# WTFutures

## Youth on Climate Futures

**BUILDING UP ON THE SUCCESS OF WTFUTURES:**
Implementing an early-stage theory of change

January 2026

WTFutures started as a collaborative inquiry, led in 2025, around the following question: How do young people see their futures in the context of climate change?

Through the systematic study of 54 projects in 29 countries, WTFutures produced seven "Key Learnings" on topics such as eco-emotions, (truly) involving young people in decision making, rethinking learning, and lifelong activism.

Most of these findings expand from one central insight: **today's young people are "Climate Natives",** which means that they have grown up all their lives in a world marked by the prospect, and increasingly the reality, of climate change. And this experience fundamentally affects how they try to find their place in the world, as well as how they envisage the future.

We wish to build up on WTFutures' momentum with you!

This requires taking stock of what we achieved, overcoming the current limitations, and creating the foundations of a "theory of change" on how to progressively hand the world to Climate Natives.

## WTFutures' successes…

Launched in November 2024 and concluded a year later, WTFutures has been a success in:
- Reaching out to a global, diverse community of projects who gave voice to young people on their climate futures;
- Building the seeds of a community of practice (3 open meetings were organized between the projects, as well as closed meetings of a smaller group of organizations and networks focused on youth, futures and/or climate);
- Producing new or significantly updated concepts and ideas, with significant consequences on climate action: the concept of "Climate Natives"; highlighting the prevalence, the significance and the possible usefulness of eco-emotions; new forms of youth participation in decision-making; etc.

## … And limitations

However, this first stage of WTFutures also has several limitations:
- 54 projects are both a lot, and a tiny fraction of what is actually happening on the ground: without trying to be exhaustive, how to be more plural?
- In particular, the presence of Latin American, African and Asian projects needs to be significantly increased.
- The community is still in the first stages of infancy. There are few horizontal contacts between projects, fewer still common tools.
- The concepts and ideas do gather significant interest, but they need to be tested and challenged.
- At this stage, traditional media have not seized on WTFutures' ideas.

# Towards a "Theory of Change" for WTFutures

Based on the experience of WTFutures' first year, we feel capable of articulating an early Theory of Change. The purpose of this second phase of the project would be to test it and to begin implementing it, also in order to make the project self-sustainable in the near future.

**• Long-term goal:**
Climate Natives, who have lived all their lives with the experience and the perspective of climate change, have transformed climate action, but also other fields of policy such as education. Young people are not only considered legitimate "voices", but also become full participants in decision-making, both within institutions and private organizations.

**• Intermediate goals:**
· Young people build an original, audible, yet plural and non-dogmatic global voice on climate and social justice.
· Institutions, NGOs and corporations have created ways to seriously include young people in strategy and decision-making.
· Despite the difficulties brought about by climate change, young people again feel that the world in which they grow up is making room for them.
· In several places or the world, learning institutions lead experiments ways to better equip young people to strive in an uncertain world.

**• Outputs:**
· A deep understanding of what the Climate Natives' experience of growing up is like, taking into account the diversity of conditions and situations around the Planet;
· A "WTFutures community of practice", providing interaction, common tools and community support to projects that empower youths to reflect, act and speak out on their climate futures;
· Public results of on-the-ground experimentations on concepts and ideas coming out of the WTFutures community, resulting in reusable and implementable toolkits for local institutions, NGOs and corporations.
· Alliances with other youth organizations and networks to make the voice of young people better heard in international climate discussions.

**• Activities:**
· Building and nurturing an international Community of practice: outreach, regular meetings, support groups, commons (tools and knowledge), shared visibility.
· Collaborating with academic research on WTFutures' topics, with a particular focus on (i) better understanding the aspirations and concerns of Climate Natives, and (ii) youth involvement in change at all levels.
· Local experimentations producing reusable knowledge:
    – "In the head of climate natives": Letting young people themselves define what being a Climate Native means, and draw the consequences of this definition.
    – Testing ways to give real power to young people, beyond tokenistic participation.
    – Testing ways to recognize the social and educational value of activism.
    – Bridging the gap between climate natives and corporations serious about their social and ecological impact.
· Reaching out to youth organizations and networks, forming alliances towards common and innovative forms of expression and presence at major climate-related events.

## The 2026 goals

In 2026, the goals are: to build up the Community of Practice, to initiate alliances with other youth-focused networks, to build partnerships with research, and to launch or support experimentations on the ground.

### • The Community of Practice
- Proactive outreach with a particular focus on Africa, Asia and Latin America. Goal: 40+ additional projects included in the database and the community.
- Create a program of meetings for mutual learning on topics of common interest ("Agoras"): 5 meetings in 2026.
- Create a support mechanism for new projects, through meetings where support comes both from the WTFutures team as from other projects within the community: 3 support meetings in 2026.
- Work towards building a self-sustaining financing model.

### • Disseminating WTFutures' content
- This activity is directed towards the Community of Practice as well as towards media, educators, activists, etc., who may not be willing to engage with WTFutures on a regular basis. The purpose is to produce, or support the production of, modular, accessible and reusable material based on WTFutures' insights: short videos, infographics, educational material, etc.
- It will also create the formats, tools and media presence for effectively sharing future information and knowledge coming from WTFutures and its community.

### • Initiating and/or supporting follow-up projects on the ground
The first stage of WTFutures has identified four directions that should be pursued in order to (i) validate and deepen some of the major insights, and (ii) move from idea to experimentation, evaluation and possible scaling:
- "In the head of climate natives": Letting young people themselves define what being a Climate Native means, and draw the consequences of this definition.
- Testing ways to give real power to young people, beyond tokenistic participation.
- Testing ways to recognize the social and educational value of activism.
- Bridging the gap between climate natives and corporations serious about their social and ecological impact.

These projects need to be built in cooperation with partners on the ground. In 2026, we wish to initiate local partnerships with at least 5 organizations in at least 2 of the above directions. These partnerships will involve partial funding from WTFutures.

### • Giving Climate Natives a voice
In 2026, WTFutures will reach out to youth organizations and networks, towards a common and innovative form of presence in regional and international fora.

Several of these organizations have already been involved in WTFutures, although in a light form: UNICEF Innocenti, School of International Futures, Teach The Future, Youngo, Fit for Future Generations, Generation Climate Europe… We will create a more formal cycle of collective work, reach out to other organizations, and suggest concrete topics and occasions for a collective expression. COP 31, or more likely COP 32, should be one of these occasions. One other meeting will be held in Brussels, focusing on youth organization networks at the European level.

## Deliverables

- A broader WTFutures community that brings together at least 100 practitioners, bound by common experiences.
- WTFutures 2026 Learnings: synthesis of the insights and learnings gained from the survey of new projects, the interaction with researchers, and the agoras (web, pdf, short videos).
- Accessible, educational WTFutures content material: 10-15 short videos, infographics, etc.
- Initiation of 4-5 follow-up projects in as many countries.
- A common, creative and powerful message produced and shared by various youth organizations, for COPs and other occasions.
- A plan towards economic self-sustainability of WTFutures and its community, with collaborative governance involving projects and youth organizations.

## Initial planning

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **COMMUNITY** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Contact existing projects | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Outreach to new projects | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | | | |
| Outreach to research | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | | | |
| Agoras | | | A1 | | A2 | | A3 | | A4 | | | A5 |
| New projects support | | | | NP1 | | NP2 | | | | NP3 | | |
| 2026 Key Learnings | | | | | | | | Writing + Validation | | | Publication | |
| **DISSEMINATION** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Material repository | ███ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Open call | | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | | | |
| Development: video | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | | | |
| Development: infographics | | | | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | | |
| **FOLLOW-UP PROJECTS** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Intentions & specifications | | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | | |
| Call for projects | | | | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | |
| Codesign with short list | | | | | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | |
| Project prototypes | | | | | | | | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | |
| Evaluation & next steps | | | | | | | | | | | | ███ |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **VOICE** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Outreach | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | | |
| Work program | | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | | | | | | | |
| Intermediary meeting (BXL) | | | | | | ███ | | | | | | |
| Production | | | | | | | ███ | ███ | ███ | ███ | | |
| Delivery | | | | | | | | | | | ███ | |
| Evaluation & next steps | | | | | | | | | | | | ███ |

## Partner with us!

We are looking for:
- Funding from foundations, public institutions, or responsible corporations;
- Local partners to implement some of our projects on their respective grounds;
- Networks to reach out to more diverse projects everywhere in the world;
- Practitioners to share in the Community of Practice;
- Academic partners to deepen our analysis and avoid reinventing the wheel…
   … And more!

## Reach out:
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