

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Children and youth account for two thirds of the world's poor, yet are often excluded from decision-making processes on poverty reduction and eradication. Financial inclusion can support youth in accumulating savings and reducing the impact of economic shocks.



Hunger and malnutrition often prevent youth and children from taking part in society, at every level. Responsibly engaging youth in sustainable agricultural policies and practices is essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2.



Investing in the health and well-being of youth can support sustainable development outcomes around the world. The active participation of young people can lead to better health outcomes, including with respect to vaccination programmes and mental health.



The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has had a detrimental impact on the education of children and youth. Ensuring access to inclusive and equitable quality education is essential for successful transition into the labour force and attaining decent work.



Providing financial access and developing the financial capabilities of young women and girls build social and economic empowerment, allowing them to take advantage of greater economic opportunities.



Youth collaboration initiatives, such as the Water Youth Network, can help to connect young people to the water and sanitation sectors to inform innovative solutions at the local and national levels, as well as providing platforms for sharing best practices.



Building the renewable energy skills and capacities of youth can help to accelerate action on clean energy. Innovative hubs and accelerators that empower young people can help to foster cleaner and more affordable energy transitions.



Youth represent the highest unemployment rate in the labour market. Young people must be better engaged in skills and capacity-building policies and programming in order to achieve more inclusive economic growth.



Youth have an important stake in ensuring access to digital infrastructure. Nearly a third of those who are not connected to the Internet are young people. Their active engagement can ensure that a greater number are not excluded from the modern digital world.



Young people must be involved in the creation of social protection programmes and policies in order to reduce the lifelong consequences of poverty and discrimination, which fuel inequalities around the world.



Children and youth are key to ensuring that urban development strategies support financial inclusion and social empowerment and create sustainable and safe cities.



Decades of evidence show that widespread behavioural change, such as recycling and using less plastic, often begins with children and youth. While they are the least responsible for environmental degradation, they will bear the greatest burden of its impact.



Close to half a million youth around the world have taken action on climate change. Supporting youth-led initiatives can help to empower young people to take action in their local communities to combat climate change.



Young people can provide local knowledge and innovative solutions for the conservation and protection of the world's marine ecosystems and coastal communities.



Youth are active agents in tackling deforestation and desertification. To preserve biodiversity, young people must be engaged in policies and programmes at the local, national and global levels.



Millions of young people around the globe continue to face violence in their homes, schools, communities and online. Youth engagement in capacity-building and institutional inclusion can foster more peaceful and just societies.



Partnerships for the Goals must be youth-sensitive and inclusive, drawing on the knowledge and experience of young people to drive forward solutions for a greener, more prosperous and safer future.

Source: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), "UNICEF and the Sustainable Development Goals", available at www.unicef.org/sdgs (accessed on 20 March 2023); United Nations, "Global issues: youth", available at www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth (accessed on 20 March 2023); and Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, "#YouthStats: hunger and poverty", available at www.un.org/youthenvoy/hunger-poverty/ (accessed on 20 March 2023).