



Building cross-cutting skills and landscapes knowledge for effective youth leadership

On the sidelines of 20th Conference of the
Parties to the UN Framework Convention on
Climate Change (COP20)

5-7 December, 2014
Lima, Peru

Organizing committee



Coordinating partners



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1 Executive summary



“I’m tired of hearing the young generation are the future. Why? Because it implies that group is marginal. We tend to be involved in these decision-making processes because youth is ‘colorful,’ youth is ‘dynamic.’ But actually what we require is to be seriously and honestly involved at the centre of processes.”

Florent Kaiser
Former president of the International Forestry Students Association.

Conferences and committees the world over are recognizing the importance of youth¹ representation. However, youth participation is still largely limited, particularly in the international arena, to a ‘demand to be heard.’ Youth involvement can also often be tokenistic – where young people are given a voice but no decision-making power.

Youth participation requires a great deal of thought, commitment, time, flexibility, and political will. Some wonder if it is worth the effort. Others think that youth participation is a public-relations gimmick or a passing trend². But when viewed in the broader context of effective and appropriate political and development decisions about sustainable land use, the crucial nature of meaningful youth participation emerges.

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF), first held in Warsaw, Poland (2013) and then in Lima, Peru (2014) has been a milestone in this respect³.

It is one of the few global arenas where hundreds of young people have been given a multifaceted opportunity to:

- build key skills needed for effective participation (pitching an idea, networking, critical thinking and facilitating a discussion) – **the youth masterclasses and mentoring program**
- formally contribute their ideas on key conference themes and build intergenerational dialogue - **the youth session**
- undertake leadership roles through the conference program – **the ‘youth in GLF’ program**

Extensive surveys and interviews were conducted following the GLF showing a significant uptake of practical skills amongst youth leaders and masterclass participants that helped to maximize their participation in the GLF. Interviews conducted with senior professionals involved in youth activities at the GLF suggests the activities helped to foster intergenerational learning (Section 5, Annex 5).

There were pleasing signs that young people were considered integral to the Global Landscapes Forum; the presence of a youth MC and youth moderators and panelists in many discussion forums. However there was no youth representation in any of the plenary sessions, which should be improved at future conferences.

1 Defined as 18–30 years old

2 Cockburn, G (2000). *Meaningful youth participation in international conferences: A case study of the International conference on war-affected children*. Canadian International Development Agency

3 <http://www.scidev.net/asia-pacific/communication/opinion/integrate-the-youth-voice-in-science-policy-conferences.html>

The effective participation of youth at GLF has been an affirmation of the rights of young people to be listened to and taken seriously in matters that affect them and, according to many conference delegates, made a major contribution to the tone and quality of many of the discussions. It also has many far-reaching impacts beyond the conference – from tangible projects that have been initiated by youth delegates⁴, to employment opportunities⁵ and everything in between.

This report offers our experiences, lessons, and suggestions from youth activities at the Lima Global Landscapes Forum (GLF 2014) as a concrete example of how meaningful participation of youth in conferences can be realized (section 6).

A three-year ‘youth engagement in conferences’ strategy is currently under development, with the aim to secure long-term funding support in 2015. As part of this, we are exploring the possibility of a 12-month ‘youth in landscapes’ fellowship and mentoring program under the auspices of GLF.

Impacts by the numbers

770	Applications for 12 youth leadership positions.
450	Masterclass, youth session and webinar participants
30%	of youth session participants were senior professionals
22%	of discussion forums chose youth moderators/speakers
1,662	Subscribers to youth mailing list
25	Senior researchers, policy officers and business representatives mentored youth delegates.
48	Blogposts about youth issues published on <i>landscapes.org</i> between June-Dec 2014

4 From Warsaw to Lima: How the GLF helped grow a new youth initiative: <http://www.landscapes.org/warsaw-lima-glf-helped-grow-new-youth-initiative/>

5 <http://www.landscapes.org/preparing-youth-agents-change-qa-forests-asia-youth-moderator-aristia-hady-wanjaya/>

2 The approach to youth participation at GLF

"We really welcomed young professionals teaming up with more experienced professionals...I see in my own wider working environments that it is increasingly difficult for young professionals to get a place to start and build experience." – GLF Discussion Forum host

There are many definitions of youth participation⁶. The youth activities organizing committee chose to define participation as more than youth simply attending or observing a meeting of senior professionals but rather playing a significant and substantive, not purely ceremonial role.

The current activities were conceived in the wake of two successful predecessors: the youth session at the first Global Landscapes Forum in Warsaw (2013 GLF) and the special youth session at the Forests Asia Summit in Jakarta, 2014.

At GLF 2013, 10 young professionals from across the world were given speech coaching to help them tell their landscape success stories to an audience of 300 people. Youth were given a more active role at the Forests Asia Summit, where discussions were led by five "youth moderators" who underwent an extensive mentoring program to build their discussion topic and their ability to facilitate discussions.

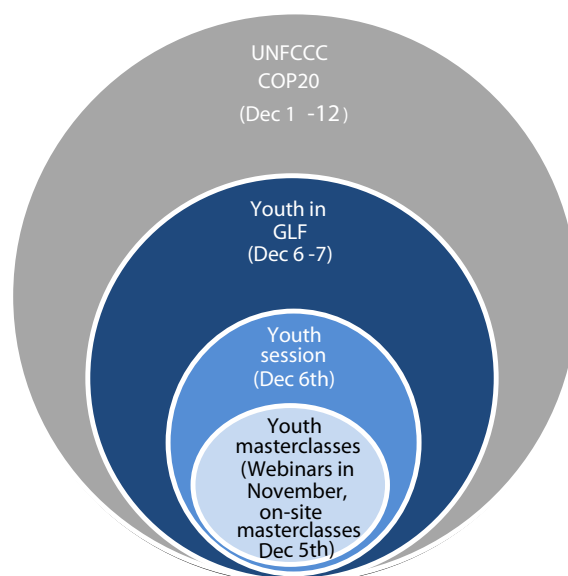
Despite these well-received efforts, the youth organizing team noticed a lack of broader youth participation in the conferences. This led to the tripartite design of the youth program at 2014 GLF:

1. Youth masterclasses and mentoring program
2. Youth session
3. Youth in GLF

As the events were held in Latin America, strong regional representation was encouraged and Spanish language needs were catered for.

Building skills, confidence and networks

The youth participation committee identified a need to build several key participation skills amongst youth delegates – facilitating a discussion, contributing to a discussion, pitching an idea, critical thinking, an understanding of landscapes concepts, and networking; these formed the basis of a masterclass series.



“I met incredible people at the GLF such as the ex Mexico president who was willing to talk to me, also I met people with same interest in the environment field.”

Masterclass participant

“This kind of activity is useful, and should be done more often during high level conferences.”

Masterclass trainer

⁶ Meaningful Youth Participation in International Conferences <http://bit.ly/1Ch04iB>

Six professional trainers were recruited to facilitate these masterclasses, some of whom were from GLF partner organizations (Wageningen University, CIAT etc).


Masterclasses utilized blended learning methodologies, with five webinars conducted in November - to introduce techniques and scenarios and offer skill building to those who were unable to travel to Lima - followed by a full day on-site program the day before GLF, which was attended by 60 youth (see Section 4 for a breakdown). Youth participants were also given practical "missions" to complete during the GLF and these were reported on as part of peer-to-peer assessment (Annex 5).

A mentoring program was also launched, pairing youth and senior delegates with similar backgrounds who were encouraged to attend at least one conference session together. Youth session facilitators and pitchers were also paired with a scientific mentor to help them develop their discussion topics.

The full agenda and resources can be found at landscapes.org/youth-masterclasses.

The masterclasses were instrumental in building the capacity of young people to effectively contribute to the youth session and GLF more widely. They gave young people the space to reflect upon the key skills needed for effective participation, practise these skills with their peers and trainers in a safe environment, and build their confidence before heading into the conference (more detail in section 5).


This video and written guide outlines the key skills and tools needed to effectively network, and guides you through the practical steps of developing your "networking action plan".



Wednesday November 26
09:00 Bangkok/03:00 CET/21:00 Tuesday 25 Peru

What are landscape approaches?

You may have heard the term "landscapes approach" but what does it actually mean? Find out why the approach is important for sustainable agriculture, food security, forestry and climate change adaptation and how it aims to change the way that land is governed.



Webinars On Air were recorded and are now freely available on landscapes.org/youth-masterclasses

Letting youth take the lead

The first item on the GLF agenda was the youth session (held concurrently with civil society sessions). Briefly, the youth session began with a series of concurrent roundtable discussions on the four themes of the Global Landscapes Forum – the implementation of integrated landscape approaches, climate change, green economy and sustainable development.

While branded a youth session, with the over-arching aim of discussing the key conference themes from the perspective of youth, we also had a strong emphasis on intergenerational learning. We actively encouraged senior professionals to participate in the discussions and to consider the perspectives and challenges facing young people. Effective youth participation depends on the mentorship and support of senior professionals, so it's important they are part of the conversation and are actively encouraged to support young people and take up their perspectives.

However, we didn't just want this to be a discussion for the sake of discussion. To encourage innovation, the key outcome generated from each discussion was 'pitched' to a dragon's den panel of science, business and policy experts for constructive critique.

In August 2014, we advertised for youth to apply for two distinct youth leadership roles related to the youth session:

Eight "youth facilitators" (4 x English and 4 x Spanish speaking) who developed and led the roundtable discussions.

Four "youth pitchers" who pitched the main outcome of their nominated discussion to the dragon's den.

From 770 applications, 12 youth facilitators and pitchers were selected three months prior to GLF and given an intensive mentoring and training period to develop their facilitation/pitching skills and knowledge of their discussion topic (Annex 2).

The discussion topics were:

English	Spanish
Fracking: Can communities, governments and businesses agree on an integrated approach?	"Fracking": ¿Pueden las comunidades, los gobiernos y las empresas coincidir en un enfoque integrado?
How sustainable is your food supply chain?	¿Es sostenible la cadena de suministro de alimentos?
How can we address rural-urban migration of youth in the post-2015 development agenda?	¿Cómo podemos hacer frente a la migración rural-urbana de los jóvenes en la agenda de desarrollo post-2015?
How can youth ensure REDD+ initiatives address oil palm expansion?	¿Cómo puede la juventud garantizar que las iniciativas REDD + aborden la expansión del aceite de palma?

Approximately 200 people participated onsite (Section 4). The online public were engaged in e-discussions around key GLF themes prior to the event, in order to refine discussion topics. The dragon's den was also livestreamed.



“This is one of the more interesting things I'm going to be doing for all of the COP.”

Rachel Kyte
World Bank Group Vice President
and dragon's den panellist.

Plugging youth into the wider GLF program

We approached session hosts a month prior to the GLF with a unique opportunity to build the skills and knowledge of passionate and enthusiastic young professionals in landscapes sectors (namely on-site masterclass participants) by involving them as moderators/facilitators, speakers or panellists. We received a great response, with almost a quarter agreeing to involve youth.



Building an evidence-base

We undertook an ambitious monitoring and evaluation program, with over 250 semi structured interviews and online survey responses received from youth participants, selected youth leaders, senior GLF delegates and mentors. These data enabled us to develop an evidence-based understanding of:

- The importance of capacity building opportunities provided to youth
- How the youth voice contributed to the GLF discussions and beyond
- How the program could be improved next time

A preliminary analysis has been conducted (Annex 5), with more sophisticated methods (e.g. text analysis) planned for journal submission in 2015.

“[Our youth moderator] was excellent. I honestly think none of us could have done it as well.”

Discussion forum host

“I would seek to involve youth again definitely. I would want to ensure the workshop format allowed for fuller involvement. Involvement on panel would be worth considering too.”

Discussion Forum host

What more can be done to improve/foster intergenerational collaboration, particularly in land use issues?

We posed this question to 2014 GLF delegates. Here's a selection of the responses.

“Have specific policies to engage young professionals at least in the larger organisations through debates and discussions that feature different generations perspectives on the same issue.”

“Strive for high quality skills through your training and mentoring approaches.”

“Organize a panel where they are the speakers. Let them shadow senior speakers.”

3 Participants

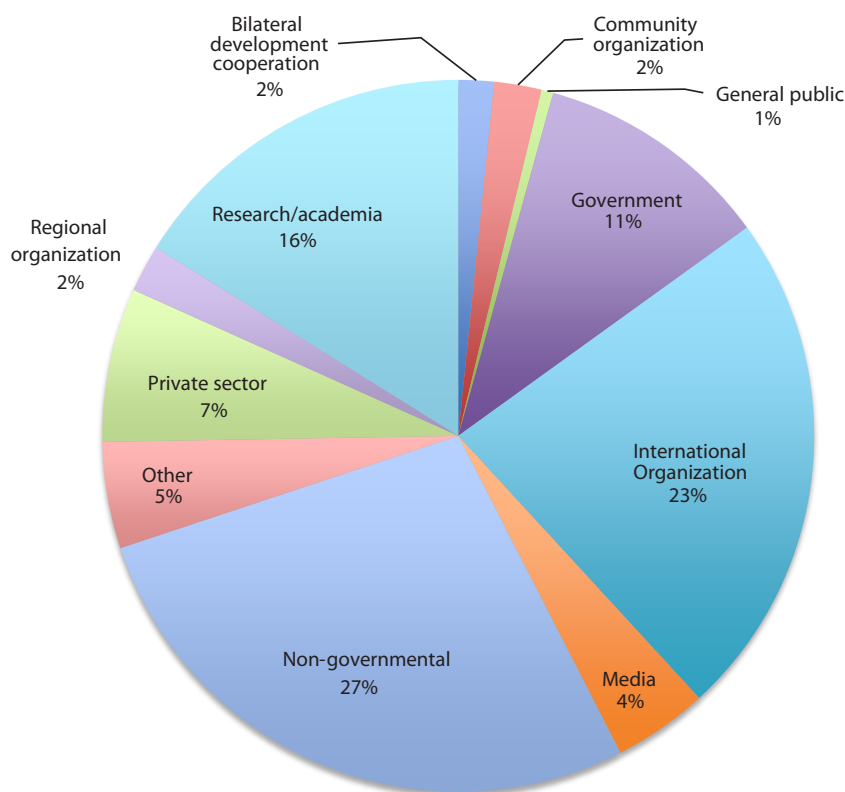
Over 400 people registered to attend the pre-masterclass webinars however only 193 actually participated (48%). Post-webinar evaluation suggests that most registrants didn't attend webinars because they had other commitments or the timing was inconvenient.

We received 100 applications for the masterclasses however only 60 could be accommodated due to space and programmatic limitations. The participant selection process involved assessing their answers to several short questions and masterclass topic preference.



Over 600 people registered to attend the youth session but only 200 could be accommodated due to space and programmatic limitations. The participant selection process involved reconfirming interest and assessing discussion topic preference.

The event was well attended by both youth (70%) and senior professionals interested in youth issues (30%). Figure 2 shows the breakdown of youth session participants by sector. Note: academia/research also includes students.



Youth session participants by sector (n = 200)

4 Outcomes

Activity	Outcomes	Challenges	Suggestions for improvement
Youth masterclass and mentoring program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumental in building the capacity of young people to effectively contribute to the youth session and GLF more widely. • All masterclass participants reported an increased confidence in networking, facilitation, pitching and critical thinking skills. • Increased youth awareness about landscape issues and how these relate to climate change and sustainable development. • Many participants followed up with senior professionals post-session, and have continued to do so since the conference. • Participants are keen to pass on the information and skills learnt in the mentoring program to their colleagues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run with essentially no budget. Will need funding in order to develop materials and recruit trainers who can dedicate time to developing the program • Not prominently advertised or marketed on landscapes.org 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide structured materials participants can refer to during the masterclasses • Networking paired with GLF cocktail and debrief afterwards • Ground the skill building in real-life case studies, research projects or challenges in landscapes sectors. • More actively partner with youth organizations involved in the climate change negotiations e.g. CLiMates • Future masterclasses could focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building partnerships at a coordinator level. - The big issues at COP or GLF. - Creating a global change makers society. - Communication and youth media. - Social media. - Lobbying. - Time management. - Effective public speaking skills. - How to communicate complex scientific topics to a diverse audience. - Activist blogging

continued on next page

Activity	Outcomes	Challenges	Suggestions for improvement
Youth session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 participants onsite – 100 Spanish speakers, 100 English speakers • Lively discussions and debate around youth perspectives on the four key landscapes issues/themes of 2014 GLF. • Messages related to the themes of the conference – see full youth outcome statement in Annex 6 • Ideas represented equally with other stakeholder groups at 2014 GLF • Fostered cooperation among young individuals and youth organizations at the global, regional and local level. • Increased engagement between older professionals and youth. • Short video interviews conducted after the youth session suggested an increased understanding of youth issues amongst older professionals attending 2014 GLF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of confirmed participants showed up late, affecting the organization of discussion groups. • 2 hours is not long enough for substantive discussions • Pitchers were not given enough time after discussions ended to refine and develop the pitch • Limited online engagement in e-discussions and during the session itself • Youth facilitators and pitchers found it difficult to coordinate across timezones • Significant time was spent deciding and refining the topic – more direction needed to ensure concrete outcomes • The commitment was larger than many expected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GLF is perhaps not the most appropriate setting for intimate discussions. Find a smaller venue and hold the discussions a day before GLF. • The dragon’s den suits the format of GLF much better and could be the focus of the youth session at GLF. This will also give the pitchers more time after the discussions to prepare an engaging pitch. • Better engage online public during the session – give them opportunity for questions and feedback • Youth committee should work with the GLF organizers to pre-identify topic(s) or project(s) that could form the basis of youth session discussions and pitching – to ground the ideas and also help/encourage projects and institutions to think about youth issues more systematically • Bolster the mentoring structures to help youth facilitators and pitchers prepare for the youth session. • Ensure pitches are developed as a team (pitcher + facilitator) and accurately reflect the group consensus. • Youth participants were keen to stay more formally connected to their peers. This could be achieved by building a youth session alumni network. Previous youth facilitators/pitchers could also mentor new youth facilitators/pitchers.
Youth in GLF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More youth in leadership roles in 2014 GLF sessions • All 10 thematic pavilions facilitated by youth • Five youth were discussion forum moderators • Youth MC for high level sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some session hosts believed youth moderators needed more expert knowledge about the topic they were moderating • There were no youth speakers in plenary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize more activities at the youth booth – many did not seem to know of its presence. • Pair youth with session hosts earlier so more preparation time • Prepare session hosts to be mentors of young people • Encourage session hosts to identify youth from their own organizations/projects to moderate • Ensure a space for at least one youth speaker in high-level sessions.

5 Lessons learned and next steps

Essential elements for meaningful youth participation in conferences

- A youth participation committee or conference organizer responsible for youth engagement
- Dedicated skill and confidence building opportunities e.g. a day-long masterclass program held immediately before the conference.
- Dedicated time to discuss youth angles on conferences issues and develop a position/communiqué
- Opportunities to present/discuss youth viewpoints, practice new skills during conference sessions
- A high-level youth speaker
- Two-way mentoring between senior and younger delegates to facilitate intergenerational understanding and networking

A potential program

- Day 1 – masterclasses
- Day 2 – youth session discussions
- Day 3 (day 1 of GLF) – Dragon's den to pitch ideas from discussions + mentoring program
- Day 4 (day 2 of GLF) – youth involved in discussion forums, pavilions and plenaries as MCs/facilitators/panellists + mentoring program

1 There is significant demand for a 'meaningful youth participation' model that can be adapted and applied to different conferences.

We believe we are well on the way to perfecting a model of meaningful youth participation. To date this program has been largely volunteer run, which has many capacity and resourcing limitations. Support will be needed to fine-tune and scale up this work in 2015.

Next steps: A three-year 'youth engagement in conferences' strategy is currently under development, with the aim to secure long-term funding support in 2015.

2 Long-term support of youth leaders

In our current model, a cohort of young people are selected for a leadership role at the youth session (pitchers, facilitators, speakers etc) and are given a 2-month intensive preparation period. Because of this, selection can favor those with established capacity, when there are many enthusiastic young people who deserve the opportunity but would require more intensive capacity building. Feedback has also shown that youth leaders found the commitment larger than expected and, as it is an informal commitment that is considered ancillary to their current employment, not enough time is dedicated. A long-term formal approach, with ongoing mentoring and skill building could enable more significant outcomes and impacts to be achieved.

For example, AWARD⁷ provides a 12-month fellowship, skill building and mentoring program for early career female scientists in Africa and has been recognized as a prestigious opportunity that employers respect. A similar youth fellowship program could encourage more sustainable investment in youth leadership and capacity building. This long-term approach could also be self-reinforcing, with past youth leaders, mentoring future youth leaders and a formal alumni network helping peers formally connect and collaborate.

Next steps:

- Explore the possibility of a 12-month 'youth in landscapes' fellowship under the auspices of GLF. The 'youth engagement in conferences' strategy could form a significant part of this fellowship.
- Engage with universities and employers to recognize and reward commitment of young people (for example for subject credits, incorporation in curricula, professional development certification)

3 Intimate discussions don't suit the format of GLF

Held in a large venue, with a large number of attendees, our experience suggests that the venue and mindset of participants is not necessarily conducive to workshop-style discussions. There were several challenges with the 'discussion-style' format of the first half of the youth session (discussed in section 5) – lateness or no-show of many registered participants who reconfirmed their availability only days prior, short timeframe for discussion and pitch development, broad scope of potential discussion topics with few links to concrete projects or initiatives (despite the encouragement of the organizers).

Next steps: To ensure more concrete and innovative outcomes are achieved, youth session organizers should:

- **Timing:** Hold the discussions at a smaller venue the day before GLF and give discussions more time to naturally evolve. The dragon's den suits the format of GLF much better and outcomes from the day's discussions could form the focus of the youth event at GLF. This will also give the pitchers more time after the discussions to prepare an engaging pitch.
- **Scope:** In collaboration with GLF organizers and implementing partners, youth session organizers should determine the topic and a specific context for discussions before recruiting youth facilitators and pitchers. These topics should be real life initiatives, projects or needs that youth could address e.g. the development of a youth stakeholder engagement strategy for a particular project, institution or policy process. Not only would this allow for more concrete, implementable outcomes but would also encourage institutions and projects to systematically start considering and introducing youth perspectives and issues into their *modus operandi*.

4 Empower session hosts to involve young professionals

According to one session host: *"With more time, we would likely have been able to share with [our youth moderator] the thinking behind the session and get her involved in thinking through questions and mentor her a bit. Doing this well though takes time and so without enough lead time it is hard to fit this all in."*

Not everyone is a natural mentor yet many will formally or informally need to mentor or be mentored at some stage of their professional career. Session hosts should be offered capacity building opportunities (e.g. facilitation skills, knowledge sharing methods, mentoring) for more effective session delivery. This would also better equip them to include and mentor young professionals taking part in their sessions. To minimize costs, trainers from the youth masterclass program could be utilized for session host training.

Next steps: Discuss possible initiatives to improve session host capacity to mentor and engage youth, perhaps as part of the 12-month 'youth in landscapes' fellowship.

5 Improve high-level youth representation

When conferences are organized, care is taken to ensure gender and regional diversity. Our vision is that age diversity to be given the same consideration.

As put by a senior GLF delegate, *"Emphasis on equity and long-term outlook in a land use context is synergistic with the youth dimension. It is important to ensure youth have a voice during research, discussion fora, and decision-making processes."*

Many young leaders have important and interesting ideas to share and international fora are starting to ensure they are given a place on the world stage (e.g. The World Economic Forum's Global Shapers in Davos⁸).

Next steps: Work with GLF organizers to ensure age diversity is respected by all session hosts, that youth are adequately represented in high level sessions and pre-set time for the youth to meet alone with the hosting ministers or dignitaries.

8 www.dw.de/young-people-want-a-say-in-davos/a-18201849

6 Acknowledgments

This was truly a team effort. The organizing committee would like to extend special thanks to:

Ann-Kathrin Neureuther and Dan Cooney for championing the importance of effective youth engagement in the Global Landscapes Forum.

Peter Casier for always being available and enthusiastic to help, whether in reviewing the concept note, providing advice on webinars or mentoring our opening speaker.

Our masterclass trainers – Harlem Siu, Javier Baca, Cora van Oosten, Karen Buchanen, Martina Mascarenhas and Andy Jarvis who kindly volunteered their time and energy.

Bruce Campbell and Vanessa Meadu from CCAFS for a guest contribution at the masterclasses and always being interested and available to engage with young people.

To our dragons – Rachel Kyte, Peter Holmgren, Irene Hofmeijer Merkeli, Guilherme do Prado Lima, Paola Agostini and Andy Jarvis for being so open about your personal experiences and generous in time and advice.

Robin Bourgeois, Jennie Dey De Pryck, Ashwin Ravikumar and Anne Rosenbarger for mentoring youth facilitators and pitchers.

Michael Victor for always lending a helping hand when most needed.

Nadia Manning-Thomas for her wisdom, insight and warmth, particularly in shaping the initial concept note.

Simone Staiger, Musuq Briceno, Maria Nuutinen for helping find the right trainers and learning materials.

Tanja Jovic for conducting most of the monitoring and evaluation interviews – not a small task!

Vanda Santos for assisting with the facilitator and pitcher selection.

Pam Robertson for insight on collaborative problem solving approaches



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