

25 young climate leaders named as finalists for The World Around's Young Climate Prize

Now in its third cycle, the prize pairs its 2026 cohort with a roster of mentors including Bruce Mau, Paola Antonelli, Walter Hood, and Tatiana Bilbao.



Clockwise from top left: Pynbhairoh Snidvongs Kruesopon & Charlotte Khoo; Ariana Agarwal; Janet Dete & Damaris Kuria; Cristian Jossias Beker Quintero; Gauri Gautam; Ryan Murphy; Robyn Camille Mijares

September 16, 2026 – [The World Around](#), a design and architecture nonprofit founded by curator Beatrice Galilee, today named 25 finalists for the third cycle of its [Young Climate Prize](#).

Launched in 2022, the prize is a mentorship program for climate-focused designers, scientists, and organizers between the ages of 13 and 25. Drawn from 16 countries, 25 finalists will take part in a three-month academy combining individual mentorship with lectures and workshops led by influential figures from The World Around's community. The program culminates in a jury review, with three winners announced in 2027.

"The global youth climate movement is a wellspring of inspiration, outlining in the starkest possible terms the stakes—and the ingenuity—of the generation that will live with this crisis the longest," said **Beatrice Galilee**, Founder and Executive Director of The World Around. "The deeply impressive work by this year's cohort is a reminder that some of the most rigorous and relevant design solutions won't come from the top down, and many of our future climate leaders are just getting started."

The cohort spans innovation in material and product design, infrastructure, ecological repair, advocacy, education, and more. This year's mentors include designer **Bruce Mau**; MoMA curator **Paola Antonelli**; landscape architect and 2019 MacArthur Fellow **Walter Hood**; architects **Tatiana Bilbao**, **Al Borde**, and **Xu Tiantian**; Dark Matter Labs co-founder **Indy Johar**; Pentagram partner **Harry Pearce**; filmmaker **Fernando Frías**; and many more.

Past winners include **Mohamed Salem Mohamed Ali**, a Saharwi refugee in Algeria who built a desert farm inside the Smara refugee camp; Pakistani cartographer **Namra Khalid**, for her work mapping climate vulnerability in Karachi; Sierra Leonean environmentalist **Foday David Kamara**, who has helped convert over 450 tons of discarded plastic into building materials; and Nigerian architect **Blossom Eromosele**, who has designed solar-powered modular homes for refugees and displaced families.

See below for this year's full list of finalists and [download images here](#).

Young Climate Prize Cycle 3 Finalists

[Download images here](#)

Protecting Public Health

Ariana Agarwal & Vivaan Chhawchharia, 16, India

Plas-Stick: A biodegradable material made from discarded tamarind seeds and magnetic nanoparticles that binds and removes microplastics from drinking water without electricity.

[Mentor: Bruce Mau, designer](#)

Ahmed Sajidan Jarjis Rafsan, 23, Bangladesh

Shirin Sajmila International Foundation, ApexStride, and the Caribbean Studies Network: Three organizations spanning flood response health systems and repairable prosthetics.

[Mentor: Daniel Perlin, artist and experience designer](#)

Carla & Rares Gheorghe, 16, Romania

Lichenary: A citizen science platform using lichens as air quality bioindicators, now expanding into moss-based filtration panels.

[Mentor: Michael Wang, artist](#)

Ryan Murphy, 16, Thailand

Air Pure Project: A low-cost HEPA air purifier built from local components for classrooms in Bangkok's Khlong Toei district.

[Mentor: Jon Marshall, industrial designer](#)

Rushil Hari Koppaka, 24, India

Alkamy Carbon: Adapts wastewater-treatment infrastructure in Mumbai to remove and store atmospheric carbon dioxide.

[Mentor: TBC](#)

Sofía Méndez Roca, 19, Bolivia

PyroGel: A plant-derived hydrogel designed to slow wildfire ignition without leaving toxic residue in soil.

[Mentor: Brian Butterfield, architect and exhibition designer](#)

Inventing Alternatives

Carlo Charles, 25, Singapore

Flint: A rechargeable, cellulose-based battery made from agricultural waste, without lithium, cobalt, or nickel.

[Mentor: Harry Pearce, graphic designer](#)

Ella Csuka, 25, United States

Ecotune: Bio-based textiles developed as alternatives to petroleum-derived fabrics for fashion, footwear, and interiors.

[Mentor: Paola Antonelli, curator](#)

Gauri Gautam, 25, India

Mycelius: Mycelium-based materials made from agricultural and textile waste, developed for interior products.

[Mentor: Marc Benda, gallerist](#)

Janet Dete & Damaris Kuria, 25, Kenya

Queening Afrika: A collection and processing system that turns discarded synthetic hair into fiber for handbags and home goods.

[Mentor: Fernando Laposse, designer](#)

Rewild, Restore & Radical Repair

Bolesław Jacaszek, 18, Poland

Miejska Miedza: Converts university lawns in Gdansk into semi-natural meadows for wild pollinators.

[Mentor: TBC](#)

Cléusia Cardina, 24, Mozambique

Riparian Restoration of the Nhatsongo River: Riverbank restoration in Chizombero using buffer planting, a community tree nursery, and low-cost irrigation using recycled bottles.

Mentor: [Walter Hood, landscape architect](#)

Pynbhairoh Snidvongs Kruesopon & Charlotte Khoo, 19, Thailand

Care for Coral: Youth-led coral restoration and coastal-resilience education founded during the pandemic.

Mentor: [Tatiana Bilbao, architect](#)

William Tan, 15, United States

Build A Reef: Sensor-equipped artificial reef structures paired with student-led marine engineering programs.

Mentor: [Ewan McEoin, curator](#)

Leading through Culture

Denise Ayebare, 23, Uganda

BetterLife International: Works with refugee and displaced women on climate-adapted farming, including a soil monitoring app.

Mentor: [Henk Ovink, water expert](#)

Ema Puposka, 18, China

Making Waves Club: Founded an international youth ocean conservation film festival at age 12.

Mentor: [Kyle Bergman, film curator](#)

Cristian Jossias Beker Quintero, 18, Panamá

Bocas del Toro Youth for Climate Action: Brings young people, including Indigenous youth, into local climate policy processes.

Mentor: [Ana María Gutierrez, architect](#)

Robyn Camille Mijares, 25, Philippines

Grow School Philippines: Founded the country's first bamboo farm school, reaching more than 98,000 students with free environmental education.

Mentor: [Al Borde, architecture collective](#)

Veldesén Yaputra, 24, Indonesia

Amurta: Works with artisan communities in China, Indonesia, and Peru to bring traditional craft into contemporary products and exhibitions.

Mentor: [Xu Tiantian, architect](#)

AJ Raymundo, 23, Philippines

On the Edge: Documents fishing communities on Laguna de Bay affected by a government expressway project, through film and salvaged material art.

Mentor: [Fernando Frías, filmmaker](#)

Sumaya Saidi, 21, Afghanistan

Hamra Green: A digital platform, translated into Dari and Pashto, for organizing local environmental work.

Mentor: [TBC](#)

About the Young Climate Prize

The Young Climate Prize is a mentorship and recognition program from The World Around, launched in 2022 for climate-focused designers, scientists, and organizers between the ages of 13 and 25. Each cycle pairs a cohort of finalists with individual mentors from architecture, design, and related fields for a multi-month program culminating in a jury review and the announcement of winners.

www.theworldaround.org/young-climate-prize

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About the World Around

The World Around is a New York-based nonprofit founded in 2019 by curator Beatrice Galilee, dedicated to making new ideas in architecture and design accessible to a broad public. Its programming, including an annual summit, spans lectures, short documentary films, and initiatives such as the Young Climate Prize, with a recurring focus on climate and social justice.

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