

2nd WORLD GASTRONOMY SUMMIT

Manabí, Ecuador | 14 - 17 October 2026

EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH GASTRONOMY



Organised by IGCAT and hosted by MANABI WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY 2026

■ CONFERENCE READER (ENG.)

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WELCOME TO THE 2nd WORLD GASTRONOMY SUMMIT

Empowering Youth Through Gastronomy

MANABÍ, ECUADOR | 14-17 OCTOBER 2026



■ THE STRUCTURE OF THE SUMMIT

Under the theme “**Empowering Youth Through Gastronomy**”, the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit in Manabí, Ecuador, brings together youth consultations, international perspectives, thematic plenaries, collaborative discussions and encounters with local food culture. From **14-17 October 2026**, the programme moves from listening and sharing experiences to developing practical recommendations for youth employment, cultural continuity and regenerative food futures.

WEDNESDAY
14 October 2026

PRE-SUMMIT CONSULTATIONS

Bringing young voices into the conversation

Consultations in Pollica and at Terra Madre provide an international foundation for the discussions. On 14 October, workshops with ULEAM and ESPAM students, encounters in Chone and the 33rd World Regions of Gastronomy Platform meeting explore biodiversity, regenerative food systems, agritourism, living heritage and opportunities for young people. Insights from these exchanges will inform the Summit's debates.

THURSDAY
15 October 2026

OPENING AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Following the official welcome to Manabí, representatives of World Regions of Gastronomy share approaches to connecting food heritage with youth participation and regional development. **Global Food Challenges**, moderated by Robert Palmer, brings together partner organisations to reflect on conservation, education, cultural cooperation and regenerative practices, drawing on the pre-summit consultations. **Manabitan Perspectives - Future Challenges** grounds these discussions in local experiences of traditional cuisine, university education, entrepreneurship and youth aspirations.

FRIDAY
16 October 2026

MORNING PLENARIES

Following UNESCO's presentation of its International Food Atlas, three plenaries explore complementary pathways for empowering young people:

- **Plenary 1: Making Food Production Attractive - The Role of Design, Arts and Culture.** Chaired by Jaume Gomila, this session examines how creativity and cultural recognition can strengthen pride in food professions and attract younger generations to agriculture, fisheries and food production.
- **Plenary 2: From Field to Future: Youth and Gastronomy.** Chaired by Emanuela Panke, this session explores regenerative farming, responsible fishing, agribusiness, agritourism and technology, alongside the training, finance and partnerships young people need to build viable livelihoods.
- **Plenary 3: Youth, Food and Interpreting the Past for a Future of Health and Well-being.** Chaired by Chef Rodrigo Pacheco, this session connects inherited food knowledge with education, innovation and community action, exploring how gastronomy can support healthier lives and a stronger sense of belonging.

WORLD CAFÉ

Sixteen round tables bring together hosts, contributors, young voices and rapporteurs to develop strategies for youth empowerment. Discussions cover the primary sector, hospitality, education, health, entrepreneurship, social inclusion, creative food heritage and urban-rural connections. Each table is tasked with producing five concrete proposals, recommendations or actions.

SATURDAY
17 October 2026

REPORTING BACK AND BUILDING A LEGACY

Rapporteurs present the World Café findings in a session led by Jaume Gomila, Norma Bock and Patricio Tamariz. The programme continues with the **Grand Tour of Manabí**, followed by the **Summit Conclusions and Declaration**, presented by Dr Diane Dodd. Recognition of Manabí's Promoting Committee, the announcement of the next World Gastronomy Summit and closing remarks connect the discussions with their continuing legacy.

EXPERIENCING AND CELEBRATING MANABÍ

Visits, shared meals and cultural encounters connect the Summit's themes with the host region's living heritage. The programme includes Portoviejo's university gardens, Montecristi's straw-hat workshops, the signing of new World Regions of Gastronomy and a bean-to-bar chocolate experience in Manta. The Summit concludes with **Rhythms and Flavours of Manabí**, the **Food Film Menu 2026 Gala Awards** and a gala dinner celebrating food, culture and international collaboration.



OPENING THE 2nd WORLD GASTRONOMY SUMMIT



DR. DIANE DODD

President of the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism (IGCAT) and Executive Director World Regions of Gastronomy, Spain/UK

Dr Diane Dodd is President of IGCAT (International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism), a global non-profit organisation established in 2010 to empower local communities and regions by highlighting the importance of protecting and promoting distinctive food, culture, arts and natural assets.

IGCAT's mission is to ensure that these assets are safeguarded as part of sustainable tourism and balanced development strategies, essential

for the planet, health, wellbeing and local economies. The Institute works with regional stakeholder consortiums, a worldwide network of experts and intergovernmental partners. It provides the European and World Region of Gastronomy Award and is the official secretariat of both platforms. In addition, under Diane's leadership, IGCAT has created internationally recognised initiatives including the Young Chef Awards (in Europe and the Americas), World Food Gift Challenge, Top Foodie Websites Award and the Food Film Menu.

"If young people do not embrace their food heritage, both they and the planet stand to lose so much. That is why gathering in Manabí, where I have witnessed so many young people proudly celebrating their food identity, will be such an enriching experience for IGCAT experts from around the globe."

On behalf of the IGCAT Executive Board and our World and European Regions of Gastronomy, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit in Manabí, World Region of Gastronomy 2026. We warmly thank the Prefectura de Manabí, CIPMANABÍ, Fundación FUEGOS and Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí for their collaboration and commitment to bringing us together.

We welcome the young people, food producers, chefs, educators, researchers, cultural leaders, entrepreneurs and policymakers joining us from across the world. Each brings knowledge and experience that can help us understand how gastronomy can create meaningful opportunities for the next generation.

Our first Summit, hosted by Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025, centred on food at the heart of cultural and community well-being. Here in Manabí, we build on that conversation by asking who will carry this knowledge forward, who will produce our food, and what conditions young people need to build a healthy food future in their regions.

Our theme, **Empowering Youth Through Gastronomy**, invites us to connect the protection of food heritage with education, creativity, public policy and decent livelihoods. Young people must have a voice in these discussions and a meaningful role in shaping the decisions that affect their futures.

FAO's 2025 report, *The Status of Youth in Agrifood Systems*, shows the importance of this task. In 2021, agrifood systems employed

44% of working youth worldwide, compared with 38% of working adults. The report identifies young people as key agents of change who will face the combined challenges of feeding a growing population, replacing an ageing workforce and adapting to climate impacts. It calls for stronger youth participation, training, access to resources and economic opportunity. ([FAO, 2025](#))

This brings us to a question that should remain at the centre of our discussions: **Are we making food production attractive enough, visible enough and viable enough for young people to choose it?**

During IGCAT's visits to regions, we have repeatedly encountered concerns about an ageing agricultural workforce, urbanisation and the difficulty of attracting new producers. We have also heard that land can be privately owned yet effectively unavailable to young people who would like to cultivate it. Communities may value the beauty of their agricultural landscapes while the conditions needed to keep them productive become progressively weaker.

Succession is often discussed as a cultural problem, with young people described as losing interest. Yet it is also a practical problem of access to assets, income and training. A young farmer cannot survive on inspiration alone. Young growers need land, seeds, water, equipment, finance and reliable markets. A young fisher needs access to boats, licences, harbour facilities and training. A food entrepreneur needs a realistic route through regulation, premises, packaging costs and distribution.

If these conditions are missing, promotional campaigns will achieve little on their own. Regions need to reduce the barriers that make entry unrealistic.

This is where public policy must meet creativity. Conversations between landowners, local authorities and university agriculture departments can open opportunities for low-rent growing spaces. Internships, mentoring, shared equipment and supported trials can allow young people to experience farming or fishing before taking on the full cost of land or a boat. Grants for food science and entrepreneurship can help them develop ideas, test products and reach their first customers. Such measures make the invitation to work in food credible.

Protecting biodiversity requires the same practical approach. IGCAT encourages regions to identify and recover local plant varieties and animal breeds because this diversity can support climate resilience and strengthen regional identity. A variety is more likely to survive when farmers can cultivate it, researchers can support its recovery, chefs can use it and consumers understand why it is worth buying. Young people can contribute at every stage, connecting inherited knowledge with research, enterprise and new ways of communicating.

Education is central to this work. Alongside scientific, technical and business skills, the future of food needs imagination, experimentation, storytelling, sensory understanding and design. Education systems must make room for these abilities. Cooking, growing, tasting, creating and learning directly from producers can help young people understand their region and recognise opportunities within its food economy.

The creative sectors also have an important role in making these opportunities visible. Food films, including those recognised through IGCAT's Food Film Menu, bring the hands, faces, landscapes and emotions behind food into view. They can show farming, fishing, cooking and craft as meaningful life paths, and present young people choosing these careers as pioneers of the future. When young people tell their own food stories, they help shape how their communities are understood and valued.

Our World Regions of Gastronomy Platform provide a space to bring these different fields together. By connecting public authorities, producers, schools, universities, businesses and cultural organisations, regions can turn individual initiatives into lasting opportunities. International exchange helps us learn from one another, while recognising that each place must find solutions suited to its people, culture and environment.

Throughout this Summit, I invite you to bring practical examples, difficult questions and ideas that others can adapt. As we listen, discuss and work together, let us consider:

- What would make farming, fishing and other food professions a viable and rewarding choice for young people?
- How can education connect food heritage with science, creativity and entrepreneurship?
- What can public authorities and businesses do to improve access to land, resources, finance and markets?
- How can young people help shape food policy and lead the protection of cultural and biological diversity?

The value of our gathering will be reflected in what follows: the partnerships we build, the opportunities we open and the changes we take home. Let us listen carefully to young people's ambitions and to the obstacles they identify, and be specific about how we can help.

What if the greatest job opportunity for the next generation is not to leave their region, but to reimagine it?

That possibility deserves our imagination, investment and commitment. Together, we can help create places where young people can earn a decent living, contribute to their communities and take pride in the food knowledge they inherit and develop.

On behalf of IGCAT, thank you for your presence and generosity. Welcome to Manabí, and welcome to the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit.





DR. JACKELINE ROSALÍA TERRANOVA RUIZ

Acting Rector of ULEAM, Ecuador

Dr. Jackeline Rosalía Terranova holds a PhD in Pedagogical Sciences from the University of Holguín (Cuba), a master's degree in Early Childhood Education and a bachelor's degree in Educational Sciences. She currently serves as a lecturer and Acting Rector at Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí.

She has extensive experience in early childhood education, academic management and research.

She has authored scientific publications and spoken at international conferences across Latin America. Her previous roles include Programme Coordinator, Chair of the Research Committee, Vice-Rector for Research, Community Engagement and Postgraduate Studies, and Academic Vice-Rector. She has also led educational projects and teacher training programmes.

"At ULEAM, we believe that young people can shape a better food future when education connects knowledge with the needs of our communities. Hosting the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit is an opportunity to celebrate Manabí's food heritage and inspire a new generation to develop it through research, creativity and entrepreneurship."

Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (ULEAM) is a public university based in Manta, Ecuador. Through teaching, research and community engagement, it contributes to the development of Manabí and the wider country. As a host institution for the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit, ULEAM brings together education, local knowledge and international exchange to explore how gastronomy can create opportunities for young people.

Its academic provision connects gastronomy with hospitality, tourism and entrepreneurship. The Hospitality and Hotel Management degree prepares students to manage accommodation and restaurant services, develop business initiatives and design innovative hospitality experiences. With career opportunities in restaurants,

catering and events, the programme provides a practical connection between university education and the visitor economy, while recognising the importance of cultural heritage and sustainability.

In the life sciences and related fields, ULEAM offers programmes in Biology, Agricultural Engineering, Agroindustrial Engineering, Agribusiness, Environmental Engineering and Food Engineering, complemented by Nutrition and Dietetics in the health sciences. Together, these disciplines offer a foundation for connecting food production, processing, environmental stewardship and human wellbeing. This breadth of expertise creates opportunities to link Manabí's food heritage with scientific knowledge and innovation, helping young people explore careers across the food system.



MGS. MARCIANA AUXILIADORA VALDIVIESO ZAMORA

Mayor of Manta, Manabí, Región Mundial de Gastronomía 2026, Ecuador

Marciana Valdivieso Zamora has a mission: to carry out the largest social welfare project in Manta's history. As a citizen, as a councillor and now as mayor, her life has been dedicated to this cause. To this end, she has worked alongside various organisations, which has enabled her to launch campaigns to support hundreds of people in vulnerable communities throughout Manta. She was born on 29 September 1983. Marciana Valdivieso is a business engineer, having graduated from the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro

in Manabí, and holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from the Universidad Tecnológica América. The Universidad Católica de Nueva España awarded her an Honoris Causa Doctorate in 'Sustainable Development' for promoting the successful 'Huertos en Manta' project. She was elected as a councillor in 2019 and re-elected in February 2023. That same year, she was elected deputy mayor by the Cantonal Municipal Council. She is currently the Mayor of Manta.

"In Manta, our food tells the story of our sea, our land and the people who sustain us. Protecting this heritage means valuing our fishers, growers and cooks, and giving young people opportunities to carry their knowledge forward. The 2nd World Gastronomy Summit invites us to connect this pride in our identity with a shared responsibility: ensuring that our communities can shape a healthy, sustainable food future."

Welcome to Manta. We are delighted to welcome the participants of the Second World Gastronomy Summit. For Manta, speaking of cuisine means speaking of the sea, our land, and the people whose hard work and expertise bring our flavors to life.

Our gastronomy tells the story of our fishermen, producers, and cooks. It is an integral part of our identity and a way to share the hospitality that sets us apart with the rest of the world.

This summit, bringing together Manta and Portoviejo, invites us to learn from other experiences and to reflect together on the future

of our food. It allows us to explore new opportunities for those who produce, prepare, and bring our food to the table.

Through the Mayoralty of Change, we champion initiatives such as *Sabor a Manta* and community gardens, because we believe in gastronomy as a cultural expression, a source of opportunity, and a link to healthy, sustainable nutrition.

I hope these days allow us to discover new flavors, exchange ideas, and—above all—meet the people who make our cuisine a source of pride.

WELCOME FROM MANABÍ, WORLD REGION OF GASTRONOMY 2026



ECON. LEONARDO ORLANDO ARTEAGA

Prefect of Manabí Provincial Government, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026, Ecuador

Leonardo Orlando is an Ecuadorian economist and Prefect of Manabí, serving since 2019 and re-elected for the 2023-2027 term. He holds master's degrees in Business Administration and in Tax Administration and Public Finance. Previously, he served as Director General of Ecuador's Internal Revenue Service and has worked as a university lecturer and economic and fiscal consultant.

A strong advocate for gastronomy as a driver of sustainable regional development, he promotes Manabí's culinary heritage, local producers and ancestral food traditions. His work supports the international promotion of Manabí, World Region of Gastronomy 2026, connecting gastronomy with cultural identity, sustainable tourism and food sovereignty.

"The 2nd World Gastronomy Summit gives Manabí the opportunity to share our rich food heritage and culinary identity with the world, while inspiring new pathways for young people in gastronomy. We are proud that IGCAT has chosen our region to host this important international gathering."

It is my honor to welcome you to Manabí, a magical province strategically located on the coast of Ecuador.

Manabí's designation as the World Region of Gastronomy 2026—the first in the Americas to receive this recognition—offers an unparalleled opportunity to strengthen our identity, project our traditional knowledge into the future, and create lasting opportunities for our people. It is also a chance to build a legacy that endures within our communities, our entrepreneurial ventures, and, above all, among the new generations who will bear the responsibility of keeping our gastronomic heritage alive and continuing to transform it.

This represents a tremendous challenge and a significant responsibility: to share with the world the work we have been building and coordinating around traditional cuisine, sustainable and resilient agri-food production, entrepreneurship, community participation, innovation, and international exchange.

In this context, the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit, the Young Chef of the Americas Competition, and the 3rd Manabí Millenary Gastro-

nommy Festival (Portoviejo Edition) serve as platforms to showcase the talent, entrepreneurship, innovation, and leadership of the new generations. Under the theme "Empowering Youth through Gastronomy," these gatherings will foster inter-regional dialogue and facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices.

This vision places the new generations at the heart of our efforts. We believe that education is the means by which young people strengthen their talent, creativity, and capabilities, enabling them to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities. Therefore, we promote spaces where we can learn from traditional cooks, farmers, fishermen, and artisans, while simultaneously developing new ideas, business ventures, and professional opportunities. Preserving our heritage also means empowering young people to make it their own, innovate based on their roots, and project it into the future. On behalf of all the people of Manabí, we invite you to visit our province—a truly charming place distinguished by its tourist attractions, customs, traditions, high productivity, cheerful and hospitable people, and delicious cuisine that is currently capturing the world's attention.



TATIANA VILLEGAS ZAMORA

Director and Country Representative of UNESCO, Ecuador

Tatiana Villegas Zamora, a Colombian national, has been Director of the UNESCO Office in Ecuador since 1 October 2024. She studied Art History and Archaeology at the Sorbonne in France, specialising in underwater archaeology. For more than fifteen years, she worked on cultural heritage protection and public policy development in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly through capacity building and technical assistance to governments. Her career at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and subsequently within UNESCO's international service has led her to specialise in sustainable development through the organisation's areas of competence: education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication. She began her UNESCO career in 2006 in the Cultural Heritage Division, working on the protection of underwater heritage and the

fight against illicit trafficking in cultural property. In 2010, she joined UNESCO's international staff as a Culture Programme Specialist at the Regional Office for Culture in Havana, Cuba, where she served until 2014. She was then appointed to the UNESCO Office in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where she worked until 2016. From 2016 to 2019, she was responsible for the Culture Programme for Egypt, Sudan and Libya at UNESCO's Regional Office for the Arab States, based in Cairo. In December 2019, she joined UNESCO's Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean in Havana as Coordinator of the Culture and Natural Sciences Programmes. In 2022, she was appointed UNESCO Representative in Haiti, a position she held until September 2024.

"To empower youth through gastronomy is to entrust them with one of humanity's greatest treasures: the knowledge, traditions, and biodiversity that shape our identities and sustain our communities. When young people carry this living heritage forward, they become architects of a more sustainable and culturally rich future."

Young people are not only the future of our societies; they are already shaping their present.

For UNESCO, youth are a global priority. Across the Organization's work, young people are recognized not as passive beneficiaries, but as partners, innovators, knowledge holders and leaders. UNESCO promotes meaningful youth engagement by supporting their active participation in the decisions, policies and initiatives that affect their lives and futures. This commitment is grounded in a simple conviction: sustainable and lasting solutions are stronger when they are developed not only *for* young people, but *with* young people.

This vision is particularly relevant in the context of living heritage. Intangible Cultural Heritage exists through people and communities. It is expressed through practices, knowledge and skills transmitted across generations and continually recreated in response to changing environments and societal needs. Its vitality therefore depends on creating opportunities for young people to engage with it, contribute to it and shape its future.

Gastronomy offers a powerful example of this dynamic relationship. Behind traditional cuisines lie systems of knowledge that connect biodiversity, local food production, craftsmanship, memory, identity and community life. These traditions are much more than a legacy of the past. They are living resources that can help address con-

temporary challenges, including social inclusion, sustainable livelihoods, climate resilience and the renewal of local economies. Young people have a unique role to play in this process. When they learn from elders, value local ingredients, practice traditional techniques, document community knowledge, or create new opportunities through innovation and entrepreneurship, they help keep heritage alive while ensuring its relevance for future generations.

UNESCO believes that young people should not have to choose between tradition and innovation. Living heritage provides a foundation from which new ideas, creative expressions and sustainable solutions can emerge. By connecting cultural knowledge with contemporary realities, young people can become powerful agents of positive change within their communities and beyond. In territories such as Manabí, where gastronomy reflects a deep relationship between culture, nature and community knowledge, empowering youth means supporting their role as custodians, creators and leaders. Through their engagement, food traditions can continue to evolve, strengthen cultural identity and contribute to sustainable development.

Ultimately, safeguarding living heritage is not only about preserving knowledge inherited from the past. It is about empowering young people to shape the future with confidence, creativity and a strong sense of belonging.

■ PERSPECTIVES FROM WORLD REGIONS OF GASTRONOMY



Moderated by:

OMAR VALDEZ



IGCAT Board Member and Executive Director of UN Tourism Academy, Andorra

Omar Valdez is a member of the Board of IGCAT and Executive Director of UN Tourism Academy, formerly the UNWTO.Themis Foundation, based in Andorra. An Argentine national, he holds a bachelor's degree in Public Relations and an Executive Master's in Tourism Management from IE Business School in Madrid, Spain.

Before moving to Andorra, he worked in the telecommunications, information technology and media sectors in Buenos Aires. He joined the then UNWTO.Themis Foundation as a Senior Consultant in 2004 and has served as Executive Director since 2010. In this role, he advances tou-

rism education and training, supporting Member States in strengthening the quality, competitiveness and sustainability of the sector through skills development and educational policies.

Through his work with IGCAT, he contributes international expertise in tourism, education and cooperation, supporting the organisation's mission to connect gastronomy with culture, creativity and community wellbeing. His work highlights the importance of knowledge exchange and collaboration across regions and sectors in creating opportunities for sustainable development.

"World Regions of Gastronomy demonstrate how food can connect culture, education and sustainable tourism. By valuing local knowledge and investing in young people's skills, we can turn gastronomic heritage into opportunities that strengthen communities and inspire future generations."

Regions are our food future. They are where food is grown, knowledge is passed between generations and cultural traditions take shape around the table. They are also where many of the decisions that affect our food systems—from land use and education to tourism and support for local producers—can be connected to the needs of communities and the characteristics of each place.

This session brings together perspectives from the World Regions of Gastronomy to explore how regional action can help build more resilient, inclusive and sustainable food futures. By sharing experiences across diverse territories, it will examine how safeguarding food heritage, supporting biodiversity and strengthening local eco-

nomies can go hand in hand. It will also consider how cooperation between public institutions, businesses, educators and civil society can turn shared ambitions into lasting change.

At the heart of this discussion is the next generation. Ensuring that young people can build meaningful livelihoods in farming, fishing, food production, hospitality and the creative sectors is essential to the future of our regions. Their knowledge, ideas and participation can help living traditions evolve and communities thrive. By investing in regions and their young people, we invest in the future of food.

FOOD IS CULTURE, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY



LAURA RUANA PAVON

Deputy Director General for Agrifood Enterprises, Quality and Gastronomy, Government of Catalonia; IGCAT Expert and Co-Director of Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025, Spain

An Agricultural Engineer by training, she also holds Master's degrees in Agri-food Law and in International Affairs and Diplomacy. She has nearly 20 years of experience in the Catalan public administration, with a strong focus on agricultural policy, agri-food industry development, food quality systems, and market organisation across the agri-food chain. Prior to her current position, she served for nine years as Head of the Integrated Control and Payments Service within the Directorate-General for Rural Development.

In her current role, she is responsible for the planning and coordination of policies related to the agri-food industry, food quality and differentiation schemes, including PDOs, PGIs and other

quality labels, as well as the promotion of fair and balanced commercial relations within the agri-food supply chain. She also oversees the development of programmes and support measures for agri-food transformation, marketing and distribution, and the implementation of the Catalan Code of Good Commercial Practices. Her work includes the supervision of official controls, fraud prevention and quality assurance systems, as well as the promotion of local products, short supply chains and artisanal food production. She is also involved in strengthening Catalan gastronomy as a driver of territorial identity and in promoting the international visibility of Catalan agri-food products. She has experience participating in international working sessions and conferences.

“Empowering young people through gastronomy means equipping them with the skills to turn talent, tradition and innovation into real opportunities. Our agri-food and culinary heritage can become a strong driver of creativity, identity and a more sustainable and resilient future.”

Food is much more than what we eat. It reflects who we are, where we come from and how we relate to our territory and to one another. Recipes, products, landscapes and ways of cooking carry knowledge accumulated over generations. In Catalonia, gastronomy is therefore an essential part of our culture, heritage and identity.

Catalonia's recognition as World Region of Gastronomy 2025 was an opportunity to celebrate this heritage, strengthen it at home and share it with the world. It was conceived as a country-wide project, coordinated by two departments of the Government of Catalonia—the Department of Business and Labour and the Department of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food—and supported by three key promoting partners: Fundació Alícia, elBulli Foundation and the Catalan Academy of Gastronomy and Nutrition. Its strength lay in its collective dimension.

Throughout 2025, 1,887 organisations and stakeholders joined the initiative and more than 455 actions were carried out, involving the entire food and gastronomy ecosystem: public administrations, producers, restaurants, companies, educational institutions, associations and social organisations. These actions took place both

within Catalonia and internationally. Initiatives across the territory strengthened the connection between food, local products, landscapes, culture and communities, while international actions projected Catalan gastronomy around the world. This dual approach was essential: taking Catalonia to the world while also strengthening the value of our gastronomic heritage within Catalonia itself.

One of the major milestones of the World Region of Gastronomy has been precisely to reinforce Catalan cuisine as a shared cultural heritage. The Government of Catalonia has taken on the management of the *Cuina Catalana* brand, providing a new framework for recognising, promoting and transmitting a culinary tradition that belongs to the country as a whole. This is particularly significant because a cuisine is much more than a collection of dishes: it is a living system of products, techniques, recipes, knowledge, landscapes and people. Perhaps this is one of the most important legacies of Catalonia World Region of Gastronomy: understanding that culinary heritage survives when it is shared. Connecting generations means connecting memory with innovation, tradition with new forms of communication, and inherited knowledge with the creativity of young people.

ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE



ECON. LEONARDO ORLANDO ARTEAGA

Prefect of Manabí Provincial Government, Manabí World Region of Gastronomy 2026, Ecuador

Leonardo Orlando is an Ecuadorian economist and Prefect of Manabí, serving since 2019 and re-elected for the 2023-2027 term. He holds master's degrees in Business Administration and in Tax Administration and Public Finance. Previously, he served as Director General of Ecuador's Internal Revenue Service and has worked as a university lecturer and economic and fiscal consultant.

A strong advocate for gastronomy as a driver of sustainable regional development, he promotes Manabí's culinary heritage, local producers and ancestral food traditions. His work supports the international promotion of Manabí, World Region of Gastronomy 2026, connecting gastronomy with cultural identity, sustainable tourism and food sovereignty.

"Manabí is where the countryside, the city, and the sea come together to create a gastronomy rooted in identity, tradition, and a vision for the world."

On behalf of the Provincial Government of Manabí, I warmly welcome all participants to the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit. It is an honour to host this international gathering in Manabí, World Region of Gastronomy 2026, and to share the flavours, traditions and hospitality that define our province. Our gastronomy tells the story of our people: the knowledge of generations, the dedication of our farming and fishing communities, and the creativity of those who bring our food to the table.

At the Prefecture, we champion gastronomy as a driver of sustainable development, connecting our cultural heritage with opportunities for local producers, entrepreneurs and communities. By promoting local products, valuing ancestral knowledge and stren-

gthening the links between food, culture and tourism, we seek to build a future in which our gastronomic wealth contributes to greater prosperity and food sovereignty.

Young people are central to this ambition. We want the next generation to find opportunities in their own communities, take pride in their food heritage and bring fresh ideas to its continued development. This Summit offers a valuable space for young people to learn, exchange experiences and build connections with others from around the world. We welcome you to discover Manabí, listen to its people and join us in shaping a food future rooted in our heritage and inspired by our youth.

REGENERATIVE GASTRONOMY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE



JERRY SPOONER

Executive Director, Regenerative Vanua, IGCAT Expert and promotor of Vanuatu World Region of Gastronomy 2027, Vanuatu

Jerry Spooner is the co founder of Regenerative Vanua, working to restore ecosystems and strengthen Pacific communities through the principles of vanua—the deep connection between land, people, culture, and spirit. His work brings together regenerative agriculture, gastronomy, and agritourism to support resilient local economies and celebrate place-based food systems.

Jerry as Chair of the Global Agritourism Network Pacific Region is now working with the Pacific Islands Forum in the application of the Regional Pacific Regenerative Verification Initiative. A

credible, values-and placed based framework for regenerative practice in the region.

He is also contributing to efforts toward Vanuatu's IGCAT (International Institute of Gastronomy, Arts, Culture and Tourism) 2027 nomination for World Gastronomy Awards, and the hosting of the 2027 3rd World Region of Gastronomy Summit in Vanuatu highlighting Pacific regenerative farming, food, culture, and landscapes globally. His work focuses on aligning traditional knowledge with modern regenerative approaches to create lasting environmental, cultural, and economic impact.

“Young people are essential to safeguarding the future of our food systems. By connecting ancestral knowledge with regenerative gastronomy, they can restore the land, strengthen climate resilience and keep our food cultures alive.”

Across Vanuatu and the Pacific, food connects people to land, culture and community. Climate change, dependence on imported foods and rising diet-related diseases highlight the urgent need to strengthen local food systems.

Drawing on Regenerative Vanua's work and the development of Vanuatu's Kastom, Kakae, Storian Polisi 2025–2050, this presentation explores how regenerative gastronomy can strengthen climate resilience, food sovereignty and community wellbeing. Combining Indigenous knowledge, traditional farming and local food production offers opportunities to restore ecosystems, improve nutrition and create livelihoods while keeping food cultures alive.

The emerging Regenerative Verification Program recognises evidence of healthy ecosystems, thriving communities, stewardship and knowledge transmission. Moving beyond compliance alone, it

focuses on the relationships between people, place and culture that sustain regeneration. Central to this approach are Regenerative Journeys, which connect hosts, visitors, farmers, chefs and communities through participation in local food systems, cultural traditions and stewardship activities. Supported by Regenerative Learning Exchanges, they bring students, producers, researchers, tourism operators and knowledge holders together to learn from one another and develop shared solutions. Visitors become active contributors, while young people gain opportunities to build skills, develop leadership and connect ancestral knowledge with new ideas.

By bringing food, culture, land and learning together, Vanuatu and the Pacific can demonstrate how regenerative gastronomy supports healthier communities and resilient livelihoods—ensuring that future generations inherit both thriving ecosystems and the knowledge to care for them.

PARTNERS IN FOOD, UNITED BY PURPOSE



LAMIA TEMIMI

Co-Founder and CEO, Sawa Taste of Tunisia, IGCAT Ambassador and Executive Director of Cap Bon World Region of Gastronomy 2028, Tunisia

Lamia Temimi is the co-founder of Sawa Taste of Tunisia, an award-winning social enterprise specializing in culinary tourism, gastronomic heritage, and sustainable destination development. With a background in the hotel industry, international cooperation, and cultural promotion, she has built strong networks across the tourism and gastronomy sectors, positioning Sawa as a leading reference for authentic, community-based travel in Tunisia.

Committed to empowering local artisans and connecting people through food, Lamia designs immersive experiences that celebrate traditional recipes, contemporary Tunisian creativity, and the country's rich terroir, history, and hospitality. She is a consultant in sustainable and culinary

tourism and serves as the Culinary Advisor of La Chaîne des Rôtisseurs – Bailliage de Tunisie.

Lamia is one of the driving forces behind the Discover Cap Bon 2028 initiative, leading the international nomination of the Cap Bon Peninsula as an IGCAT World Region of Gastronomy 2028. She also contributes to international projects that foster young culinary talent, preserve food heritage, and promote cross-cultural cooperation across the Mediterranean. A regular speaker at international events, Lamia champions gastronomy as a catalyst for sustainable tourism, cultural diplomacy, and regional development, helping strengthen Tunisia's place on the global culinary map.

“By connecting gastronomy, education, and entrepreneurship through our collaboration with academic institutions, we are empowering young people to become ambassadors of their heritage and drivers of sustainable regional development. Cap Bon's journey demonstrates how food can inspire innovation, opportunity, and a stronger future for the next generation.”

Through Cap Bon – World Region of Gastronomy 2028, we are connecting culinary heritage with education, creativity and entrepreneurship to make food-related professions more attractive to younger generations. Our approach gives young people opportunities to work alongside local artisans, producers and businesses, applying their skills to practical challenges while discovering the value of their region's food culture.

We have signed agreements with five universities, with further partnerships underway, bringing together disciplines including design, arts, tourism, hospitality, business, management and agronomy. These collaborations connect education with the needs of the territory and create opportunities for students to contribute directly to its development.

Young designers can help artisans rethink a visual identity, develop sustainable packaging or redesign a shop or production space. Business and management students contribute marketing and deve-

lopment strategies, while tourism and hospitality students help transform culinary heritage into meaningful visitor experiences. Agronomy students bring knowledge of sustainable production, and young digital specialists support storytelling, communication and online visibility.

This creates a reciprocal exchange: young people gain experience, confidence and professional connections, while artisans and producers access knowledge and creativity they may otherwise lack the resources to secure. Working together also allows students to learn from the skills and experience of those who sustain Cap Bon's food traditions.

Our ambition is to make heritage a source of innovation and opportunity. By enabling young people to reinterpret traditional knowledge and develop ideas of their own, we are strengthening the connections between entrepreneurship, cultural identity and sustainable regional development.

GASTRONOMY SHAPED BY PEOPLE THROUGH TIME



ELIF GÜNAY

Gastronomy Expert, Bureau Gastronomica and team member Şanlıurfa, Candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2029, Türkiye

Elif Günay is a gastronomy professional from Türkiye, working at the intersection of gastronomy, cultural heritage, destination development, and food tourism. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Gastronomy and Culinary Arts and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Design, Technology and Society at Özyeğin University, where her research explores late Ottoman culinary history and street food culture.

Elif is a Partner at Fields & Forks, a boutique travel company creating immersive journeys that connect travellers with Türkiye's authentic food culture, local producers, and living traditions. She is also a Consultant at Bureau Gastronomica, contributing to gastronomy-led

destination development projects that strengthen regional identity through food.

Alongside her professional work, Elif has been actively involved in the Slow Food movement, supporting initiatives that promote biodiversity, local food systems, and community-based gastronomy. She believes that authentic food experiences can foster cultural understanding, create meaningful connections between urban and rural communities, and inspire younger generations to value and sustain their culinary heritage. Through her work, Elif advocates for gastronomy as a powerful tool for cultural dialogue, sustainable tourism, and territorial development.

"The future of food lies in youth who are rooted in their territories yet open to the world."

In Şanlıurfa, gastronomy does not begin at the table. It begins in the soil, with the people who cultivate it, and in a culinary memory shaped over thousands of years. At the heart of this story is Göbeklitepe, a UNESCO World Heritage Site dating back almost 12,000 years. Archaeological findings offer remarkable insights into the early processing of grains, communal food practices and possibly early fermentation. For us, Göbeklitepe is not only an archaeological treasure. It is the starting point of Şanlıurfa's gastronomic story – connecting archaeology, agriculture, food, culture and tourism.

But preserving this heritage means protecting much more than recipes. For years, Şanlıurfa has been working to protect the entire chain behind its gastronomy: the soil, the product, the producer, traditional knowledge and the people who will carry this heritage forward. Our agricultural initiatives have supported local farmers and sustainable production. Projects have protected ancestral seeds and kept them in production, including their free distribution to farmers.

The Şanlıurfa Youth Gastronomy Academy, planned for the coming year, is being developed together with our district municipalities, Harran University and the Şanlıurfa Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Young participants will meet farmers, local masters and elders. They will learn where products come from, how they are cultivated, how traditional dishes are prepared, and why this knowledge matters.

Most importantly, we want young people to become active guardians of this heritage – and transform this knowledge into opportunities in gastronomy, agriculture, entrepreneurship and tourism. For us, empowering youth through gastronomy means connecting the future to its roots. From the first grains of Göbeklitepe to today's farmers, from ancestral seeds to traditional recipes, and from our local masters to the young people of Şanlıurfa, this is one continuous story.

TASTING THE DESTINATION



GÉRALDINE ARTIGNY

Head of Gastronomy and Spiritualism, Martinique Tourism Authority, Martinique, Candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2030, Martinique

Géraldine Artigny applies her expertise to Gastronomy Tourism development, shaping the strategy that structures and grows Martinique's culinary tourism offer by working closely with local stakeholders, producers, chefs, distilleries

to craft authentic and unforgettable experiences. Her mission is to design and implement actions that showcase culinary and rum heritage while strengthening Martinique's appeal on the international stage.

"Our street food and bakeries, our traditional dishes and restaurants, our world-renowned rum and art of the table all tell the story of who we are. But our youth will decide where that story goes next. In Martinique, we say: Sé grenn diri ka fè sak diri – every grain of rice helps fill the bag. We want every young talent to add their grain and help shape the next chapter of Martinique's culinary heritage."

Martinique's candidacy for World Region of Gastronomy 2030 is an opportunity to celebrate, preserve and share a unique Creole culinary identity shaped by our history. Our cuisine reflects centuries of encounters between Indigenous Caribbean traditions and influences from West Africa, France and India, which have blended over generations to create a gastronomy that is distinctly Martinican.

Rum is inseparable from this identity. Martinique is internationally renowned for the quality of its rums, which have received numerous awards and distinctions worldwide. Our gastronomic heritage also extends beyond the plate to our rich art de la table – from traditional clay ceramics and craftsmanship to presentation and the traditions of welcoming and sharing a meal.

Preservation is equally important. Some traditional dishes and recipes are becoming increasingly difficult to find on restaurant menus. Through our "Martinique Destination Gourmande – Horizon 2030" strategy, we want to safeguard and transmit this heritage while giving a new generation of chefs, artisans and

entrepreneurs the opportunity to reinterpret it, innovate and build their future around it.

Our first Forum du Tourisme Gourmand, held in June 2026, connected memorable food experiences with local agriculture, recruitment, training and the transmission of knowledge. A dedicated workshop explored how to make food professions more attractive to young people, placing the next generation at the heart of our gastronomic ambitions. We have also launched a call for an annual culinary festival, with its first edition planned for April-June 2027. Producer markets, masterclasses and competitions will provide opportunities for young talent and schools to participate, learn and showcase their skills.

Our ambition for 2030 is therefore both to preserve and to reinvent: protecting the culinary traditions, products and craftsmanship that make Martinique unique, while enabling a new generation to take ownership of this heritage and shape the future of Martinican gastronomy.

GASTRONOMY: IDEAS THAT TRANSFORM



KATYA BREDIKHINA

Director, Greenrock Foundation and Armenia's candidacy for World Region of Gastronomy 2031, Armenia

Katya Bredikhina is Head of the Green Rock Foundation in Dilijan, Armenia, and Project Lead at Apicius Armenia International School of Hospitality. She has more than a decade of experience designing and leading philanthropic, educational, and community-development initiatives across Armenia, Russia, and the wider region.

Previously, Katya served as Head of Global Philanthropy at BT Advisors, the family office of Alexander Tynkovan, where she oversaw charitable and social-impact programs across Russia, Moldova, Romania, Cyprus, and the UAE. She has also worked with the State Tretyakov Gallery's Small Museums Initiative and served as a consultant and Expert Board member for the New School Alumni Foundation.

Earlier in her career, Katya spent nearly five years with the RVVZ Foundation and Scholae Mundi Foundation, supporting initiatives in education, regional development, and philanthropic infrastructure. Her experience also includes designing leadership and professional-development curricula for the АРХИТЕКТОРЫ.РФ program at the Strelka Institute and seven years at the Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO.

Katya's academic and professional background spans urban planning, economics, administration, linguistics, leadership, and experience design, with additional training at KAOSPILOT, Ashoka/Cambridge, and IMD.

"Empowering youth through gastronomy means empowering them to shape the future of their communities. Gastronomy is far more than food, it is culture, identity, entrepreneurship, and opportunity. When young people are given the knowledge, practical experience, and confidence to contribute, they don't simply build careers; they help create places where others will want to live, work, and belong."

Young people need a visible and credible path from learning to earning a living if they are to build their futures in our regions. At the Green Rock Foundation in Dilijan, Armenia, we work to connect education, hospitality, entrepreneurship, and community development so that young people can build skills and apply them locally. While we do not run a standalone agriculture program, agricultural thinking and practice are integrated through initiatives such as the Next Gen project. Within this context, gastronomy provides a framework for bringing these opportunities together in a practical and locally relevant way.

Our **AgroNext Dilijan** youth camp in July 2026 introduced 15 young people aged 14–18 to the possibilities of modern agriculture. Through visits to a greenhouse enterprise, encounters with agricultural entrepreneurs and practical sessions on sustainable farming and agricultural technology, participants explored a sector many knew little about. They developed business ideas responding to local agricultural challenges, showing growing confidence in presenting their proposals and interest in taking them further.

Our **Next Gen programme** supports young people in moving from ideas to action. Participants work in teams, develop and implement projects, and engage with mentors, professionals and local stakeholders. By addressing real community and economic challenges, they gain practical experience and take responsibility for their contribution. Alongside this, **Apicius Armenia International School of Hospitality** provides practical gastronomy and hospitality education in operational settings, connecting professional skills with employment pathways.

Our ambition is to strengthen the connections between these initiatives, enabling young people to progress from an initial discovery to project development, professional education and economic participation. For Armenia's candidacy for World Region of Gastronomy 2031, this offers a practical direction: linking food heritage and local production with opportunities that young people can see, test and pursue. Regional development becomes meaningful when the next generation can help shape it and build a livelihood within it.



Moderated by:



ROBERT PALMER

Director, Robert Palmer Consultants and IGCAT Ambassador,
United Kingdom

Robert Palmer is an independent consultant who works internationally on a wide range of cultural projects in the areas of cultural policy and strategy, cultural heritage, festivals and events, the creative economy and issues related to cultural policy and strategy, cultural rights and the cultural development of cities. He was formerly the Director of Culture and Cultural and National Heritage for the Council of Europe based in Strasbourg, France (2006-2014).

Prior to joining the Council of Europe, Robert Palmer had worked in the cultural sector for more than 30 years as a theatre director, cultural director and international arts consultant. He has been an adviser to many cities, regions and national governments concerning cultural development and regeneration, cultural tou-

risms, festivals and arts policies. He advises UNESCO, European Commission, Agenda 21 for Culture (UCLG) and many different European Cultural Institutes and cultural networks on cultural matters.

Robert Palmer was the Director of two European Capitals of Culture (Glasgow and Brussels), published a report for the European Commission evaluating 40 European Capitals of Culture, and was the Chair of the European Jury that selects European Capitals of Culture. He is currently a member of the Advisory Committee to the British Council, and the Chair of Art27 Scotland. He is an Ambassador for IGCAT. He is the author of the book "Eventful Cities Cultural Management and Urban Regeneration" and a wide range of articles and other publications.

"When young people have the skills, resources and freedom to shape our food future, they gain the power to sustain their cultures, build livelihoods and transform their communities."

Global food systems have never been more productive, yet never more disconnected from the ecological and cultural foundations that sustain them. We produce abundance, but increasingly struggle to ensure health, equity and resilience. This growing disconnect cannot be resolved through production alone, but through a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between food, nature and culture. Food is abundant. Global production has reached unprecedented levels, and supply chains now span the entire world. Yet alongside this abundance, profound challenges persist environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, diet-related ill health, and continued food insecurity. This contradiction points to a deeper structural issue. We are not running out of food. We are running out of meaning. This is not a rhetorical claim, but a reflection of a growing disconnect between food systems and the ecological and cultural foundations that sustain them. Food is increasingly treated as a global commodity defined by efficiency and scale, rather than as a living expression of place, season, knowledge and identity. As this connection weakens, so too does resilience.

The multiple crises facing food systems— climate change, soil degradation, water scarcity and social inequality—are interconnected. They are not isolated failures, but signals of systems that have

become overly simplified and detached from the diversity that once ensured their stability. Food has always been more than production. It is a cultural right and a shared expression of how societies relate to land, water and one another. It carries memory across generations and anchors people to place. When food systems lose this cultural grounding, they also lose adaptive capacity and long-term resilience. The erosion of crop diversity, culinary traditions and local food knowledge is therefore not only a matter of heritage. It is also a question of future security. Biodiversity and cultural diversity are deeply interdependent, and the weakening of one inevitably affects the other. Addressing global food challenges requires a shift in perspective: from increasing output alone towards strengthening the relationships between food, culture and ecosystems. This includes supporting regenerative practices that restore soil health and biodiversity, valuing traditional and Indigenous knowledge alongside scientific innovation, and enabling food systems that reflect local identity while participating in global exchange.

Regeneration is therefore not only environmental. It is also cultural and social. It describes the possibility of restoring coherence between how food is produced, what it represents, and how it is experienced. Young people are already shaping this transition.

Across urban and rural contexts, new generations are rethinking food systems with creativity, awareness of planetary limits, and a strong commitment to equity and sustainability. Their contributions challenge inherited assumptions and open pathways towards more inclusive and climate-resilient futures. Ultimately, food systems reflect how societies define value: what is nurtured, what is neglected, and what is carried forward into the future. Rebuilding meaning in food therefore requires more than technical adjustment. It requires cultural renewal, collective imagination, and a renewed commitment to seeing food not only as sustenance, but as a shared expression of how we choose to live, relate and endure on a changing planet.



IGCAT | PLANET-FRIENDLY FOOD FOR A NEW GENERATION



DR. EDITH M SZIVAS

Vice President, IGCAT, United Kingdom

Dr Edith M Szivas is Vice President of IGCAT (International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism) and an internationally recognised strategist, advisor, and executive board member. With extensive expertise in sustainable tourism planning, heritage conservation, and capacity building, she plays a key role globally in shaping strategies that integrate cultural identity, gastronomy, and responsible tourism development. She has been leading projects for major international organisations, including the UN World Tourism

Organisation (UNWTO), the World Bank, UNDP, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the Asian Development Bank, and continues to advise Ministries, destinations, and private sector companies. Her work bridges policy and practice, fostering innovative solutions that balance the preservation of cultural heritage with community development, economic growth, and sustainability. She holds an MSc in Tourism Planning and Development and a PhD in Tourism Policy from the University of Surrey, UK.

"IGCAT's philosophy of cross-sectoral collaboration brings agriculture, gastronomy, culture, education and tourism together to create opportunities that no sector could achieve alone—opening new pathways for young people, strengthening local livelihoods and building more resilient regions."

At IGCAT, our philosophy of cross-sectoral collaboration recognises that agriculture, gastronomy, culture, education and tourism have more to offer when they work together. Our World Regions of Gastronomy Platform meeting in Manabí on 14 October, as part of the pre-summit consultations, will explore how these connections can strengthen regional development and create meaningful opportunities for young people.

At **Hacienda La Prosperina in Jipijapa**, our first conversation will focus on natural heritage, fair trade and food production. The setting, where women producers share their knowledge of coffee and sustainable agriculture, brings these relationships into practical focus. How can regions protect their ecosystems while enabling producers to earn a fair livelihood? How can visitor experiences strengthen local food production and help consumers understand its value? And how can we ensure that the benefits reach the communities whose knowledge and work sustain these landscapes?

Our second conversation, at **Cerro Jaboncillo Archaeological Park**, will explore how to encourage young people to see living heritage as an asset for their future. We will consider how education, digital storytelling and participatory projects can connect younger generations with the knowledge, traditions and places they inherit. What gives young people a genuine sense of ownership? How can they reinterpret heritage through their own creativity? What partnerships are needed to turn this engagement into professional and entrepreneurial opportunities?

These questions invite us to examine how regional collaboration works in practice. By exchanging experiences across the Platform, we aim to identify approaches that connect conservation with livelihoods and cultural pride with opportunity. For me, the value of these consultations lies in bringing different perspectives together around a shared responsibility: enabling young people to become active contributors to their regions' futures, with the skills, support and influence to help shape them.

SLOW FOOD | SLOW FARMS | TERRA MADRE



PROF. ESTEBAN TAPIA

International Councillor for Andean Area, Slow Food, Ecuador

Esteban Tapia is a professor at Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) and Slow Food's International Councillor for the Andean Region. A member of the Slow Food Council since 2016, his work combines teaching, research and a commitment to gastronomy as a driver of sustainable development.

He holds a degree in Gastronomy and a UNESCO master's degree in Heritage and Sustainable Tourism from Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Argentina. His work explores the con-

nections between food, culture and identity, with particular attention to food sovereignty and sustainable tourism.

The author of several books and academic articles, he contributes to discussions on gastronomy's role in regional development and the recognition of food heritage. His approach connects academic knowledge with an appreciation of local expertise and the diversity of food cultures.

"Good, clean, and fair food, based on cultural and natural biodiversity, creates opportunities for sustainable development for young people."

Biodiversity also means cultural diversity. Terra Madre Salone del Gusto, organised by the Piedmont Region and the City of Turin, has established itself as a leading event dedicated to dialogue and exchange among communities worldwide committed to sustainability. Over four days, the event brings together people who work daily within the food system and political decision-makers to discuss practical solutions for ensuring good, clean and fair food for all.

Biodiversity is the event's central theme and will feature prominently through initiatives such as Slow Food Farms, the Slow Food Youth Network (SFYN), Slow Food Presidia, the Ark of Taste and the Slow Food Cooks' Alliance. We are talking about agricultural diversity, but also social and cultural diversity: a way to move beyond the conformity driven by consumerism and polarised divisions, and instead embrace and understand complexity. Biodiversity is wealth, resilience and our most precious guarantee of survival and well-being.

Biodiversity unites us. It embodies a culture of solidarity and peace. In a world marked by conflict and division, diversity is our strength: the starting point for imagining a global society founded on openness, mutual respect and solidarity. Food is a universal language that transcends borders, breaks down walls and exposes the limitations of nationalism. Without encounters between cultures, culinary cultures would not exist: every dish tells a story of exchange, travel, fusion and innovation.

Young people have a fundamental role to play in sustainable development. Within Terra Madre, this major global gathering dedicated to food, workshops will take place with the team of IGCAT and a presentation of the 2026 Food Film Menu - the outcomes of this gathering will be presented during the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit.

CROPTRUST | FLAVOURS OF THE FUTURE



DR. JANNY VAN BEEM

Global Genebank Coordinator, CROP TRUST, USA

Dr Janny van Beem is responsible for Global Genebank Partnership coordination at the Crop Trust, where she supports capacity building, quality management and risk management to strengthen the conservation of crop diversity. Her work helps genebanks improve their technical and operational performance and builds partnerships for sharing knowledge and expertise.

Trained in plant breeding, she holds a PhD from Cornell University, USA. Before joining the Crop Trust, she worked at the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), the International Center for Tropical Agriculture

(CIAT) and the International Potato Center (CIP), contributing to the breeding and conservation of maize, beans, wheat and potatoes.

Her experience also includes overseeing internationally accredited quality systems and working with national commissions in Mexico and Peru on the protection and equitable sharing of plant genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. She brings a practical, collaborative approach to strengthening the institutions that safeguard agricultural biodiversity for future generations.

“Every seed we conserve holds possibilities for our food future. By connecting crop diversity with young people's knowledge and creativity, we can keep those possibilities alive—in our fields, our kitchens and our communities.”

The diversity of crops and varieties that underpin our food systems is also an essential part of our cultural and gastronomic heritage. Traditional crops, varieties, dishes and preparation methods reflect generations of knowledge and adaptation to local environments. Yet as food systems change, much of this diversity—and the knowledge associated with its cultivation and use—is at risk of being lost. Engaging younger generations in understanding, valuing and using this diversity is therefore critical to ensuring its conservation for the future.

The Crop Trust is an international organization dedicated to conserving and making crop diversity available for use, forever and for the benefit of everyone. In Ecuador, as part of the Crop Trust's BOLD project, the Crop Trust supports the National Genebank of the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agropecuarias (INIAP) in its work to conserve and make available the country's rich agricultural diversity. Alongside the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), the Crop Trust is also working to strengthen Ecuador's national seed system by building bridges between the diversity conserved in the genebank and smallholder farming communities. As part of the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit, the Crop Trust is

organizing an event for university students from ULEAM and ESPAM exploring the connections between agricultural biodiversity, gastronomy and resilient food systems.

The event brings together perspectives from crop diversity conservation, seed systems, agricultural development and academia, alongside hands-on experiences that connect agricultural biodiversity with food and culture. Live demonstrations and tastings at the event focus on three crops of cultural importance in Ecuador—rice, corn and peanuts—using traditional dishes to explore their cultural significance, history and diversity.

By connecting the diversity safeguarded in genebanks with the foods people grow, prepare and eat, the event demonstrates that crop conservation is not only about preserving seeds. It is also about ensuring that diversity continues to be used, valued and passed from one generation to the next. Engaging young people in this process can help build a new generation of advocates, researchers, farmers, food professionals and consumers who recognize agricultural biodiversity as both a living cultural heritage and a vital resource for the future of our food systems.

FUTURE FOOD INSTITUTE | FUTURE FOOD BOOTCAMP



ANA MARIA ALEGRÍA SERNA

Food Researcher, FUTURE FOOD INSTITUTE, Colombia

Alegría Serna is a food scientist specialized in Research and Development (R&D), sustainable innovation, and science communication. Her work explores food ingredients and bioactive compounds at the molecular level, combining food science, innovation, and sustainability to contribute to more resilient global food systems.

She currently works as an Innovation Specialist at the Future Food Institute, where she contributes to projects focused on sustainable food futures, consumer engagement, and innovation within the agri-food sector. Her expertise includes formulation, prototyping, and scaling-up, with a particular interest in translating scientific knowledge into practical and accessible solutions.

Alongside her work in innovation, Alegría is deeply passionate about science communication and

public engagement. She believes that understanding the science behind food can help people build a more conscious and informed relationship with what they eat. This vision led her to found Cuina Lab, a science communication project dedicated to revealing the hidden molecular stories behind food through visual narratives and accessible scientific content.

Through her research and communication work, Alegría aims to bridge the gap between academic, industry and society, making complex food science understandable, engaging, and relevant for broader audiences. Her approach combines scientific rigor with creativity, helping connect people with the cultural, molecular, and sustainable dimensions of food.

“The kitchen is the ultimate lab, and our youth are the ultimate innovators. Empower them with gastronomy, and watch them regenerate the world.”

At the Future Food Institute, we believe that building more sustainable food systems begins with children's curiosity about the world around them. At our **Paideia Campus in Pollica**, in Italy's Cilento region, the Mediterranean Diet provides a living framework for connecting food, nature, culture and community. Our educational approach encourages younger generations to discover how their everyday lives are connected to the landscapes and traditions of their region.

A central part of this work is the **Paideia Digital Academy**, developed with the Municipality of Pollica. Through creative learning, digital storytelling and practical experimentation, children gain tools to explore and communicate their local heritage. Activities have included visiting the archaeological site of Velia and recreating it in Minecraft, alongside outdoor exploration transformed into photographs, videos and stories. A community treasure hunt also enabled children and adults to discover water resources, biodiversity and the values of the Mediterranean Diet, culminating in a restored vineyard.

This work continues into adolescence through **Trame Mediterranee**, a programme for young people aged 11-17 that connects Mediterranean food culture with critical thinking and seeks to address educational inequalities. These initiatives reflect our commitment

to continuous learning, enabling young people to recognise the value of their region and participate in its future.

This educational mission is complemented by opportunities for international exchange, including our **Gastrodiplomacy Bootcamp**, held from **25 to 28 July 2026**. Over four days, chefs, food and beverage managers, and food storytellers came together to design practical strategies for climate action, using food as a driving force for change.

This year's edition welcomed IGCAT President **Dr Diane Dodd**, who presented a screening of the **2025 Food Film Menu** and led a discussion on how to engage young people in redesigning food systems. The conversation explored gastronomy's potential to preserve cultural identity, strengthen communities and build regenerative futures.

At the **2nd World Gastronomy Summit**, we will share reflections from this gathering as a contribution to the pre-summit consultations. For me, the connection between our work with children and these international exchanges is fundamental: youth participation grows through opportunities to discover, learn, express ideas and turn them into actions that contribute to the well-being of communities and the planet.

REGENERATIVE VANUA | A REGENERATIVE FOOD FUTURE



PEPE FASSOS

Director, Five Sixty Farms, IGCAT Expert, Australia

Father of 8 kids, Husband and Regenerative Farmer. Director of award winning Five Sixty Farms and Co-Founder of the Agritourism Venue - Belong

At Five Sixty. Agritourism Consultant for Regenerative Vanua. Chef and active committee member of the infamous Byron Farmers Market Australia.

“Empower youth through gastronomy to see food from seed to plate, guided by deep integrity that honors traditional culture and heritage, turning kitchens into classrooms and communities into stewards.”

As the world faces interconnected challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, food insecurity, ecosystem degradation, and widening social inequalities, there is growing recognition that food systems must do more than simply sustain the status quo. Around the world, regenerative approaches are emerging as pathways for restoring ecological health, strengthening communities, and renewing relationships between people and place. For many Pacific communities, however, these principles are not new. They are embedded within long-standing systems of stewardship, reciprocity, and collective responsibility that have sustained communities for generations.

Drawing on insights from a recent workshop with ESPAM students, this presentation explores what a regenerative food future could look like from both a Pacific and global perspective. It highlights the important role food plays in connecting culture, identity, health, livelihoods, land, and future generations while examining how **Regenerative Hospitality, Regenerative Agritourism, and Regenerative Gastronomy** can contribute to thriving communities, food sovereignty, climate resilience, and regenerative livelihoods.

Participants will be introduced to the concept of **Vanua** as a living social, cultural, spiritual, and ecological system and explore how Indigenous stewardship systems can help inform regenerative futures. Through this lens, hospitality is understood not simply as a service industry but as an expression of stewardship, reciprocity, and relationship.

Regenerative Hospitality is the expression of Vanua through stewardship, culture, food, and meaningful relationships, creating reciprocal exchanges that strengthen community wellbeing, cultural continuity, ecological health, and self-determination while supporting the regeneration of people and place. It welcomes guests into relationships rather than destinations, fostering learn-

ing, contribution, healing, and transformation in ways that serve the aspirations of the Vanua and contribute to its ongoing flourishing. Within this framework, visitors are welcomed into meaningful relationships with communities, food systems, landscapes, and cultural practices rather than invited to consume products or experiences. **Hospitality exists to serve the aspirations of the Vanua, not the expectations of visitors.**

The presentation will explore how **Regenerative Agritourism** extends beyond economic diversification and visitor experiences towards stewardship, reciprocity, food sovereignty, and the regeneration of socio-ecological systems. Agriculture, culture, community, and visitors become part of a living system where educational, transformational, and place-based experiences strengthen local livelihoods while protecting and regenerating Indigenous knowledge, food systems, and landscapes.

It will also examine how **Regenerative Gastronomy** moves beyond food as a product and recognises food as an expression of culture, identity, stewardship, and community wellbeing. Traditional farming systems, local food production, Indigenous knowledge, and food culture are presented as critical pathways for strengthening climate resilience, improving health outcomes, reducing dependence on imported foods, and responding to the growing non-communicable disease epidemic affecting Pacific communities.

A key focus of the presentation will be the **Regenerative Verification Program**, an emerging alternative to conventional certification systems. The program seeks to recognise and verify evidence of thriving communities, healthy ecosystems, food sovereignty, stewardship, cultural continuity, and knowledge transmission. Rather than measuring compliance alone, the program focuses on verifying regeneration through strengthened relationships between people, place, culture, food systems, and future generations.

GLOBAL AGRITOURISM NETWORK | GASTRONOMIC ALLIANCES FOR A REGENERATIVE FUTURE



CHADLEY HOLLAS

Chair, GLOBAL AGRITOURISM NETWORK, USA

Chadley Hollas is the founder of Cultivating Tourism, a consultancy that works at the intersection of agritourism development, nature-based tourism, and rural livelihoods. He is a co-founder of the Global Agritourism Network (GAN), a collaboration spanning researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in more than 118 countries, working to define, document, and strengthen agritourism worldwide.

Chadley's work centers on tourism as a tool for rural community resilience, connecting working landscapes, food systems, and local economies in ways that create lasting livelihoods for the people who steward them. He brings that perspective to engagements across the United

States, in Ecuador, and internationally, including research on Andean ethnotourism and resident empowerment through ecotourism in Ecuador's highland and lowland communities.

He is also a PhD candidate in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at the University of Georgia, USA and has authored or co-authored more than a dozen peer-reviewed studies on agritourism, rural food systems, and community development. At the World Gastronomy Summit 2026, Chadley represents GAN as a voice for place-based, people-centered approaches to tourism that put rural producers and their communities first.

"The future of gastronomy and food systems is dependent on how we support the next generation. And our job is simple: empower youth by giving them space to create, listen when they speak, and respect their ideas."

Around the world, farms are opening their gates to visitors. Farm stays, tours, tastings, workshops, and on-farm events give farming families new income and give visitors a direct connection to the places their food comes from. Agritourism also creates new kinds of work on the farm: hospitality, marketing, event planning, education, and food production. These are roles that can bring young people back to rural places, or give them a reason to stay.

But interest alone does not create a pathway. Small farms often cannot afford to train and pay a young person while that person is still learning. When the risk of that investment falls entirely on the farm, most farms simply do not take it on. The question for this session is not whether young people care about food and farming. Many clearly do. The question is how we share the cost and risk of bringing them in.

The Global Agritourism Network connects farmers, researchers, extension educators, tourism professionals, and policymakers in more than 100 countries. Our work is built on the idea that farms facing similar challenges in very different places can learn from each other. This contribution draws on three experiences:

Chone, Manabí, Ecuador. On 14 October, GAN and Regenerative Vanua joined students from ESPAM MFL, the FAO Agrojovent project, and the Chone Gastronomic Laboratory to discuss how agritourism

can drive a circular economy in rural Manabí. I will share what the students told us.

Earth People Farms, St. Helena Island, South Carolina, USA. Earth People Farms, a Gullah Geechee family farm on land cultivated by the family for generations, is the first small farm in South Carolina to register as a sponsor in the state's apprenticeship program. Their apprentice, a recent high school graduate, is earning a nationally recognized credential while helping build the farm's community-supported agriculture program. The farm has also created an online academy so other small farms can host apprentices without building their own training programs.

Fishtë, Albania. Mrizi i Zanave serves as an incubator for young entrepreneurs, offering space, visitors, and mentorship so new businesses can test their ideas before launching on their own. Meanwhile, at Blerina's Agritourism Concept, young apprentices are leading a regenerative future for the farm.

Together, these cases point to a practical lesson. Young people's participation in the future of food depends on structures that pay them while they learn and spread the risk beyond a single farm: apprenticeships, incubators, shared training, and partnerships between farms, schools, and networks.

IBERCOCINAS | IBEROAMERICAN GASTRONOMY AND FOOD



JESÚS MENDOZA MEJÍA

President of IBERCOCINAS & Head of the Department, Agrifood Cultures within the Living Cultures, Intangible Heritage and Interculturality Unit, Government of Mexico's Secretariat of Culture, Mexico

Jesús Mendoza Mejía is President of Ibercocinas, an initiative of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), and Head of the Department of Agrifood Cultures within the Living Cultures, Intangible Heritage and Interculturality Unit of the Government of Mexico's Secretariat of Culture.

He is a PhD candidate in the Postgraduate Programme in Political and Social Sciences, specialising in Sociology, at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). He holds a master's degree in Political and Social Studies and a bachelor's degree in Intercultural Development and Management, with a specialisation in Cultural Heritage Management and Promotion, from the same university. He also completed postgraduate studies in the Management and

Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage, offered by the National University of Córdoba and UNESCO's Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Latin America (CRESPAL).

His professional experience includes designing and implementing projects for the management of intangible heritage from an intercultural perspective. His interdisciplinary research explores community museums and the recovery of memories, traditional knowledge, practices and festivities in urban and Indigenous communities. He has also contributed to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through academic and outreach activities in educational and community institutions.

"Young people are the heirs to agrifood knowledge, and only by recognizing and engaging with it is it possible to envision a sustainable future."

At Ibercocinas, we recognise traditional cuisines as living expressions of cultural diversity, community knowledge and territorial identity. Our approach to cultural cooperation encourages dialogue across Ibero-America, creating opportunities to learn from the food practices that connect our territories while respecting the differences that make each one distinctive. Within this framework, young people have an essential role in sustaining food heritage and contributing to its future.

Our pre-summit workshop will use Ibercocinas' experience as a practical starting point for exploring these relationships. Participants will examine connections and differences between food practices across Ibero-American territories before reflecting on their own culinary identity. Which ingredients, skills, traditions and shared experiences express their community's relationship with food? Whose knowledge sustains these practices, and how is it passed between generations?

From this reflection, we will turn to the challenges young people face in engaging with gastronomy and food heritage. What pre-

vents them from learning traditional skills, developing their ideas or building a livelihood connected to local food? What support would allow them to participate meaningfully while respecting the communities and knowledge on which their work depends?

Participants will then develop a **community-based proposal combining identity, youth participation and sustainable development**. The aim is to connect cultural recognition with practical action: identifying a local challenge, exploring possible solutions and considering the partnerships and resources needed to move forward. Young people will be encouraged to draw on their own experiences and aspirations in shaping proposals relevant to their territories.

At the **2nd World Gastronomy Summit**, Ibercocinas will share the workshop's youth-led ideas and recommendations on the conditions needed to turn them into sustainable opportunities. Through this process, we seek to show how culinary diversity and cultural cooperation can strengthen local food systems and give young people a meaningful role in their development.



DELIGHTING CONSUMERS



ING. VICTOR MOREIRA

Executive Director, Chamber of Industry and Production of Manabí, Ecuador

Victor Moreira Vera is an Ecuadorian professional born in Portoviejo, Manabí, on July 23, 1987. He holds a degree in Marketing Engineering with a specialization in Strategic Advertising, as well as two postgraduate degrees: a Master's in Innovation and Entrepreneurship from the University of Barcelona and a Master's in Industrial Production and Operations from the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja.

His professional career has been defined by leadership, business management, commercial development, and institutional coordination. He began his career in the pharmaceutical sector as a medical sales representative for Interpharm Laboratories and Siegfried Laboratories. He later served as owner and commercial manager of Hidrela, strengthening his expertise

in sales, operations, supplier management, and team leadership.

In the public sector, he held key positions at Portomercados EP and Portocomercio EP, where he led business units and coordinated shopping centers, municipal markets, and a slaughter and processing facility. He also served as Acting General Manager, participating in strategic planning, budget management, and institutional decision-making.

He currently serves as CEO of Corproinnova Cía. Ltda., General Manager of the Chamber of Industry and Production of Manabí, and Executive Director of COGREPROM. His work focuses on promoting productivity, innovation, public-private cooperation, and the sustainable economic development of Manabí.

"Heirs to the flavors and culinary wisdom of Manabí, today we stand as ambassadors of a gastronomic legacy recognized by the world—one that we, with pride and vision, will carry even further!"

Manabí's gastronomy is one of the region's greatest expressions of identity and one of its most promising economic assets. Its distinctive ingredients, traditional knowledge and culinary practices offer a strong foundation for creating products and experiences that stand out in today's market.

By combining this heritage with innovation in presentation, communication, design and marketing, local producers and businesses can reach new audiences while reinforcing the authenticity and sense of place that make Manabí unique.

Collaboration across the value chain can further strengthen this potential. Producers, entrepreneurs, chefs, tourism businesses, universities and public institutions all contribute to showcasing Manabí as a region where gastronomy, culture and enterprise come together.

A deeper understanding of consumers can help turn Manabí's distinctive gastronomic heritage into greater visibility, competitiveness and sustainable economic opportunities for the region.

TRADITIONAL CUISINE AND HERITAGE



CHEF FANNY VERGARA

President, Network of Traditional Cooks of Manabí and Slow Food Community of Ancestral Manabí Cuisine – SALPRIETA, Ecuador

Research chef and promoter of Manabí's ancestral cuisine, cultural manager, President of the Network of Traditional Cooks of Manabí, Coordinator of the Slow Food SALPRIETA Community, and creator of the collective brands Tomaní and Gasan.ec.

She won the Sabor a Manabí Competition with her *Fish Ceviche with Cacao* recipe (Manta, March 2018), and the Chocolate Salon at the RAÍCES Fair with *Salprieda with Cacao* (Guayaquil, July 2018).

In recognition of her invaluable contribution to the preservation, promotion and strengthening of Manabí's ancestral cuisine—an essential part of the cultural heritage of Ecuador's Montuvio people—she received recognition from the National Assembly of Ecuador. She was also awarded the Eloy Alfaro Delgado Cultural Merit Decoration by the Provincial Government of Manabí for her work in safeguarding the cultural heritage and Cholo-Montuvio identity of Manabí.

She has also received recognition for Gastronomic Development and Innovation from the National Tourism Forum, as well as the INAY Award for Heritage and Gastronomy at the International Tourism Convention.

She has been awarded national and international projects with institutions including the National Institute of Cultural Heritage (INPC), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Ibercocinas—the culinary cooperation programme for members of SEGIB—and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

She has represented Manabí at eight international events focused on culture and gastronomy through her own initiative and resources, as well as at one international event with the support of the Provincial Government of Manabí.

“Let us be like the trees that change their leaves with every season but never their roots. For without tradition, there is no innovation. Youth serve as the bridge between heritage and memory, and as guardians of Manabí's agri-food and artisanal legacy; we must emulate the trees, for they may lose their leaves, but never their roots.”

Manabí cuisine is a living expression of cultural identity, memory, and ancestral heritage. Preserving and revitalizing it means recognizing and valuing the knowledge held by its practitioners, local producers, and the families who—generation after generation—have passed down their culinary wisdom and flavors.

Research, cultural management, and the application of intellectual property rights to traditional knowledge and cultural

expressions help safeguard the province's agri-food and artisanal heritage, ensuring that the children and youth of Manabí inherit a protected legacy.

In this way, greater visibility is given to local ingredients, recipes, techniques, and traditional stories that strengthen Manabí's gastronomic identity and create new opportunities for its communities.

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN SAFEGUARDING GASTRONOMIC HERITAGE



DR. MARCOS ZAMBRANO

Academic and Cultural Ambassador for Manabí's Gastronomy, Ecuador

Doctor of Education Sciences and Doctor of Jurisprudence, with specialisations in Administrative and Political Law. He has extensive experience in the educational, social, political and agricultural fields, which has enabled him to hold a number of senior positions, including Rector of the FAE Manta Educational Unit, Rector of the El Bejucal-Chone Educational Unit, and Dean of the Chone Campus of the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí.

He also served for six years as Vice-President and President of the Electoral Tribunal of Manabí, as well as Secretary of the Technical Secretariat for Training and Professional Development (SETEC). His experience has enabled

him to lead a range of projects in education, the environment and health.

In the political sphere, he has advised electoral campaigns for various public offices. For more than 20 years, he has also served as a governance adviser to several municipal administrations and has contributed to the organisational development of political movements and parties at both provincial and national levels.

He currently serves as Rector of the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí for the 2021-2026 term. He is also a member of the Chamber of Industries of Manabí and a member of the Assembly of the Higher Education System (ASESEC).

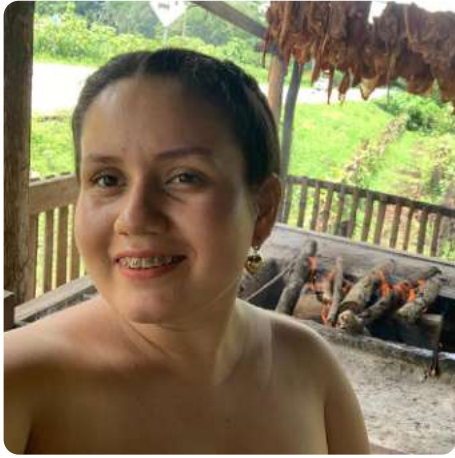
"Universities have a responsibility to connect knowledge with identity, helping to preserve Manabí's gastronomic heritage and pass it on to future generations."

Universities have an important role in safeguarding Manabí's gastronomic heritage by connecting academic knowledge with the traditions, practices and cultural identity of local communities. Education and research can help document ancestral knowledge, strengthen its recognition and ensure that it is transmitted to future generations.

Drawing on extensive experience in education and institutional leadership, this perspective highlights the value of collaboration

between universities, communities and cultural actors. By creating spaces for research, learning and intergenerational exchange, higher education can contribute to keeping Manabí's culinary heritage alive while strengthening regional identity and opening new opportunities for young people. This directly reflects the programme's focus on the role of universities in safeguarding gastronomic heritage.

YOUNG PERSPECTIVE ON MANABITA CUISINE, HERITAGE AND ITS FUTURE



ANGELICA NAYELY PEÑARRIETA CHILA

Owner, Lento pero Seguro Con Dios Restaurant, Ecuador

Angélica Nayely Peñarrieta Chila is 25 years old and the owner of her own food business, Lento pero Seguro Con Dios, a restaurant located in Chone on the road to Quito, next to the Procafrucho cooperative.

She has the support of her parents, sisters, partner and wider family. From the age of 18, she learned the value of work and responsibility,

encouraged by her parents to develop an entrepreneurial spirit and build a better future. Her experience is rooted in the countryside and in the values passed down by her family. Through her own journey as a young entrepreneur, she hopes to create opportunities for herself and inspire other young people to develop their own initiatives and build a future connected to their local roots.

"Smoking cannot be rushed. Its true flavour emerges from the encounter between fire and the ingredient."

Smoking is one of the oldest culinary techniques, born from the need to preserve food and shaped over generations by local knowledge and tradition. Beyond its practical origins, it has become a distinctive way of creating flavour, texture and identity.

Today, smoking connects ancestral practices with contemporary gastronomy. Chefs and food producers continue to reinterpret the

technique through innovation and precision, while respecting the patience and knowledge on which it is based.

At the heart of smoking is the relationship between fire, time and ingredients. This slow process reflects a wider understanding of gastronomy as living heritage: a space where tradition can evolve while continuing to carry memory, culture and a strong sense of place.

TRAINING A NEW GENERATION



ORAZIO BELLETTINI

Executive Director, Fuegos Foundation; IGCAT Ambassador, Ecuador

Orazio is a graduate of the Pan-American Agricultural School – Zamorano, the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He co-founded and served as Executive Director of Grupo FARO and currently leads FUEGOS Foundation, an Ecuadorian civil society organi-

sation that promotes gastronomy as a driver of transformation for people and territories. He has 15 years of experience facilitating strategic dialogue at regional and national levels, as well as multisector co-creation processes in several Latin American countries.

“Young people are called upon to make gastronomy the driving force behind building a society where collaboration, innovation, and progress flourish.”

In Manabí, World Region of Gastronomy 2026, food is more than a source of nourishment or a culinary attraction. It is a living expression of identity, a bridge between generations and a powerful instrument for building a more sustainable and inclusive future. For young people, gastronomy offers an opportunity to reconnect with their heritage while developing the skills, creativity and entrepreneurial capacities needed to shape their communities.

Manabí's traditional cuisine is rooted in ancestral knowledge, local biodiversity and ingredients such as maize, peanuts, cassava, plantain and fresh seafood. Dishes including encebollado, viche de pescado and tonga carry stories, techniques and values transmitted from generation to generation. Traditional food preparation, often passed down orally within families and communities, represents an invaluable form of cultural education. By documenting these practices and creating opportunities for young people to learn directly from traditional cooks, farmers and fishers, we can strengthen cultural pride and ensure that this knowledge remains alive. Safeguarding gastronomic heritage is therefore not only about preserving recipes. It is about recognising the people, skills and relationships that sustain them and inspiring younger generations to see their own culture as a source of opportunity.

Food also provides a platform for young people to imagine new professional pathways in agriculture, fishing, food production, hospitality, creative tourism and entrepreneurship. In Manabí, a new generation of chefs, farmers and entrepreneurs is exploring how traditional ingredients and recipes can inspire innovative products, experiences and businesses. By combining ancestral knowledge with contemporary skills, technology and research, they can create economic value while protecting the identity of their territory. Innovation does not require abandoning tradition; it can renew it, ensuring that gastronomic heritage remains relevant to future generations.

Education is essential to this transformation. Schools, universities and community organisations can connect young people with

local food systems, helping them understand the nutritional, cultural, environmental and economic value of what they produce and consume. The challenge is to make food-related professions attractive, accessible and viable, demonstrating that working with traditional food does not mean remaining in the past, but actively shaping the future.

Manabí faces challenges associated with inequality, migration, climate change and vulnerability to natural disasters. Strengthening local food systems can contribute to addressing these challenges while creating opportunities for younger generations. Supporting farmers and fishers, developing short food supply chains and strengthening women's participation in the food economy can generate livelihoods and reinforce community resilience. Gastronomy tourism also offers opportunities to connect visitors directly with producers, traditional cooks and local communities. These experiences can create value for the territory while encouraging cultural exchange and respect for traditional knowledge.

At the same time, revitalising traditional diets and improving food education can contribute to healthier communities and greater awareness of the relationship between food and wellbeing. Local food systems, adapted to their environment and rooted in community knowledge, can also strengthen resilience in the face of earthquakes, floods and climate variability.

Manabí's designation as World Region of Gastronomy 2026 provides an important opportunity to bring these ambitions together. Through the Fuegos Foundation and collaboration with public and private partners, the programme seeks to highlight the richness of Manabí's food heritage, support local producers and connect gastronomy with education, culture, health, innovation and sustainable development. Its long-term value will depend on ensuring that young people are not simply beneficiaries of these initiatives, but active participants in designing and implementing them.

Training a new generation means giving young people the knowledge, confidence and opportunities to transform their heritage into meaningful futures. By reaffirming the past, we strengthen their roots. By imagining the future, we open new professional and creative possibilities. By changing the present, we create opportunities for dignified livelihoods and stronger communities.

Manabí demonstrates that gastronomy can become a pathway through which young people preserve what makes their territory unique while acquiring the tools to transform it. As World Region of Gastronomy 2026, Manabí invites the world not only to discover its flavours, but also to share in a vision where food becomes a source of cultural pride, creativity, resilience and opportunity for the next generation.



INTERNATIONAL FOOD ATLAS AND DIGITAL PLATFORM



PRAVALI VANGETI

Project Coordinator, Secretariat of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, France

Pravali Vangeti is an international cultural relations and heritage management professional at UNESCO's Living Heritage Entity, which serves as Secretariat for the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

As coordinator of the project 'International Food Atlas and Digital Platform for safeguarding, promoting and transmitting foodways to future generations', Ms Vangeti leads capacity-building and policy research initiatives on the safeguarding of foodways as living heritage in 16 countries across 5 world regions. She is also engaged in the development of a digital knowledge platform

enabling peer-learning and international cooperation for communities safeguarding their foodways. Through the International Food Atlas, her work explores the intersection of living heritage, sustainable livelihoods, and community well-being across diverse cultural contexts.

Previously, as focal point of UNESCO's World Heritage Education Programme, Ms Vangeti championed youth engagement in heritage through international fora and volunteering programmes across 70+ countries. She is a founding co-convenor of the Climate Heritage Network Youth Forum.

"The safeguarding of foodways as living heritage extends beyond the transmission of knowledge and know-how to future generations – it is a channel for upholding the dignity and creativity of communities, and for creating peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies."

Foodways are a defining marker of both our individual and shared cultural identities. They carry deep meaning, telling us who we are and how we relate with the world and to one another. They express our relationship with nature, seasons, and the land, and carry our stories of migration, adaptation, and resilience – becoming a vital expression of our living heritage.

The International Food Atlas and Digital Platform aims to build new knowledge and equip communities around the world in safeguarding their foodways, through capacity-building, peer-learning,

research, and documentation. Additionally, it aims to strengthen the visibility and inclusion of foodways as living heritage in policy-making at the global level.

The project documents good safeguarding experiences from communities and leverages digital technologies to give them international visibility – turning them into a source of inspiration for communities, and in particular youth, to engage in peer learning. In doing so, these digital technologies help them remain connected and resilient for the future.

PLENARY 1:

MAKING FOOD PRODUCTION ATTRACTIVE – THE ROLE OF DESIGN, ARTS AND CULTURE



Moderated by:



JAUME GOMILA SAURA

Vice President, IGCAT, Spain

Jaume Gomila Saura is a philologist, teacher and cultural manager. He holds professional qualifications in Music and Theatre, as well as postgraduate degrees in Education and Literary Studies from the University of Barcelona. Throughout his career, he has worked across all five major arts disciplines, as well as in the heritage sector.

A career civil servant with the Government of the Balearic Islands, he has played a key

role in the organisation of arts education programmes. He served as Director of the Public Library and Historical Archive of Mahon (2014–2015) and later as Director General for Culture of the Government of the Balearic Islands (2015–2017).

He is an active member of numerous organisations, NGOs and public bodies and currently serves as President of the Adult Schools of Minorca.

“Young farmers, fishers, chefs, maîtres, artisans, storytellers and cultural managers are the hope for our planet.”

Making gastronomy attractive to the young requires considering what makes a life worth living. Climate change lays bare the consequences of standing outside nature: from being part of it to behaving as non-stop extractors. Detachment from the soil, water, seasons, animal breeds and plant varieties endangers the biosphere and leaves mankind more vulnerable to malnutrition and hunger.

Participation in foodways and their renewal strengthens the attention, the empathy and the capacity to reason that such disconnections erode. Between the naïveté of utopia and the surrender of dystopia lies the protopia of praxis: heritage, arts –audiovisual, literary, musical, performing and visual–, culture and creativity reveal themselves not as decoration, nor even as an appeal to sensibility or sensitivity, but as an essential force for reversal.

In this regard, gastronomy is queen and the lesson learnt is clear: we need youth on board. Innovation can bolster commitments and open doors to entrepreneurship, provided that access to learning, fair incomes and freedom of expression ensure the viability of these paths. Through increasingly cross-sectoral and regenerative approaches, youngsters can turn inherited wisdom into hopeful livelihoods, linking their ambitions with the social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being of their communities.

Rehumanisation through gastronomy involves, without paternalism, giving the next generation the means to secure a life worth living, a heritage worth carrying forward and a planet still worth inhabiting.

LIVING RECIPES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



CARLOS ORTIZ

Founder, Amanah – Preserving Culinary Knowledge for Future Generations, IGCAT Expert, Mexico

Carlos Ortiz is the founder of Amanah and author of the Umami Markup Format (UMF), an open specification that treats recipes not as documents but as structured, provenance-bearing knowledge artifacts – versionable, attributable, and preservable like source code. His research asks how culinary heritage can be recorded, compiled, and transmitted across generations without flattening the cooks and communities it comes from, a thesis set out in his paper “Recipes Are Not Documents.” He is a member of IGCAT’s Global Expert Network.

Carlos is also a Director in the Data and Analytics division of Banorte, one of Mexico’s largest financial groups, where he leads risk analytics, and CEO of ClearBand Analytics, a machine-learning model-governance company. Earlier he founded Yoomy Analytics, a data platform for restaurants, and Kossina Cloud, a dark-kitchen operation, and served as a Director General at Mexico’s Ministry of Energy. A trained cook (Rouxbe Culinary Arts Diploma) he lives in Mexico City, where the same question runs through everything he builds: how knowledge survives its passage through time.

“Young people don’t inherit gastronomy – they rewrite it. Empowering them in the kitchen means giving them permission to be authors, not just heirs.”

Nearly everything humanity knows about cooking is stored in a format that was never designed to hold it. A written recipe is a lousy photograph of a living practice: it records quantities and steps, and discards lineage, variation, context, and the identity of the hands that shaped the dish. Every time that page is copied – into a cookbook, a blog, a database, a training corpus for artificial intelligence – the loss compounds. The dish survives; the knowledge decays. This talk argues that the erosion of culinary heritage is, at its root, an infrastructure problem – and that infrastructure problems can be solved.

Amanah is an open platform built on the Umami Markup Format (UMF), an open specification that treats a recipe the way engineers treat source code: as a structured, versionable, provenance-bearing artifact. In UMF, a recipe knows where it came from. Attribution cannot be silently stripped away. A dish can be forked – adapted by a young cook in Manta or in Mexico City – while preserving, permanently and

visibly, the thread back to the grandmother, the region, and the community that originated it. Adaptation becomes a recorded event rather than an erasure, and heritage becomes something to build on without betraying.

The stakes are generational. Young people do not simply inherit gastronomy; they rewrite it. Infrastructure like UMF gives them permission to be authors rather than only heirs – and gives regions a way to hold their cuisines as living archives instead of printed anthologies.

It also confronts an urgent question of our moment: machine-learning systems are already consuming the world’s culinary knowledge at industrial scale. Whether the communities that created that knowledge remain visible inside it is a design decision – and we are making it right now.

REVALUING CRAFTS



PATRICK SAM

Managing Partner, Creative Culture Investments, IGCAT Expert, Namibia

Patrick Sam is a world-renowned thought leader who hails from the capital of Namibia, Windhoek. As a Fulbright Scholar, he completed his MA in International and Transcultural Studies at Columbia University. He is an International Development Expert, Public Policy Specialist and Broadcasting Journalist with a specific focus on public policy and planning.

He was the former Chairperson of the National Art Council of Namibia and the former Chair of the African Chapter of IFACCA. As an Independent Consultant, he has worked with the Government of the Republic of Namibia, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, EU, USAID, Namibia Institute for

Democracy (NID), other Foundations and many more public, private and civil society organisations and indigenous communities.

As a national expert, he has developed Namibia's Strategy on the Cultural & Creative Industries, Reviewed the National Art Fund Act, and building capacity on Social Protection and Artistic Freedom.

He currently also serves as the Vice-Chairperson of the Namibia Craft Centre and recently won Best Production Designer at the annual Namibia Film & Theatre Awards as the Director of the Screenplay- 'Coming Home Dead'.

"I am all for cultural diversity because it sustains human dignity for all."

Namibia's cultural and creative economy depends on spaces that encourage creativity, cultural expression, entrepreneurship and community participation. Food, design, arts and culture are interconnected forces that can make the country more attractive, competitive and inclusive by connecting production and consumption with identity, heritage, tourism and new forms of creative enterprise. Together, they offer opportunities to transform local knowledge and cultural traditions into sustainable livelihoods, particularly for women, young people and rural communities.

This ambition is reflected in Namibia's Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6), which seeks to develop an enhanced and enabling ecosystem for arts and creative industries, recognising human creativity as a national resource for social and economic development. The challenge is to translate this vision into practical opportunities that enable creative producers to develop their skills, access markets and benefit from the value they generate.

The craft sector provides a compelling example of how creative production can be connected with food, tourism and cultural experiences. The Namibia Craft Centre has established a significant grassroots platform, supporting more than 4,000 artisans and their families across the country. With an estimated annual turnover of N\$30 million generated for artisans and businesswomen and approximately 32,000 visitors each year, it demonstrates the economic potential of transforming Indigenous knowledge, materials and traditions into products that carry both cultural meaning and commercial value.

Crafts do more than provide souvenirs. They tell stories about communities, landscapes, materials and ways of life. When connec-

ted with gastronomy, they enrich the experience of food through traditional utensils, locally designed tableware, packaging, visual storytelling and the cultural environments in which food is prepared and shared. Design and artistic expression can give greater visibility to local food products, strengthen their identity and create new opportunities for producers to reach consumers.

The proposed Namibia Craft & Design Institute (NCDI) offers an opportunity to institutionalise this approach. Its envisaged phased investment model, incorporating pilot funding, co-financing, facilities and equipment, and market expansion, could strengthen the foundations of a more coordinated creative economy. Such investment is particularly relevant for women, young people and rural communities, whose participation in the craft sector makes it an important vehicle for inclusive economic development.

Nevertheless, substantial barriers continue to constrain the sector's potential. Many producers operate informally and lack sufficient capital, while access to product development, design innovation and markets beyond established tourism routes remains limited. Inconsistent quality and production capacity, fragmented institutional support, inadequate infrastructure and high logistics and shipping costs further restrict growth. Limited digital payment systems, export capabilities and access to international buyers create additional obstacles for businesses seeking to expand.

Addressing these challenges requires more than individual entrepreneurial effort. It calls for an inclusive creative production ecosystem that connects producers with the skills, infrastructure, finance and markets they need to succeed.

Social inclusion must therefore be central to the development of Namibia's creative and food-related economy. Inclusion cannot simply mean allowing people to participate; it must mean creating the conditions in which women, young people and communities in rural and under-served areas can own enterprises, develop skills, access finance, reach markets and benefit meaningfully from their work.

Regional craft hubs and shared production facilities could strengthen collaboration and provide access to equipment and expertise that individual producers cannot easily afford. Improved quality certification, export readiness, e-commerce and digital sales systems would help connect local production with wider markets. Partnerships with tourism businesses, events, retailers and buyers could create further opportunities to showcase distinctive Namibian products and experiences.

For younger generations, the intersection of food, design, arts and culture opens professional pathways that extend beyond conventional understandings of agriculture, craftsmanship or hospitality. It creates opportunities for product designers, food entrepreneurs, artists, cultural storytellers, digital marketers and creative tourism operators to work together, developing businesses that draw on local

identity while responding to contemporary consumer expectations.

Making food production attractive therefore also means making the wider cultural and creative ecosystem surrounding food visible, innovative and economically viable. When young people recognise that their creativity, heritage and knowledge can become the foundation for meaningful careers, traditional production can be reimagined as a source of opportunity rather than a practice belonging only to the past.

The craft sector represents a relatively low-cost, high-impact entry point into Namibia's creative economy. By placing design, arts and culture alongside agriculture, gastronomy, tourism and enterprise development, Namibia can build a more diverse and inclusive economy that celebrates its cultural capital.

The magical intersection of these sectors lies in their capacity to connect people, places and traditions with new ideas, markets and opportunities. By investing in creativity and ensuring that its benefits reach those who sustain cultural production, Namibia can empower a new generation to transform its heritage into a living resource for economic opportunity, cultural pride and sustainable development.



DRESSING THE CARIBBEAN PLATE: CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND CUISINE



NNEKA A. NURSE

Culinary & Culture Strategist, Best Dressed Plate LLC (BDP),
IGCAT Expert, Caribbean

Nneka Nurse is a culinary and culture strategist, curator, and founder of Best Dressed Plate. Working across tourism, hospitality, media, and live experiences, she helps destinations and institutions translate culinary culture into meaningful visibility, visitor value, and long-term opportunity. Her original platforms include Caribbean Tradishon, Navigator's Table, Insider's Plate, Reel & Nyam, Caribbean HERitage Woman's Awards, Sliced to Savor Cooking Classes, and the Caribbean Culinary Impact Awards.

Nneka serves as Academy Chair for the Caribbean region for North America's 50 Best Res-

taurants and as a Caribbean Global Expert for IGCAT, roles that deepen her understanding of how recognition is built and whose voices reach global rooms.

Born in the United States, raised in Trinidad, and grounded in Jamaican, Trinidadian, Barbadian, and Nevis family heritage, she brings both lived cultural fluency and an operator's discipline to her work.

Her mission is to move Caribbean cuisine from the streets to the seats without losing the people, histories, and systems that give it meaning.

"Gastronomy education fails young people at the point where it matters most. The handoff between what they learn and what they can earn. We are good at teaching heritage as memory. We are bad at building it into a career."

Best Dressed Plate founder Nneka A. Nurse explores how design, cultural storytelling and partnerships can make food production more visible, valued and viable for new generations.

Using the Caribbean as her lens, she shows that the finished plate is only the last chapter in a wider system that includes farmers, fishers, market vendors, producers, cooks and storytellers.

Young people do not leave the farm because they hate the land. They leave because no one made the land look like a future. Design, art, and culture change that.

At Best Dressed Plate I bring chefs, farmers, cultural institutions, tourism boards, and hospitality brands to one table, from the

United Nations to the James Beard House. What holds it together is a pathway for young people: to see the work, learn it, earn from it, and lead it. A dish tells you what a place tastes like. The table tells you who a place is.

Her call to action challenges regions to invest beyond the plate by creating pathways for young people to see, learn, earn and lead within food-related livelihoods. The Caribbean is setting the table, and there is room for every region to sit down and build together.

YOUNG TALENT FOR ARCTIC FOOD



CHEF PER THEODOR TØRRISSEN

Project Manager, Nordland County Municipality, IGCAT Expert, Nordland, European Region of Gastronomy 2028, Norway

Per Theodor Tørrissen is a Project Manager at Nordland County Council (Nordland fylkeskommune), where he leads the Nordland European Region of Gastronomy 2028 initiative and the ArktiskMat project. His work focuses on strengthening the connection between gastronomy, culture, tourism, and regional development across Northern Norway.

Working closely with local producers, chefs, destinations, and public stakeholders, Tørrissen supports initiatives that highlight the value of local food traditions and promote gastronomy as a resource for sustainable development.

Through both Nordland European Region of Gastronomy 2028 and ArktiskMat, he contributes to creating stronger networks, increasing visibility for Arctic food cultures, and encouraging collaboration across sectors.

His particular interest lies in how food can help build regional identity, support local businesses, and create meaningful experiences for residents and visitors alike. He is committed to showcasing the diversity and quality of Northern Norway's food culture while fostering long-term value creation for local communities.

"Young people have the power to shape the future of our food systems and rural communities through politics and action. Through gastronomy, we can create pathways to meaningful careers, entrepreneurship, and cultural understanding, while strengthening the connection between people, place, and sustainability. Investing in youth today and creating platforms for learning, is investing in resilient communities and a thriving food culture tomorrow."

The Arctic is home to distinctive food traditions shaped by nature, seasonality, Indigenous knowledge and generations of experience in fishing, farming, hunting and gathering. These traditions are an important part of regional identity, but their future depends on the ability to inspire a new generation to carry them forward. As Arctic communities face challenges related to depopulation, recruitment and the continuity of local food production, an important question emerges: how can we encourage young people to see food, agriculture, hospitality and gastronomy as meaningful careers and opportunities for innovation?

This question lies at the heart of ArktiskMat, an international food symposium founded in 2012 in Mosjøen, Northern Norway. Over the years, ArktiskMat has developed into a meeting place for chefs, producers, researchers, students, educators and food enthusiasts from around the world. Through lectures, workshops, discussions and shared meals, it explores the connections between food, culture, sustainability and regional development, while celebrating the richness and diversity of Arctic food cultures.

A central ambition of ArktiskMat has always been to invest in people, particularly young people. By strengthening knowledge and

professional competence, encouraging pride in local resources and creating opportunities for collaboration, the symposium seeks to support recruitment into food production, hospitality and related industries. Bringing students and young professionals into direct contact with international chefs, food innovators and experienced producers demonstrates that gastronomy can offer pathways to creativity, entrepreneurship and community development.

As Nordland prepares for its designation as European Region of Gastronomy 2028, developing young talent is a central priority. The Award offers an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between producers, educational institutions, chefs, tourism businesses and communities, while raising awareness of the opportunities offered by the region's distinctive food culture.

The future of Arctic food depends not only on safeguarding traditions and local knowledge, but also on giving young people the confidence, skills and opportunities to shape what comes next. Through collaboration, innovation and a shared commitment to community, gastronomy can become a powerful tool for empowering the next generation, strengthening regional identity and building sustainable food futures.

LOCAL TALES AND FLAVOURS



KÁROLY SZABÓ

Executive director, Visit Harghita, IGCAT Expert,
Harghita, European Region of Gastronomy 2027, Romania

Károly Szabó is the Executive Director of Visit Harghita, the destination management organization responsible for promoting Harghita County, Romania, as a sustainable and authentic tourism destination. With a background in tourism and destination development, he has dedicated his career to strengthening regional collaboration, enhancing visitor experiences, and creating long-term value for local communities.

Under his leadership, Visit Harghita has become a recognized example of innovative destination management in Central and Eastern Europe. His work focuses on sustainable tourism, community engagement, destination branding, and the integration of gastronomy into regional develop-

ment. Through strategic partnerships with local producers, hospitality businesses, cultural organizations, and public institutions, he has contributed to positioning Harghita as an emerging European gastronomic destination.

As an IGCAT Expert, Károly actively promotes the idea that gastronomy is a powerful driver of sustainable tourism, cultural identity, and economic resilience. He has led numerous international collaborations and knowledge-sharing initiatives, encouraging destinations to think globally while acting locally. His efforts have played an important role in Harghita County earning the prestigious title of European Region of Gastronomy 2027.

"When young people discover gastronomy, they don't just learn recipes-they discover culture, creativity, entrepreneurship, and a sense of belonging. By empowering the next generation through food, we are preserving our heritage while shaping a more sustainable and innovative future."

How do we make young people care about the stories, traditions and cultural heritage of previous generations?

This is the question behind the Legendarium project in Transylvania, Romania. Rather than approaching cultural heritage primarily through textbooks or traditional forms of education, Legendarium has explored how stories can be transformed into experiences that young people can discover, play, watch and ultimately live.

The project started in 2008 as a civil initiative built around the legends and stories of Transylvania. One of its first major projects was a map bringing together 156 local legends and stories. From there, the concept developed into books, board games, animated films and, eventually, a physical cultural experience: Mini Transylvania Park, where visitors can explore miniature versions of historical buildings and landmarks from the region. The central idea is simple: they did not change the stories – they changed the way young people could enter the stories. A map allows a young person to discover a story. A game allows them to play it. An animated film allows them to feel it. A thematic park allows them to physically enter it. Each format creates a different entry point into the same cultural heritage.

This approach raises a broader question that is relevant far beyond Transylvania: how can destinations make cultural heritage meaningful and attractive to younger generations? Young people may

not necessarily want to "learn about heritage", but they are often interested in stories, characters, challenges, exploration and experiences. By changing the way heritage is presented, we can create new connections between generations without losing the authenticity of the original stories.

At a Gastronomy Summit, this conversation naturally extends to food heritage. Culture is not only what we see or hear – it is also what we taste. The same experience-based approach can be applied to traditional food and culinary heritage: a local story can inspire a character, a game, a thematic route, a recipe, a festival or an interactive experience.

Instead of simply telling young people what traditional food is, we can invite them to discover where it comes from, who made it, how it is prepared and what stories are connected to it. Harghita County, as the European Region of Gastronomy 2027, is applying this approach by connecting local food heritage with stories, traditions, local producers, places and experiences, creating new ways for younger generations to discover and engage with the culinary identity of the region.

The Legendarium experience therefore offers not a single model to copy, but a way of thinking about heritage: from information to experience, from spectators to participants, and from preservation to engagement.

A ROUTE OF FLAVOURS, CULTURE AND CREATIVITY



UFUK KEŞOĞLU

Founder, Bureau Gastronomica, IGCAT Expert
Şanlıurfa, World Region of Gastronomy candidate 2029, Türkiye

Mustafa Ufuk Keşoğlu is a lecturer in Gastronomy and Culinary Arts at Cappadocia University, founder of Bureau Gastronomica, and a Member of Slow Food Türkiye Communities. His work focuses on sustainable gastronomy, food heritage, destination development, and regenerative food systems.

With a background as a professional chef and consultant, he has led and contributed to projects with international organisations and public institutions including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the Ministry of National Education of Türkiye (MoNE), municipalities, universities, and industry partners. He has also worked with Metro Türkiye on sustainability, gastronomy, and food system initiatives, supporting projects that strengthen

local producers, reduce food waste, and promote responsible food value chains.

Mustafa is actively involved in international gastronomy and territorial development initiatives through IGCAT, contributing to World Region of Gastronomy projects, destination strategies, and youth-focused programmes. His work bridges academia, public policy, and industry, helping destinations use gastronomy as a tool for sustainable development, cultural heritage safeguarding, and community resilience.

He is particularly interested in empowering young people through gastronomy, connecting traditional food knowledge with innovation, and creating inclusive food systems that generate long-term social, cultural, and economic impact.

"The future of gastronomy will not be inherited—it must be entrusted to young people who are free to question, create, and care."

Şanlıurfa's Cultural Route explores how a living food culture, rooted in a landscape shaped by more than 12,000 years of human history, can inspire contemporary creativity. The story begins with a deep relationship between food, land, agriculture, culture and community, but it does not end in the past.

For us, the idea of the Unbroken Table is about continuity through change: how each generation can reinterpret its heritage and create with it. The Cultural Route brings together culinary arts, culture, design, events and community participation, creating spaces where knowledge can move between generations and across different parts of the food system.

Our experience with initiatives such as Slow Wheat Şanlıurfa has shown us how events can become powerful learning environments, bringing producers, farmers, chefs, academics, community leaders and young people together around shared questions. This approach also informs our developing T4T 2.0 framework: moving beyond the traditional classroom to build the capacity to learn, connect, adapt and create.

The question is not only how we preserve heritage, but how we give people – especially young people – the capacity to carry it forward.

FOOD REVOLUTION FROM THE PACIFIC



MNZM ROBERT OLIVER

Founder, Pacific Island Food Revolution, IGCAT Ambassador, New Zealand

Robert Oliver MNZM is a New Zealand chef, author, broadcaster, social entrepreneur, and a 2025 Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center alumnus. He is the founder and Executive Director of Pacific Island Food Revolution (PIFR), a television-led movement transforming food systems across the Pacific through Indigenous food culture. Raised in Fiji, Robert has spent more than three decades championing Pacific cuisine as a pathway to better health, climate resilience, cultural pride, and economic opportunity.

His first book, *Me'a Kai: The Food and Flavours of the South Pacific*, was awarded *Best Cookbook in the World* at the Gourmand World Cookbook

Awards in 2010. His later books, *Me'a'i Samoa* and *Eat Pacific*, also received international acclaim. In 2022, he was appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Pacific communities and the food industry.

As a judge on *My Kitchen Rules New Zealand*, Robert saw the power of entertainment to inspire behaviour change. That experience led him to create Pacific Island Food Revolution, now recognised as one of the world's leading examples of entertainment driving social impact. His guiding belief is simple: "The story of the food is the story of the people," and reconnecting people with their food culture can transform lives.

"Culture isn't inherited—it is practised, one meal at a time."

Pacific Island Food Revolution (PIFR) is an award-winning, Pacific-led food systems movement using media, culture and community to reconnect Pacific people with their own food—and build healthier, more resilient food systems.

Created by chef, author and television presenter Robert Oliver MNZM, PIFR began as a television series and has grown into a regional platform for change. Its idea is simple: choosing local food improves health, strengthens agriculture and livelihoods, protects culture and builds climate resilience.

The story of the food is the story of the people PIFR pioneered entertainment-led behaviour change, bringing food systems into kitchens, markets, villages and family tables. Broadcast across 12 Pacific countries, the series reached around five million people, with 42% of surveyed viewers reporting positive dietary change.

PIFR understands that emotion drives behaviour. It taps into ancestral food memories, cultural pride, family, humour, happi-

ness and good-natured competition—making healthy local food exciting and aspirational.

At its heart is a powerful Pacific truth: "Your culture is your cure." Traditional foods and knowledge are living solutions for the future, carrying stories of land and ocean, grandparents, villages and identity.

PIFR turns connection into action, linking Pacific food and knowledge with entrepreneurship, tourism, education and institutional food. Across Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and beyond, initiatives support women-led enterprise, regenerative tourism, culinary education, schools, blue foods and Pacific Rainbow communities.

A Pacific solution with global relevance PIFR connects health, culture, agriculture, livelihoods and environment through a model built on Pacific strengths—making change participatory, positive and enjoyable. Your culture is your cure. The story of the food is the story of the people. When Pacific people fall in love with their own food again, they rediscover the power already at their table.

ART GIVING VOICE TO THE TERRITORY



RICARDO ALCÍVAR

Artist and Researcher from Manabí, Ecuador

Ricardo Alcívar Morán is a self-taught artist and researcher from Manabí whose work seeks to recover ancestral culture and promote environmental conservation. A 58-year-old Ecuadorian artist, he focuses particularly on cultural research related to the Jama-Coaque culture of Manabí. He began creating art as a child, working with recycled materials due to limited access to formal artistic training.

His work is inspired by ancestral art and explores the life, beliefs and worldview of pre-Columbian cultures. He also creates sculptures of endangered animals to raise awareness about environmental protection and deforestation. Among his monumental works are a 40-metre-long iguana made from recycled materials, including fibre-

glass and scrap metal, and a 12-metre-high figure of Christ currently under construction. He also works with natural materials such as stone and ancient roots, particularly guayacán. Although trained in industrial mechanics, he has dedicated his life to art and cultural research. Over seven years, he developed a research project that resulted in an "ark" of 50 pieces reflecting ancestral cultural identity. His artistic practice includes sculpture, painting in oil, acrylic and charcoal, as well as replicas in clay and wood.

He lives in the canton of Jama, at the heart of this cultural heritage, where he continues to promote the recovery and appreciation of ancestral culture through his work.

"Through art, we can give a voice to our ancestors, our land and our natural heritage, so that future generations understand where they come from and what they have a responsibility to protect."

Art can play a powerful role in expressing the identity of a territory, making visible the stories, knowledge and relationships that connect people with their cultural and natural heritage. In places such as Manabí, artistic practice can help bring ancestral traditions into the present while creating new ways for communities to understand and value their heritage.

Drawing inspiration from pre-Columbian cultures, local materials, biodiversity and the landscape, artistic expression can connect memory with contemporary creativity. Sculpture, painting and the

reuse of natural or recycled materials can become tools for interpreting the past, raising environmental awareness and strengthening a sense of belonging.

By giving form and visibility to cultural memory and the natural environment, art can help safeguard local identity while encouraging new generations to engage with the heritage of their territory. In this way, creativity becomes not only a means of expression, but also a way of transmitting knowledge, reinforcing community pride and imagining the future.

PLENARY 2:

FROM FIELD TO FUTURE: YOUTH AND GASTRONOMY



Moderated by:



DR. EMANUELA PANKE

President, Iter Vitis Cultural Route of the Council of Europe,
IGCAT Ambassador, Italy/Israel

Emanuela Panke is an expert in cultural tourism, the valorisation of food and wine gastronomy, and international cooperation, with more than twenty-five years of experience in the design and management of initiatives focused on culture, wine, sustainable tourism, and territorial development.

Since 2016, she has been President of the European Federation Iter Vitis – Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, having previously served as Secretary General from 2007 to 2016. She coordinates international networks that bring together public institutions, universi-

ties, museums, wine-producing territories, and stakeholders from the tourism sector in more than twenty-five countries.

Throughout her career, she has coordinated numerous European and international projects and has specialised in place branding, cultural routes, wine tourism, and gastronomic tourism, with particular attention to cultural diplomacy. She is also an author, international speaker, and curator of exhibitions and programmes dedicated to the promotion of cultural and agri-food heritage.

“When a young person learns to appreciate the flavors of their land, they also learn that their culture can become an opportunity to build the future.”

Generational renewal in agriculture and fisheries is often described as a question of numbers: fewer young people entering the sector, more farms and boats without successors. Behind these numbers, however, lies a question of opportunity, recognition and belonging. Young people need to see food production as a profession that offers a viable livelihood, a valued role in their community and room for their ideas. The experience of European cultural routes, including the wine landscapes of *Iter Vitis*, shows how connecting a product to its landscape, community and living heritage can help a new generation imagine a future in it. Attracting young people to the primary sector is therefore a cultural task as much as an economic one.

This plenary explores how young people can help shape the future of food through sustainable production, entrepreneurship and the renewal of local knowledge. Across different territories, these approaches share a common ambition: to create value locally and ensure that it benefits the communities where food is produced. Biodiversity, practical skills, knowledge of the sea and the soil, and the ability to communicate a product's origins are central to this ambition. Gastronomy can bring these elements together, connecting producers with wider audiences and opening opportunities in education, tourism and local enterprise. Having spoken with each of our speakers, I believe their collective superpower lies in the

diversity of expertise they bring: from agronomy to engineering and the humanities. Each offers a distinct way of seeing, questioning and approaching the challenges ahead. Like the individual pieces of a collector's album, their contributions come together to reveal a richer picture, one that gives us reason to be optimistic about the future young people can build through food and gastronomy.

The session will consider what is needed to make these opportunities more widely accessible: access to land, training and finance; fairer relationships between producers and markets; digital tools that respond to the needs of rural and coastal communities; and sustained cooperation between institutions, businesses and territories. Alongside the promise of these initiatives, we will examine the risks, uncertainties and practical difficulties young producers face, and what it takes to overcome them. An optimistic vision of the future gains strength when it is grounded in an honest understanding of these challenges. Supporting young producers means creating the conditions for them to build livelihoods, contribute to their communities and adapt inherited knowledge to new challenges. Their participation is essential to keeping territories active and food systems resilient, while sustaining the cultural identity that makes each place distinctive.

CULTIVATING THE FUTURE OF LOCAL FOOD



SERGIO RIUDAVETS

Owner-Farmer – Productes Ecològics Santo Domingo, Top 50 Farmers Menorca, European Region of Gastronomy 2022, Spain

Hello! I'm Sergio Riudavets, and my journey with the land began in 2014. For more than a decade, I have dedicated myself to understanding natural cycles and refining organic horticulture techniques, with the aim of restoring to the soil the life it gives us with every harvest.

From my farm in Punta Prima (Sant Lluís, Menorca), I work according to a clear philosophy: we do not simply produce food; we restore the ecosystem.

In 2023, I took a further step in my specialisation by implementing a regenerative market-gardening system using compost beds. This method allows me to maximise profitability and fertility, retain moisture more effectively, and create resilient soil adapted to the challenges of our Mediterranean climate.

"Cooking nourishes not only the body but also the future. When we put a spoon and a stove in a young person's hands, they do not merely learn a recipe; they discover their voice, their culture, and their power to transform the world."

The comparison between the organic and regenerative models begins with compost and fertility management. In the organic model, compost is incorporated deeply into the soil through tillage, with the aim of directly nourishing crops during the growing season. In the regenerative model, compost is applied exclusively to the soil surface as a microbiological inoculant. It is not buried; instead, it stimulates the native soil food web and feeds microorganisms, which in turn make nutrients available to plant roots. Water management also differs between the two approaches. The organic model generally relies on conventional drip irrigation on bare or partially covered soil, with greater exposure to water loss through direct evaporation. In the regenerative model, water use is radically optimised through permanent ground cover (*mulching*). The soil acts like a biological sponge, retaining moisture for longer periods, reducing the water footprint and helping to prevent problems such as waterlogging or fungal development.

Planting spacing and the use of space are also managed differently. The organic model tends to use wider, linear planting layouts, shaped by the need to maintain clear pathways for machinery and rotary tillers. The regenerative model uses high-density planting in permanent beds that are never walked on. Because heavy machinery is not required on the beds, net productivity per square metre can be maximised. In terms of crop rotation, the organic model follows strict rotation by botanical families across entire plots in order to break

pest cycles following annual tillage. The regenerative model adopts a more flexible approach based on simultaneous polycultures and continuous crop succession within the same permanent bed, always maintaining living roots in the soil to nourish microbial life.

The tools used reflect the same difference in philosophy. The organic model relies on rotary tillers, traditional hoes and heavy machinery to break up compacted soil layers and turn the soil. The regenerative model uses exclusively low-disturbance hand tools, such as the **broadfork** to aerate the soil without turning its layers, and the **stirrup hoe** for precise, shallow cutting of weeds. These practices also affect direct costs. The organic model involves high recurring costs for tractor or rotary-tiller fuel, the continual purchase of certified external organic inputs, and ongoing labour for weed control. The regenerative model significantly reduces external inputs by regenerating the biological fertility of the soil. Tillage fuel costs are eliminated entirely, while permanent mulching helps minimise labour hours.

By integrating both approaches on the farm, the regenerative model can significantly increase net commercial margins per unit of land, helping to offset some of the limitations of conventional organic production. At the same time, greater climate resilience and reduced exposure to fluctuations in the price of commercial external fertilisers can support sustained long-term economic viability.

ORGANIC BY NATURE



KATHARINA HÄNI

Administrator and Co-founder, BioFarmland, Banat, European Region of Gastronomy 2028, Romania

Katharina Häni is an Agricultural Engineer at her own organic farm, BIOFARMLAND, and a Food Engineer at BIOFARMLAND MANUFACTURA, her organic manufacturing unit. There, she produces several varieties of organic mustard paste, mills wholemeal flour from cereals grown on her farm, including ancient varieties, and creates tea blends from her own organic herbal cultivation.

She is also the founder of CALEA NATURALA (Natural Way Association), a non-profit orga-

nisation dedicated to promoting a lifestyle in harmony with nature. Through the association, she has begun developing an ecovillage and educational centre.

Katharina loves her work and enjoys running, hiking, spending time in the mountains, practising yoga, vegan food, painting and being with people.

"Biofarmland- another kind of agriculture for a sustainable, efficient and healthy food production, from field to fork"

I am a Swiss agricultural engineer operating together with my brother our own organic Farm, Biofarmland, and a food engineer managing our organic manufacturing unit, Biofarmland Manufatura. Here, we produce several varieties of organic mustard, mill wholemeal flour from our own ancient grains, and blend teas from our cultivated organic herbs. Biofarmland is an 800-hectare, family-run grain enterprise specializing in ancient varieties such as *Triticum monococcum* (einkorn), *Triticum dicoccum* (emmer), and *Triticum spelta* (spelt).

We practice a different kind of agriculture. Our approach is strictly organic—avoiding synthetic chemicals and GMOs—and is combined with no-till methods and the elimination of external fertilizers. We

pay particular attention to soil health and regeneration, cyclical agriculture, and biodiversity. Most importantly, we prioritize energy efficiency and resilience through autonomy.

This agricultural model, when combined with in-house manufacturing to process and package our own harvest, brings significant added value to our business, the surrounding region, and the country. We pair this with direct marketing through our online shop, serving both B2C and B2B clients without relying on major retail chains. By integrating digital marketing with authentic storytelling about our unique approach, culture, and values, we bring a new, cultural dimension to e-commerce.

PARTNERSHIPS CULTIVATING LIVING TERRITORIES



LUISA VÉLEZ-SABANDO

Better Life Leader & National Coordinator of the AgroJoven Programme, FAO, Ecuador

Environmental Engineer with a Master's degree in Environmental Management and nationally accredited as an Environmental Consultant.

She has experience in the planning and coordination of projects related to sustainable development, climate change adaptation, agrobiodiversity, governance, eco-gastronomic tourism, heritage, research, university teaching, editorial processes, and resource mobilisation.

Since the age of 19, she has been dedicated to promoting multisectoral actions to strengthen climate resilience and the sustainability of agri-food systems in rural, coastal, urban,

and peri-urban areas, contributing to stronger urban-rural linkages.

Her professional experience ranges from providing technical support to families, communities, and grassroots groups to advising cities and governments, NGOs, and multilateral organisations within the framework of regional and global food and climate programmes and agendas.

She currently works for FAO Ecuador as Better Life Pillar Leader and National Coordinator of the AgroJoven Programme.

"Every food product holds a story, a territory, and a web of knowledge connecting producers with those who process and consume it. When young people recognize the value of this living heritage and find opportunities to innovate within their own communities, agrifood systems become bridges—linking the countryside to the city and tradition to the future—and engines for building a better life, leaving no one behind."

The future of agrifood systems depends on creating meaningful opportunities for young people to participate, innovate and build sustainable livelihoods in their own territories. In Ecuador, the AgroJoven Programme seeks to expand productive and employment inclusion opportunities for rural youth by promoting bio-enterprises and agribusinesses, accelerating commercial linkages and improving the competitiveness of productive value chains with strong potential for employment generation.

Promoted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Ecuador since 2024, AgroJoven operates at national and local levels. It contributes to strengthening local economies linked to agriculture, livestock, fisheries, agroforestry, value-added production and services oriented towards sustainable production models and the circular economy.

The programme recognises that generating decent employment for young people requires more than providing individual training or entrepreneurship support. It is essential to create enabling conditions that allow young people to participate fully in agrifood systems, access resources and markets, and develop enterprises that respond to the needs and opportunities of their territories.

AgroJoven therefore promotes deforestation-free value chains, bio-enterprises, eco-gastronomic experiences, innovation and productive inclusion. It also encourages investments in rural territories that can support the sustainable development of young people and strengthen their economic participation.

This approach is implemented through three complementary projects, each responding to specific territorial needs while contributing to the programme's wider objective of creating opportunities for rural youth.

EmpleoAgroJoven, also known as AgroJovenCacao, operates in the provinces of Napo and Manabí as part of the Global Integrated Country Approach Programme – Phase IV. Led by Ecuador's Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, with technical assistance from FAO and support from other government institutions, the project focuses on market systems development. It strengthens the entrepreneurial ecosystem and connections with the private sector, helping young people access financing and new markets for their products and services. It also supports public policies related to youth, rural development and agriculture, reinforcing governance mechanisms and youth leadership. The

initiative represents an investment of USD 1.3 million in non-reimbursable cooperation, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

AgroJoven Chone demonstrates how the natural and cultural heritage of a territory can become a foundation for youth employment and entrepreneurship. Led by the Municipal Decentralised Autonomous Government of the Canton of Chone, the project supports young people in urban and rural parishes through nutrition-sensitive bio-enterprises and sustainable tourism itineraries based on eco-gastronomic experiences. By connecting food production, gastronomy, tourism and local heritage, it seeks to contribute to inclusive rural transformation, the urban agenda and the revitalisation of agrifood heritage, with young people at the centre of these processes. The project is supported by USD 1.248 million in funding from the Italian-Ecuadorian Fund for Sustainable Development.

The third initiative, AgroJoven Innovación, is led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, with technical assistance from FAO. It seeks to strengthen innovation and the productive inclusion of rural youth by improving governance, developing spe-

cialised skills and professional qualifications, and reducing barriers to technology, financing and markets. Particular emphasis is placed on youth participation in policy dialogue, economic empowerment and the creation of a more inclusive and dynamic environment for young people working in the agrifood sector.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate the importance of connecting youth entrepreneurship with territorial development, institutional partnerships and market opportunities. They also highlight the potential of agriculture and gastronomy to create employment while strengthening local identity, sustainable production and the value of agrifood heritage.

As we explore how to move from the field to the future, AgroJoven offers an approach in which young people are not simply beneficiaries of rural development programmes, but active participants in transforming their territories. By investing in their skills, enterprises, leadership and access to opportunities, we can help build more inclusive and resilient local economies while encouraging a new generation to see agrifood systems as a meaningful place to develop their professional futures.



CARING FOR THE SEA, FEEDING THE FUTURE



IOANNIS VEKRIS

Young Fisherman, Ichthyologist, South Aegean, World Region of Gastronomy candidate 2028, Greece

My name is Ioannis Vekris. I am 26 years old and come from the island of Amorgos, Greece. I hold a degree in Ichthyology and represent the fourth generation of my family to work as a fisherman. Growing up in a fishing family gave me a close connection to the sea from an early age and a strong understanding of the knowledge, skills and traditions that are passed from one generation to the next. My academic background in ichthyology

complements this practical experience, allowing me to combine traditional fishing knowledge with a scientific understanding of marine ecosystems. Today, I am particularly interested in the future of small-scale fisheries, the sustainable use of marine resources and the role that young people can play in keeping fishing communities active and resilient.

"If fishing is to have a future, we need to protect the sea that sustains us. For young fishers, tradition and sustainability must go hand in hand so that our communities, knowledge and way of life can continue for generations to come."

AMORGORAMA: From Protecting the Sea to Securing a Future for Fishing Communities

Amorgorama is a community-led initiative born on the island of Amorgos, in the South Aegean, from the professional fishers themselves. It began with a simple but critical realization: the sea that had sustained generations of islanders was under increasing pressure from overfishing and marine pollution, while small-scale fishing was becoming an increasingly difficult profession to sustain.

Rather than seeing marine protection as a restriction on their livelihoods, the fishers of Amorgos chose to make it part of the solution. They developed a collective action plan combining seasonal fishing restrictions during spawning periods, the gradual adoption of more selective fishing gear, the creation of protected marine areas, and coastal and seabed clean-up operations. Their approach was built on the knowledge of the people who depend on the sea every day, and was subsequently strengthened through cooperation with scientists, local authorities, civil society organisations and the Greek State.

This bottom-up approach has now moved from local initiative to institutional recognition. In August 2025, a Presidential Decree established Fisheries Restricted Areas around Amorgos, including three year-round no-take zones and a seasonal fishing closure around the island. Scientific monitoring and management are now also being implemented in cooperation with the Agricultural University of Athens.

But Amorgorama is ultimately about more than protecting marine ecosystems. It is about making sure that there is a future for small-scale fishing – and for the communities, knowledge, traditions and food culture connected to it. This is where the youth dimension becomes essential.

If young people are to see farming, fishing and food production as viable and meaningful careers, these sectors must offer not only employment, but also a future. They need to be connected with innovation, knowledge, technology, environmental responsibility and a sense of purpose. Amorgorama offers a real-life example of how a traditional profession can evolve without losing its identity. The participation of young fishers in the initiative is particularly significant. Amorgorama has already contributed to the renewal of the local fishing community, including the arrival of new young members in the professional association. Their experience brings a personal perspective to a central question for island communities: how can traditional primary-sector professions remain attractive and relevant to the next generation?

There is also a direct connection with gastronomy. Healthy seas mean healthier and more resilient fisheries; responsible fishing supports the availability and quality of local seafood; and sustainable fishing helps preserve the culinary identity of island communities. In this sense, gastronomy is not the final link in the chain, but part of a wider ecosystem connecting nature, production, livelihoods, culture and consumers.

Amorgorama therefore offers a perspective on gastronomy that begins before the food reaches the kitchen – with the people who produce it, the ecosystems that sustain it, and the young people who may carry this knowledge and profession into the future. The experience of Amorgos raises a broader question for island and rural communities across Europe: what does it take to make a traditional primary-sector profession a credible choice for the next generation?

REGENERATE THE LAND, TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES



LUCAS OSHUN

Director and founder, Regeneration Field Institute, USA/Ecuador

Born and raised in Northern California, Lucas has been working in Central and South America since 2008 and in Ecuador since 2011. As an educator, agroforester and supply chain specialist, he stu-

dies the connections between market access, ecosystem and soil restoration and the future of agriculture and ecosystem services in the tropics.

"Rebuilding soils, ecosystems and livelihoods through Syntropic Agroforestry."

No product—especially something people consume—can truly be considered premium or gourmet if it comes from degraded soils, depends on harmful chemical inputs, or leaves producers without a viable future.

The premium cacao market has traditionally emphasized genetics, flavor, fermentation, and traceability. These qualities matter, but they are incomplete. The same is true for coffee, wine, chocolate, and any other product - especially those we put into our bodies. A genuinely premium product should also reflect the condition of the land where it was grown, the resilience of the farming system, and the wellbeing and opportunity of the people who produced it. Gastronomy can help redefine quality so that ecological and social integrity become part of what buyers look for and reward.

In Manabí, Ecuador, this is an urgent opportunity. The region combines an extraordinary cacao heritage with widespread soil degradation, loss of tree cover, increasingly difficult climate conditions, and an aging agricultural workforce. Conventional commodity markets give farmers little reason, and often little capacity, to invest in long-term soil and ecosystem restoration. Premium cacao can change that equation when higher market value is tied directly to regenerative practice, careful post-harvest processing, and transparent relationships between farmers and buyers.

The Regeneration Field Institute in Chone, Manabí is developing this approach through farmer-led field schools and through our commercial partner Tierra Viva Cacao. Farmers learn to establish diverse agroforestry systems that combine cacao with plantain, timber, fruit, biomass and native trees; rebuild soil fertility through organic matter and managed succession; reduce dependence on external chemical inputs; and restore productive landscapes over time. Training is practical and community based. Demonstration plots, community 'minga' workdays, locally adapted planting material,

follow-up visits, and farmer-promoters allow knowledge to move from one farm to the next. A 2025 pilot trained 25 farmers in five communities and achieved strong participation and development of the 30x30 meter practice systems, providing a strong foundation for continued scaling. In 2026 our program has 110 who've implemented regenerative agroforestry plots.

The supply chain is being designed around the same values. Centralized fermentation and drying, quality control, traceability, and direct market relationships will help smallholders consistently meet fine-cacao standards. Premium prices then become more than a reward for flavor: they become an economic engine for restoring soil, increasing tree cover, protecting water, and creating dignified rural work. In 2026 and 2027 we will be scaling this vision further.

Youth are essential to this transition, and the knowledge and skill gap currently in the cacao farming industry represents an excellent opportunity for employment in rural regenerative agriculture. Regenerative cacao requires skilled grafters, pruners, agroforestry technicians, fermentation managers, quality-control specialists, and local entrepreneurs. It also requires more intensive management than many farms currently have the knowledge or capacity to carry out. Training young people for these roles turns landscape restoration and increasing the productivity of cacao agrobusiness into a credible livelihood rather than an abstract goal.

We have been pursuing the skills and experience to have legitimacy and skill pursuing this vision in Manabí since 2016, and now our 30 hectare regenerative agroforestry campus serves as a base of operations and proof of concept. The larger vision is a supply chain in which better flavor, healthier soils, stronger communities, and restored landscapes reinforce one another—and where "premium" describes the whole story of the cacao, not only the final bean.

DIVERSIFYING INCOME: THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF AGRITOURISM



ASOC. PROF. SHPRESIM DOMI

President, Global Agritourism Network, Albania

President of the Global Agritourism Network (GAN). Lecturer and researcher at the Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT). He holds a PhD and has completed post doctoral research on agritourism development. His academic work focuses on rural development, agritourism, and tourism, with publications in international peer reviewed journals. Actively involved in national and international projects, he has contributed significantly to advancing agritourism in Albania by co-founding the Albanian Agritourism Association, supporting legal reforms, support on drafting the National Agritourism Strategy, leading enterprise capacity building initiatives, and designing financial grant schemes to foster sector growth.

nal projects, he has contributed significantly to advancing agritourism in Albania by co-founding the Albanian Agritourism Association, supporting legal reforms, support on drafting the National Agritourism Strategy, leading enterprise capacity building initiatives, and designing financial grant schemes to foster sector growth.

"Gastronomy is the bridge between our past, our present, and our future—honoring cultural heritage, strengthening communities, and inspiring prosperity for generations to come."

The Global Agritourism Network (GAN) defines agritourism as an agricultural diversification activity arising from the intersection of agriculture and tourism. It offers authentic experiences connected to agricultural production while showcasing the tangible and intangible resources of a region or locality.

Two principles distinguish agritourism from other forms of rural tourism. First, the farm remains a working agricultural enterprise, with tourism complementing rather than replacing production. Second, the visitor experience is rooted in agriculture itself: the land, animals, crop cycles, processing methods, food and rural way of life. Agritourism is therefore not simply accommodation in the countryside. It is an opportunity for visitors to engage directly with the people and practices behind food production.

Food is one of the most powerful ways to attract visitors to farms. Travellers increasingly seek opportunities not only to taste local gastronomy, but also to discover the ingredients, cultivation methods and traditions behind it. Agritourism responds to this interest by bringing food production and consumption together in the same place.

A visitor who tastes a traditional dish on a working farm can meet the producer, discover the ingredients, observe how they are cultivated and understand the knowledge involved in their preparation. This direct encounter transforms food from a product into an experience and gives greater visibility to agricultural work.

For younger generations, this creates opportunities that extend beyond conventional agricultural production. Agritourism brings together farming, hospitality, gastronomy, entrepreneurship, education and cultural storytelling. It allows young people to apply different skills within a working agricultural enterprise while developing new products, services and experiences rooted in their territory.

The challenge is to ensure that farmers have access to the knowledge, finance, infrastructure and markets needed to diversify successfully, without losing the productive identity of their farms. Agritourism should strengthen agriculture rather than displace it.

AGRO-TECH FOR YOUNG PRODUCERS



OSCAR EKPONIMO

Founder/CEO, Chowberry Inc, IGCAT Expert, Akwa Ibom, nominated World Region of Gastronomy 2030, Nigeria

Oscar Ekponimo is a food systems innovator, AI researcher, and internationally recognized advocate for sustainable food systems, gastronomy, and nutrition access. He is the Founder of Chowberry, an initiative that began by tackling food waste and food insecurity and is now evolving into an AI-powered global nutrition infrastructure that connects farmers, retailers, healthcare providers, governments, philanthropies, and communities to improve nutrition access, strengthen local food economies, and generate measurable social and health outcomes.

Oscar serves as an IGCAT Expert representing Nigeria and contributes to global conversations on gastronomy, regional food identity, and sus-

tainable development. His work has received international recognition, including being named a Rolex Laureate, featured as one of TIME Magazine's Next Generation Leaders, and selected among the Top 50 Creative Entrepreneurs worldwide by the Basque Culinary Center in 2022.

Working at the intersection of technology, culture, gastronomy, and public innovation, Oscar champions the use of artificial intelligence and digital public infrastructure to build more resilient food systems, preserve culinary heritage, expand nutrition access, and position gastronomy as a catalyst for healthier communities, inclusive economic development, and sustainable regional growth.

"The next generation will transform food systems by combining culinary heritage with technology, creativity, and entrepreneurship. Gastronomy is where culture meets innovation."

Our food system is no longer fit for the future. From the concentration of power within global food value chains to the unequal distribution of resources across communities, the systems that determine how food is grown, traded, accessed, and valued are increasingly being questioned.

Food has become one of humanity's greatest paradoxes: while we produce enough to feed the world, millions remain food insecure, biodiversity continues to decline, traditional food knowledge is disappearing, and young people are leaving agriculture and rural communities in search of opportunity elsewhere.

These realities call for more than incremental improvements. They demand a fundamental reimagining of the structures that shape our relationship with food from production and distribution to consumption, ownership, and governance.

This is where gastronomy becomes more than cuisine. Gastronomy sits at the intersection of culture, agriculture, health, creativity, entrepreneurship, tourism, and regional identity. It has the unique ability to reconnect people with place, strengthen local economies, celebrate biodiversity, and inspire healthier, more sustainable food systems.

Young people must be at the center of this transformation. The next generation will inherit a food system facing unprecedented environmental, economic, and social pressures. But they also possess something equally unprecedented: the ability to combine indigenous knowledge with science, technology, artificial intelligence, design, and entrepreneurship to create entirely new possibilities.

The journey from field to future is therefore not simply about transferring knowledge from one generation to another. It is about empowering young people to become architects of the next food system - one that values farmers as innovators, gastronomy as a driver of regional development, technology as an enabler of equity, and culture as a source of resilience.

If we are serious about building sustainable food systems, our greatest investment will not be in technology or infrastructure alone. It will be in the imagination, creativity, and leadership of young people who are prepared to preserve our culinary heritage while boldly reimagining its future. Because the future of gastronomy will not be defined only by the dishes we celebrate, but by the food systems we choose to build.

PLENARY 3:

YOUTH, FOOD AND INTERPRETING THE PAST FOR A FUTURE OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Moderated by:



CHEF RODRIGO PACHECO

Founder, Bocavaldia Research and Development Restaurant, Ecuador

Rodrigo Pacheco is an Ecuadorian chef, environmental leader, and internationally recognised figure in sustainable gastronomy. His work explores the power of gastronomy as a tool to protect biodiversity, transform food systems, and strengthen the relationship between people, culture, and nature.

He is the founder of Bocavaldia, an ecosystem-based culinary innovation and food systems laboratory located on the coast of Ecuador. For more than a decade, he has developed a model that integrates ecological restoration, biodiverse edible forests, regenerative production, research, and Indigenous wisdom.

An essential part of his work is the exchange of knowledge with Indigenous communities and young people in the region, recognising their

knowledge, worldview, and relationship with the land as fundamental elements for imagining food systems that are more diverse, resilient, and connected with nature.

He is a FAO Goodwill Ambassador, WWF Ecuador Ambassador, and Rockefeller Big Bet Climate Fellow. He has served as Chef in Residence at Yale University, spoken at Harvard University, and acted as a judge at the Bocuse d'Or.

A graduate of the Institut Paul Bocuse in France, he also participated in Netflix's *The Final Table*. Through the Bocavaldia Foundation, he promotes initiatives that connect conservation, nutrition, education, agrifood systems innovation, and community development, using gastronomy as a bridge between biodiversity, culture, and knowledge.

"Sustainable gastronomy is a powerful platform for youth empowerment – where biodiversity, ancestral wisdom and innovation come together to create opportunity, strengthen identity and build a more resilient future."

Food is much more than nourishment. It shapes our identity, connects us to our cultures and territories, and influences our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. For young people, our relationship with food can become a powerful foundation for health, belonging, environmental responsibility and leadership.

As a chef, environmental advocate and founder of Bocavaldia in Ecuador, I have spent the past 15 years exploring how sustainable gastronomy can transform our relationship with nature and one another. Working alongside local communities, Indigenous knowledge holders, farmers, fishers and young people, I have come to understand gastronomy as a powerful instrument for education, biodiversity conservation, cultural preservation and social transformation.

Through Bocavaldia and its foundation, we are developing an ecosystem-based approach that connects sustainable food sys-

tems, ancestral wisdom, science and innovation. Our work includes the creation of biodiverse edible forests and NEMO, an initiative that seeks to address chronic child malnutrition through the nutritional potential of biodiversity while restoring ecosystems and strengthening local communities.

As an FAO Goodwill Ambassador and WWF Ecuador Ambassador, I advocate for a greater role for gastronomy in addressing the interconnected challenges of human health, food insecurity, biodiversity loss and climate change.

When we reconnect young people with food, culture and nature, we give them more than the foundations of health and belonging. We give them the opportunity to become leaders in shaping the future of our planet.

LOCAL SEEDS, HEALTHY FUTURES



NIKOS RENESIS

Director, Nursery of the Region of South Aegean & Head of the Animal Production Department of the Directorate of Primary Sector of Dodecanese, South Aegean, World Region of Gastronomy candidate 2028, Greece

Nikos Renesis holds a university degree in Crop Production from the Technological Educational Institute of Crete, Faculty of Agriculture, obtained in 1993, and a Master's degree in Environmental Education from the Department of Sciences of Early Childhood Education and Educational Design at the University of the Aegean, completed in 2020.

He is Director of the Regional Nursery of the South Aegean Region and Head of the Animal Production Department within the Directorate of Primary Sector of the Dodecanese. Earlier in his career, he also served as Head of Urban Green Spaces Maintenance.

His professional experience combines agriculture, environmental education, public administration and regional development. He has been a member of the Executive Committee supporting the South

Aegean Region's European Region of Gastronomy 2019 title within the IGCAT framework and has participated in European cooperation initiatives, including the INTERREG IVC Hybrid Parks project, focused on collaboration and synergies across financial, social and educational dimensions.

He has also contributed to environmental education through his role as rapporteur at first-level seminars organised by the Environmental Education Centre in the South Aegean, as well as at workshops of the Greek Botanical Gardens Network.

A member of the National Association of Technological Agronomists of Greece, he brings extensive experience in coordination and stakeholder engagement, working closely with ministries, municipalities, public authorities, private-sector organisations, manufacturers, farmers and other actors involved in the primary sector and regional development.

"Local seeds preserve more than biodiversity; they preserve our cultural identity, traditional knowledge and the future of healthy communities. By teaching children to value and protect them, we empower the next generation to safeguard the food heritage of tomorrow."

The future of gastronomy is shaped long before food reaches the table. It begins with healthy ecosystems, the conservation of biodiversity and the transmission of traditional knowledge to younger generations. If we want children to value local food and make informed choices about their health and the environment, we must give them opportunities to understand where food comes from and experience its production firsthand.

This conviction is at the heart of the Aegean Gardener Programme, an educational initiative developed in the context of the South Aegean's candidacy for World Region of Gastronomy 2028. The programme introduces schoolchildren across the South Aegean islands to the principles of the Aegean Diet through practical gardening, local seeds and traditional cultivation methods. It encourages them to look beyond food as a product purchased or consumed and discover the natural processes, agricultural knowledge and cultural traditions that make it possible.

This approach is particularly relevant to the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit's focus on empowering youth through gastronomy. Giving

young people practical experience of food production can strengthen their confidence, deepen their appreciation of local traditions and encourage them to see agriculture and gastronomy as meaningful areas for future learning and engagement.

As the South Aegean prepares its candidacy for World Region of Gastronomy 2028, the Aegean Gardener Programme offers an opportunity to connect the region's food heritage with the education of future generations. By introducing children to local seeds, traditional cultivation and the principles of the Aegean Diet, we can help ensure that these traditions remain relevant and valued.

Investing in food literacy today means investing in healthier communities and more resilient local food systems tomorrow. If we want future generations to protect biodiversity and appreciate their gastronomic heritage, we must allow them to experience these values with their own hands.

The future of sustainable gastronomy begins where every harvest begins: with a seed, a child and the opportunity to learn from nature.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY: THE ROLE OF NGOS



ROSA RODRIGUEZ JARAMILLO

Executive Director, Heifer Ecuador Foundation, Ecuador

Born in Quito, Ecuador, Rosa Rodríguez has more than 25 years of experience in development processes working alongside rural populations, Indigenous peoples, mangrove communities and social organisations across the country. She has also worked in Uruguay and the Dominican Republic. She is an educational communicator and holds two specialisations: Communication for Development and Local Development with a Gender Perspective. She has also pursued studies in Management and Development.

From a young age, she became involved with Indigenous peoples in Ecuador and supported their organisational processes as a volunteer. She later moved to Uruguay, where she studied Educational Communication at the University of the Republic in Montevideo. While there, she worked with Fundación El Abrojo.

Throughout her career, she has worked with several national organisations focused on the environment and rural development, including Fundación Natura and the Ecuadorian Centre for Agricultural Services, where she served as a researcher and project officer. She has also worked in international cooperation as an officer with the United Nations Volunteers Programme, with Cooperation for International Development – CID-Progressio, a British cooperation organisation – and with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

In December 2003, Rosa Rodríguez joined Heifer Ecuador as National Programmes Coordinator, and since 2005 she has served as National Director. This experience has enabled her to deepen her work in agroecology, sustainable food systems and food sovereignty in Ecuador. Her commitment to Heifer's mission and principles has led her to promote spaces for collective coordination in the country. These include the Agroecological Collective, made up of organisations and NGOs working in agroecology, and the Agrarian Collective, composed of international cooperation institutions such as Oxfam and Agronomists and Veterinarians Without Borders (AVSF) of France.

She currently works through the five thematic programmes that guide Heifer International's work in the Americas region: Mangroves; Livestock and Sustainable Agriculture on Latin American Hillside; Coffee and Cacao; Páramos; and Dry Forest. Her work seeks to multiply and expand the impact on rural families, while also ensuring the operation of systems that provide timely and transparent information to donors.

Rosa Rodríguez also volunteers with Luna Creciente, a rural women's movement, and is part of the coordinating team of the Association of Freethinkers of Ecuador.

"Never alone: food unites generations, knowledge, and territories. When young people have the power to transform the food systems they inherit, gastronomy becomes a force for health, identity, and a sustainable future."

Food sovereignty begins with an apparently simple question: who has the power to decide? Who decides what is produced, which seeds are preserved, what reaches local markets and school meals, which forms of knowledge are passed from one generation to the next, and whether young people can imagine a viable future in their own territories?

For Heifer International, these questions are inseparable from the transformation of food systems. A sustainable food system must be environmentally responsible and economically viable, but it must also be locally led. Farmers, Indigenous peoples, women, young people and their organisations cannot remain at the end of a development process designed from the outside. They must have

the capacities, resources, relationships and decision-making power needed to build it themselves.

This changes the role of an international NGO. Our role is not to decide what communities should produce or eat. Nor is it simply to implement projects. It is to help create the conditions that allow local actors to make informed decisions and turn them into sustainable realities: by strengthening organisations and leadership; supporting regenerative and climate-resilient production; facilitating access to finance, technology and fair markets; connecting producers with consumers, businesses and governments; and enabling local knowledge to engage in dialogue with science and innovation.

In Manabí, Ecuador, this becomes tangible. At the Puerto La Boca Collection Centre in Jipijapa, locally produced food is organised and delivered to students through a school feeding initiative. Behind what may appear to be simply a plate of food lies an entire system: farmers, local knowledge, community organisation, markets, nutrition, education and a new relationship between young people and the territory that feeds them.

For this reason, interpreting the past cannot mean returning to it nostalgically. Traditional knowledge is not a museum piece. It is living knowledge. The challenge is to enable a new generation to combine inherited seeds, recipes, biodiversity and agricultural knowledge with technology, entrepreneurship, new markets and their own aspirations.

Food sovereignty, therefore, cannot be reduced to producing food locally. It is about decision-making capacity: ensuring that communities can define how their food is produced, distributed, valued and consumed, while protecting the ecosystems and cultures that sustain it.

Perhaps, then, the true measure of an NGO's success is paradoxical: not how indispensable we manage to become, but how much stronger the local system remains without depending on us.

For Heifer International, this lies at the heart of locally led sustainable development: local power, globally connected.



CONSCIOUS FOOD SYSTEMS ALLIANCE



LUZ ELENA NAVARRO DÍAZ

CoFSA Local Action & Regenerative Systems Analyst, United Nations Development Programme, Mexico

Luz Elena is CoFSA's Local Action and Regenerative Systems Analyst, where she leads collaboration with Indigenous peoples and local communities. Specializing in rural and agricultural development across Latin America and East Africa, she is deeply committed to driving conscious systems change by integrating Indigenous and local knowledge. Her work focuses on foster-

ring inclusive, regenerative communities while protecting and honoring Nature. Luz Elena holds a Master's degree in International Development from Sciences Po Paris and is the co-founder of Soluciones Creativas Sostenibles (SOCS) and Tercer Espacio in Mexico. She believes in Nature wisdom, collective intelligence and harmony of life—*lekil kuxlejal*.

"True transformation begins when we reconnect with Nature, recover our ancestral wisdom, and awaken the consciousness to nourish both people and planet."

The Conscious Food Systems Alliance (CoFSA) is a UNDP-convened initiative focusing on the inner dimension of food systems transformation. Transforming food systems requires more than changing how we produce, distribute and consume food. It also means transforming our relationships with food, one another and Nature, and nurturing the values, mindsets and inner capacities that make this change possible.

From this perspective, traditional food is a living resource for the future. Food cultures carry generations of knowledge about land, seasons, seeds, biodiversity, cooking and community. Young people can help keep food cultures alive by reconnecting with elders, learning from their knowledge and reinterpreting traditions through contemporary gastronomy and creativity. CoFSA's Communities of Wellbeing approach supports communities in strengthening these relationships so that food cultures can thrive and evolve. CoFSA's Dialogues with Indigenous Peoples also highlight the importance of intergenerational knowledge transmission and the urgency of protecting the wisdom of Indigenous Peoples.

Well-being encompasses physical, spiritual, social and emotional dimensions. Farming in harmony with Nature, through agroecological, organic, biodynamic and regenerative practices, can protect ecosystems while supporting healthier food systems and communities.

CoFSA's collective inquiry on Farmers' well-being and the inner dimension of agroecology explores how this transition can benefit

farmers beyond its environmental and productive outcomes. Farmers describe greater resilience, creativity and a stronger sense of purpose. Moving towards more regenerative practices is not only a technical transition; it also involves changes in values, mindsets and relationships with land, work and community.

By revitalising local ingredients, traditional dishes and food cultures, young entrepreneurs can create livelihoods while keeping traditions alive. Beyond business and digital skills, they need inner capacities: being, to stay grounded under pressure; relating, to care for people and place; and collaborating, to build together. CoFSA's Youth Circle connects young food systems leaders across regions for inspiration, intercultural learning and peer exchange. Strong communities are essential to turning young people's ideas into lasting, locally rooted enterprises.

CoFSA partnered with the Government of Bhutan to co-host the first Global Conscious Food Systems Summit in 2026, building on more than five years of work. Its Conscious Food Systems Framework brings together a shared vision, conscious ways of working, lessons learned and over 50 case studies.

Bhutan's Gross National Happiness philosophy places culture, Nature and well-being at the heart of development. This resonates with CoFSA's conviction that transforming food systems requires not only sound policies and investment, but also the values, relationships and inner capacities of the people driving change.

LEARN FROM THE SEA, LIVE THE FESTIVAL



CAMILLA DIGRE

Festival manager, Oi! Mat og Drikke AS, Trondheim-Trøndelag, European Region of Gastronomy 2022, Norway

Camilla Digre is a Project Manager at Oi! food & beverage, where she leads the development of the Norway Seafood Festival—a national platform that showcases Norwegian seafood while inspiring future generations to explore careers in gastronomy, hospitality and food culture.

Representing a new generation of festival leaders, Camilla is passionate about creating meaningful experiences that connect children and young people with chefs, producers, educators and the wider hospitality sector. Through the Norway Seafood Festival, she is exploring how festivals can become living learning arenas

where young people discover not only the joy of food, but also the people, professions and opportunities behind it.

Camilla will share how the Norway Seafood Festival is building on the legacy of the Trøndersk Matfestival to become a future-oriented platform for youth empowerment. Her work focuses on using gastronomy to inspire the next generation, strengthen regional identity and demonstrate how festivals can play a vital role in recruitment, community engagement and resilient food cultures.

"In Norway, the sea has always sustained our communities. Today, it can also inspire the next generation to shape the future of gastronomy."

As Project Manager of Norway Seafood Festival, I represent a new generation of gastronomy festival leaders emerging from Trøndelag, Norway's European Region of Gastronomy 2022.

Years of strategic work to position gastronomy as a driver of regional identity, sustainability and future-oriented development contributed to that award – and today we believe festivals can do even more: serve as living learning arenas where children and young people engage directly with hospitality, creativity and future food systems.

This belief is grounded in 21 years of experience from Trøndersk Matfestival, where learning happens in direct, one-to-one encounters – a child talking to the farmer who grew the corn, being allowed to pick their own carrot, or seeing a producer's own child working proudly alongside them. This kind of low-threshold, face-to-face participation is something formal education struggles to recreate: it is social, sensory and emotional, and families, teachers and communities take part alongside the children, giving it visibility and weight.

Norway Seafood Festival (started in 2023) builds this into a hands-on, learning-by-doing programme around Norway's seafood traditions. On day one we have opened up for nursery and school visits allowing children to see, touch and smell real fish; puzzles teach them what different species look like; they taste fiskeboller (a Norwegian staple) and try mussels cooked with soda. They learn by doing, touching, tasting and smelling.

For our festivals themselves, all our children and family activities are free, and there is no entry fee. This allows people from all walks of life

to take part: children make their own sushi, talk to the fishermen who caught the fish, try their hand at cooking with our chefs, and meet the technicians who care for the sea animals gathered in our aquariums. None of this instructs from a distance – it is designed so a child can see, touch, taste and ask, and leave curious about where their food comes from and how they, too, can help shape a sustainable future.

That curiosity is the seed of something larger: many young people are searching for professions connected to creativity, sustainability and meaning, and gastronomy and hospitality offer exactly this – but only if the people behind these professions are made visible and approachable early on.

In order to ensure this, older students are part of this picture too: upper secondary school students staff some of our food stalls, working alongside a professional chef-teacher who guides them so they can deliver safely. This gives them real, hands-on experience with local products and direct interaction with the public, as well as a valuable source of income for their student enterprises – another way we connect young people to the trade under the guidance of experienced professionals.

Bringing the learnings from Trøndersk Matfestival to Norway Seafood Festival reflects a natural evolution: from celebrating regional food culture to actively building the hands-on encounters that shape future food communities. Through direct contact with fishermen, chefs and technicians, children and young people become not just an audience, but our future colleagues, hosts and ambassadors for resilient food cultures.

BUILDING FOOD LITERACY



SUNANTHEE KANCHANAWAT

Professor, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, IGCAT Expert, Hong Kong/Thailand

Sunanthee graduated with a degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management in 2005, followed by a master's in Tourism Management in 2007. She began her teaching career in 2012 as a part-time lecturer, contributing to curriculum development in tourism education. Her love for food inspired her to open a bakery in 2013.

Her journey in gastronomy started at Perfect Link Consulting Group, a sustainable tourism consultancy in Thailand, where she worked closely with national tourism organizations. This experience revealed to her the significance of gastro-tourism in preserving culinary traditions and nurturing local pride.

In 2018, Sunanthee moved to Hong Kong to join the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, specializing in Food and Beverage subjects. She leverages her extensive gastronomy background to inspire students, emphasizing food as a tool for cultural education and connection. Sunanthee promotes food

literacy, encouraging students to understand their food, develop ethical perspectives, respect diversity, and protect culinary heritage. Offering the educational trips as a part of learning experience, she has designed educational gastronomy trips for students, focusing on food biodiversity, food literacy and culinary heritage. Her itineraries incorporate sensory experience design and neuro-gastronomy concepts, offering hands-on activities, farm-to-table experiences, interactions with local producers, food-related art projects, and expert knowledge sharing.

Since 2025, recognised as an Expert for IGCAT (International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism), Sunanthee also serves as Integrated Gastronomy Design Advisor for the Thailand Gastronomy Network and is currently pursuing doctoral studies. Her thesis focuses on revisiting the definition of gastro-tourism and exploring how itinerary design can enhance engagement and create memorable experiences.

"Empowering youth through food education, fostering food literacy, ethical awareness, respect for cultural diversity, and appreciation of culinary heritage. Experiential learning connects young people with food biodiversity, local producers, culture, and the stories behind what they eat."

Food literacy is not only for students of culinary arts or hospitality. It is a form of citizenship education that should be accessible to every discipline. Whether studying business, design, engineering or the humanities, every student is also a food consumer whose everyday choices influence the people, communities and environments behind what they eat. By understanding the labour, culture and resources involved in food production, young people can become more conscious consumers and use their purchasing power to support ethical sourcing, sustainability and regional food heritage.

Gastronomy provides a powerful educational platform through which students can discover their strengths, understand the world and learn to create value with others. Universities have an important role to play in this process, not simply as institutions that transmit knowledge, but as living platforms connecting classrooms with farms, kitchens, producers and communities. When food beco-

mes a shared subject of inquiry across disciplines, students can contribute their own perspectives through research, storytelling, design, entrepreneurship, technology or cooking.

Experiences in Hong Kong and Thailand demonstrate how this approach can be implemented. At The Hong Kong Polytechnic University's School of Hotel and Tourism Management, the Food and Wine Academy connects younger generations with internationally recognised chefs and food and beverage experts. Courses such as The Evolution of World Cuisine use food as a lens through which to examine food cultures, migration, geography, climate resilience and cultural survival.

In Thailand, Hat Yai University and the Thailand Gastronomy Network provide opportunities for applied research and collaboration through a Gastronomy Living Lab. Students, young entre-

preneurs, food enthusiasts and local producers work together to document Indigenous ingredients, safeguard regional food identity and co-design authentic gastronomic tourism experiences.

Empowering young people through gastronomy means equipping them not only with knowledge, but also with the ability to apply it responsibly. When universities act as living platforms for collaboration, students can develop sustainable enterprises, contribute to food innovation and help safeguard cultural heritage while strengthening the pride and resilience of the communities around them.



REGENERATE THE LAND, CULTIVATE THE FUTURE



ASUAO KIRIFI POUONO

Representative for Polynesian Countries, Pacific Regenerative Agritourism Network, IGCAT Expert, Samoa

I am an Agricultural Scientist with a DTA (USP-Alafua), BSc (UCDavis) and an MPhil from UWI, St Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago.

I began my career as an Agronomist (1980) at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forest, Fisheries & Meteorology (MAFFM), and spent a significant amount of time on taro breeding for TLB resistant materials (which began during the 1993 TLB outbreak). Later on, MAFFM became the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), and I was appointed the MAF-ACEO-Quarantine in 2001, before being selected as the Chief Executive Officer for MAF during 2007-2010. During my term as CEO, I was a recipient of a special award-"New Zealand Prime Minister's Fellow"- in March 2008.

After leaving the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, I was nominated as the Country Manager for the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access-PHAMA/ PHAMA-Plus program (2011-2023). In addition, I have also served as a

Board Member for both the Samoa Trust Estate Corporation (STEC), and the Ministry of Lands and Survey (MLS).

At the moment, I am the current President of the "Samoa Society of Agricultural Professionals (SSOAP), as well as a member of the Advisory Committee for Samoa's Business Incubator Centre at the Scientific Research Organization of Samoa (SROS). Meanwhile, I continue to provide technical support to the farming and agribusiness communities through various projects in the country, specifically in Cocoa Processing with a focus on new Startups.

Furthermore, I was the representative for Samoa at the Pacific Agritourism Network from June 2024-April 2025, now I have been elevated to represent the Polynesian countries at the Pacific Regenerative Agritourism Network (PRAN), based in Vanuatu.

"Suggestions for Business Incubator Startups in Regenerative Farming to advocate for GEDSI promotion using a Family Farm Team (FFT) concept, with specific interest on women and youth creativity and innovation"

Agribusiness can create new opportunities for young people when traditional agricultural knowledge is connected with entrepreneurship, value-added production and emerging tourism experiences. In Samoa, initiatives that encourage young people to develop products, test business ideas and engage with local food systems are helping to make agriculture more visible, creative and economically relevant.

Cocoa offers a strong example of this potential. By moving beyond primary production into processing, product development and mar-

ket-oriented innovation, young people can participate in a wider range of roles across the value chain while strengthening local enterprise and retaining more value within communities.

Agritourism adds another dimension by connecting farming, food, culture and visitor experiences. Together, these approaches can help young people in Samoa see agriculture not only as a traditional livelihood, but also as a field for innovation, entrepreneurship and long-term development.

SABER COMER: LEARNING TO THINK THROUGH FOOD



KARISSA BECERRA

Founder and Director General, La Revolución Coordinator of the Gastronomy Programme, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP), Peru

Karissa Becerra is Director of the Gastronomy Programme at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. A philosopher specialising in Anthropological Studies, she is a graduate of the International Culinary Center in New York and holds a Master's degree in Gastronomic Sciences.

She is the founder and director of La Revolución, a non-profit association that teaches children and adults how to eat and think through an innovative food education methodology. Through the organisation, she promotes educational campaigns and projects such as *Cocina Poderosa*.

She is the author of gastronomic publications including *Café de las nubes*, *café del Perú* (2010), which was recognised by the Gourmand Awards in 2011 as one of the best books about coffee in the world. Her book *Riquisísimo, cocina peruana para niños* promotes the strengthening of identity through cooking, food and shared time around the table as spaces for exploring who we are.

In 2018, she was a finalist for the Basque Culinary World Prize, which recognises the potential of gastronomy to generate social transformation.

"Every time we choose what to eat, we decide what kind of world we nourish. Food-based education fosters critical thinking in children and young people, enabling them to recognize who they are, understand their relationship with the world, and discover the immense power their food choices hold to transform their lives, their communities, and their surroundings."

Every time we choose what to eat, we decide what kind of world we are supporting. Food connects us with our history, with the people who produce it, and with the ecosystems that make life possible. Educating through food creates an everyday space in which to develop critical thinking, recognise our identity, and understand how our decisions relate to both individual and collective wellbeing.

This contribution presents **Saber Comer**, a food education methodology that I have developed with La Revolución in Peru. Its approach brings together cooking, sensory exploration, biodiversity, and science so that children and young people can build knowledge through experience and find in food a way to interpret the world and participate in its transformation.

Through our senses, we perceive the world and begin to understand it. Food offers a particularly powerful medium for this kind of learning; it engages all the senses, forms part of our everyday lives, and connects what we perceive with memory, emotions, and curiosity. Exploring its qualities creates familiarity and a willingness to try; comparing, describing, and interpreting these experiences makes it possible to establish connections, ask questions, and develop independent judgement. In this way, sensory experience becomes a means of building knowledge.

Observing, smelling, touching, tasting, and cooking are starting points for questioning and investigation. A single ingredient can open a

conversation about the territory it comes from, the people who grow it, the knowledge that has brought it to our table, and the transformations that take place when we cook it. In this way, a familiar experience connects curiosity with an understanding of cultural, social, and ecological processes.

Throughout this journey, inherited food knowledge enters into dialogue with scientific knowledge and with the questions of new generations. Recipes, local products, and memories shared in the kitchen and around the table offer opportunities to explore who we are, value diversity, and develop new ways of caring for ourselves and for our surroundings.

Youth empowerment is expressed through the capacity to understand, question, and act. **Saber Comer** seeks to strengthen this autonomy through food literacy that connects knowledge with everyday decisions and participation in the community. Choosing what to eat also means asking what forms of production, what relationships, and what kind of future we want to sustain.

From this perspective, gastronomy can become an educational tool for practising conscious food citizenship. The aim is for children and young people to recognise the power of their decisions and become involved in building healthier communities that value their culture and protect the biodiversity that sustains them.



For Manabí, empowering youth through gastronomy is not only about preserving culinary heritage. It is about transforming that heritage into opportunity, dignity and a future worth building in the territory. Manabí's gastronomy begins long before food reaches the table. It begins with farmers, fishers, producers, traditional cooks, artisans, entrepreneurs and families whose knowledge has been transmitted across generations. These relationships between people, food and territory are an extraordinary cultural asset, but their continuity cannot be taken for granted. Younger generations must be able to see agriculture, fisheries, gastronomy, hospitality and food-related entrepreneurship not as activities belonging to the past, but as viable, innovative and meaningful pathways for their future. This challenge has particular significance for Manabí. The province has learned that resilience is more than rebuilding what has been lost. It is the capacity to create new opportunities from local knowledge, identity and community strength. Gastronomy can play an important role in that process by connecting traditional knowledge with education, creativity, technology, tourism, entrepreneurship and access to markets.

The World Café of the 2nd World Gastronomy Summit provides an opportunity to move this conversation from dialogue to action. Across 16 round tables, participants will examine youth empowerment from different but interconnected perspectives, including primary production, climate resilience, hospitality, education, health, entrepreneurship, social inclusion, creativity, food heritage and the relationship between rural and urban territories. The purpose is not simply to identify challenges, but to generate practical proposals that regions can adapt and implement.

A central question can therefore accompany our discussions: What must we change today so that a young person can see gastronomy (from farming and fishing to hospitality, tourism, creativity and entrepreneurship) not simply as inherited tradition, but as a viable, dignified and exciting future? The answers will be different in every territory and from perspectives of experts. Yet several principles can unite them: young people need access to knowledge and skills, opportunities to innovate, connections to markets, pathways to entrepreneurship, recognition for traditional knowledge, and above all, a genuine voice in shaping the food systems they will inherit.



We hope this World Café can demonstrate that gastronomy is much more than what happens in a kitchen. It is a territorial system capable of connecting generations, creating livelihoods, strengthening identity and giving young people reasons to participate in – and lead – the future of their communities. The success of this World Café should therefore be measured not only by the ideas we share, but by the actions those ideas inspire after the Summit.

Moderated by:



JAUME GOMILA SAURA

Vice President, IGCAT, Spain

Jaume Gomila Saura is a philologist, teacher and cultural manager. He holds professional qualifications in Music and Theatre, as well as postgraduate degrees in Education and Literary Studies from the University of Barcelona. Throughout his career, he has worked across all five major arts disciplines, as well as in the heritage sector.

A career civil servant with the Government of the Balearic Islands, he has played a key role in the

organisation of arts education programmes. He served as Director of the Public Library and Historical Archive of Mahon (2014-2015) and later as Director General for Culture of the Government of the Balearic Islands (2015-2017).

He is an active member of numerous organisations, NGOs and public bodies and currently serves as President of the Adult Schools of Minorca.

"Rehumanisation through gastronomy involves, without paternalism, giving the next generation the means to secure a life worth living, a heritage worth carrying forward and a planet still worth inhabiting."



NORMA CRISTINA BOCK

Americas Coordinator, IGCAT, Ecuador

Norma Bock is a strategic leader in the global meetings and tourism industry. With over 20 years of experience, she has designed and positioned destinations through congresses, international events, and purposeful experiences. Of Ecuadorian-German heritage, she combines a structured approach with deep cultural sensitivity to facilitate high-level dialogue among public, private, and academic stakeholders.

Educated in Ecuador, Germany, and Spain, Norma is a trilingual professional with a strong track record in securing, organizing, and developing global congresses, trade shows, and events. She has held leadership roles across the public, private, and academic sectors, representing Ecuador and Quito on the international stage.

In these capacities, she spearheaded efforts to attract and develop international events for Ecuador, helping to position Quito among Latin America's top 10 destinations—according to ICCA rankings—for several consecutive years.

She has collaborated with international organizations such as MPI and SITE. Serving as SITE's Sustainability Director for South America, she promotes responsible practices within the global events industry and supports the transition toward more sustainable models aligned with initiatives like Net Zero Carbon Events.

Driven by a strong sense of community, Norma fosters collaboration, listens to ideas, and turns them into reality with practicality and efficiency. She also champions social projects focused on preserving cultural heritage, empowering Ecuadorian artisan women, and advancing regenerative tourism.

As part of her commitment to education, she donated a family library containing over 25,000 volumes to support the learning and development of future generations from low-income backgrounds.

Her leadership style blends Ecuadorian warmth, German precision, strategic vision, and a humanitarian spirit, establishing her as an influential figure in the meetings industry.

"Gastronomy is the most powerful language for connecting territory, culture, and development. When strategically articulated, it becomes a global platform for identity and transformation."

MESA 1: JUVENTUD, SECTOR PRIMARIO Y GASTRONOMÍA

Explorar cómo la gastronomía puede transformar la agricultura, la pesca y la producción primaria en opciones de vida atractivas, viables y con propósito para las nuevas generaciones.

- ¿De qué manera la gastronomía puede restablecer el vínculo de los jóvenes con la tierra y el mar, posicionando al sector primario como un futuro deseable y prestigioso?
- ¿Cuáles son las competencias críticas que requieren hoy los jóvenes para liderar un sector primario innovador?
- ¿Cómo pueden los chefs y la cadena gastronómica actuar como catalizadores para añadir valor exponencial a los productos de origen?
- ¿Qué barreras impiden el acceso de los jóvenes?

RETO:

Compartir cinco propuestas concretas para empoderar a la juventud en el sector primario.

PRESIDENTE:



DR. LUIS ANDRADE

Docente de ESPAM & Slow Food ALMA, IGCAT Expert, Ecuador

Experto en los campos del turismo, el desarrollo sostenible y el geoturismo, interpretación del paisaje, la geografía y los espacios; con más de 30 años de experiencia en Gestión, Cooperación Internacional, enseñanza y actividades enfocadas en la comunidad.

VOCES:



MICHAEL JAIR LOOR PALMA

Dirigente estudiantil y voluntario Slow Food ALMA, Ecuador

Especialista en Activismo y Desarrollo Comunitario e Institucional, cuenta con una destacada trayectoria en el sector social, liderando de forma voluntaria proyectos de intervención orientados al desarrollo sostenible y la participación ciudadana.



ARIEL MARIANO WILLIAMS ZAMBRANO

Ganadería San Marcos, Ecuador

Una persona apasionada por la naturaleza, la ganadería, la comida sana y el cuidado del medio ambiente mediante sistemas agroecológicos especialmente en ganadería.



LILIBETH LUZMILA PÁRRAGA BASURTO

Voluntaria, Slow Food Alma, Ecuador

Tecnóloga en gastronomía, dedicada desde pequeña a la repostería y la creación de platillos.



CHEF VALENTINA ÁLVAREZ

Coordinadora Gastronómica-Chef Ejecutiva, Iche Escuela-Restaurante-Lab, Ecuador

Cocinera tradicional, autodidacta, investigadora fundamentada en la ciencia ancestral. Enfoca su trabajo en la revalorización de la alimentación y cultura alimentaria de la Región de Manabí, con un especial trabajo con mujeres y jóvenes de comunidades locales.



PATRICIO ESPÍN

Especialista en Agricultura, Bienestar Rural y Territorio, Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura-IIICA, Ecuador

Lidera los proyectos de Cooperación Internacional en el ámbito de desarrollo sostenible y productivo, desarrollando y fortaleciendo los emprendimientos de organizaciones productoras.



SERGIO RIUDAVETS

Agricultor propietario - Productes Ecològics Santo Domingo, Top 50 Farmers, Menorca, European Region of Gastronomy 2022, Spain

Desde hace más de una década, Sergio se ha dedicado a comprender los ciclos naturales y a perfeccionar las técnicas de horticultura ecológica, con el objetivo de devolver al suelo la vida que nos brinda con cada cosecha. Desde su finca de Punta Prima (Sant Lluís, Menorca), trabaja siguiendo una filosofía clara: no nos limitamos a producir alimentos, sino que restauramos el ecosistema.

RELATORA:



PROF. MÓNICA PULIDO

Asesora Política Cocinas tradicionales de Colombia, Repipi de Colombia y Unidad Técnica de Ibercocinas, IGCAT Expert, Colombia

Consultora internacional en patrimonio vivo con énfasis en prácticas tradicionales alimentarias y culinarias, con una experiencia de más de 12 años en el sector cultural donde se ha desempeñado en el diseño e implementación de políticas públicas y proyectos socioculturales.

TABLE 2: YOUTH, CLIMATE CHANGE, REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE AND GASTRONOMY

To explore how gastronomy can inspire young people to engage in regenerative agriculture, climate-resilient food systems and primary production as attractive, viable and meaningful careers.

- How can gastronomy reconnect young people with the land and sea, while responding to the challenges of climate change?
- What skills do young people need to contribute to regenerative agriculture and climate-resilient food production today?
- How can chefs and gastronomy add value to regenerative, local and climate-smart primary products?
- What prevents young people from entering regenerative agriculture and climate-resilient primary production?

TASK:

Provide five concrete ideas on how to empower youth in regenerative agriculture and climate-resilient primary production through gastronomy.

CHAIR:



JERRY SPOONER

Executive Director, Regenerative Vanua, IGCAT Expert, Vanuatu, World Region of Gastronomy 2027, Vanuatu

Jerry Spooner is the co founder of Regenerative Vanua, working to restore ecosystems and strengthen Pacific communities through the principles of vanua—the deep connection between land, people, culture, and spirit. His work brings together regenerative agriculture, gastronomy, and agritourism to support resilient local economies and celebrate place-based food systems.

VOICES:



CHADLEY HOLLAS

Chair, Global Agritourism Network, USA

Chadley Hollas is the founder of Cultivating Tourism, a consultancy that works at the intersection of agritourism development, nature-based tourism, and rural livelihoods, and co-founder of the Global Agritourism Network (GAN), a collaboration working to define, document, and strengthen agritourism worldwide.



KATHARINA HÄNNI

Administrator and Cofounder, BioFarmland, Agricultural engineer, Banat, European Region of Gastronomy 2028, Romania

Katharina is an Agricultural Engineer on her own organic Farm BIOFARMLAND and Food Engineer in her own organic manufacturing unit: BIOFARMLAND MANUFACTURA. She has founded CALEA NATURALA, a non-profit association, in order to promote a lifestyle in harmony with nature, and started building an ecovillage and educational center.



LUCAS OSHUN

Director and Founder, Regeneration Field Institute, USA/Ecuador

Born and raised in Northern California, Lucas has been working in Central and South America since 2008 and in Ecuador since 2011. As an educator, agroforester and supply chain specialist, he studies the connections between market access, ecosystem and soil restoration and the future of agriculture and ecosystem services in the tropics.



DR. ERECIA HEPBURN

Associate Professor, University of The Bahamas, Bahamas

An agricultural scientist, educator, researcher, and policy advocate with more than two decades of experience across higher education, agricultural development, food security, climate resilience, and public policy, she works to strengthen the linkages among agriculture, tourism, climate change, education, and sustainable development throughout The Bahamas and the wider Caribbean.



ENG. AGATHA TOMMASI

Advisor to the Environment and Sustainability Secretariat of the Government of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Environmental engineer with a master's degree in Metrology, Quality, Innovation, and Sustainability. Throughout her professional career, she has specialized in sustainability, water resource management, environmental policy, and international cooperation, working to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge, public policy, and action at the local level.



SPIROS BALANTINOS

Deputy Governor for Tourism and Primary Sector Integration, Crete, European Region of Gastronomy 2026, Greece

Spiros' work focuses on strengthening the links between local food production, hospitality and gastronomy, combining practical business experience with regional policymaking. A fourth-generation cheesemaker from Chania, he has worked across production, quality control, sales and distribution in his family's traditional Cretan dairy business. His experience spans both the agrifood and hospitality sectors, providing a direct understanding of their challenges and shared opportunities.

RAPPORTEUR:



PEPE FASSOS

Director, Five Sixty Farms, IGCAT Expert, Australia

Father of 8 kids, Husband and Regenerative Farmer. Director of award winning Five Sixty Farms, Co-Founder of Agritourism Venue - Belong At Five Sixty, Agritourism Consultant for Regenerative Vanua and Chef and active committee member of the infamous Byron Farmers Market Australia.

MESA 3: JUVENTUD Y FUTURO DE LA HOSTELERÍA

Redefinir la hostelería como un ecosistema de dignidad, creatividad y crecimiento integral para las nuevas generaciones.

- ¿Cómo puede la hostelería ser un espacio donde los jóvenes crezcan y prosperen, en lugar de sufrir desgaste profesional?
- ¿Cómo perciben hoy los jóvenes el trabajo en la hostelería?
- ¿Qué cambios son necesarios en las condiciones laborales, la formación y las oportunidades de desarrollo profesional?
- ¿Cómo puede la gastronomía tradicional revalorizar las profesiones de la hostelería?
- ¿Qué ejemplos de éxito existen actualmente?

RETO:

Hacer una lista de cinco cambios necesarios para una hostelería atractiva para la juventud.

PRESIDENTE:



CHEF EDGAR LEON

Embajador Gastronómico del Ecuador, World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS), Ecuador

Investigador, escritor, y embajador de la cocina ecuatoriana, Chef Edgar Leon tiene años de experiencia en el ámbito de la gastronomía, trabajando como chef, decano, embajador de marca, y más.

VOCES:



MICHELLE CHASING CHÁVEZ

Asistente de producción, Burning World Pottery & Representante de Slow Food ALMA, Ecuador

Su interés por el turismo y el desarrollo territorial la llevó a participar como voluntaria en distintos espacios vinculados a la cultura, la gastronomía y el patrimonio, entre ellos ALMA (Alimentación Manabita), donde promovió la cultura alimentaria, las tradiciones y el patrimonio culinario de Manabí.



JESUS RODRÍGUEZ ZAMBRANO

Voluntario Slow Food ALMA, Ecuador

Un joven de 20 años de familia ganadera, Jesus hace huertos agroecológicos, bosques productivos comestibles y sostenibles, y siembra sintrópica en fincas ganaderas para hacer recuperación ecológica de áreas. De momento está aprendiendo a hacer alimento de bloques multinutricionales para animales en época de sequía.



CHEF SANTIAGO GRANDA

Director & CEO, Instituto Superior Tecnológico La Escuela de los Chefs, Ecuador

Santiago Granda León es una de las voces más influyentes de la gastronomía ecuatoriana contemporánea. Chef, educador y comunicador, ha fusionado su formación en Cocina Internacional, Gastronomía y Comunicación Corporativa para convertirse en un líder del sector culinario y un promotor incansable de los sabores del Ecuador.



PROF. ESTEBAN TAPIA

Consejero Internacional de Slow Food para la Zona Andina, Ecuador

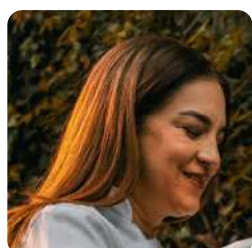
Esteban Tapia es profesor de la Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) y consejero internacional de Slow Food para la región andina. Miembro del Consejo de Slow Food desde 2016, su labor combina la docencia, la investigación y el compromiso con la gastronomía como motor de desarrollo sostenible.



ANGELICA NAYELY PEÑARRIETA CHILA

Dueña, Restaurante Lento pero Seguro Con Dios, Ecuador

Angélica Nayely Peñarrieta Chila tiene 25 años y es propietaria de su propio negocio de comidas, "Lento pero Seguro Con Dios", un restaurante ubicado en Chone, en la vía a Quito, junto a la cooperativa Proacafrucho. Su experiencia tiene sus raíces en el campo y en los valores que le ha transmitido su familia. Espera crear oportunidades para sí misma e inspirar a otros jóvenes a desarrollar sus propias iniciativas y construir un futuro vinculado a sus raíces locales.

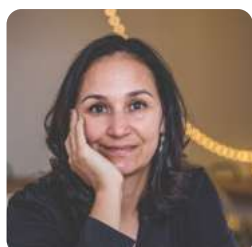


DRA. JENNY GARCIA

Fundadora y Dirección General, La Hueca con Sabor, Cocina Ecuatoriana en México, México

En 2007 fundó en la Ciudad de México La Hueca con Sabor, un proyecto culinario dedicado a preservar, difundir y proyectar las raíces y tradiciones ecuatorianas en el extranjero. Su trabajo integra el uso del tradicional Horno Manabita (desde 2023) y el traspaso generacional de este legado junto a su hija.

RELATORA:



KARISSA BECERRA

Fundadora y Directora General, La Revolución, Coordinadora del Programa de Gastronomía, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP), Perú

Karissa es la fundadora y directora de La Revolución, una asociación sin ánimo de lucro que enseña a niños y adultos a comer y a pensar mediante una metodología innovadora de educación alimentaria. A través de la organización, promueve campañas y proyectos educativos como Cocina Poderosa.

TABLE 4: YOUTH AND THE FUTURE OF HOSPITALITY

To rethink hospitality as a sector of dignity, creativity and long-term opportunity for young people.

- How can hospitality become a space where young people thrive, not burn out?
- How do young people currently perceive hospitality work?
- What needs to change in working conditions, training, and career paths?
- How can traditional gastronomy elevate hospitality roles?
- What examples already work?

TASK:

Provide five concrete ideas on how to empower youth through creative methods.

CHAIR:



DR. FARES BRAIZAT

Chairman, NAMA Strategic Intelligence Solutions, IGCAT Expert, Jordan

Fares Braizat is a leading regional expert on public policy, with distinguished expertise spanning tourism, governance, the nexus between security and economic development, and survey research. His career reflects a unique blend of academic scholarship and high-level public service, with contributions across international and local universities, think tanks, civil society organizations, and both the public and private sectors.

VOICES:



OSCAR EKPONIMO

Founder/CEO, Chowberry Inc, IGCAT Expert, Akwa Ibom, nominated World Region of Gastronomy 2030, Nigeria

Oscar Ekponimo is a food systems innovator, AI researcher, and internationally recognized advocate for sustainable food systems, gastronomy, and nutrition access. He is the Founder of Chowberry, an initiative that began by tackling food waste and food insecurity and is now evolving into an AI-powered global nutrition infrastructure.



KRISTIINA TAMMETS

CEO of Tartu County Development Association, Estonia

Kristiina Tammets is a rural development expert with over 15 years of experience in Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) and international cooperation. Kristiina has extensive experience in building and managing local, national, and European networks, bringing together municipalities, businesses, NGOs, universities, and development agencies.



GÉRALDINE ARTIGNY

Head of Gastronomy and Spiritualism, Martinique Tourism Authority, Martinique, candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2030, Martinique

Géraldine Artigny applies her expertise to Gastronomy Tourism development, shaping the strategy that structures and grows Martinique's culinary tourism offer by working closely with local stakeholders, producers, chefs, distilleries to craft authentic and unforgettable experiences. Her mission is to design and implement actions that showcase culinary and rum heritage while strengthening Martinique's appeal on the international stage.



NNEKA A. NURSE

Culinary & Culture Strategist, Best Dressed Plate LLC (BDP), IGCAT Expert, Caribbean

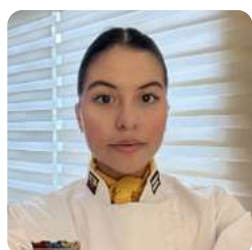
Nneka Nurse is a culinary and culture strategist, curator, and founder of Best Dressed Plate. Working across tourism, hospitality, media, and live experiences, she helps destinations and institutions translate culinary culture into meaningful visibility, visitor value, and long-term opportunity.



CHEF RODRIGO PACHECO

Founder of Bocavaldia Research and Development Restaurant, Manabí, Ecuador

Rodrigo Pacheco is an Ecuadorian chef, environmental leader, and internationally recognised figure in sustainable gastronomy. His work explores the power of gastronomy as a tool to protect biodiversity, transform food systems, and strengthen the relationship between people, culture, and nature.



EMA CEDEÑO MORETA

Student, Universidad Técnica de Manabí, Ecuador

Ema Cedeño Moreta is a culinary professional currently training at the Technical University of Manabí. Driven by a deep passion for gastronomy and a strong sense of connection to her Manabí identity, she seeks to carry her region's culinary heritage into the future by reviving the traditional techniques, flavors, and products that define it.

RAPPORTEUR:



IDA LEE-WRIGHT

Chief Communications & Marketing Officer, Oi! Mat og Drikke AS, IGCAT Expert, Trondheim-Trøndelag, European Region of Gastronomy 2022, Norway

With a background in strategic communication, destination development and brand building, Ida is passionate about positioning gastronomy as a catalyst for stronger communities, resilient food systems and international collaboration. She works at the intersection of gastronomy, regional identity and sustainable development, exploring how food can create social, cultural and economic value far beyond the plate.

MESA 5: EDUCACIÓN GASTRONÓMICA Y APRENDIZAJE PARA LA VIDA

Repensar los sistemas educativos para que la gastronomía sea una vía de competencias, identidad y empleo.

- ¿Qué deberían aprender los jóvenes sobre alimentación y gastronomía antes de los 18 años?
- ¿Qué saberes alimentarios faltan hoy en la educación?
- ¿Cómo enseñar conocimientos gastronómicos tradicionales?
- ¿Quién debe enseñar (chefs, mayores, agricultores, docentes)?
- ¿Cómo conectar educación y empleo real?

■ RETO:

Preparar una lista de cinco propuestas para transformar la educación alimentaria y gastronómica.

■ PRESIDENTA:



CHEF LAURA ROSANO

Chef, Docente y Investigadora, Red de agroecología del Uruguay, Chacra Ibira Pitá, IGCAT Expert, Uruguay

Laura Rosano, postgrado en Dieta Mediterránea y Cocina Contemporánea en la Universidad de Barcelona, es una cocinera especializada en cocina regional y mediterránea y propietaria de la Chacra Agroecológica Ibira Pitá, producción de frutos nativos, centro de educación y experiencias gastronómicas.

■ VOCES:



STHEFANY SOFÍA GARCÍA MUGUERZA

Emprendedora y embajadora juvenil gastronómica de la FAO, Ecuador

Sofía García comparte sus conocimientos integrando la gastronomía y los entornos naturales a través de la comunidad Slow Food ALMA en proyectos como Slow Food Negroni. Impulsa junto a su familia el desarrollo de la Quinta Sofía, un espacio dedicado a la reproducción de la gastronomía tradicional manabita dentro de un entorno agroecológico.



CHEF MARÍA FERNANDA SALAS PUENTE

Coordinadora Académica y Profesora, Escuela Politécnica Superior del Litoral, Guayaquil, Ecuador

Consultora en alimentos y bebidas, hospitalidad y turismo, con 22 años de experiencia liderando proyectos de consultoría, transformación operativa y fortalecimiento organizacional para organizaciones. Su experiencia combina visión, conocimiento técnico y capacidad de implementación para diseñar modelos de gestión que optimizan la operación, fortalecen el servicio y generan valor sostenible.



CHEF MARIANELLA ORLANDO ARTEAGA

Gestora Gastronómica, Restaurante "Casa Manaba", Ecuador

Marianella Orlando, gestora, investigadora y promotora de la gastronomía manabita, dedicada a preservar y difundir el legado culinario de su tierra. Desde su restaurante Casa Manaba, ubicado en Guayaquil, Ecuador, promueve la riqueza gastronómica de Manabí, ofreciendo platos elaborados con ingredientes locales y recetas patrimoniales que reflejan la identidad de la región.



ROBINSON ORTIZ

Servidor Público, Programa Futuros Urbanos, Manabí, Ecuador

Formado profesionalmente en una institución pública Alfaro como Licenciado en Marketing, Robinson busca encontrar espacios que promuevan acciones positivas para las y los jóvenes del territorio Manabita, y transmitan los saberes y costumbres tradicionales de la tierra manabita.



NANCY PAREDES CRUZ

Chef Ejecutiva de Bongo Nancy restaurante & Embajadora gastronómica de la Red de Cocineras Manabitas, España

Nacida en Ecuador y de nacionalidad española, su trayectoria gastronómica comenzó en 1999, trabajando en reconocidos establecimientos de la capital española, hasta emprender su propio proyecto gastronómico en 2004. Desde Bongo Nancy Restaurante, trabaja por preservar, promover y posicionar la cocina ecuatoriana y manabita, convirtiendo la gastronomía en un puente cultural entre Ecuador y España.

RELATOR:



CHEF ANDRÉ SCHREI

Director Académico, Escuela de Gastronomía UNITEC, Honduras

Erik André Schrei Godoy es académico, investigador y profesional de la gestión gastronómica. Su trabajo se enfoca en la integración de ciencia, técnica, gestión, innovación e identidad cultural dentro de la educación gastronómica. Ha desarrollado investigaciones y proyectos relacionados con patrimonio alimentario, análisis sensorial, productos tradicionales y experiencias gastronómicas.

TABLE 6: GASTRONOMY EDUCATION AND LEARNING FOR LIFE

To rethink education systems so gastronomy becomes a pathway to skills, identity and employment.

- What should young people learn about food and gastronomy before they turn 18?
- What food knowledge is missing from current education?
- How can traditional food knowledge be taught?
- Who should teach it (chefs, elders, farmers, educators)?
- How do we link education to real jobs?

TASK:

Provide a list of five recommendations to transform food and gastronomy education.

CHAIR:



CÁIT NOONE

Head of School Global Enterprises, ATU, IGCAT Expert, Galway-West of Ireland, European Region of Gastronomy 2018, Ireland

Cáit is an internationally experienced educator, having played a significant role in institutional development, contributing to key areas such as university integration, faculty formation, and quality assurance. She has contributed to the Galway European Capital of Culture Steering Committee and the Galway European Region of Gastronomy Executive, and served as the higher education representative on the Irish Careers Oversight Group for the Hospitality and Tourism industry.

VOICES:



JACQUELINE FASSOS

Co-owner, Belong at Five Sixty & Owner, Hairdresser and Make-up Artist, Salon 5 Sixty, Australia

Jacqueline Fassos is part of Belong at Five Sixty, a family business dedicated to creating a place where people can reconnect, grow, and experience a slower, more intentional way of living. They believe the greatest education comes through real-life experiences—growing nourishing food, caring for the land, building strong mindsets, and creating meaningful connections with nature and each other.



SUNANTHEE KANCHANAWAT

Professor, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, IGCAT Expert, Hong Kong/Thailand

In 2018, Sunanthee moved to Hong Kong to join the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, specializing in Food and Beverage subjects. She leverages her extensive gastronomy background to inspire students, emphasizing food as a tool for cultural education and connection.



ORAZIO BELLETTINI

Executive Director, Fuegos Foundation, IGCAT Ambassador, Ecuador

Orazio currently leads FUEGOS Foundation, an Ecuadorian civil society organisation that promotes gastronomy as a driver of transformation for people and territories. He has 15 years of experience facilitating strategic dialogue at regional and national levels, as well as multisector co-creation processes in several Latin American countries.



DAYANARY LUCIA VERGARA SALCEDO

Gastronomy Student, Universidad Tecnica de Manabí & Regional Young Chef Winner, Manabí, Ecuador

Since the beginning of her academic training, Dayanary has demonstrated a great passion for Ecuadorian cuisine, with a particular interest in culinary innovation and the revitalization of the products and culinary traditions of Manabí. Her goal is to contribute to the development of Ecuadorian gastronomy through research, creativity, and the creation of culinary experiences that highlight the country's identity, culture, and rich flavors.



DEDRICK TAYLOR JR.

Assistant Pastry Chef, Hepburnsgreengroup, Bahamas

A young aspiring chef with a strong passion for culinary arts, who finds inspiration for dishes using local ingredients and transforming them while maintaining their authentic significance. Dedrick is a descendant of Cat Island Bahamas and an active member of St. Agnes Church.

RAPPORTEUR:



DR. SIMONA NEUMANN

Director General, Visit Timis - Association for Tourism Promotion and Development in Timis County, IGCAT Expert, Banat, European Region of Gastronomy 2028, Romania

Dr. Simona Neumann is an international cultural manager and public diplomacy expert with over two decades of experience in leading major European cultural and regional development projects. Her work focuses on the intersection of culture, diplomacy, gastronomy, youth development, sustainable tourism, and international cooperation.

MESA 7: JUVENTUD, GASTRONOMÍA Y SALUD

Conectar la gastronomía con la salud física, mental y comunitaria de la juventud.

- ¿Cómo puede la alimentación tradicional mejorar la salud juvenil en lugar de deteriorarla?
- ¿Cómo afectan los sistemas alimentarios actuales a la salud?
- ¿Qué papel puede desempeñar la gastronomía en la prevención y el bienestar?
- ¿Cómo pueden los jóvenes ser embajadores de salud alimentaria?
- ¿Qué políticas apoyan dietas tradicionales saludables?

RETO:

Listar cinco acciones clave que vinculen gastronomía, juventud y salud.

PRESIDENTE:



DR. JORDI TRESSERRAS

Consultor de la UNESCO consultant, Embajador de Food Capitals y Experto de IGCAT, España

Experto en gastronomía y desarrollo local a través de la cultura, la economía creativa y el turismo sostenible, Jordi actúa como consultor de UNESCO en cultura, turismo y desarrollo sostenible.

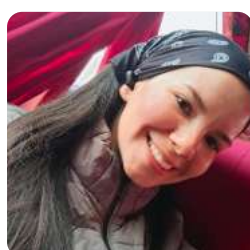
VOCES:



JORGE ANDREI FLORES DE VALGAS JÁCOME

Voluntario, Slow Food ALMA, Ecuador

Jorge es representante legal de San Pascasio Agroecológico y miembro de la Asociación de Ganaderos Agroecológicos Planeta Verde. Desde la Finca San Pascasio –un predio familiar dedicado a la producción sostenible de bovinos y porcinos– junto a su padre impulsa un modelo agroecológico que entiende la alimentación desde el enfoque One Health: la salud del suelo, los animales, las personas y el territorio como un solo ciclo benéfico.



STEFANY VITERI ZAMBRANO

Joven fundadora de la Fundación REVA y voluntaria de Slow Food ALMA, Ecuador

Ingeniera ambiental, emprendedora y fundadora de la fundación REVA, comprometida con el bienestar ambiental, social y económico con las comunidades. activamente participa en restauración y agroecología.



LIZET BAUTISTA PATZI

Coordinadora de Proyecto, Comunidad Slow Food Recuperación del Patrimonio Biocultural de Colquiri, Bolivia

Lizet Bautista Patzi es gastronoma boliviana del pueblo indígena Aymara, trabaja en la revitalización del patrimonio alimentario, la agroecología y el fortalecimiento de los sistemas alimentarios indígenas. Ha liderado procesos comunitarios de investigación participativa, recuperación de semillas nativas, restauración ecológica, salvaguarda de conocimientos ancestrales y promoción de la soberanía alimentaria con el apoyo del Fondo AYNÍ del Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas y la Red de Pueblos Indígenas de Slow Food.



JUDITH ORLANDO

Asesora Gastronómica, Ecuador

Su pasión por la gastronomía empezó siendo muy joven, aprendiendo junto a su madre y abuela. María Judith ha transmitido sus conocimientos a sus familia y amigos, y también al mundo: fué participante y gestora en la elaboración del libro 200 Recetas, Sus Relatos y Secretos.



PROF. LEONOR MERCEDES VILLACRESES PONCE

Docente, ULEAM, Ecuador

Docente universitaria de la Carrera de Gastronomía, chef de partida doble e investigadora, con más de 10 años de experiencia en el ámbito gastronómico, académico y profesional. Cuenta con experiencia en procesos culinarios, gestión gastronómica, investigación y docencia, destacándose por su enfoque en la innovación, el fortalecimiento de las competencias profesionales y la transferencia de conocimientos desde el campo laboral hacia el aula universitaria.



ABG. MARÍA ISABEL GUILLÉN MENDOZA

Vicealcaldesa de Portoviejo, Manabí, Ecuador

Abg. María Isabel Guillén Mendoza nació y vive en la ciudad de Portoviejo, Provincia de Manabí. Es Doctora en Odontología, Abogada de la República de Ecuador, y activista sobre los derechos Humanos y la Salud en el ámbito social.

RELATORA:



CHEF CECILIA CEDEÑO

Chef Ejecutiva, Muya Cocina, Ecuador

Cocinera Manabita, gestora cultural, y formadora de emprendedores gastronómicos.

TABLE 8: YOUTH, GASTRONOMY AND HEALTH

To connect gastronomy with physical, mental and community health for young people.

- How can traditional food improve youth health instead of harming it?
- How do current food systems affect youth health?
- What role can gastronomy play in prevention and well-being?
- How can young people become food health ambassadors?
- What policies support healthy traditional diets?

TASK:

Present five key actions to support better gastronomy for youth and health.

CHAIR:



ROSA RODRÍGUEZ

Executive Director, Heifer Ecuador Foundation, Ecuador

Born in Quito, Ecuador, Rosa Rodríguez has more than 25 years of experience in development processes working alongside rural populations, Indigenous peoples, mangrove communities and social organisations across the country. She is an educational communicator and holds two specialisations: Communication for Development and Local Development with a Gender Perspective.

VOICES:



RAISA TORRES

Founder, Tierra Viva Cacao, Ecuador

Raisa Torres is an Ecuadorian environmental engineer with a Master's degree in Environmental Law. Through Tierra Viva, she focuses on regenerative agroforestry, cacao quality, centralized fermentation and post-harvest practices, while strengthening connections between farmers, origin, and specialty chocolate markets.



CHEF ILYÉS LEVENTE

Chef, PÁVA Restaurant, Harghita, European Region of Gastronomy 2027, Romania

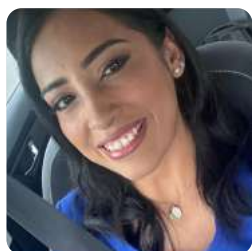
Ilyés is a professional chef in Transylvania, Romania. He works as a creative chef, preparing the seasonal menus and offers for PÁVA, in Odorheiu Secuiesc, Harghita region. He also works in the Taste of Transylvania, preparing gastro festivals around the country and abroad.



CAMILLA DIGRE

Festival manager, Oi! Mat og Drikke AS& Project Manager; Norway Seafood Festival & Trondheim Brewery Festival, Trondheim-Trøndelag, European Region of Gastronomy 2022, Norway

Camilla Digre leads the development of the Norway Seafood Festival—a national platform that showcases Norwegian seafood while inspiring future generations to explore careers in gastronomy, hospitality and food culture. Representing a new generation of festival leaders, Camilla is passionate about creating meaningful experiences that connect children and young people with chefs, producers, educators and the wider hospitality sector.



PROF. IRENE ROSARIO RODRÍGUEZ PINCAY

Professor, ULEAM, Ecuador

Irene Rosario Rodríguez Pincay has experience in teaching, research, and academic management in the fields of tourism, hospitality, and gastronomy. Her research focuses on traditional cuisines, cultural heritage, hospitality, and sustainable tourism.



BYRON LECTONG

Graduate, Universidad Técnica de Manabí, Ecuador

Byron Lectong holds a degree in Gastronomy from the Technical University of Manabí. Throughout his academic and professional career, he has focused his efforts on showcasing Manabí cuisine, notably reaching the finals of the Gastronomic Tourism Competition and actively collaborating on the Guinness World Record attempt for the world's largest *viche*.



JEAN-JOCELYN SAINRIMAT

PLP Vocational High School Teacher, Ministry of National Education and CMT, Martinique

Jean-Jocelyn Sainrimat is a culinary techniques instructor with over 20 years of experience in education and high-end gastronomy. Holding a vocational degree in production techniques, he shares his passion across the Caribbean and mainland France working with hospitality schools and undertaking international assignments.

RAPPORTEUR:



LEVAN KHARASHTIVILI

Founding Dean, School of Arts and Cultural Heritage - New Vision University, IGCAT Expert, Georgia

Levan Kharatishvili is a cultural policy expert, educator, and institutional leader with 20+ years of experience in public governance, international education, culture, heritage, and creative industries development.

MESA 9: EMPRENDIMIENTO GASTRONÓMICO JUVENIL

Explorar la gastronomía como una vía económica viable y sostenible para la juventud.

- ¿Cómo pueden los jóvenes vivir de la gastronomía sin perder sus valores?
- ¿Qué modelos de negocio funcionan para jóvenes?
- ¿Cómo combinar tradición e innovación?
- ¿Qué acceso a financiación falta?
- ¿Cómo pueden los territorios apoyar las empresas lideradas por jóvenes?

■ RETO:

Compartir cinco políticas o estrategias originales que pueden ayudar al emprendimiento gastronómico juvenil.

■ PRESIDENTA:



ANA MARIA ALEGRIA SERNA

Científica de alimentos, Future Food Institute, Colombia

Alegria Serna es científica de alimentos especializada en investigación y desarrollo (I+D), innovación sostenible y divulgación científica. Su trabajo explora los ingredientes alimentarios y los compuestos bioactivos a nivel molecular, combinando la ciencia de los alimentos, la innovación y la sostenibilidad para contribuir a sistemas alimentarios mundiales más resilientes.

■ VOCES:



LUCÍA FERNÁNDEZ DE GENNA

Presidente Ejecutiva - Cámara de Comercio de Manta & Casa Rosada, Ecuador

Empresaria manabita, referente del emprendimiento femenino en Ecuador y pionera en el liderazgo gremial e institucional. Reconocida a nivel nacional e internacional por organismos como la OIT, destaca por su firme liderazgo, su defensa de causas justas y su compromiso inquebrantable con el desarrollo social y económico de Manabí.



PROF. MARCOS ALFONSO DURAN GUZÑAY

Docente ULEAM, Manabí, Ecuador

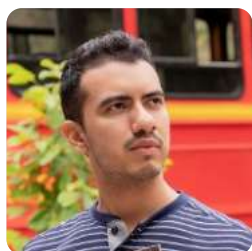
Profesional con formación académica y experiencia en el ámbito gastronómico, hotelero y educativo, orientado al fortalecimiento de los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje y al desarrollo de competencias en futuros profesionales de la gastronomía.



OMAR ALEXANDER TOAPANTA ZAMBRANO

Estudiante de Gastronomía en la Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador

Posee experiencia práctica en la producción y ejecución de platos fuertes tras su paso por el restaurante "Montuvia Raíces Ancestrales", donde destacó por el dominio de técnicas tradicionales aplicadas a la cocina de autor. Se distingue por su disciplina, aprendizaje rápido y un alto desempeño bajo presión en entornos de cocina profesional orientados a resultados de alto nivel.



LUIS ANGEL ALCIVAR VERA

Gerente y Fundador, Quinta Delicia, Ecuador

Soy emprendedor, videógrafo y fotógrafo ecuatoriano, cofundador de Quinta Delicia, una iniciativa dedicada a transformar el cacao fino de aroma en chocolates artesanales que reflejan la riqueza de nuestro territorio y el trabajo de quienes lo cultivan. Desde este buscamos demostrar que el chocolate puede convertirse en una herramienta para fortalecer las economías locales, conservar el patrimonio gastronómico y conectar a las personas con la historia detrás de cada cacao.



PROF. EMIL VIERA MANZO, MBA

Docente Investigador, ULEAM, Ecuador

Su trayectoria profesional se centra en la docencia de pregrado y posgrado, la investigación científica, la gestión académica y el desarrollo de proyectos de extensión e innovación en gastronomía, hostelería, turismo y seguridad alimentaria. Es autor de artículos científicos y libros, y cuenta con amplia experiencia en el diseño y desarrollo de programas de maestría profesional en el campo del turismo.



NATHALY AÑAZCO CHAVEZ

Graduada, Universidad Técnica de Manabí, Ecuador

A lo largo de su formación y práctica profesional, Nathaly ha orientado su interés hacia la investigación culinaria, lo que la llevó a ser finalista en el Concurso de Turismo Gastronómico y a colaborar en el récord Guinness del viche más grande del mundo. Estas experiencias han alimentado su motivación por el rescate de la gastronomía perdida y la preservación de recetas ancestrales.



DR.H.C. JORGE MACCHIAVELLO

Delegado, Dirección de Turismo M.I. Municipio de Guayaquil, Ecuador

Dr.h.c Jorge Macchiavello es Presidente de la cámara de turismo de salinas, vicepresidente de la cámara de turismo del Guayas, Director de Turismo del Gobierno Provincial del Guayas, Subsecretario del Ministerio de Turismo del Ecuador, Asesor de la Dirección de Turismo del M.I. Municipio de Guayaquil, y Presidente de Skal Club Guayaquil.

RELATOR:



CARLOS ORTIZ

Fundador de Amanah - Preservando el Conocimiento Culinario para las Futuras Generaciones, Experto de IGCAT, México

Carlos Ortiz es el fundador de Amanah y el creador del Umami Markup Format (UMF), una especificación abierta que trata las recetas no como documentos, sino como artefactos de conocimiento estructurados que preservan su procedencia. Su investigación explora cómo registrar, recopilar y transmitir el patrimonio culinario a través de las generaciones sin despojar de su complejidad a los cocineros y comunidades de los que este proviene.

TABLE 10: YOUTH-LED GASTRONOMY ENTERPRISES

To explore gastronomy as a viable and sustainable economic pathway for youth.

- How can young people earn a living from gastronomy without losing its values?
- What business models work for youth?
- How can tradition and innovation coexist?
- What access to finance is missing?
- How can territories support youth enterprises?

TASK:

Share five original policies or strategies that could support youth food enterprises.

CHAIR:



PRAVALI VANGELI

Project Coordinator, UNESCO, France

Pravali Vangeti is an international cultural relations and heritage management professional at UNESCO's Living Heritage Entity. As coordinator of the project 'International Food Atlas and Digital Platform for safeguarding, promoting and transmitting foodways to future generations', Ms Vangeti leads capacity-building and policy research initiatives on the safeguarding of foodways as living heritage in 16 countries across 5 world regions.

VOICES:



ASUAO KIRIFI POUONO

Representative for Polynesian Countries, Pacific Regenerative Agritourism Network, IGCAT Expert, Samoa

Asua Kirifi Pouono is an Agricultural Scientist. He is the current President of the "Samoa Society of Agricultural Professionals (SSOAP), as well as a member of the Advisory Committee for Samoa's Business Incubator Centre at the Scientific Research Organization of Samoa (SROS). He provides technical support to the farming and agribusiness communities through various projects in the country, specifically in Cocoa Processing with a focus on new Startups.



LUISA VÉLEZ-SABANDO

Líder Better Life & Coordinadora Nacional del Programa AgroJoven, FAO, Ecuador

Luisa is an environmental Engineer with a Master's degree in Environmental Management and nationally accredited as an Environmental Consultant. She has experience in the planning and coordination of projects related to sustainable development, climate change adaptation, agrobiodiversity, governance, eco-gastronomic tourism, heritage, research, university teaching, editorial processes, and resource mobilisation.



RENESIS NIKOS

Director, Nursery of the Region of South Aegean & Head of the Animal Production Department of the Directorate of Primary Sector of Dodecanese South Aegean, World Region of Gastronomy candidate 2028, Greece

Renesis Nikos' professional experience combines agriculture, environmental education, public administration and regional development. A member of the National Association of Technological Agronomists of Greece, he brings extensive experience in coordination and stakeholder engagement.



MARCO ANDRADE

Founder of Pop2Go, Portoviejo, Ecuador

Marco Andrade is an Ecuadorian gelato master, entrepreneur, and founder of Pop 2Go, a brand through which he has developed a contemporary vision of artisanal gelato. His work is defined by the exploration of Ecuadorian ingredients and the application of advanced formulation techniques and innovative processes, transforming local flavors, products, and culinary memories into distinctive gelato creations.



JOVAN WILLIAM

Young chef, Comité Martiniquais du tourisme, Martinique

Jovan studied at Lycée Nord Caraïbe in Martinique, where he completed a vocational baccalaureate in Cuisine and graduated with honors. He continued my studies at FERRANDI Paris Saint-Gratien, studying Hospitality Management. In 2026, he received the *Légion d'honneur* in Martinique.



LAURA RUANA PAVON

Deputy Director General for Agrifood Enterprises, Quality and Gastronomy, Government of Catalonia; IGCAT Expert and Co-Director of Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025. Catalonia, World Region of Gastronomy 2025, Spain

Laura has nearly 20 years of experience in the Catalan public administration, with a strong focus on agricultural policy, agri-food industry development, food quality systems, and market organisation across the agri-food chain. She is responsible for the planning and coordination of policies related to the agri-food industry, food quality and differentiation schemes.

RAPPORTEUR:



LAMIA TEMIMI

Co-Founder, Sawa Taste of Tunisia, Cap Bon, World Region of Gastronomy awarded 2028, Tunisia

With a background in the hotel industry, international cooperation, and cultural promotion, Lamia has positioned Sawa as a leading reference for authentic, community-based travel in Tunisia. Committed to empowering local artisans and connecting people through food, Lamia designs immersive experiences that celebrate traditional recipes, contemporary Tunisian creativity, and the country's rich terroir, history, and hospitality.

MESA 11: GASTRONOMÍA E INCLUSIÓN SOCIAL

Explorar cómo la gastronomía puede incluir a jóvenes en situación de exclusión.

- ¿Cómo puede la comida generar pertenencia y oportunidades para todos los jóvenes?
- ¿Qué colectivos juveniles están excluidos?
- ¿Cómo puede la gastronomía generar dignidad y competencias?
- ¿Qué iniciativas inclusivas existen?
- ¿Qué tipo de apoyo es necesario?

■ RETO:

Compartir cinco propuestas de iniciativas gastronómicas inclusivas lideradas por jóvenes.

■ PRESIDENTA:

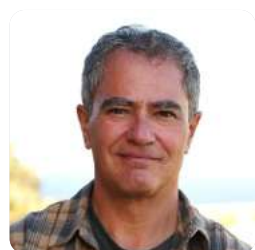


ESPERANZA NAVARRETE

Directora, 7 Caníbales, España

Esperanza Peláez Navarrete, periodista española, es directora de 7 Caníbales y parte del equipo de desarrollo de proyectos y detección de talento de Vocento Gastronomía. También es fundadora del Club Gastronómico Kilómetro Cero, empresa que ofrece actividades de ocio gastronómico desde la filosofía de preservar la cultura gastronómica local e impulsar las zonas rurales y el trabajo de las mujeres.

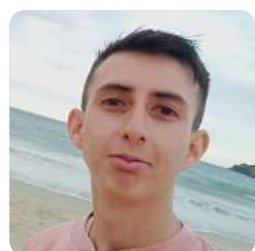
■ VOCES:



OMAR VALDEZ

Junta de IGCAT, Andorra/Argentina

Omar Valdez es miembro de la Junta Directiva de IGCAT y director ejecutivo de la UN Tourism Academy (anteriormente Fundación Themis de la OMT), con sede en Andorra. A través de su labor en IGCAT, aporta experiencia internacional en los ámbitos del turismo, la educación y la cooperación, apoyando la misión de la organización de vincular la gastronomía con la cultura, la creatividad y el bienestar de la comunidad.



JORGE DAVID MACÍAS VERA

Voluntario Slow Food ALMA, Ecuador

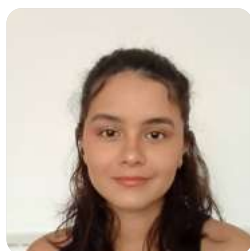
Inmerso en varios proyectos como AgroJoven Cacao, AgroJoven Chones liderados por la FAO, y Slow Food ALMA, Jorge trabaja con el cacao fino de aroma elaborando chocolates con polen, café, frutas y otros. Se enfoca en la conservación de cultivos agroforestales para evitar el deterioro de los suelos y ecosistemas, trabajando con polinizadores y aprovechando las bondades que nos dan.



LUIS ÁNGEL PALADINES

Voluntario ALMA Slow Food - Cholos por el Mar, Manabí, Ecuador

Luis Paladines fundó Cholos por el Mar, un proyecto donde codiseñan soluciones multifacéticas e integrales de sostenibilidad pesquera. Coordina también el proyecto Iluminar el Mar, probando luces LED para reducir la pesca incidental de especies marinas en peligro de extinción. La misión de Luis es empoderar y visualizar a las comunidades pesqueras como aliadas vitales en la protección de los ecosistemas marinos.



ARIANA VICTORIA ZAMBRANO ANDRADE

Estudiante Emprendedor, Slow Food ALMA, Manabí, Ecuador

Ariana Victoria actualmente cursa sus estudios universitarios, en el quinto semestre de la Carrera de Derecho en la Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (ULEAM). Con experiencia de emprendedor desde hace 3 años elaborando panes, dulces, comidas; consta de una cafetería familiar desde el año 2012.



LUPE GUTIERREZ LOOR

Gerente De Calidad, Herencia Manabita, Ecuador

Cocinera enamorada de la historia y gastronomía ancestral manabita, Lupe consta con 9 años de experiencia como empresaria, socia de la empresa Abupiedad y dueña de la marca La Herencia Manabita, encargada de las recetas ancestrales e historias de cada plato.



DIEGO ALBERTO CHEVEZ NUÑEZ

Estudiante, Escuela de Gastronomía UNITEC, Honduras

Diego tiene un pequeño emprendimiento de repostería, realizando caterings y trabajando en el área de cocina. Al crear sus platos se inspira principalmente en sus raíces hondureñas, los recuerdos de su familia y la creatividad que siempre ha estado presente en su vida. Le gusta experimentar con ingredientes, técnicas y diferentes formas de presentar la gastronomía, buscando que cada preparación tenga algo de su identidad.



DRA. JACKELINE ROSALÍA TERRANOVA RUIZ

Rectora Subrogante, Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí (ULEAM), Ecuador

Doctora en Ciencias Pedagógicas por la Universidad de Holguín (Cuba), Magíster en Educación Parvularia y Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación, Dra. Jackeline Rosalía Terranova cuenta con amplia experiencia en educación inicial, gestión académica e investigación. Es autora de publicaciones científicas y ha participado como ponente en congresos internacionales en Latinoamérica.



MILENA MEDINA

Asistente de Dirección Nacional, Fundación Heifer Ecuador, Ecuador

Cuenta con experiencia en gestión de proyectos, cooperación internacional, articulación interinstitucional y coordinación estratégica de iniciativas orientadas al desarrollo sostenible, la innovación social y el fortalecimiento de capacidades locales. A lo largo de su trayectoria profesional, ha participado en la implementación de proyectos de desarrollo económico, emprendimiento e innovación social, promoviendo la colaboración entre organizaciones, instituciones y comunidades.

RELATORA:



MARIA FERNANDA BUZETTA

Vicedecana carrera Gastronomía, Universidad Técnica de Manabí, Ecuador.

Maria Fernanda Buzetta es miembro del comité de la ciudad creativa de la gastronomía Portoviejo, coautora del Diccionario de Gastronomía Manabita, gestora de libros de gastronomía Manabita, y directora de proyectos de planificación y promoción de la cocina manabita a nivel local e internacional.

TABLE 12: GASTRONOMY AS SOCIAL INCLUSION

To explore how gastronomy can include marginalized youth.

- How can food create belonging and opportunity for all young people?
- Which youth groups are excluded from food systems?
- How can gastronomy create dignity and skills?
- What inclusive initiatives already exist?
- What support is needed?

TASK:

Share five ideas for inclusive, youth-led gastronomy initiatives.

CHAIR:

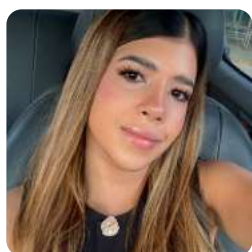


CHEF PER THEODOR TØRRISSEN

Project Manager, Nordland County Municipality, IGCAT Expert Nordland, European Region of Gastronomy 2028, Norway

Per Theodor Tørrissen is a Project Manager at Nordland County Council (Nordland fylkeskommune), where he leads the Nordland European Region of Gastronomy 2028 initiative and the ArktiskMat project. His work focuses on strengthening the connection between gastronomy, culture, tourism, and regional development across Northern Norway.

VOICES:



CHEF ORLEANA ANDRADE

Graduate in Gastronomy, Universidad Tecnica de Manabí, Manabí, Ecuador

Orleana Andrade Sornoza is a gastronomy professional who graduated from the Technical University of Manabí (Ecuador). She is passionate about gastronomy as a tool to promote health, preserve culinary heritage, and create opportunities for new generations.



ASOC. PROF. SHPRESIM DOMI

President, Global Agritourism Network, Albania

Shpresim Domi holds a PhD and has completed post doctoral research on agritourism development. His academic work focuses on rural development, agritourism, and tourism, with publications in international peer reviewed journals. Actively involved in national and international projects, he has contributed significantly to advancing agritourism in Albania.



UFUK KEŞOĞLU

Founder, Bureau Gastronomica, IGCAT Expert, Şanlıurfa Candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2029, Türkiye

Mustafa Ufuk Keşoğlu is a lecturer in Gastronomy and Culinary Arts at Cappadocia University, founder of Bureau Gastronomica, and a Member of Slow Food Türkiye Communities. His work focuses on sustainable gastronomy, food heritage, destination development, and regenerative food systems.



KRISTINA MEJO

Chief of Mission - International Organization for Migration (IOM), Ecuador

Kristina Mejo is the new Chief of Mission for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ecuador—an organization where she has worked for over 20 years—promoting gastronomy as a tool to showcase the knowledge and traditions that travel with people, create livelihoods and entrepreneurial opportunities, connect cultures and generations, and strengthen the sense of belonging and social cohesion.



ANNIKA OJASAAR

Head of Tourism, Visit Tartu, Estonia

Annika is the Head of Tourism in Tartu, Estonia, with more than a decade of experience in destination management, marketing and regional tourism development. At Visit Tartu, she works with public and private sector partners to strengthen Tartu and South Estonia as attractive, competitive and sustainable destinations.



ROBERT PALMER

Director, Robert Palmer Consultants, IGCAT Ambassador, UK

Robert Palmer is an independent consultant who works internationally on a wide range of cultural projects in the areas of cultural policy and strategy, cultural heritage, festivals and events, the creative economy and issues related to cultural policy and strategy, cultural rights and the cultural development of cities.

RAPPORTEUR:



DAVINIA GALEA

Managing Director, ARC Research & Consultancy, IGCAT Ambassador, Gozo, European Region of Gastronomy 2026, Malta

Davinia Galea is a cultural policy expert, consultant, and IGCAT Ambassador, working across cultural strategy, international cooperation, and the development of sustainable cultural and creative ecosystems. She is the founder and Managing Director of ARC Research & Consultancy, established in 2014 to strengthen connections across the cultural and creative sectors in Malta, Europe, and internationally.

MESA 13: JUVENTUD, CREATIVIDAD Y PATRIMONIO ALIMENTARIO

Explorar la gastronomía como expresión cultural y economía creativa.

- ¿Cómo pueden los jóvenes reinterpretar creativamente el patrimonio alimentario?
- ¿Cómo expresan los jóvenes su identidad a través de la comida?
- ¿Cómo conectar gastronomía con artes y medios?
- ¿Cómo evitar la pérdida de autenticidad?
- ¿Cómo generar empleo creativo?

RETO:

Compartir cinco conceptos creativos que unan juventud, cultura y gastronomía.

PRESIDENTA:



CHEF FANNY VERGARA

Presidente, Red de Cocineras Tradicionales de Manabí y Comunidad Slow Food SALPRIETA, Ecuador.

La chef Fanny Vergara es chef investigadora y promotora de la cocina ancestral de Manabí. Es gestora cultural y se desempeña como presidenta de la Red de Cocineras Tradicionales de Manabí, coordinadora de la Comunidad Slow Food SALPRIETA y creadora de las marcas colectivas Tomaní y Gasan.ec.

VOCES:



JESÚS MENDOZA MEJÍA

Presidente de IBERCOCINAS & Jefe del Departamento de Culturas Agroalimentarias de la Unidad de Culturas Vivas, Patrimonio Inmaterial e Interculturalidad de la Secretaría de Cultura del Gobierno de Mexico

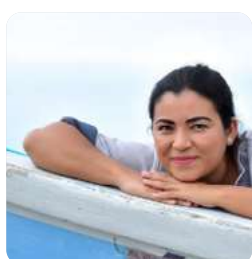
La experiencia profesional de Jesús Mendoza Mejía incluye el diseño y la puesta en marcha de proyectos para la gestión del patrimonio inmaterial desde una perspectiva intercultural. Su investigación interdisciplinar se centra en los museos comunitarios y en la recuperación de la memoria, los conocimientos tradicionales, las prácticas y las festividades en comunidades urbanas e indígenas.



EVIN LENIN AÑAPA SAN NICOLAS

Indígena Chachi y Slow Food Alma, Ecuador

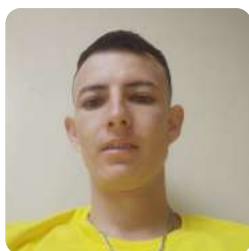
Evin Lenin Añapa San Nicolas es estudiante de la carrera de Turismo en la Escuela Superior Politécnica Agropecuaria de Manabí Manuel Félix López (ESPAM MFL). Es originario de la comunidad Centro Chachi Balzar y forma parte activa de la comunidad Slow Food ALMA, donde representa a su etnia y promueve la valorización del patrimonio alimentario ancestral.



CHEF LEIDI VALENCIA

Gestora Cultural y cocinera tradicional ecuatoriana, El Complejo Restaurante y Bar Manabí, Región Mundial de la Gastronomía 2026, Ecuador

Leidi Marlene Valencia Chila es gestora cultural, cocinera tradicional ecuatoriana y emprendedora gastronómica de San Jacinto, Manabí. Desde sus raíces montubias impulsa procesos de salvaguardia del patrimonio gastronómico, promoviendo la identidad cultural de su territorio a través de la cocina, los saberes ancestrales y los productos locales.



FRANCISCO MACÍAS VERA

Voluntario, Slow Food ALMA, Ecuador

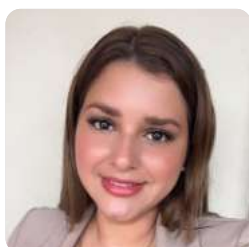
Francisco es un joven dedicado a la conservación de los polinizadores, especialmente las abejas nativas y abejas Apis Millifera que son las responsables de la polinización fundamental para el equilibrio de los ecosistemas.



DR. MANUEL ALEJANDRO BARCIA MOREIRA

Director Técnico Zonal 4 del Instituto Nacional de Patrimonio Cultural, Ecuador

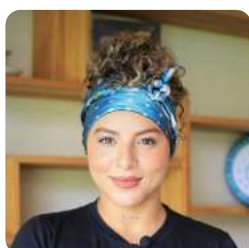
El PhD. Manuel Alejandro Barcia Moreira cuenta con más de quince años de experiencia en la gestión, investigación, conservación y salvaguardia del patrimonio cultural, liderando proyectos relacionados con el patrimonio arquitectónico, arqueológico e inmaterial, así como procesos de cooperación interinstitucional para la protección y puesta en valor del patrimonio.



PROF. BERNA PAOLA ZAMBRANO AZÚA

Docente ULEAM, Manabí Ecuador

La trayectoria profesional de Prof. Berna Paola Zambrano Azúa se encuentra vinculada a la gastronomía, la educación superior y el desarrollo de propuestas innovadoras dentro del sector turístico y gastronómico. Desde su labor docente, promueve una formación integral basada en el conocimiento, la creatividad, la innovación y el desarrollo de competencias profesionales, procurando vincular la teoría con la práctica.



ESTEFANIA CAROLINA FLORES ANGULO

Gerente-Propietaria "El Rincón de Candela", SLOW FOOD - ALMA, Ecuador.

Carolina es una joven afro descendiente conectada profundamente al territorio y memoria culinaria de la provincia de Esmeraldas. Actualmente lidera su proyecto gastronómico, un espacio que nace desde su propia historia familiar y busca convertir mediante su propuesta el realce de los sabores ancestrales de su territorio para reivindicar los productos locales e involucrar a los principales actores, como jóvenes y mujeres afro para demostrar que la gastronomía es una herramienta para fortalecer la identidad, biodiversidad y memoria local.

RELATORA:



DRA. ADRIANA ARISTA ZERGA

Especialista internacional en patrimonio cultural y patrimonio alimentario, Profesora Asistente de la Universidad de Nottingham, Experta Global de IGCAT, Peru/UK

Adriana Arista-Zerga es abogada especializada en derechos culturales y patrimonio cultural, y doctora en Antropología Social y Cultural por la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. Su labor interdisciplinaria integra el derecho, la antropología y los estudios sobre patrimonio, contando con una amplia experiencia en investigación comunitaria, gestión del patrimonio cultural y salvaguardia del patrimonio cultural tanto material como inmaterial.

TABLE 14: YOUTH, CREATIVITY, AND FOOD HERITAGE

To explore gastronomy as cultural expression and creative economy.

- How can young people reinterpret food heritage creatively?
- How do young people express identity through food?
- How can gastronomy connect to arts, media and design?
- How do we avoid losing authenticity?
- How can creativity generate jobs?

TASK:

Share five original and innovative creative concepts linking youth, culture, and gastronomy

CHAIR:



MAI DAAMGAARD RASMUSSEN

Director, Food Film Festival, IGCAT Ambassador, Aarhus-Central Denmark, European Region of Gastronomy 2017, Denmark

Mai Damgaard Rasmussen is a Danish entrepreneur and cultural organizer best known for her work with film and food culture. She has made her mark on the cultural scene through several key roles and is the founder and director of the FoodFilmFestival.dk, which combines film experiences with food culture.

VOICES:



PROF. FABIÁN BEDÓN

Professor, Universidad Técnica de Manabí & Food Capitals Ambassador, Ecuador

Cultural heritage specialist, researcher, and consultant, PhD in Tourism at the Complutense University of Madrid. Ambassador of Foodcapitals Program. He has professional experience in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Colombia in intangible cultural heritage safeguarding, including in the development of safeguarding plans, community-based inventories, nominations, post-disaster recovery and resilience, and regulatory frameworks.



ALISSON ZAMBRANO SANTOS

Communications, Urban Futures Programme, Manabí, Ecuador

A graduate of the Audiovisual Production and Filmmaking program in Quito, she is currently preparing to begin studies in Criminology and Forensic Sciences. She currently works as a communications specialist for the Urban Futures Program, which aims to improve urban food systems, youth well-being, and climate action.



ADRIANA VACA

Librarian, Foundation A Mano Manaba, Ecuador

Adriana Vaca was born in Don Juan, Manabí. She is passionate about community education, working with children and young people, and preserving our traditional knowledge, culture, nature, and identity to strengthen the community.



TATIANA VILLEGAS ZAMORA

Representative Director, UNESCO, Ecuador

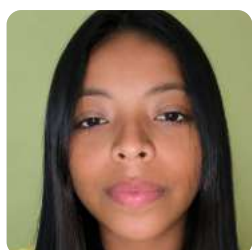
For more than fifteen years, Tatiana Villegas Zamora worked on cultural heritage protection and public policy development in Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly through capacity building and technical assistance to governments. Her career at UNESCO has led her to specialise in sustainable development through the organisation's areas of competence: education, natural and social sciences, culture and communication.



KÁROLY SZABÓ

Executive Director, Visit Harghita, IGCAT Expert, Harghita, European Region of Gastronomy 2027, Romania

Károly Szabó is the Executive Director of Visit Harghita, the destination management organization responsible for promoting Harghita County, Romania, as a sustainable and authentic tourism destination. With a background in tourism and destination development, he has dedicated his career to strengthening regional collaboration, enhancing visitor experiences, and creating long-term value for local communities.



KERLY PALADINES

Communications, Urban Futures Programme, Manabí, Ecuador

Kerly Leonela Paladines Anchundia holds a degree in Marketing and works in the Communications department of the FUEGOS Foundation, where she develops strategies for projects related to gastronomy, tourism, territorial development, and youth advocacy, viewing communication as a tool to strengthen territorial identity.

RAPPORTEUR:



KATYA BREDIKHINA

Director, Green Rock Foundation Armenia, Candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2031, Armenia

Katya Bredikhina is Head of the Green Rock Foundation in Dilijan, Armenia, and Project Lead at Apicius Armenia International School of Hospitality. She has more than a decade of experience designing and leading philanthropic, educational, and community-development initiatives across Armenia, Russia, and the wider region.

MESA 15: CONECTANDO A JÓVENES URBANOS Y RURALES A TRAVÉS DE LA ALIMENTACIÓN

Reconectar territorios y juventudes a través de la gastronomía.

- ¿Cómo puede la gastronomía volver a unir los futuros urbanos y rurales de la juventud?
- ¿Qué separa hoy lo urbano y lo rural?
- ¿Cómo puede la gastronomía reconectar ambos espacios?
- ¿Qué papel pueden jugar los jóvenes?
- ¿Qué políticas o infraestructuras faltan?

■ RETO:

Cinco propuestas para fortalecer los vínculos urbano-rurales mediante la juventud y la alimentación.

■ PRESIDENTE:



LUIS SALAZAR

Responsable de Alianzas y Comunicación de Proyectos, Crop Trust, El Salvador/Francia

Luis coordina las actividades de comunicación de los proyectos del Crop Trust, incluido el proyecto global BOLD –de diez años de duración–, y supervisa todas las relaciones con los medios de comunicación relacionadas con la Bóveda Global de Semillas de Svalbard. Asimismo, apoya las iniciativas de recaudación de fondos de la institución centradas en América Latina y en las estrategias para cultivos específicos.

■ VOCES:



PROF. GABRIELA SIÓN SALTOS

Docente, Uleam, Ecuador

Gabriela J. Sión Saltos es docente vinculada a las áreas de Gastronomía y Hotelería. Con experiencia profesional en el sector HORECA, actualmente se encuentra desarrollando estudios doctorales en Turismo. Su línea investigativa se enfoca en el patrimonio cultural alimentario, con especial interés en el papel de las mujeres como portadoras del patrimonio y en la valorización de la gastronomía de Manabí.



JUAN PABLO ESCOBAR CHASILIKUÍN

Project Manager, Fundación Heifer Ecuador, Ecuador

Juan Pablo Escobar Chasiliquín es Médico Veterinario Zootecnista, con formación de posgrado en producción animal y más de veinte años de experiencia en desarrollo rural, cadenas de valor, economía solidaria, seguridad alimentaria y gestión de proyectos.



GIACOMO ADRIANO CENTURIÓN MEGO

Young Chef & Estudiante, Pontificia Universidad Católica Peru, Peru

A Giacomo le interesa especialmente la gastronomía peruana, su diversidad cultural y la riqueza de sus territorios. Para él, cocinar es también una forma de conectar con el territorio, aprender de quienes lo habitan y reinterpretar nuestras tradiciones sin perder su esencia. Aspira a construir una identidad culinaria propia, capaz de generar nuevas experiencias y aportar a una gastronomía peruana más consciente, innovadora y sostenible.



MARÍA VIRGINIA MEJÍA ZAMBRANO

Estudiante de la ESPAM-MFL, Ecuador

María Virginia es una estudiante de Gastronomía que impulsa el aprovechamiento de los subproductos alimentarios para convertirlos en nuevos productos.



CHEF GLORIA ARMINDA CHAVEZ GANCHOZO

Propietaria, Valentina Colibrí, Ecuador

Gloria Arminda CHÁVEZ nacida en Rambuche, migró a España y con sus ahorros regresó a su país de Ecuador a continuar con sus tradiciones, como las manitas y el horno de leña. Su restaurante se llama Valentina Colibrí en la cual desde las seis de la mañana enciende el horno de leña y no falta el café pasado para todos sus clientes.



MAG. RONALD ZAMBRANO

Director de Turismo Cultura y Patrimonio GAD Manta, Ecuador

Mag. Ronald Zambrano tiene 20 años de experiencia en el sector público, en áreas de pescas. Fué Viceministerio de pesca en la Prefectura de Manabí, Ecuador, trabajando también 5 años en el Sector productivo de la provincia y 3 años de Docente universitario ULEAM facultad de Ciencias Del Mar.

RELATOR:



LUZ ELENA NAVARRO DÍAZ

Acción local de CoFSA y análisis de sistemas regenerativos, United Nations Development Programme, Mexico

Especializada en desarrollo rural y agrícola en América Latina y África Oriental, Luz Elena está profundamente comprometida con impulsar un cambio sistémico consciente mediante la integración de conocimientos indígenas y locales. Su labor se centra en fomentar comunidades inclusivas y regenerativas, al tiempo que protege y honra a la naturaleza.

TABLE 16: BRIDGING URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH THROUGH FOOD

To reconnect territories and young people through gastronomy.

- How can gastronomy reconnect urban and rural youth futures?
- What divides urban and rural food systems today?
- How can gastronomy reconnect them?
- What roles can youth play as connectors?
- What infrastructure or policy is needed?

TASK:

Five ideas to strengthen urban-rural links through youth and food.

CHAIR:



PATRICIO TAMARIZ

Executive Director, Manabí Región Mundial de Gastronomía, Manabí, World Region of Gastronomy 2026, Ecuador

Patricio M. Tamariz Dueñas is an Ecuadorian tourism strategist with more than 25 years of experience, he has held senior government positions including Vice Minister of Tourism Promotion, Undersecretary of Marketing, and Executive Director of Ecuador's Tourism Promotion Fund, contributing to the country's international tourism positioning and destination marketing.

VOICES:



MNZM ROBERT OLIVER

Founder, Pacific Island Food Revolution, IGCAT Ambassador, New Zealand

Robert Oliver MNZM is a New Zealand chef, author, broadcaster, social entrepreneur, and a 2025 Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center alumnus. He is the founder and Executive Director of Pacific Island Food Revolution (PIFR), a television-led movement transforming food systems across the Pacific through Indigenous food culture.



MARCOS ANTONIO ANDRADE VERA

Student, ULEAM & Pastry Chef, Founder of La Casa del Cake, Manabí, Ecuador

Over a decade ago, Marcos Antonio Andrade Vera decided to turn his passion into a profession and graduated with a degree in National and International Cuisine. That marked the beginning of his career as a pastry chef—a blend of technique, creativity, and a great deal of heart. Today, he leads La Casa del Cake, a venture where marketing and pastry-making come together. His goal is simple: for Bahía to experience quality desserts made with local ingredients that capture the true flavor of our region.



RUTH AMOS

Vanuatu Country Director, Regenerative Vanua, Vanuatu, World Region of Gastronomy 2027, Vanuatu

In her role as Country Director, Ruth manages the implementation of regenerative verification standards across Vanuatu. Her work involves supporting community development plans, conducting field assessments, and tracking environmental indicators such as soil health, water quality, carbon retention, and biodiversity.



PROF. DAVID PONCE GALARZA

Professor, Universidad Técnica de Manabí, Ecuador

Her professional experience encompasses event and catering management, menu design, and culinary research. She completed an internship at the elBulli Foundation–BulliLab, where she participated in product classification and the development of a gastronomic lexicon. Her doctoral research examines food products from Manabí that are at risk of falling into disuse and explores their potential culinary applications.



ELIF GÜNAY

Gastronomy Expert, Bureau Gastronomica Şanlıurfa, Candidate World Region of Gastronomy 2029, Türkiye

Elif Günay is a gastronomy professional from Türkiye, working at the intersection of gastronomy, cultural heritage, destination development, and food tourism. Elif is a Partner at Fields & Forks, a boutique travel company creating immersive journeys that connect travellers with Türkiye's authentic food culture, local producers, and living traditions. She is also a Consultant at Bureau Gastronomica, contributing to gastronomy-led destination development projects that strengthen regional identity through food.



LORENA INTRIAGO

Technical Project Assistant, FAO, Ecuador

Lorena's professional experience includes working with rural organizations, strengthening community capacities, and supporting rural development initiatives. Through AgroJoven Chone—an initiative that is part of the national AgroJoven program—she works closely with young people on a project that integrates sustainable tourism, gastronomy, and agriculture.



DR. EMANUELA PANKE

President, IterVitis Cultural Route of the Council of Europe Italy/Israel

Emanuela Panke is an expert in cultural tourism, the valorisation of food and wine gastronomy, and international cooperation, with more than twenty-five years of experience in the design and management of initiatives focused on culture, wine, sustainable tourism, and territorial development.

RAPPORTEUR:



PATRICK SAM

Managing Partner, Creative Cultural Investments, IGCAT Expert, Namibia

Patrick Sam is an International Development Expert, Public Policy Specialist and Broadcasting Journalist with a specific focus on public policy and planning. As a national expert, he has developed Namibia's Strategy on the Cultural & Creative Industries, Reviewed the National Art Fund Act, and building capacity on Social Protection and Artistic Freedom.



