

YALE

PLANETARY SOLUTIONS



Dear Planetary Solutions Community,

The challenges facing our planet did not recede in 2025—and neither did the Yale community. Over the past year, Yale Planetary Solutions helped catalyze new ideas, partnerships, and constellations of collaboration that moved knowledge into action at a moment when resolve matters more than ever.

Together, faculty, students, staff, and partners advanced work that crossed disciplines and scales, from foundational research to applied efforts shaped with communities, industry, and decision-makers. These efforts reflected a shared recognition that solving planetary challenges depends on connecting people and ideas in new ways, accelerating promising work with partners, and thinking creatively about our potential for positive impact.

We are deeply grateful to the Yale community for its curiosity, creativity, and commitment, and to our partners for trusting Yale as a place where ideas can be responsibly explored and meaningfully applied. The accomplishments of 2025 were made possible by those who asked hard questions, took thoughtful risks, and stayed engaged even when the path forward was uncertain.

Yet this moment calls for more. The scale and pace of planetary change demand continued engagement, deeper collaboration, and broader participation. Yale Planetary Solutions exists to help meet that call. To foster constellations. To support shared effort. To translate ambition into action.

We invite you to join us as we build what comes next in 2026 and beyond. Because the work is urgent. Because the stakes are shared. And because, together, we can do more than any of us could alone.

With gratitude,

Julie Zimmerman

News

Planetary Solutions: Our Top 10 Highlights of 2025



As we come to the end of 2025, YPS is celebrating some of this year's achievements. We're grateful to the many university and community partners that have made so much possible. From another round of grant-funded projects to the first Sci X Sci-Fi program and the launch of the YPS Strategic Vision 2050, we're eager to build on our momentum and make even greater impact next year. [Read more.](#)

Celebrating Positive Impact at the YPS Grant Program Symposium



A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for the first-ever YPS Grant Program Symposium on December 5th! Through 15 lightning talks and 10 posters, grant recipients shared the impact of their projects so far to a packed room of engaged attendees. If you participated, we invite you to take our [short survey](#) about the event.

Field Testing iKON to Compare Local Knowledge to Remote Sensing Data in Colombia



Smallholder farmers are particularly vulnerable to climate hazards: they make up most of the 768 million people facing hunger, yet 95% of research is irrelevant to them. Few studies include their voices. Using iKON, a low-cost, scalable tool that harnesses SMS and gamification, team members of the 2025 YPS Grant project, "Scaling Community-Sensing and Recalling of Historical Climate Impact Data" are redefining how climate impact data is generated, positioning smallholder farmers as active contributors to climate intelligence. [Watch the video.](#)

Stuart DeCew Named Inaugural Director of Yale's

Planetary Solutions Impact Accelerator



Yale Ventures is pleased to announce that Stuart (Stu) DeCew '11 M.B.A., M.E.M., has been appointed the inaugural director of the Planetary Solutions Impact Accelerator (PSIA), a new initiative designed to accelerate the translation of Yale research into transformative solutions to planetary challenges. [Read more.](#)

Yale Bird-Friendly Building Initiative Wins International Excellence Award



Yale University's Bird-Friendly Building Initiative, a project that aims to accelerate the adoption of bird-friendly design in the built environment, has been recognized with a 2025 Excellence Award by the International Sustainable Campus Network. Yale was honored for collaborations that engage external partners to disseminate knowledge, research, and best practices in ways that will benefit the communities they serve. The project received grant funding from YPS in both 2022 and 2023. [Read more.](#)

Planetary Solutions Prize Winner Named to Forbes 30 Under 30



Nick Callegari (SOM '25) has been named to the Forbes 30 Under 30 list in Manufacturing & Industry for 2026. Nick is the founder of Verustruct, a public benefit corporation developing robotic construction technologies to deliver affordable, sustainable, and beautiful housing. Verustruct won \$15,000 through the Planetary Solutions Prize at Startup Yale in April 2025, as well as the Audience Choice Award. Verustruct closed a \$2.4 million pre-seed round in September 2025. [Read more.](#)

‘We’re in a Better Place’: Has the Time for a Unified Global Carbon Market Finally Arrived?



In a Q&A, Yale economist Rohini Pande explains why a voluntary carbon market initiative adopted during the COP30 climate conference in Belém can help make emissions reduction cost effective — and promote innovation in the world's developing nations. [Read more.](#)

How Can We Tell if Climate-Smart Agriculture

Stores Carbon?



Yale Center for Natural Carbon Capture (YCNCC) researchers explain that real-world project data are needed to assess the effects of cover cropping and other practices on soil carbon storage. Large-scale medical studies provide a proven methodology. [Read more.](#)

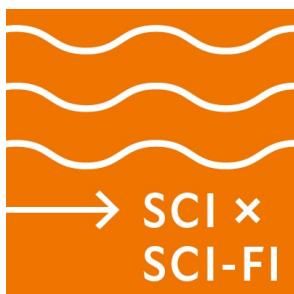
Opportunities

Apply Now to the YPS Grant Program + Impact Accelerator



The YPS Grant Program is inviting proposals for faculty- and staff-led projects aimed at solving planetary challenges. Since 2022, the program has awarded over \$7 million to interdisciplinary projects at Yale. New this year, Grant Program applicants focused on commercialization can apply to the Planetary Solutions Impact Accelerator, which provides commercialization support, expert mentorship, and access to a global network of investors and partners. Apply by Jan. 30, 2026. [Learn more.](#)

Students: Submit Your Story for the Sci X Sci-Fi Flash Fiction Contest



Prizes of \$350 and \$250 will be awarded to winning flash fiction stories of 300-1,000 words. Open to current college and university students at Yale and other institutions in the New Haven area, this contest aims to inspire hope and optimism through creative storytelling about climate and sustainability. Submit your story by February 27, 2026, and share your vision for a sustainable, thriving future! [Learn more.](#)

AI at Yale Launches 2026 Seed Grants Call for Proposals



For the second year, AI at Yale is sponsoring interdisciplinary seed grants for research in the amount of \$100,000 and workshops in the amount of \$20,000 each. These seed grants are intended to foster discipline-spanning work on, with, and about AI technologies. AI Seed Grant eligibility is for Yale researchers qualified for PI status on external grants. Applications are due February 6, 2026. [Read more.](#)

Additional Opportunities:

[Yale Chapter of the International Society of Tropical Foresters Innovation Prize: Apply by December 19](#)

[SAGE Magazine's *Ancient Futures* Print Edition: Submit Your Work by December 19](#)

[Environmental Fellows Program Applications Are Open through January 4](#)

[Apply by January 5 for the 2026 Switzer Environmental Fellowships](#)

[Final Deadline for the 2026 MIT Climate & Energy Prize is January 11](#)

[Public Humanities Grant Program: Apply by February 13](#)

Upcoming Events

Office Hours: YPS Grant Program + Impact Accelerator
January 7, 2026, Online

Yale Ventures' Collaborative CT
January 8, 2026, Connecticut Innovations

Info Session: YPS Grant Program + Impact Accelerator
January 12, 2026, Online

Office Hours: YPS Grant Program + Impact Accelerator
January 22, 2026, Online

Welcome Back Reception and Humanities in Action Panel
January 22, 2026, Humanities Quadrangle

YSPH Climate Change and Health Seminar with Dr. Ana Isabel Baptista
January 26, 2026, Online

Tropical Forest Leadership Summit
February 6-7, 2026, Kroon Hall

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