



World Youth Skills Day: ICBA's Major Youth Initiatives for Peace and Sustainable Development

Dubai, UAE, July 15, 2024 – Under the theme "Youth Skills for Peace and Sustainable Development", the world celebrates World Youth Skills Day 2024. This day is an opportunity to recognize the vital role that youth play in achieving sustainable development and building peace. In this context, The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) stands at the forefront of fostering sustainability through innovative agricultural practices.

On this occasion, Dr. Tarifa Al Zaabi, Director General of ICBA, stated, "A critical component of ICBA's mission is empowering youth by equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to address global food security and environmental challenges. Our initiatives, such as the Emirates Soil Museum and the ICBA Youth Engagement Society, provide invaluable hands-on learning experiences and foster a global network of informed and proactive young leaders. By investing in our youth, we are addressing current agricultural and environmental challenges thus ensuring a resilient and sustainable future for all."

The Emirates Soil Museum: Cultivating Knowledge through Hands-On Learning:

Inaugurated in December 2016, the Emirates Soil Museum is a unique facility dedicated to promoting environmental protection and soil conservation. The museum serves as an educational hub, offering interactive exhibits and practical workshops that provide young people with essential agricultural skills. Visitors can engage with simulators of dune formation, water infiltration, and various soil types, fostering a deep understanding of soil's role in agriculture and the environment and food security.

The museum's exhibits cover themes such as climate change, food security, and sustainable resource management. These hands-on experiences are invaluable in equipping the next generation with the knowledge to innovate and implement sustainable practices. Since its opening, the museum has attracted over 13500 visitors, including decision makers, students, researchers, and members of the public, all benefiting from its rich educational resources.

ICBA Youth Engagement Society (YES): Inspiring and Connecting Youth

ICBA YES is a dynamic platform designed to inspire, connect, and empower youth to address challenges in food security and agricultural sustainability, particularly in marginal



environments. Through awareness programs and educational sessions, ICBA YES informs youth about the pressing challenges related to food security and marginal environments. The society facilitates communication and collaboration between young people and key stakeholders, including farmers, entrepreneurs, and policymakers, through events, conferences, and internships. Additionally, ICBA YES promotes sustainable agricultural practices by emphasizing the importance of biodiversity and best practices in research and development and supports the development of agribusinesses by providing training, capacity building, and innovation opportunities.

By fostering a global network of engaged and informed youth, ICBA YES is driving practical change and innovation in agricultural practices. Since it started in 2019, around 42 international and national universities and educational foundations have collaborated and joined ICBA's youth empowerment efforts and enhanced youth's role in ICBA YES.

Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) UAE: Empowering Youth for Climate Action

The Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) UAE 2023 is a pivotal event that places youth at the heart of climate action. LCOY UAE aims to empower young leaders by nurturing their innovation skills and enabling them to contribute to climate solutions. The conference provides a platform for youth to engage with experts, share ideas, and develop strategies to address climate change and promote sustainable development. The conference brought together around 200 participants.

At LCOY UAE, young participants gain insights into the latest scientific research and policy developments related to climate action. They also have the opportunity to collaborate with their peers from around the world, fostering a sense of global solidarity and shared responsibility in tackling environmental challenges.

Internship Programs: Bridging the Gap between Education and Practice

ICBA's internship programs are designed to provide young individuals with real-world experience in agricultural research and sustainability projects. These programs offer a unique opportunity for interns to work alongside leading scientists and experts, gaining hands-on experience and practical skills that are crucial for their future careers.

Interns at ICBA are involved in a wide range of activities, from laboratory research to fieldwork, contributing to ongoing projects that address critical issues such as water scarcity, soil salinity,



and climate resilience. Through these internships, ICBA fosters the next generation of environmental stewards, ready to lead and innovate in the field of sustainable agriculture. Over the past ten years, ICBA has trained 293 interns from 29 countries around the world.

ICBA's commitment to youth empowerment through its major initiatives—the Emirates Soil Museum, ICBA Youth Engagement Society (YES), Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) UAE, and internship programs—highlights the organization's holistic approach to sustainability. By providing young people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need, ICBA is addressing current agricultural and environmental challenges and ensuring a resilient and food-secure future.

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