The Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative:

TEN YEARS YOUNG
Nestlé needs YOUth was launched in 2013 and has become a global phenomenon – a movement that has united, empowered and enabled over five million young people since inception. In its first decade, it has successfully harnessed the energy, ambition and ideas of a new generation.

Celebrating our first decade

Over 5 million
Opportunities provided by Nestlé to young people around the world*!

Renewing faith in the future
Transforming our talent pool
Shaping a global movement
Employment and Employability
Entrepreneurship
Agripreneurship
Converting ideas into action
Embedding a start-up mentality

* See Nestlé Creating Shared Value Report 2022

The Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative: Ten Years Young
In 2013, as the global financial crisis deepened, record unemployment rates hit the youth particularly hard. It was all too easy to sense their hopelessness and vulnerability, with protests against austerity echoing around the world. It was clear millions of young people risked becoming a ‘lost generation’.

Against that context, we saw a role for us as a major multinational company. We envisioned an initiative designed to help improve the employability of young people, by bolstering their skills and renewing their faith in the future. Nestlé needs YOUth was born.

Over the next decade, our program has significantly evolved and expanded: from a European to a truly global initiative; and from a focus on employment and employability, to embrace entrepreneurship, to inspire the farmers of the future; and to offer first job opportunities, training and skills to young people.

In addition, we are bringing business together in support of youth. The Global Alliance for YOUth initiative has helped millions of young people find a job, thrive in the workplace or start a business. Led by Nestlé, the alliance of 25 like-minded companies provides training, nurtures young entrepreneurs and offers first job opportunities. Our goal is to provide opportunities and a platform for young people, including representation at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

“The world’s youth are key to creating a sustainable food system that can provide for our fast-growing global population.

Most importantly, our understanding and appreciation of the critical role young people play in our shared future has grown immeasurably, particularly as the climate emergency grows more urgent. Harnessing the gifts of young people, especially the untapped potential of the youth in emerging economies, has become a proud mission with profound outcomes that go far beyond our own commercial success. The world’s youth are key to creating a sustainable food system that can provide for our fast-growing global population.

We are happy that we have supported so many young people to find work, learn skills, gain confidence and regain hope. Yet the challenges they face will not abate. They can only be addressed by continually reminding ourselves that we depend on the fresh perspectives of young people to fuel innovation, contribute to build a more sustainable future and help solve some of the challenges we face as a global society.

As we celebrate its tenth anniversary, our signature Nestlé needs YOUth initiative has grown to become a powerful symbol of Nestlé as a force for good around the world.
Transforming our talent pool

Nestlé needs YOUth grew from a focused regional response to a major global initiative in just three years, expanding from a single focus area to three. It is on track to support our ambition to help 10 million young people around the world access economic opportunities by 2030 through employment and employability, agripreneurship and entrepreneurship.

While the Nestlé needs YOUth initiative began with a single goal – to improve the employability of young people in Europe – its scope quickly expanded. By adopting additional themes of entrepreneurship and agripreneurship, it embraced a bigger objective: to unlock the creativity and innovativeness of young minds.

Nestlé needs YOUth has undoubtedly helped us identify emerging talent that can help us transform the global food system. Nestlé is a founding member of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. Our programs and alliances are a profound tool for advancing wider social and economic development in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Sparking a global movement

“I was the first person to be employed through Nestlé needs YOUth, ten years ago. My friends and I were just out of university, looking to gain some experience. We were all pretty anxious because of everything that was going on and what we saw in the media. A lot of people were struggling, and some of my friends were leaving Greece because they couldn’t find work. It was a difficult time.

We had our eyes and ears open, so I had enrolled in some classes and that was where I heard about Nestlé. I thought the traineeship might last a few months and was still anxious about what I would do afterwards. But from day one I was more or less part of every meeting, involved in all the processes. I remember feeling a mixture of emotions: I couldn’t believe how welcome they made us, but I was also scared I would destroy everything! Then, on my third day, I met with the Chief Financial Officer for Greece, and he was so friendly and down to earth that I thought ‘okay, I got this’. The rest is history.

A lot of people were struggling. I feel lucky I was offered this opportunity.

Now I’m ten years in. I spent seven years rotating through departments – human resources, supply chain, marketing – but I started in the infant formula category and that’s also where I work now. I am certainly aware of my status as the ‘first youth’: at the time there was a huge event here in Athens with suppliers, partners and customers to celebrate. There was all this publicity to engage even more people. Looking back, I know this wasn’t the path for every other person at the time – maybe I was in the right place, at the right time – and I feel lucky that I was offered this opportunity.”

Christina Damaskou (33), Assistant Brand Manager, Infant Formula & Supplements and Former Intern Greece

1415 687
Young people impacted through digital events on upskilling to help make them more employable in 2022*

* See https://www.nestle.com/sustainability/people-communities/nestle-needs-youth-initiative

The Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative: Ten Years Young
Shaping a global movement

Access all areas: we’ve mobilized our teams on six continents to introduce young people to Nestlé needs YOUth opportunities and initiatives wherever they might live.

Case studies:

- **CÔTE D’IVOIRE** — Gloria Abaidoo and Marie-Lauren “Cybell” Loko
- **CANADA** — Matt Judd
- **CHINA** — Scarlett Shi
- **USA** — Saanya Ali
- **BRAZIL** — Olivia Ramos
- **PAKISTAN** — Ahtisham Khalid

The Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative: Ten Years Young
EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY
Our first pillar, launched in 2013, focused on Employment and Employability, and was intended to enhance the job prospects of young people amid the worsening global financial crisis.

That mission continues: we aim to empower youth through training, internships, apprenticeships and other work-based learning experiences that help them thrive in the workplace.

By providing the skills that are required to help young people secure a job and progress in their positions, we are not simply motivated to ensure the future viability of our own talent pipeline, as important as that is. Where we can employ people directly, we do, but the challenge is far bigger than us. This is about creating opportunities for youth everywhere, as employment is a key ingredient of community advancement, particularly in developing economies.

As a founding member of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, we have worked to facilitate the creation of apprenticeship programs by bringing together private companies and public bodies. Where regulatory frameworks to support such programs did not exist, we have worked with governments and regional authorities to establish them.

Our efforts have helped lead to dozens of apprenticeships programs being set up around our factories and offices internationally. Examples include the Nestlé La Penilla Factory and IES Lope De Vega Dual Vocational Training Project in Spain, established in 2013; the Dual Education practical training program in our Prievidza factory in Slovakia, created in 2016; and the Nestlé Avanca Factory and Aveiro Professional School program in Portugal, launched in 2017.

As we’ve gained momentum, we’ve continued to expand all our programs and sought to widen access to them, offering more online training sessions, career guidance, a virtual internship program and mentorships, as well as by giving advice on building networks.
Case study

Kickstarting careers

Gloria’s story

“For young people trying to find work, the skills you learn at school are often not enough to help you secure a job. Joining Nestlé’s Academic Alliances Initiative – which aims to strengthen scientific engagement with universities and research institutes in sub-Saharan Africa – was an eye-opener in terms of revealing what is really expected of you. It bridged the theory taught in university with the skills required in the workplace.

An internship is an opportunity to be adventurous, to learn to express yourself better, to make connections that help in the future, and to bring things out in yourself that you didn’t realize you had. One of the things I learned about myself was that I was resilient, that I can bounce back whatever challenges come my way.”

“The Nestlé Academic Alliances Initiative is a golden opportunity. It’s a framework to learn, express your ideas and gain self-confidence. It’s a unique and enriching experience.”

Gloria Abaidoo (29), Nestlé R&D Associate, Former Intern Côte d’Ivoire

Cybell’s story

“Nestlé has helped me understand the link between science, technology and business. I’ve been able to familiarize myself with the latest technologies in cereal processing, and it’s important to me to feel I’m making a difference to the sub-Saharan region, as a local. It’s great to see people enjoying a nutritious product you’ve worked on, to feel heard and appreciate being able to turn your ideas into reality.

If you are a talented, young person looking to make a real impact on your community, the Nestlé Academic Alliances Initiative is a golden opportunity. It’s a framework to learn, express your ideas and gain self-confidence. It’s a unique and enriching experience.”

Cybell Loko (27), Nestlé R&D Associate, Former Intern Côte d’Ivoire

The Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative: Ten Years Young
From intern to expert: the journey from those first tentative steps in our business to full-time jobs at Nestlé demonstrates how a combination of early responsibility and support cultivates a transformational mindset.

“What I appreciated most about my internship was being tasked with a genuine business challenge and being responsible for solving it. Along the way, my manager really challenged my thinking across the value chain. It was all about driving awareness of a problem, and asking: ‘how are you going to fix it?’ His mentorship was so helpful in bringing out the best in me.

From day one, I felt welcome not just as a supporter but an active contributor. I could tell my co-workers were genuinely open-minded about my suggestions on how we could become more efficient: it was pretty clear that challenging the status quo was not just welcomed but encouraged. Looking back, it was so rewarding that decisions about our transport practices in Canada were made on the strength of my supply chain cost-based analysis, despite my age and relative lack of experience.

That atmosphere was empowering and inspiring. So much so that at the end of the internship, when I actually had two job offers – one from Nestlé and another from a more corporate logistics vendor – I ultimately decided to lean toward the food industry. Part of it was a passion for our brands: as a logistics guy, I like walking down the grocery aisle in stores, seeing our products on the shelf and knowing how they got there.

I’ve been with Nestlé seven years now, and I absolutely believe my internship propelled me into my career. I’m actively involved in hiring interns, again focused on transformational change – we recruit at least five each summer – and organize youth events to spread awareness of Nestlé among student clubs and associations. Curiosity is the number one thing I look for: asking the right questions and seeing that spark for problem-solving, optimizing and how we can almost always do things better.”

“Challenging the status quo

Case study

Matt Judd (29), Senior Manager, Transportation Canada

“I could tell my new co-workers were genuinely open-minded about my suggestions on how we could become more efficient.”
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
Good ideas can come from anywhere – but not everyone has the means to express them. To solve today’s global challenges, young people need the means and confidence to express their thoughts along with access to expertise and finance to get them off the ground and implement them. That’s where the second pillar of the Nestlé needs YOUth initiative comes in.

An entrepreneurial mindset has the power to revolutionize the way we approach things and inspire the adoption of disruptive new approaches that achieve more, faster, and at scale.

In this respect, Nestlé needs YOUth is all about empowering and enabling young people to share their ideas, and connecting them with others who can help turn them into viable business propositions.

That’s why initiatives like the Youth Entrepreneurship Platform – our new digital home for young innovators (read more about it on page 19) – and external partnerships such as UNESCO are so important. They provide crucial training, connect young entrepreneurs with like-minded individuals and expert innovators with a proven track record; and give access to scientific, technical, and business expertise within our global R+D Accelerator network. Collectively, these components help to build young people’s skills so they can thrive either in our business or as future farmers trained in regenerative agriculture.

Young entrepreneurs who have received some basic but tangible benefit from Nestlé in 2022

64 977
Empowering, enabling, confidence-boosting: the Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative designed to inspire young minds and demonstrate the power of teamwork within Nestlé, bringing together different skills, talents and personalities.

“I took part in the CEO Challenge earlier this year: it was a four-month initiative designed to help develop entrepreneurial skills, by building a business case around a new innovation and creating a marketing plan to launch it.

In my group we wanted to bring Nescafé to a younger audience in China, so we conceived a new product combining coffee with collectible toys. In the challenge, we progressed through three rounds, made a video that was voted on by the public, and interacted with the Nestlé Zone Greater China leadership team as they evaluated our idea.

Our concept didn’t make it through to the top three, but it’s been an inspiring process to be part of, to discover what you can achieve, work through the challenges as a team, learn to be humble and to take criticism onboard.

But more than anything else, it was so helpful to be assigned a mentor. They gave us advice on improving our creative concept, enhancing our presentations, strengthening the business case, identifying pros and cons. The whole process has given me so much confidence.

There was also another unofficial mentor – Jessie, the head of Human Resources at Nestlé Zone Greater China, who was one of the judges on the challenge. She was particularly influential – she taught us not to love our ideas too much, to enjoy the journey, not to give up and to keep looking for other opportunities.

Although the challenge has finished, it taught me so much and has changed my priorities. Before the CEO Challenge, I was planning to study abroad and did not expect to start a career right away. But I’m now three months into an internship, focused on C&E – Culture & Engagement. My days are extremely varied, ranging from visiting universities to attract new students to liaising with charities and holding diversity, equity and inclusion events, and I’m hoping for a full-time job with the company.”

“My journey with Nestlé has given me hands-on experience and boosted my confidence. I’m three months into my internship and striving to realize my full potential.”

Case study
Mentoring for success

Scarlett Shi (21), Participant, CEO Challenge, Current Intern China

The Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative: Ten Years Young
“Nestlé gave me support, without handholding. That gave me the confidence I needed.”

Case study

Inspiring

the next generation of CEOs

“In 2022, I won the ‘Big Ideas. Better World’ competition run by Girls with Impact – a non-profit dedicated to equipping the next generation of women leaders – and the Nestlé needs YOU program in the United States, which aims to upskill and expand access to career resources.

My big idea is Soirée, which aims to revive the lost art of entertaining at home. It’s a one-stop shop to find recipes, caterers, playlists and DJs, themes and table-setting ideas, aimed at Gen Z and young millennials across America who want to host parties and dinners and socialize at home.

I used my $5000 prize to hire an interim web developer, build a first version of the site and cover a lot of the subscriptions I would need. So, it really got the ball rolling. But more than that, winning demonstrated that people who didn’t know me were willing to take a chance on me. I really needed assurance that I’d made the right choice – having quit a full-time job to develop the concept. Now it’s a year-and-a-half later and we launched the site in September 2023, so Nestlé has been part of the journey since the very beginning.

When you embark on something like this, you constantly second-guess yourself. And there’s a lot of additional insecurity when you enter the space as a woman, a person of color, a third-culture kid and as someone that’s neurodivergent and deals with depression and anxiety. You ask yourself: can I handle this? Or will this be accepted? On the other side of that was my relationship with Nestlé, which was really empowering.

I was mentored by Elizabeth Nolan from one of the R&D Accelerators. We met every other week for six months, and through her questions and our conversations she gave me support, without handholding. That gave me the confidence I needed – she encouraged me to find my own answers to my questions. That relationship is very much ongoing.”
AGRIPRENEURSHIP

The Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative: Ten Years Young
Our Pillar 3 ambition:

We are working to restore faith in farming as a growth opportunity among young people, by encouraging a professional approach and the adoption of regenerative agricultural practices.

Global farming is at a crossroads – the need to feed a growing population is exacerbated by climate change. As young people gravitate toward urban areas for work, we’re motivated to help farming become recognized once again as a growth opportunity. This is the third pillar of the Nestlé needs YOUth initiative.

Our ambition is to transform the landscape of farming. With the average global age of farmers in the 50s, we are hoping to encourage young people to remain in their communities and pursue farming with a new professional mindset, equipped with new technical skills to help them embed regenerative agricultural practices and business skills that create profitable enterprises and fulfilling careers.

Meanwhile, we’re showing how profitable operations are more resilient to climate change, can proactively respond to shifting business cycles and lift communities out of poverty.

It all depends on young people – on taking calculated risks, learning to farm in new ways and leveraging their own good ideas: this is the heart of agripreneurship.

Transforming farming

5121

Young farmers trained through the Nestlé Agripreneurship Program in 2022
Case study

Olivia Ramos (28),
Coffee Farmer
Brazil

“Fazedores de Café encouraged me to grow coffee in the name of the whole community. I don’t see any other way to live.”

“For years, young people have been told they should head to the city for a better life, and that’s what I did. I grew up on a small coffee farm, watching my father work, but moved to São Paulo when I was 18. I tried several jobs, but soon got tired of the rush and stress of the city. At 20, I returned home, started working in early childhood education and literacy, but then, in 2022, coffee took the main place in my life. Fazedores de Café was an essential part of that journey.

Fazedores is a five-day course for up to 40 Brazilian farmers. It addresses the disconnect between coffee farmers and coffee drinkers – farmers grow the beans, but don’t always appreciate the roasting process or know how to taste coffee or describe it. It teaches how to use that knowledge to negotiate a better price for our coffee. And it’s also about learning to farm regeneratively. So, it’s better for us as business owners; we have a better life as farmers, and it’s good for the planet. Nestlé pays for our travel, accommodation and food, and we’re talking, learning, dreaming about coffee the whole time.

My father did the best he could, but he had never done a soil analysis, for example. And he used to harvest green beans, ripe beans, all together. After Fazedores, I became more courageous, and now I’m starting to make changes. We are planning fertilization for the coffee trees. And we’ve started collecting only fully ripe beans.

Being part of the program was incredible – especially because of the connections I made. In addition to the technical exchange, it was an exchange of life. Also, I saw the importance of the collective – Fazedores encouraged me to grow coffee in the name of the whole community. I don’t see any other way to live. The chance for coffee farming to grow stronger is even greater if we decide to stay, not to leave.”

Now in its fifth year, Nestlé’s Fazedores de Café (‘Masters of Coffee’) project aims to inspire young coffee farmers to produce better coffee and run profitable businesses while contributing to the development of their communities and adopting regenerative farming practices.

Cultivating a new coffee culture

250
Young farmers trained under Fazedores de Café since 2014

The Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative: Ten Years Young
Ahtisham and his three brothers are determined to modernize their family business. Under Nestlé’s Farmer Connect agripreneurship program, they have sharply scaled their herd, improved animal welfare and increased milk yields by 200 percent – all while co-managing the farm from Pakistan and, remotely, from Australia.

“Our father and grandfather were both dairy farmers, and they farmed in a traditional way – relying on hearsay and whatever worked for other farmers in the areas. My three brothers and I could see how hard their lives were, with unpredictable animal health, milk yields and income. As a result, after university I was considering a quite different career, and that’s not unusual – most young people in rural areas here want careers in cities, or to work in technology or innovation.

But more than half of our population is under 30 years old, so investing in young farmers is crucial – agriculture is considered the backbone of Pakistan – and I felt a responsibility to remain in the family business. I also realized we could do things differently and, thanks to Nestlé, that there’s plenty of room for technology and innovation within farming.

We initially got in touch with Nestlé Pakistan to ensure we had a reliable market for our milk, and that has turned into a really productive, inspiring relationship that’s helping transform our business. The Agricultural Services team has given us advice on everything from infrastructure to breeds, feed and veterinary issues. Based on their guidance, we’ve introduced cow sheds – which are not common here – with fans and mats to keep the animals comfortable. We’ve improved animal health with more nutritious feed.

Perhaps the best recommendation was to introduce more productive breeds such as Australian and American cattle that yield up to 50 liters of milk per day from a single animal, up from 25-30 liters. You can see these kinds of mixed-breed herds on bigger farms in Pakistan, but it’s more unusual on farms of our size. Having said that, Nestlé is sourcing agricultural products from 151 next-generation farms like ours in Pakistan – together, we’re farming more sustainably, more productively, more profitably.

Solar panels supply all our electricity needs, and we have a biogas digester to convert manure into cooking gas. We’ve imported automatic milking equipment – people are pretty shocked when they see it. And we’ve even bought software to track the health and productivity of individual animals remotely – which is helpful as although I am here in Pakistan, one of my brothers is still at university, in Australia, and yet we jointly manage everything.

Nestlé has backed us every time. We can call them whenever we need to, and they give us ideas practically on a daily basis.”

The Nestlé needs YOUth Initiative: Ten Years Young
To achieve our ambition for the world’s young people, we use coaching, mentoring and upskilling and aim to cultivate networks of entrepreneurs worldwide. Even when their output doesn’t directly benefit Nestlé, our external partnerships are key to driving social change: we work closely with a range of NGOs, academic institutions, and development partners to maximize our impact, including with the International Labour Organization (ILO)-led UN Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, the World Economic Forum (WEF), and UNESCO, our most recent collaborator.

“We believe young people are fundamentally creative – full of ideas that can help solve today’s challenges. But they often lack the resources and support to transform their ideas into concrete action – that’s why we set up this new initiative with Nestlé.

Because Youth Matter is a pilot project in Latin America aimed at 18- to 30-year-olds and will award USD 10 000 grants to 20 people to kick-start innovative, on-the-ground community projects that address three topics – reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion and diversity; climate action and sustainability; and mental health and well-being. It’s the most concrete partnership that I’m aware of between Nestlé and UNESCO in the field of youth to date.

We launched the call in June 2023, and received over 900 applications from 17 countries – some small-scale ideas, others bigger; some from remote, indigenous communities, others from more urban neighborhoods. Each one comes with the conviction that they have the power to drive change, so it’s hard to choose a few: we’ve had a busy summer!

First, we’re creating a shortlist of 44, examining whether challenges are well-explained, that the solution feels logical and that it’s a realistic proposition. Ideally, we want a geographical and gender balance too. Then a global jury selected the 20 best proposals. They were announced on 12 October, with an online event from our field office in Montevideo.

As projects get going, we’ll mentor the candidates, share tools and knowledge, and capture content to

But we also hope this benefits the candidates personally – to grow through mentorship, through networking, as entrepreneurs. It’s a precious thing when you feel your ideas matter – that people believe in you and are prepared to invest in you.”

Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO

Laurent Freixe, Nestlé’s CEO for Zone Latin America
Embedding a start-up mentality

Our plans for Nestlé needs YOUnth are always evolving, as we react to – and preempt – how the world is changing.

Beyond growing the program and expanding access to its initiatives, we aim to remain responsive to the evolving challenges we face, both as a business and as global citizens. And that’s not just about engaging the current generation of young people but being ready to embrace the next ones, too.

At the end of our first decade, we’re delighted to have helped transform lives. But this is not a question of ‘mission accomplished’. As we enter our second decade, we’re determined to accelerate the pace of change.

While we began our work focused on employment and employability, it’s our work on cultivating entrepreneurship around food, and in embedding ideas around regenerative agriculture that has expanded the most in the last few years. These are the means by which we can make the biggest transformational difference to the problems the world is facing, the way in which we can maximize our contribution through sustainable food systems.

One aspect of this is the Youth Entrepreneurship Platform (YEP). YEP was only founded a year ago but it’s already shaking up and bringing a more overtly disruptive, start-up mindset to Nestlé – one that can nurture ideas that can quickly scale and create significant positive impacts for people and the planet.

We’re now planning to grow our community of YEPers to 100,000.

On this next leg of our journey, we are confident that we will reach one of our key ambitions to support 10 million young people with economic opportunities by 2030.

10 MILLION
Young people supported with economic opportunities by 2030 is our ambition

“Entrepreneurship and agripreneurship are key areas of growth and opportunity for Nestlé and we hope to make a transformational difference for the young generation.”

Yann Wyss, Global Head, Social Impact & Human Rights

“YEP is a convenient online home where all of Nestlé’s innovation initiatives can be found, and where budding entrepreneurs can immerse themselves in related content and e-learning.”

Christian Vousvouras, Co-founder, Youth Entrepreneurship Platform