



ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM

YOUTH2030

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

"COVID-19 recovery: Youth taking action for a sustainable future"

CONCEPT NOTE

THEMATIC SESSION ON "YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN TRANSFORMING EDUCATION – SDG 4"

19 April 2022, 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

IDENTIFICATION	
SDG/theme or Region	Quality Education (SDG 4)
Session co-lead UN	UNESCO
Session co-lead Youth	UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)
Session co-organizers (both UN and Youth)	IESALC, OHCHR, UNCTAD, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN WOMEN GPE
BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES	
<p>Education is key in driving progress across all SDGs and enabling young people to prepare for entry into the workforce and actively engage on critical social and environmental issues that affect them. The prolonged and repeated class and school closures during 2020 and 2021 have resulted in leaving many of the education-related targets of the SDGs well off track. This global learning crisis is depriving hundreds of millions of children and young people of their right to quality education with increased drop-out rates, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable and marginalized students and young people, particularly girls. Investments in education improve health outcomes, build human capital,</p>	

reduce poverty and inequality, combat violence and extremism, and boost earnings. Yet confronted with young and growing populations, high rates of poverty and inequality – and compounded by the impacts of COVID-19 –many governments in lower-income countries lack the resources they need to get all children in school and learning.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the risks that arise when young people do not have access to (technological) resources and the appropriate education and training to unlock their innovative potential. As digital technologies continue to open up a world of new opportunities, many youth from lower income countries still require access to the internet as well as the right skill-set necessary to leverage new digital technologies to improve their livelihoods and solve urgent social, economic and environmental challenges at community level. Education institutions and professional development initiatives need to equip young people with transferable skills, offer apprenticeships and mentorship opportunities, as well as foster innovative spirit to keep up with the needs of the changing job market. For young people to seize the benefits of the new digital era ahead, providing resilient and high-quality education environments where innovation, best practices and creativity are nurtured need to become an integral part of new learning ecosystems.

Within this context, the ECOSOC Youth Forum SDG 4 Breakout session will highlight the role of youth engagement in enhancing the quality of formal and informal education. The skills and knowledge that young people need to effectively contribute to human rights, sustainable development, a culture of peace and non-violence, respect for diversity and global citizenship will be discussed, as well as challenges and opportunities to develop and deliver related educational programmes. This session will provide a safe space for young people to share their perspectives on how to transform education amidst ongoing crises. Through an interactive dialogue, youth representatives will identify recommendations for the future of education and learning, including as part of the overall consultations on the Transforming Education Summit to be held in September 2022.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

This session aims to highlight the role of youth engagement in enhancing the quality of formal and informal education. Existing youth-led solutions that transform education and their impacts on local, national, and regional communities will be showcased in this session. The skills and knowledge that young people need to effectively contribute to human rights, sustainable development, a culture of peace and non-violence, respect for diversity and global citizenship will be discussed, as well as challenges and opportunities to develop and deliver related educational programmes. Proposed strategies on how youth engagement can be strengthened to reshape formal and informal education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be shared and discussed. Strategies to increase and improve youth advocacy for education financing and inclusive education will be shared. The purpose of this segment is to reiterate the need to support and build upon existing youth-led solutions to improve the accessibility and equity of education and to accelerate progress on SDG 4.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Primary outcomes

1. Raise awareness about youth and student priorities to ensure that education systems are inclusive, future-proof, sustainable, safe, and backed by education policy, financing, and infrastructure
2. Raise awareness about existing youth-led solutions that are transforming informal and formal education
3. Discuss and propose strategies to strengthen youth engagement during planning processes, consultations, implementation, validation, and reviewing procedures relating to improving quality education

Secondary outcomes

1. Existing youth and student organisations and affiliations and youth-led solutions are provided opportunities to gain support through sustainable funding and resourcing
2. Youth and students are invited by member states in intergenerational dialogues to shape national education commitments

APPROACH USED TO GENERATE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The virtual event will be structured as an interactive and intergenerational session, featuring UN, civil society, academia and government representatives. More particularly, youth representatives will answer questions prepared for the session and share experiences and lessons learned. The showcased examples of meaningful and successful youth actions will provide a set of good practices for possible replication and adaptation in other relevant contexts.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

The session will highlight the experiences of youth and student panellists and their creative action towards creating more sustainable and equitable education.

01:30-01:35 **Introduction of the session**

01:35-01:50 **Opening Remarks**

Sobhi Tawil, Director of Future of Learning and Innovation, UNESCO

Loes van der Graaf, Education Focal Point, MGCY

Screening of the video “Start acting by learning for our planet”

01:50-02:50	Young Voices on Transforming Education Each panellist will share their journey of taking action achieving quality education in their local communities. The moderator will lead a discussion with the panellists and discussants around the guiding questions below. Panellists will share their insights and the recommendations from their consultations with other young people to achieve these targets.
02:50-02:55	Interactive Moment Attendees will share their views on transforming education through an online tool.
02:55-03:00	Closing Remarks Armel Azihar, SDG4Youth Transforming Education Summit Youth Advisor Key outcomes of this session will be expressed to attendees and next steps on strengthening youth partnerships in local communities will be shared.

SESSION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can we ensure meaningful youth engagement and youth advocacy in transforming and reimagining the future of education?
2. How can young people and stakeholders work together to build back SDG 4 issues that are off track?
3. What kind of education is needed to ensure youth empowerment and positive engagement in society?

NAMES OF SESSION SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR(S)

Moderator:

- Ulises Brengi, SDG4Youth Network Transforming Education Summit Youth Advisor

Opening and Closing Remarks:

- Sobhi Tawil, Director of Future of Learning and Innovation, UNESCO
- Loes van der Graaf, Education Focal Point, MGCY
- Armel Azihar, SDG4Youth Transforming Education Summit Youth Advisor

Panellists:

- Noella Bidikukeba Ilunga, Humanitarian Youth Ambassador and Former President of DAFI Club in Zambia
- Melissa Diamond, Founder and Executive Director, A Global Voice for Autism
- Guncha Annageldiyeva, International Coordinator of Communication, Y-PEER Network
- Selin Ozunaldim, Youngest representative of UN Women’s global gender equality movement HeForShe in Turkey

- Smriti Khemka, Member of the Global Youth As Researchers (YAR) Learning Team
- Asimawu Tahiru, Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Youth Leader
- Muhammad Sarim Raza, Youth Leader at UNCTAD

Discussants:

- Hao Jingfang, Chinese Youth Representative
- Lara Bertemes, Luxemburger Youth Representative
- Mariya Badeva, Bulgarian Youth Representative
- Manal Moussane, Dutch Youth Representative

OVERVIEW OF PREPARATORY EVENT/CONSULTATION

Leading up to the breakout session, the co-leaders will organize several consultations with UN and youth co-organizers, including the SDG4 Youth Network. The consultations will follow an interactive dialogue format relying on guiding questions and will prioritize the voices of young people. Audiences will be given the opportunity to engage in the preparatory events through social media and ad hoc surveys to be published on the official communication channels of both co-leaders and co-organizers.

SUGGESTED READING

1. [Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its targets](#)
2. [Incheon Declaration: Education 2030: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All](#)
3. [A Youth Development Lens on Education 2030 \(SDG4\) - Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development](#)
4. [Education for Sustainable Development Goals: learning objectives](#)
5. [Global Citizenship Education: Topics and objectives](#)
6. [UN Youth Strategy, Youth 2030: Working With and For Young People, *Fourth Priority: Youth and Human Rights*](#)
7. [UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training](#)
8. [UN Human Rights Council Resolution 39/3: World Programme for Human Rights Education \(youth\)](#)

9. [Plan of action for the fourth phase \(2020-2024\) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education](#)

10. [SDG4Youth Network, Youth and Students at the Centre of SDG4](#)

11. [Transforming Education Summit](#)