

Introduction

The Food and Climate Shaper Digital Boot Camp redesigned the learning ecosystem and transformed the concept of education into an ongoing, collaborative, values-based process with the ultimate goal of the betterment of humanity. The initial in-person experience shifted to a digital format in 2020 to continue amidst the ongoing pandemic.

The Future Food Institute in partnership with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations catalyze the knowledge of circular and sustainable agrifood systems by empowering Climate Shapers, connecting communities, and innovating solutions to food system challenges.

The Digital Boot Camps include hands-on experience supported by a series of masterclasses, discovery missions, open conversations, hackathons and FAO e-learning courses to transfer knowledge, skills and competencies to strengthen the capacities of the food system professionals of today and tomorrow. Where continents, time zones, and age are not barriers and digital tools are the enablers of glocal community activation.

In 2020 two editions took place with 81 participants from over 40 countries with diverse disciplines and backgrounds. The cohorts were learning from over 150 industry experts, professors, researchers, FAO officers through live conversations, mentoring sessions and reflections. In the same time, engaged with their own ecosystem through curated assignments.



Purpose

The Boot Camps involve multidisciplinary curated groups of “thinkers” and “doers,” young experts from all over the globe, inspired and motivated to take action in the real world to combat climate change, and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Methods

The 4-week part-time ‘hybrid’ learning program comprises three distinct training “experiences”: inspiration, aspiration, and action.

The main learning journey, based on ecosystemic and prosperity thinking, is accompanied by four tracks: Climate-Smart Cities, Farms, Kitchens, and Oceans.

The experiential learning platform allows participants to engage in an international workshop environment composed of prototyping and teamwork-based innovation challenges. The final deliverable of the teams is Proof of Concept solutions addressing defined food system issues presented in front of industry representatives providing feedback and the opportunity to further develop the ideas.



Results

The participants understand the interrelatedness of production and consumption and are able to develop a sustainability mindset ready to address the greatest challenges of our era, evaluate problem-solving strategies, and design experience and science-based solutions.

Learning by exploring the entire food value chain:

- Environment – climate-conscious land and ocean solutions
- Production – with focus on circular systems
- Access – new tools to guarantee food safety
- Nourishment – health and nutrition through biodiversity
- Eating Lifestyle – food experience with a focus on UX
- Awareness – the potential of data

Discussion

Education is one of the sectors most affected, tested, and impacted by the global pandemic and that demonstrates a continued need for change to fuel and restart the leadership of the future. The 7 Seeds of Change perfectly align with the Digital Boot Camp experience.

1. Start with the “Why”
2. Restoring Universal Human Values
3. Project Based Learning
4. Lifelong Learning
5. Learn with Others
6. Technology
7. Find Essential Needs

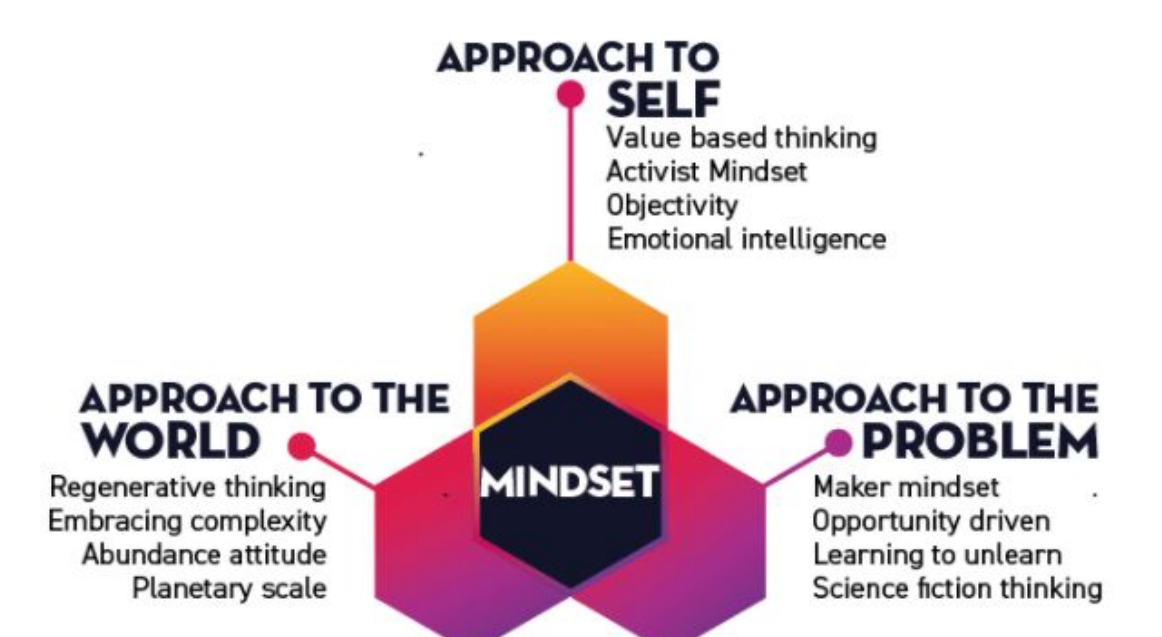


The Climate Shapers equipped with human & planet centered innovation tools and the Food for Earth toolbox can hack our food system and regenerate the planet starting from food.

Implications

We have witnessed the distinct value that comes with integrating intergenerational citizens, from various backgrounds. It has become apparent that distinctive ideation exists at the intersection of multicultural minds. With this in mind, we mapped our desired outcomes for the Boot Camps into five core impact areas:

1. Sense of agency.
2. Belongingness.
3. Food system solutions.
4. Embracing complexity.
5. Cross-pollination



Acknowledgment

The contribution of the FAO E-Learning Academy, the legacy and knowledge partners, and the Future Food Alumni Network are key to the success of the Digital Boot Camps.