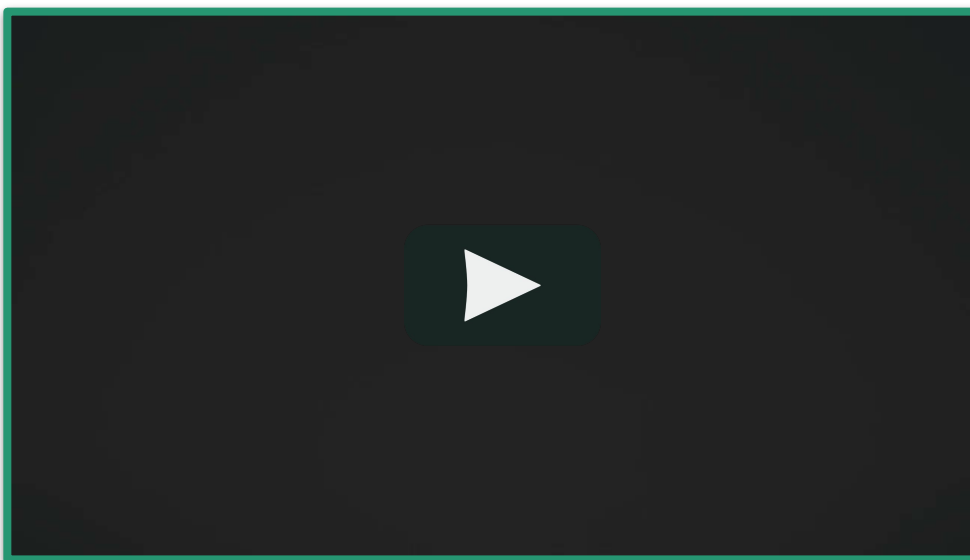
Key concepts

Welcome!



Priscila Zúñiga

Manager, Gender Equity and Youth Programs



Melissa Alfaro

Specialist, Talent Management Division

Carolina Borda - Technical Specialist in IICA's Agricultural Climate Action and Sustainability Program – IICA Delegation in Colombia



Tell us, who are you and what do you do at IICA?

My name is Carolina Borda, and I am Colombian. I am currently working as a Technical Specialist in IICA's Agricultural Climate Action and Sustainability Program. I also currently serve as Vice-President of the IICA Staff Association (APIICA).

What does it mean to you to commemorate August 12 (International Youth Day) from your perspective as a young woman?

For me, this is an opportunity to recognize the importance and validity of the contributions of youth to creating a society that champions equality and respects differences, by fostering processes in which youth truly participate in decision-making.

Using your youthful essence as a tool, what could you improve in your workplace?

I believe that significant progress has been achieved in incorporating youth, thanks to improvements with respect to internships and professional visits. One possible area for improvement could be incorporating career plans that enhance the capabilities of youth involved with the Institute, facilitating their professional growth within the Institute.

What message would you like to send to the youth on this Day?

That we should take advantage of the various forums and opportunities available to receive training, acquire tools, contribute our knowledge and jointly develop solutions that contribute to improving the livelihoods of rural producers in our countries, under a comprehensive vision. Greater access to services, new opportunities and knowledge would allow for counteracting the migration of youth to cities.



Tell us, who are you and what do you do at IICA?

My name is Eboni Adderley; I am 26 and the new National Technical Coordinator for IICA Bahamas.

What does it mean to you to commemorate August 12 (International Youth Day) from your perspective as a young woman?

August 12th to me, like other young women and youth, serves as an opportunity to raise awareness on the myriad of challenges we face for equitable participation in various aspects of society. At the same time, this day calls for celebrating and reflecting on the many achievements, and triumphs of young women like me that work to address these inequities.

Using your youthful essence as a tool, what could you improve in your workplace?

Since assuming my position, I have emphasized the need and worked on being more digitally in sync with the community and the agencies we serve. I believe that information and awareness are power, so I have been more intentional about information sharing through our social media channels and ensuring that programmatic offerings reach the right audiences.

What message would you like to send to the youth on this Day?

To the youth today, keep putting in the work. It may not feel like the generation before hears or sees us but remember that in a decade or so, we will get to enjoy the fruits of our labor. So, continue to create the world you want your future self to live in.



Tell us, who are you and what do you do at IICA?

My name is Carlos Figueroa. I'm 29 years old and I live in Coronado. I am happily married and am an Industrial Engineer with experience in the area of ISO management services and systems. Since coming to IICA, I have been working in process management, carrying out data collection, analysis and process mapping, as well as providing support for the implementation of institutional processes.

What does it mean to you to commemorate August 12 (International Youth Day) from your perspective as a young man?

I believe that young people have the necessary tools to create positive changes in society that will create a better future for ourselves and for upcoming generations. On the other hand, it is important to highlight the problems that we young people face on a daily basis and to propose real solutions that attack the root of the problem, rather than the symptoms that are evident in society today.

Using your youthful essence as a tool, what could you improve in your workplace?

I believe that giving young people new challenges that allow them to create, innovate and develop new skills that can be applied in their professional and personal lives will provide additional motivation for their overall development.

What message would you like to send to the youth on this Day?

The most important message I have to offer is to do your research and educate yourselves, not only in your profession, but also in other areas that will equip you to form your own opinion, rather than being influenced simply by what another person may have said, before proving it to be correct. This information age is a time in which we are seeing the most uninformed people and in which today's youth are the most vulnerable.



Tell us, who are you and what do you do at IICA?

My name is Dahianna Binns Ramírez. I am a young, rural woman of Afro-Costa Rican descent, originally from the canton known as the heart of the Caribbean – Siquirres, in Limón Province. I am an International Relations professional and a Junior Intern in the Gender Equality and Youth Program of IICA's Strategic Coordination Unit. I also provide technical cooperation support for the DTC.

What does it mean to you to commemorate August 12 (International Youth Day) from your perspective as a young woman?

For me, International Youth Day is a recognition of young people's rights within the international community, highlighting the challenges we face and calling for action to promote measures that will strengthen our abilities and guarantee our rights in all areas.

Using your youth as a guide, what aspect of your daily activities as an intern could be improved?

I would consider implementing participatory methodologies or methods that allow the opinions of young people to be included in decision making processes within the various areas of IICA. I believe it is important and necessary to take note of innovative ideas, coupled with creativity and professionalism, in order to collectively build and promote the inclusive transformation of the agrifood systems of the Americas.

What message would you like to send to the youth on this Day?

As youth, we are the present and not the future of humanity. We are agents of change with the ability to transform and innovate. We can hold our own in decision making forums and can carry out major and impactful projects. We deserve our rights to be recognized throughout the world. May we never fail to let our voices be heard in all spheres.



Podcasts



AgroLink - Hemispheric Community of Rural Youth, a Reality: This program introduces the Hemispheric Community of Rural Youth, a virtual platform created with and for youth. It's a space for debates, unity, sharing, and contributing to building a better world.

By IICA: [Link](#)

Rural Youth of Latin America and the Caribbean. We Are Land and Territory. By International Land Coalition - Latin America and the Caribbean (ILC-LAC): [Link](#)

Para las juventudes rurales el derecho al acceso y gobernanza de la tierra está ligado a las garantías para la permanencia digna en los territorios.

"TENER LA TIERRA, GOBERNAR NUESTROS TERRITORIOS"



Chapter 6:

Intergenerational Dialogue | Que se corra la voz Podcast. By Project DAC: Dialogue and Collaborative Support: [Link](#)

Wisdom of the Land. By Free Land Colombia:

Episode 10.
Rural Youth: [Link](#)

Episode 42.
Youth in Agriculture: [Link](#)



Books



Rural Youth and Subjectivity - Life Between the Countryside and the City.

By María Luz Roa: [Link](#)

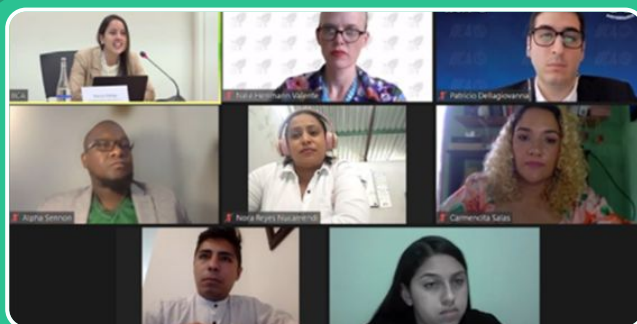


Events

Regional Forums and Hemispheric Youth Forum: Four regional forums (Caribbean-North, South, Andean, Central) and a hemispheric forum focused on "Rural Youth Building the New Post-COVID-19 Agriculture" were held

By IICA: [Link](#)

Juventudes rurales construyendo la nueva agricultura post COVID-19



By IICA: [Link](#)

2nd Hemispheric Forum of Rural Youth: Launch of the Hemispheric Community of Rural Youth. The central theme was "The Role of Rural Youth and Food Security in the Americas," where young individuals from all Americas regions discussed challenges related to financing, production costs, climate change, and more. The Hemispheric Community of Rural Youth was launched

Adding Voices for Intergenerational Justice: Childhood, Adolescence, and Youth in the Governance of Latin America and the Caribbean (Second Meeting of the Parties to the Escozú Agreement). By UNICEF LACRO; Corporación Motum; The Millenials Movement; Colombian Platform for Childhood and Youth; Eco Maxei Querétaro AC and Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN): [Link](#)





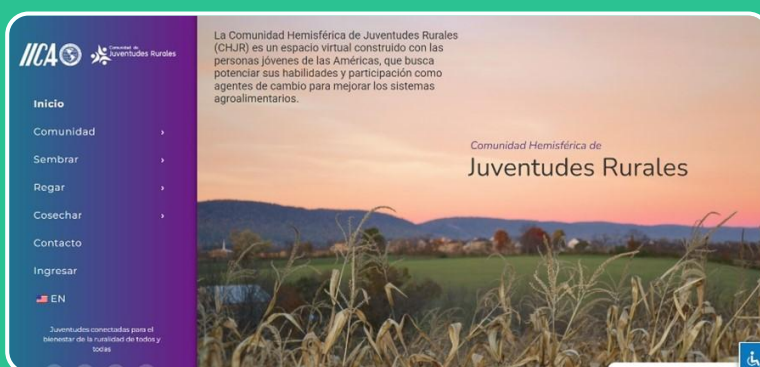
Panel 2: Intergenerational Justice in the Pursuit of Climate Justice (Latin American Just Transitions). By CLACSO, OXFAM, and Universidad del Rosario: [Link](#)

Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages. By the Regional Youth Working Group of the United Nations Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean (RCP LAC): [Link](#)



Latin American Rural Youth Festival. By FAO: [Link](#)

Other Resources



Hemispheric Community of Rural Youth (HCRY): A virtual space for youth in the Americas aimed at enhancing their skills and participation as agents of change to improve agri-food systems.

By IICA: [Link](#)

Challenges Faced by Youths: Navigating Our Paths of Technical Cooperation

In achieving sustainable, equitable, and inclusive development across all domains and sectors, it is crucial to address two social factors that intersect the lives of all individuals: the intergenerational and intersectional gender approaches. The former underscores the significance of addressing the specificities of youth, recognizing their active and central role across sociocultural, economic, and political spheres, beyond the spaces they have already conquered. This approach entails providing them with the necessary opportunities to thrive in rural settings, while avoiding the consequences of generational and gender stereotypes.

By promoting the participation of rural youth, stereotypes are challenged, fostering a more inclusive environment where the potential and capabilities of all individuals are acknowledged, regardless of their gender or age. This boosts self-esteem, confidence, and the ability to influence policies and decision-making spaces. Some stereotypes label youth as the generation of the future, the generational successors, the future of humanity. Such perceptions hinder recognizing young people as agents of change, with distinct needs, interests, and perspectives that should be integral to the development and strengthening of agri-food systems.



These stereotypes erect barriers to accessing education, rural extension, decision-making, political participation, productive and financial resources, and limited possibilities for decent rural employment. Consequently, youth often find themselves in situations of economic dependency, despite efforts to advance the rights, participation, and representation of the Americas' youth. The inequalities that characterize rural youth are exacerbated by the intersectionality of other variables, such as gender, race, and ethnicity.

Another significant challenge in the region is the lack of disaggregated statistics, as national data conceals regional disparities concentrated in rural territories, differences between rural men and women, young people in rural and urban environments. Such information is vital for accurately recording the productive participation of young individuals. Biases in data collection, stemming from not viewing youth as productive, but rather as helpers or successors, impact the design and implementation of policies and services aimed at strengthening agri-food systems, often focusing on adult males.



Intergenerational Approach

To address generational gaps, it is essential to transcend adult-centric perspectives that exclude youth as agents of change. Past are the days when approaches favored the figure of an adult, often male and Caucasian. Today, we recognize the diversity of actors—women and men, youth, afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, and more.

To achieve this, IICA, throughout its Gender Equity and Youth Program prioritizes an intergenerational and empowerment approach for rural youth as affirmative actions. Active youth participation in decision-making spaces is vital to achieve gender equality and promote just, inclusive development of the Americas' agri-food systems.

Their involvement guarantees the representation of diverse voices and the inclusion of perspectives that may have been overlooked. This involves not just creating exclusive spaces for youth, which can lead to isolation, but fostering generational integration and enriching all processes with the visions and interests of young people.



To enable influence and empowerment opportunities for rural youth, the Gender Equity and Youth Program provides a platform for coordination and exchange through the Hemispheric Community of Rural Youth (HCRY). This community is participatory and dynamic, generating networks and mobilizing youth participation.

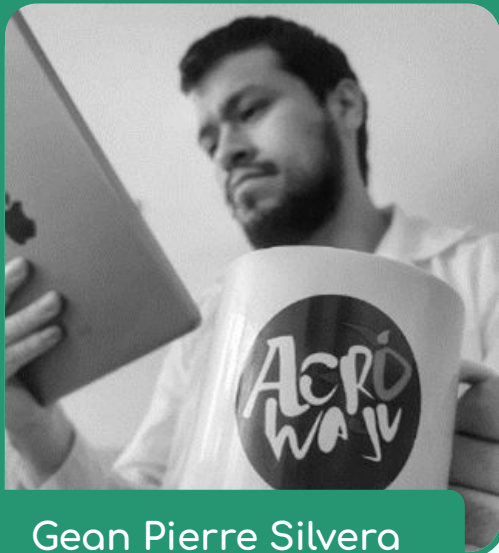
Similarly, the program builds alliances, coalitions, and joint actions with youth networks, the private sector, and academia to develop other spaces, particularly for youth influence and offerings of training and projects in support of youth.

Strengthening institutional capacities to integrate gender, intersectionality, and intergenerational approaches becomes essential to guide technical cooperation actions. By identifying and addressing the specificities of youth, this empowers them. As TCD, we can achieve more effective and efficient technical cooperation, creating systemic and profound impacts on the Americas' youth.

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

Inspiring Stories from the Americas: Entrepreneurial Youths

In celebration of International Youth Day, the Gender Equity and Youth Program is delighted to share the following inspiring stories of young entrepreneurs from diverse regions of the Americas.



Gean Pierre Silvera

This young entrepreneur of Peruvian origin is the founder of "AgroWayu," a venture that harnesses innovation and scientific research to create sweet and nutritious products infused with gelling additives. The inception of this venture dates back to 2016 when its founder was halfway through his Agro-industrial Engineering studies. Fuelled by enthusiasm and scientific curiosity, he participated in a research fair that culminated in the development of a unique and nutritious product known as "gelanchías." AgroWayu operates under a distinct food approach; its products are organic, non-ultra-processed, and rich in nutritional value. Moreover, the venture integrates crops native to its country of origin, such as chia and quinoa.

Gean's motivation is to address food-related challenges, notably childhood malnutrition, an issue affecting 131 million individuals in Latin America and the Caribbean (PAHO & FAO, 2023). This venture aligns its efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly emphasizing SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). They view their project as one that considers social and environmental factors as integral to their product's value proposition, sourcing inputs from local suppliers.

"Navigating the agroindustry and food technology sectors is exhilarating as it allows me to apply my technical knowledge in practical ways. I have never ceased this learning journey since I embarked on it." For more information about this venture, you can find them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). We encourage you to follow them.



Hailing from Colombia, Juan David Caro and María Rodríguez recognized the untapped potential within the Amazon rainforest's "suri larvae" as the foundation for their entrepreneurial endeavour. This innovative concept sprouted in 2020 during their journeys across Peru and Colombia, exploring university campuses and scientific research hubs. Both Juan and María, fellow university students pursuing agri-food engineering with a focus on bioethics, are visionary entrepreneurs who, driven by the dream of establishing their own enterprise, gave birth to "Imobo Sac." This venture is devoted to nutritional health, the revival of gastronomic traditions, and the environmental conservation of the Amazonian regions spanning Colombia and Peru.

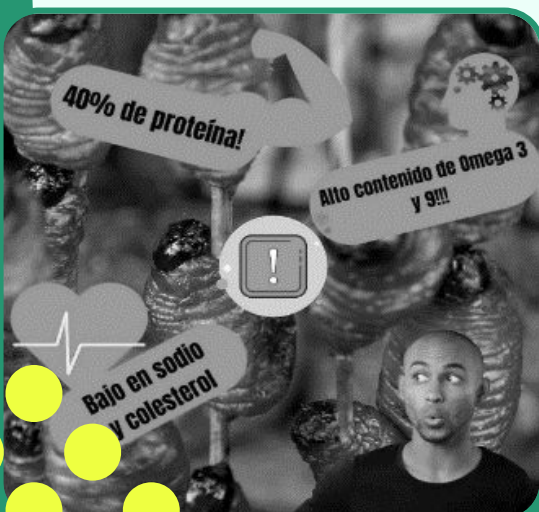


Juan David Caro and María Rodríguez

Driven by the aspiration to revolutionize production and agri-food systems through their venture and the supply chain it stimulates, these young individuals find inspiration. Their enterprise has enabled them to reach communities, producers, and consumers eager to delve into innovative and distinct culinary experiences. Imobo Sac faithfully recreates the ancestral use and consumption of "suri larvae" by indigenous communities to enhance dietary quality.

This larva plays an integral role in Amazonian gastronomy. Imobo Sac produces three distinct products: "suritivos," dehydrated suri larvae flour as a protein supplement, and suri oil for respiratory support. These larvae-derived products, historically harvested from palm trees through practices that involved tree felling, have undergone a transformation led by these young minds. They have devised a sustainable production system that leaves no ecological footprint. By cultivating "suris" within controlled artificial farms, they offer a certified, environmentally friendly, and high-quality product.

"Honesty and transparency are paramount to fostering customer loyalty. Reinforcing these values is crucial for national brands to thrive amidst international competition; our commitment lies with consumers and their well-being." For more insights into this remarkable venture, you can find them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). We invite you to follow their journey.





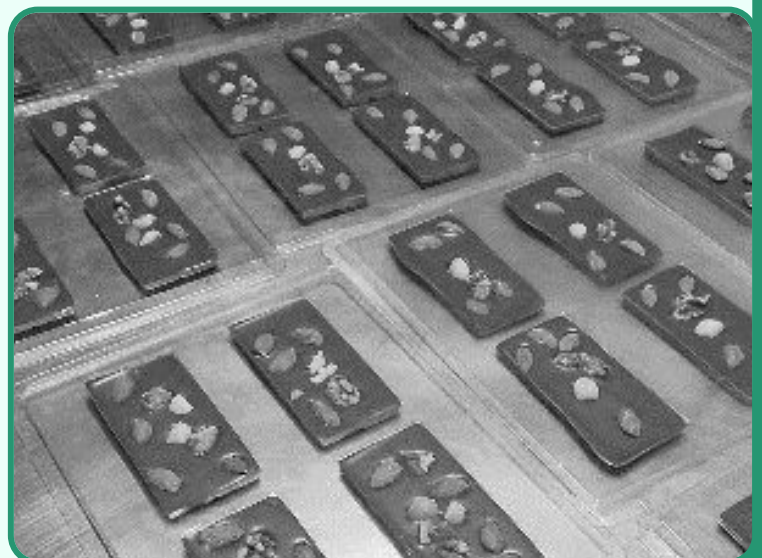
Byron Rodríguez and Sandra Córdova

Balfour, a Costa Rican entrepreneurial venture, took root in the rural locality of San Jorge in Los Chiles, Alajuela Province. Led by a dynamic young couple, Byron Rodríguez and Sandra Córdova, Balfour specializes in the transformation of cacao into an array of products, including dips, spreads, chocolate bars, chocolate-peanut butter, almond-chocolate butter, among others. Inspired by their Peruvian escapade, this couple decided to embark on their entrepreneurial journey in 2017, envisioning both productive activity and an opportunity window within Costa Rica.

These two enterprising individuals are acutely conscious of the environmental impact associated with cacao production on soils. As such, their business is firmly rooted in environmental sustainability. Employing energy harnessed from solar panels, they power their mini-factory, situated within their own abode. Moreover, their enterprise boasts carbon neutrality certification, as evidenced by practices such as rainwater usage for plantations and the avoidance of harmful soil pesticides.

An integral facet of their social and economic impact ambitions in other communities led them to procure their raw material—cacao seeds—from areas like Guatuso and Talamanca. They express immense satisfaction in fortifying the production chain of rural communities. Notably, the majority of cacao suppliers are women organized within community agricultural spaces, diligently adhering to agroecological practices.

"Every time we think back to our journey in Peru, we are reminded of the inspiring chocolate tour experience and the wealth of knowledge we gained about this wonderful fruit that now sustains us. We are continuously exploring techniques to craft superior products, and I will never forget that this learning journey began at the Chocolate Museum in Peru." For further insights into this exceptional venture, please find them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). We warmly invite you to follow their journey.





KEY CONCEPTS

Adultocentrism

Adultocentrism places children, adolescents, and young adults in a subordinate position in relation to adults. Similarly, older adults experience diminished power with age and reduced productive capacities (UNFPA, 2018). Overcoming this adult-centric perspective, which excludes young people, is crucial for their inclusion as agents of change rather than just successors or the future generation.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a collaborative process through which individuals develop capacities, skills, and resources to control their life circumstances consciously and critically. This transformation enables them to shape their environment according to their needs and aspirations while simultaneously transforming themselves. Empowerment enhances people's participation in all aspects of their personal, social, political, and economic lives (UN, 1995; IICA, 2017).

The Program prioritizes the creation of spaces for participation and experience sharing, where young individuals acquire tools to empower their skills and capabilities. In this context, concrete actions have been taken, such as developing online platforms and discussion forums that drive empowerment among rural youth and facilitate effective participation in decision-making processes.

Intersectional Gender Approach

Intersectionality refers to the interplay between two or more social factors that define an individual. Identity elements like gender, ethnicity, race, geographic location, and age do not independently affect a person. Instead, they combine in various ways, resulting in structural inequalities impacting economic and social realities, as well as access to opportunities (Ríos, 2022).

An intersectional gender approach involves working with all genders while acknowledging the importance of promoting positive masculinities, shifting traditional gender roles, establishing a gender framework within institutions and organizations, and recognizing the diversity characterizing the Americas' population.

In all actions carried out by the Program, the intersectionality of factors such as ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, migratory condition, geographic location, sexual orientation, and gender identity is considered. This perspective will be integrated and promoted with partners to comprehensively and inclusively analyse and work on intersectionality.

Laying the foundation for integrating this approach requires a gender analysis that identifies roles, disparities, and gaps. Building on this understanding of reality, policies can be formulated, specific technical and financial resources generated, and gender monitoring and evaluation systems designed. These components contribute to substantive equality in the region, ensuring that no one is left behind.

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