

Organized by ICUA

2026 Youth Innovation:

Collaborating to Improve and Protect our Planet (CIPP)

Concept Note and Programme Outline



Table of Content

Background and Rationale	1
Organization	2
Central Focus and Related Themes	2
Registration and Submission Requirements	4
Timeline	13
Outputs	13
Awards	14
Notes on Submissions	16
Logistics	17

Background and Rationale

To support the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the International Centre for UNESCO ASPnet (ICUA) launched the global campaign “**Youth Innovation: Collaborating to Improve and Protect our Planet**” (CIPP) in 2024 as a creative platform for children and youth to engage with sustainable development. Since its inception, the campaign has sought to foster intercultural dialogue, enhance sustainability awareness, and encourage young people to express their

ideas, concerns, and aspirations through creative means.

Building on the success of its initial editions, the campaign demonstrated strong and growing international engagement between 2024 and 2025. During this period, CIPP reached 67,801 children and youth and more than 8,000 teachers from 40 countries, resulting in 66,565 creative submissions. The wide geographical participation, active involvement of educators, and diversity of creative works underscore the campaign's effectiveness in transcending cultural and regional boundaries, as well as its role as an inclusive platform for exchange, collaboration, and youth participation in sustainability-related dialogue.

The 2026 edition reflects a continued commitment to providing accessible and equitable opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to engage with sustainable development. Through creative exploration of global and local challenges, the 2026 campaign aims to strengthen early awareness of the SDGs, cultivate creative and critical thinking skills, and connect sustainability concepts with young people's lived experiences and personal expression, thereby empowering them to contribute meaningfully to shaping a more sustainable future.

Organization

ICUA, in collaboration with its regional partners, invites young people from around the world to submit creative works on the theme of sustainable development. To ensure scientific rigor and uphold high professional standards throughout the campaign, and to identify outstanding submissions that demonstrate both creativity and broad impact, ICUA has established an expert committee to provide guidance throughout the entire process.

ICUA has also developed the CIPP official website for technical support throughout the process. The platform facilitates communication, sharing and collaboration between children and youth worldwide, and serves as a space for joint exploration of solutions and the promotion of intercultural understanding and cooperation.

Central Focus and Related Themes

The 2026 CIPP adopts “**Shaping Our Shared Future—Youth Visions for Life, Society, and the World Ahead**” as its central focus and places particular emphasis on the following five related themes. The 2026 edition invites participants to explore how present choices shape tomorrow's environment, cultures, technologies, health, and social cohesion, translating local observations into creative contributions for a sustainable and peaceful future.

Theme	Linked SDGs
I: Our Changing Planet	
Suggested areas of exploration include, but are not limited to, exploring climate change, conserving terrestrial and marine biodiversity, and the stewardship of oceans and freshwater systems.	SDG13 Climate Action SDG14 Life Below Water SDG15 Life on Land
II: Our Living Heritage	
Suggested areas of exploration include, but are not limited to, safeguarding and revitalizing tangible and intangible cultural heritage; promoting intercultural dialogue and innovative transmission of traditions.	SDG4 Quality Education SDG8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
III: Our Well-being	
Suggested areas of exploration include, but are not limited to, advancing healthy lifestyles, mental well-being, inclusive public spaces, and sustainable consumption and production.	SDG3 Good Health and Well-being SDG11 Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG12 Responsible Consumption and Production
IV: Our Digital Future	
Suggested areas of exploration include, but are not limited to, promoting responsible, inclusive, and ethical uses of digital technologies, including AI, to support sustainability and equity.	SDG4 Quality Education SDG9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
V: Our Peaceful Society	
Suggested areas of exploration include, but are not limited to, fostering cultures of peace, non-violence, and cooperation; strengthening empathy, dialogue, and community resilience.	SDG16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG17 Partnerships for the Goals

For further information about the SDGs, please refer to the descriptions on the United Nations website: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/

Registration and Submission Requirements

This campaign is open to children and youth worldwide. A panel of experts will select representative and innovative works, which will be showcased and shared through multiple channels.

1. Age Groups

The campaign is designed for two different age groups, children's group and youth group. The group category will be determined based on the age of the oldest team member.

- ✓ **Children's Group:** 5-10 years old, born between 1st June 2016 (inclusive) and 31st May 2021 (inclusive)
- ✓ **Youth Group:** 11-17 years old, born between 1st June 2009 (inclusive) and 31st May 2016 (inclusive)

2. Modes of Submission

Participants may submit work either individually or as part of a team of up to 20 members. Each participant may take part in only one submission, whether individually or as a team member. Each submission may be entered in only one age group, one theme, and one submission category.

3. Language Requirements

Countries and partner organizations conducting independent evaluations may accept submissions in national languages accompanied by an English translation.

For countries and partner organizations that do not conduct independent evaluations and whose national language is neither English nor Chinese, the Organizer will work with them to identify appropriate individual arrangements. These may include, for example, submitting works in a designated language (such as English) or identifying a supporting organization with the capacity to conduct evaluations in the relevant language.

4. Submission Guidelines

- a) **Submission Limit:** Participants may revise their registration information and work details before the registration deadline.
- b) **Submission Procedure:** Participants are kindly advised that the submission procedure may vary depending on national contexts and local arrangements.
- c) **Disqualification Criteria** (submissions will not be considered for evaluation under the following circumstances):
 - Late submission;
 - Content not aligned with the campaign theme;
 - Failure to meet the basic requirements;
 - Incomplete submission materials;

- Duplicate submissions (e.g., one individual or team submitting multiple entries, or the same entry being submitted more than once).

5. Work Types

Children's Group

Type	Requirements	Submission Materials
Painting	1. Hand-drawn original work expressing an imagined world related to a campaign theme. 2. Size: A3 (29.7 x 42cm) or A2 (42 x 59.4cm)	1. Photo of painting (PNG/JPG, ≤20MB) 2. Presentation Video with Chinese or English (or both) subtitles (MP4, landscape, ≤2 min, ≤200MB) 3. Please submit one of the following documents in PDF format: (1) A description of the creative process (for individual submissions only); (2) A description of each team member's contribution (for team submissions only).
Craft	1. Create an original work based on one campaign theme 2. Incorporate diverse materials (e.g., paper, textiles, recycled items, clay) or mixed-media techniques 3. Express ideas through hands-on making or	1. Photo of craft (PNG/JPG, ≤20MB) 2. Presentation Video with Chinese or English (or both) subtitles (MP4, landscape, ≤2 min, ≤200MB) 3. Please submit one of the following

	construction 4. Max. size: L120 × W60 × H100 (cm)	documents in PDF format: (1) A description of the creative process (for individual submissions only); (2) A description of each team member's contribution (for team submissions only).
Solution	1. Explore a real-life issue related to one campaign theme 2. Show understanding of the problem and underlying reasons 3. Present ideas or solutions in creative and different ways such as drawings, diagrams, mind-map, models, etc.	1. Explanatory Document with Chinese characters or English words* between 500 and 1,500 (PDF/JPG, ≤20MB) 2. Presentation Video with Chinese or English (or both) subtitles (MP4, landscape, ≤2 min, ≤200MB) 3. Please submit one of the following documents in PDF format : (1) A description of the creative process (for individual submissions only); (2) A description of each team member's contribution (for

		team submissions only).
Live-action Video	1. Create an original live-action video aligned with one campaign theme. 2. Use live-action footage, photographs, interviews, or other visual materials to explore an issue, share an idea, document an action, or present a perspective related to the selected theme. 3. Demonstrate creativity, authenticity, and meaningful engagement with the topic. 4. The video may take the form of a documentary, interview, community action story, campaign record, personal narrative, news feature, or other live-action storytelling formats. 5. Include clear subtitles in Chinese , English or both to support understanding and enhance communication of the message.	1. Video: The final live-action video with Chinese or English (or both) subtitles (MP4; landscape, 3-5min, ≤500MB) 2. Explanation document (maximum file size 20MB). The content of the document should include: (1) Creative concept (story outline or script); (2) Character design (if applicable); (3) Scene planning (visual composition and shot design); (4) Description of the video creation tools used, including how they were applied during the production process; (5) Sources and credits for any third-party visual, audio, font or music materials used (if applicable); (6) Behind-the-Scenes Photos (10 photos)

		documenting the production process. 3. Please submit one of the following documents in PDF format : (1) A description of the creative process (for individual submissions only); (2) A description of each team member's contribution (for team submissions only).
Open Work Type	Only for countries or regions with UNESCO ASPnet National Coordinators (NCs) or partner organizations who can conduct independent evaluations.	Subject to NC's or partner organization's proposal

*Language and word limits may be adjusted according to the language and specific circumstances of the submitting country

Youth Group

Type	Requirements	Submission Materials
Painting	- Hand-drawn original work expressing an imagined world related to a campaign theme. - Size: A3 (29.7 x 42cm) or A2 (42 x 59.4cm)	- Photo of painting (PNG/JPG, ≤20MB) - Presentation Video with Chinese or English (or both) subtitles (MP4, landscape, ≤2 min, ≤200MB) - Please submit one of

		the following documents in PDF format: (1) A description of the creative process (for individual submissions only); (2) A description of each team member's contribution (for team submissions only).
Poster	1. Design a poster aligned with one campaign theme 2. Demonstrate clear understanding of the issue 3. Use visuals and text for effective communication 4. Support content with relevant data/examples and references 5. Ensure logical, accessible presentation for a general audience 6. Original work (hand-drawn and/or digital) 7. Size: A3 / A2 / A1 / A0	1. Poster in PNG/JPG, $\leq 20\text{MB}$ 2. Presentation Video with Chinese or English (or both) subtitles (MP4, landscape, $\leq 2\text{ min}$, $\leq 200\text{MB}$) 3. Please submit one of the following documents in PDF format: (1) A description of the creative process (for individual submissions only); (2) A description of each team member's contribution (for team submissions only).
Solution	1. Identify a real-world issue aligned with one campaign	1. Explanatory Document with a

	theme - Analyse underlying causes using relevant knowledge or data - Propose a well-reasoned and feasible solution - Evaluate expected impact, limitations, and potential improvements - Present ideas clearly with logical structure and supporting evidence	maximum of 3,000 Chinese characters or English words*. (PDF/Image/Mind Map, ≤20MB) - Presentation video with Chinese or English (or both) subtitles(MP4, landscape, ≤2 min, ≤200MB) - Please submit one of the following documents in PDF format: (1) A description of the creative process (for individual submissions only); (2) A description of each team member's contribution (for team submissions only).
Live-action Video	- Create an original live-action video aligned with one campaign theme. - Use live-action footage, photographs, interviews, or other visual materials to explore an issue, share an idea, document an action, or present a perspective related to the selected theme. - Demonstrate creativity, authenticity, and meaningful	- Video: The final live-action video (MP4; landscape, 3-5min, ≤500MB) - Explanation document with Chinese or English (or both) subtitles (maximum file size 20MB). The content of the document should include: (1) Creative concept

	engagement with the topic. 4. The video may take the form of a documentary, interview, community action story, campaign record, personal narrative, news feature, or other live-action storytelling formats. 5. Include clear subtitles in Chinese , English or both to support understanding and enhance communication of the message.	(story outline or script); (2) Character design (if applicable); (3) Scene planning (visual composition and shot design); (4) Description of the video creation tools used, including how they were applied during the production process. (5) Sources and credits for any third-party visual, audio, font or music materials used (if applicable); (6) Behind-the-Scenes Photos (10 photos) documenting the production process. 3. Please submit one of the following documents in PDF format: (1) A description of the creative process (for individual submissions only); (2) A description of each team
--	--	--

		member's contribution (for team submissions only).
AI Short Video	1. Create an AI-generated short video aligned with one campaign theme. 2. Highlighting the unique value of artificial intelligence in the creative process 3. Content can be a story, a visual metaphor, a futuristic vision, a documentary-style clip, etc. 4. Include clear subtitles in Chinese , English or both to support understanding and enhance communication of the message.	1. Video: The final AI short video with Chinese or English (or both) subtitles (MP4; landscape, ≤2 min, ≤200MB) 2. Explanation document (maximum file size 20MB). The content of the document should include: (1) Creative concept (story outline or script); (2) Character design; (3) Scene planning (visual composition and shot design); (4) Description of the AI video creation tools used, including how they were applied during the production process. 3. Please submit one of the following documents in PDF format: (1) A description of the creative process (for individual submissions

		only); (2) A description of each team member's contribution (for team submissions only).
Open Work Type	Only for countries or regions with National Coordinators (NCs) or partner organizations who can conduct independent evaluations.	Subject to NC's proposal

*Language and word limits may be adjusted according to the language and specific circumstances of the submitting country

Timeline

Project Launch	Early June 2026
Submission Deadline	31 October 2026
Assessment	November 2026
Award Announcement, Ceremony & Showcase	Mid-January 2027

All dates and times listed in this table are expressed in the UTC+8 time zone.

The evaluation for the overall awards may be carried out in multiple rounds, with certificates issued in phases as appropriate.

Outputs

Following a rigorous selection process, a range of outstanding submissions will be recognized across various categories, including paintings, crafts, solutions, science posters, and AI short videos. These works will have the opportunity to be showcased through diverse platforms for global promotion, exhibition, and exchange, further amplifying the creativity and reflections of the participants.

Awards

To recognize outstanding submissions and their creators, the campaign will offer the following awards with electronic certificates:

Student Awards

In recognition of participants' contributions and outstanding submissions, electronic certificates will be issued upon meeting the established requirements.

Category	Title	Description
Overall Awards	Award for Leadership in Sustainable Innovation	Submitted works meet the highest standards in thematic relevance, innovation, completeness, and overall impact, demonstrating leadership and exemplary influence.
	Award for Pioneering Sustainability	Submitted works demonstrate a strong alignment with the theme, are rigorous and highly complete, showcasing unique ideas and thinking, with at least one significant highlight.
	Award for Sustainability Exploration	Submitted works align with the specified theme and basic submission requirements, and are sufficiently complete.
Special Awards	Award for Environmental Protection and Resilience (Theme I)	This award honours outstanding efforts that address climate change, enhance environmental resilience, and support the protection of ecosystems, biodiversity, oceans, and natural resources.
	Award for Cultural Continuity and Creativity (Theme II)	This award highlights exemplary approaches to safeguarding, transmitting, and creatively reinterpreting cultural heritage and traditions in contemporary

		contexts.
	Award for Healthy and Inclusive Living (Theme III)	This award recognises initiatives and ideas that advance physical and mental well-being, promote sustainable lifestyles, foster inclusive community design, and enhance quality of life.
	Award for Digital Innovation for Sustainability (Theme IV)	This award acknowledges forward-looking applications of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and information and communication technologies that support sustainable development in a responsible and ethical manner.
	Award for Peaceful and Inclusive Societies (Theme V)	This award celebrates contributions that strengthen peacebuilding, social cohesion, mutual understanding, dialogue, and cooperation within and across societies.
Other Awards	Other awards established by partner organizations.	

Teacher Recognition

These certificates are intended to recognize educators whose guidance and commitment have contributed meaningfully to students' engagement and achievement within the initiative. Through their mentorship and encouragement, these educators foster creativity, leadership, and a strong sense of responsibility toward sustainable development. The following distinctions will be conferred under this category:

Honorary Title	Description
Outstanding Mentor Award	Conferred upon instructors whose students receive the Award for Leadership in Sustainable Innovation, Special Awards, or other awards established by donors.
Certificate of Acknowledgement	Presented to instructors whose students submit eligible works in accordance with the established

	requirements.
--	---------------

Institutional Recognition

These certificates are intended to recognize schools and organizations that demonstrate strong institutional commitment to promoting student participation and advancing the objectives of the initiative. Through effective coordination, outreach, and encouragement, these institutions play a vital role in fostering broad engagement and a culture of sustainability. The following distinctions will be conferred under this category.

Honorary Title	Description
Outstanding School/Organization Award	Conferred upon schools and organizations that submit more than 40 works in accordance with the established requirements.
Certificate of Acknowledgement	Presented to schools and organizations whose students submit eligible works.

Notes on Submissions

1. Originality

- a) Participants must guarantee that their submitted works are original, do not involve any form of plagiarism;
- b) Submitted works do not infringe upon any third party's copyright, portrait rights, privacy rights, or other lawful rights and interests.

2. Regulations on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence Tools

- a) Only "AI short video" format are permitted to use generative artificial intelligence tools, and participants must truthfully disclose the methods of use as required;
- b) Failure to truthfully disclose the use of artificial intelligence tools will result in disqualification from CIPP;
- c) The use of generative artificial intelligence tools is strictly prohibited in all other formats of works. However, the use of basic filters or video editing functions is permitted.

3. Submission Standards

- a) Watermarks and logos are not permitted;
- b) Submissions from commercial organizations, as well as works that are commercial in nature, staged, or disruptive to the ecological environment and community, will not be accepted.

4. Legal and Ethical Compliance

- a) All submitted works must be created in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and must not contain any violent content;
- b) Content that violates public order, social ethics, or religious sensitivities is strictly prohibited.

5. Declaration of Rights and Authorization

- a) By submitting their work, authors unconditionally grant the organizer a royalty-free and worldwide non-exclusive license to:
 - i. reproduce, distribute, exhibit, transmit via information networks, publicly display, and—where necessary for campaign purposes—edit or modify the work;
 - ii. use the work for future public exhibitions, publications, and environmental science educational activities related to sustainable development.
- b) The authors retain the moral right of attribution and all other rights legally granted to them;
- c) Should the authors wish to terminate this authorization, a written request must be submitted. The license shall be terminated only upon the organizer's written consent.

6. Protection of Minors

- a) In accordance with the principles of the protection of minors, participants under the age of 18 shall be required to obtain the prior written consent of their legal guardian, who shall bear full legal responsibility for any infringement arising therefrom;
- b) All submitted works shall not contain any privacy-related information pertaining to minors.

Logistics

1. Statement of Non-Profit Purpose

The CIPP campaign is conducted on a public-interest and non-profit basis and is open to participants worldwide. The organizers are committed to ensuring that no fees of any kind are charged throughout the creative submission process, including but not limited to registration fees, evaluation fees, or certificate fees. No organization or individual has been authorized to collect any fees on behalf of the CIPP campaign. Should in-person sharing, exhibition, or exchange activities be organized at a later stage, any related travel or incidental expenses will be communicated separately by the organizers. Participation in such activities will be entirely voluntary.

2. Contact Information

For inquiries, please contact the campaign organizer at icua_cipp@icua.org

3. Right of Interpretation

The organizer reserves the final right of interpretation.

4. Further Details

For more details, please visit the official website:

www.icua-cipp.com