**PRESS RELEASE**

Istanbul, 12 November 2026

# Genç Hayat Foundation brings rural youth to the COP31 agenda

On 14 November, at the UN Climate Change Conference in Antalya, the Foundation will share the first findings of its survey of 294 young people from 21 provinces and discuss rural youth, green skills and the transformation of work.

Genç Hayat Foundation, which has kept rural youth on its agenda since 2010, will host a session at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31), held in Antalya from 9 to 20 November 2026. The session, **"Growing Green Futures: Rural Youth, Skills and the Green Transformation of Work"**, will take place on Saturday 14 November, 16:00–16:45, at the Türkiye Pavilion in the Blue Zone (B125, Room 1).

Climate debates mostly follow the agenda of big cities and classrooms. In this session, Genç Hayat Foundation puts forward the question of young people who live in rural areas and are often left out of these debates: what green skills and what work do I need to stay where I live and make a living?

The Foundation will share with decision-makers what it hears from young people at its field sites: rural young people's expectations of work, the impact of climate change on livelihoods, and the skills they need.

Ahead of the conference, the Foundation surveyed 294 young people aged 15–24 from 21 provinces on rural life, work, climate change and their hopes for the future. They were asked questions such as where they would like to live in five years, under what conditions they would consider staying where they live, how they were affected by weather events such as drought, floods or frost over the past year, and what fields they would like to work in if they lived in a village or small town. Young people were also asked what single message they would give decision-makers at COP31.

The answers paint a striking picture: 72% of young people see building a future in rural areas as possible, but more than half (55.1%) say this depends on better work and living conditions; only 14.6% are certain they will live in a rural area in the future. The first condition for staying where they live is a well-paid, regular job (61.6%). The full survey report and the outcome statement shaped by young people's voices, the **"Manifesto of Rural Youth"**, will be published on 16 November at genchayat.org/en/cop31.

> Uğur Gülderer, General Director, Genç Hayat Foundation
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> **"Rural young people are among those who feel the climate crisis most directly, yet they are the least visible at the tables where solutions are discussed. We are bringing their questions and proposals to COP31. The green transition will be fair only to the extent that young people can build work and a future where they live."**

## Survey highlights

**72%**
see a future in rural areas as possible; 55.1% say it depends on better work and living conditions.

**14.6%**
are certain they will live in a rural area in the future.

**61.6%**
want a well-paid, regular job first in order to stay where they live.

**54.8%**
want COP31 to discuss green jobs and employment for young people first.

Source: Genç Hayat Foundation youth survey, 2026 · 21 provinces, ages 15–24, n=294. Data visuals are in the media kit at genchayat.org/en/cop31.

## Session details

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| **Date and time** | Saturday 14 November 2026, 16:00–16:45 |
| **Venue** | COP31 Blue Zone, Türkiye Pavilion B125, Room 1, Antalya |
| **Moderator** | Prof. Dr. Bülent Gülçubuk, Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, Ankara University |
| **Speakers** | Suat Dede, Ministry of Labour and Social Security<br>Chizuru Iwata, UNICEF Türkiye<br>Cem Ertal, TOPRAQ AI<br>Uğur Gülderer, General Director, Genç Hayat Foundation |
| **Language** | Turkish and English, with simultaneous interpretation |

**About Genç Hayat Foundation**
Working with children and young people aged 11–18 since 2008, Genç Hayat Foundation has reached more than 85,000 children and young people in 34 provinces. Through national and international programmes and research, the Foundation supports children's and young people's access to education. www.genchayat.org

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Journalists need Blue Zone accreditation to attend the session. Please get in touch for photo and footage requests.