

International Youth STEM Grand Final Brings Global Young Innovators to London to Tackle Food Waste

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, July 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Young innovators from around the world gathered in London for the BIEA's STEM Youth Innovation Competition 2026 Grand Final & Showcase, hosted by the [British International Education Association \(BIEA\)](#) at Mercato Metropolitano, Elephant & Castle.

This year's competition theme, Reducing Food Waste, challenged students aged 6 to 18 to develop practical STEM-based solutions to one

of the world's most pressing sustainability issues. The in-person Grand Final saw 33 teams from different parts of the world meeting in London, including teams from the UK, Turkey, China, Macao, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea.



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These young people are not only learning science — they are learning leadership, teamwork and how to think beyond the obvious. These are skills that AI cannot replace.”

Dr Alex Holmes, Head of STEM at BIEA.

From smart food-waste monitoring systems and preservation technologies to circular-economy approaches using food by-products, the students demonstrated how science, technology, engineering and creativity can be used to address real-world challenges.

Among this year's outstanding award-winning teams were young innovators from Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, South Korea and Turkey, whose projects impressed judges with their creativity, practical thinking and commitment to sustainability. These included teams such as MyCel from

Malaysia, EcoShield from South Korea, and Citra Sense Pack from Turkey, alongside high-achieving Saudi student teams presenting solutions linked to food preservation, waste analysis and technology-enabled food-waste reduction.

The energetic youngsters from Team Fresh Trackers also wowed the crowd with their enthusiasm, teamwork and brilliant display, walking away with The Peers Award, a special recognition voted for by fellow participants.

The top awards were presented by Nikki Collins, CEO of BIEA, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd Hanafi Ahmad Damanhuri, representing the Malaysian High Commission in London.

Nikki Collins, CEO of BIEA, said: "The Grand Final is always a celebration of young people's creativity, but this year felt especially powerful. These students have not only understood the challenge of food waste; they have responded with imagination, compassion and practical scientific thinking. BIEA is proud to provide a platform where young people from different countries can learn from one another and see themselves as future changemakers."



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd Hanafi Ahmad Damanhuri said:

"It was inspiring to see so many young people from around the world presenting thoughtful and innovative solutions to a global challenge. Events like this show the importance of international collaboration in education, and I was especially pleased to see students demonstrating confidence, teamwork and a strong sense of responsibility for the future."

Dr Alex Holmes, Head of STEM at BIEA, said the 2026 competition had shown a particularly strong level of experimental thinking.

"We saw students going beyond theory and testing practical ideas, including projects that used food waste itself as a resource for new preservation methods."

The Grand Final featured a full day of activities, including team showcases, project judging, student interviews, a live challenge and an awards ceremony. Judges and visitors had the opportunity to speak directly with students about their ideas, prototypes and research process.

BIEA said this year's competition reflected the importance of giving young people a platform to respond to global issues through innovation and international collaboration.

Helen Hu, Partnership Director at BIEA, said:

"What makes this competition special is not only the quality of the STEM ideas, but the way young people from different countries approach the same global problem from different cultural and local perspectives. Food waste affects every community, and these students are showing that young people can be part of the solution."

The 2026 Grand Final also highlighted London's role as an international meeting point for young talent, educators, scientists and partners committed to sustainability and future skills.

Looking ahead, BIEA also announced its 2027 competition theme: "Fish Forward: A Challenge to End Overfishing." The new theme will invite students to explore solutions to overfishing, including reducing bycatch, tackling illegal fishing and supporting more sustainable aquaculture. It continues BIEA's commitment to encouraging young people to use STEM to protect the planet and respond to urgent environmental challenges.

BIEA's [International STEM Youth Innovation Competition](#) is the organisation's annual flagship STEM programme, designed to inspire young people to apply scientific thinking to real-world challenges. Previous competition themes have included protecting endangered animals with drone technology, saving coastlines, tackling plastic pollution, designing sustainable cities and reducing food waste.

Competition information: <https://bieacompetition.org.uk/2026-competition/>

Notes to editors:

The British International Education Association is a UK-based non-profit organisation promoting STEM education, sustainability, youth voice and international collaboration. BIEA works with students, schools, educators and partners internationally to encourage creativity, confidence and problem-solving through real-world learning.

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