



General Conference

38th session, Paris 2015

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

38 C/19
30 October 2015
Original: English

Item 4.5 of the provisional agenda

CONCLUSIONS OF THE YOUTH FORUM

From 26 to 28 October 2015, around 500 young women and men from 159 Member States met at the 9th UNESCO Youth Forum entitled “Young Global Citizens for a Sustainable Planet”, to discuss thematic issues related to climate change and the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Throughout the three-day Forum, the youth participants imagined the future and identified the following global recommended actions.

1. Young Global Citizens for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

1.1. Rights, freedoms, responsibilities

- *We have to encounter human rights every day through innovative forms of education – to learn to respect, enjoy, and live rights. By educating through our peers' experiences, by sharing responsibility with each other and by making a difference in each other's lives, we can all experience our rights.*
- (a) Create a contextually adaptable programme/toolkit on global citizenship education using innovative methods to be implemented at all levels to ensure the universal enjoyment of human rights. This programme must:
 - Promote the inclusiveness of all and the elimination of discrimination in formal and informal methods;
 - Include voices from multiple perspectives, including traditional and indigenous cultures;
- (b) Coordinate a network of organizations that empower young women and men to start and stay in school through mentorship and tutoring. Educator training, and meeting context-specific needs are of paramount importance;
- (c) Guarantee partnerships, networking, and adequate support for the African and Caribbean regions to ensure their success in achieving the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG);
- (d) Emphasize further cooperation between local entities and United Nations agencies in order to empower local economic and social actors from targeted communities to be agents of change;
- (e) Dramatically increase and improve allocation of resources in the education sector to accomplish SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Ensure access to safe learning opportunities for all marginalized groups including all gender identities, the LGBT community, migrants, and indigenous peoples.

1.2. Diversity, Identity

- *Increase intercultural exchange between refugees and youth organizations through exchange programmes and sport events.*
- *Train members of local youth organizations to become peer trainers who will coach their peers in their communities.*
- (a) Increase intercultural exchange between refugees and youth organizations through exchange programmes and sport events;
- (b) Enhance cultural, sexual and ethnic diversity, including breaking down gender stereotypes:
 - Organize a global weekly festival through an online app to help youth to connect and share knowledge
 - Create a global youth platform to share projects worldwide
 - Organize a bi-annual cultural week in schools, sharing published UNESCO materials;

(c) Create a global environment youth organization that focuses on:

- A virtual global university, accessible to all, that encourages reflection and solution development in order to protect the environment and improve environmental policy-making
- A global village whose environmental security is ensured by guardians
- Piloting environment-oriented programmes
- An international medium for sharing good news
- The education of future generations so that they become environment-friendly;

(d) Develop a youth foresight knowledge-lab forum to be deployed all around the world starting in countries with UNESCO field offices:

- Train members of local youth organizations to become peer trainers who will then coach their peers in their communities
- Conduct foresight sessions to empower young women and men, including in remote communities, to think critically and see the future in a different way, in which they can meaningfully make a change in the present
- Develop structures and processes to ensure follow up to UNESCO Youth Forum recommendations.

1.3. Learning, personal development and sustainability

- *An education and experience for life.*
- *Community-built knowledge rather than imposed knowledge.*

(a) An education and experience for life:

- In order to empower young women and men in society and raise their recognition and broaden their view, it is crucial to promote a mandatory universal civic service where youth contribute to society through their involvement in community needs based on general interests;
- This service would also provide opportunities for young women and men to think outside the box of their regular curriculum and personal perspectives, getting a better intercultural and inter-societal view of life and its stakeholders, e.g. implement civic service in national curriculum;

(b) School is more than a structure:

- Schools should be seen as a community, not only as a structure. This implies that we must make the transition from the formal educational model to a new one that recognizes students not only as individuals but also as members of a community;
- Therefore, schools must be built as places for personal development and for establishing social skills such as interpersonal communication, critical and innovative thinking, and debating;

- Schools must be institutions where youth can try, fail, learn, repeat and succeed; a safe place where we can learn by experience and where we could be encouraged to explore and go beyond limits;

(c) Community-built knowledge rather than imposed knowledge

- In our current model with primary and secondary education, national education authorities and teachers define the curriculum from a unilateral position, not allowing students to go further and explore other sources of knowledge and therefore, killing creativity and critical thinking;
- We propose the use of crowdsourcing information and norm critical thinking for cultural understanding by developing a platform on which students would have access to different information about historical events and social norms, leading them to question and search. This would make education inclusive and non-discriminatory, allowing voices that normally are not heard to be taken into account;
- This strategy would also promote openness to diversity and intercultural richness among students, helping them to understand the complexity of our world and promote peace.

(d) Reducing the gap between adulthood and youth

- Raise recognition of vocational training. Practical experience is a crucial factor for the future of youth in their professional and individual life.

2. Young Global Citizens for a Sustainable Planet

2.1. Knowledge, Awareness and Media

➤ *We call upon UNESCO to create bridging capacity between young women and men from different continents by establishing intercontinental social innovation incubators that will produce social start-ups with empowering knowledge, skills and experience.*

- (a) Acknowledge climate as a co-existing cultural heritage and recognize that the way to preserve local knowledge and cultures is through climate change mitigation, adaptation and transformation. Furthermore: preserving culture and facilitating the sharing of knowledge among local communities would enhance their capacity to take effective and efficient actions;
- (b) Create bridging capacity between young women and men from different continents by establishing intercontinental social innovation incubators that will produce social start-ups with empowering knowledge, skills and experience;
- (c) As young people who are confident that we are agents of sustainable change, we commit ourselves to:
 - Promote active global citizenship by adopting and advocating healthy and sustainable lifestyles in order to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by involving ourselves in the implementation and monitoring of the Goals so as to achieve a better understanding of the issues surrounding the newly adopted SDGs;
 - Implement in local education systems new ways of knowledge creation that increase social and emotional intelligence, in order to empower skills of advocacy and policy making.

2.2. Local practices, biodiversity and prevention of natural disasters

- *Our recommendation is to set up an online community that will enable governments, international organizations and local organizations to share information, positive stories and data with communities around the globe.*
 - *Encourage local communities to be aware of the importance of biodiversity in the prevention of natural disasters.*
- (a) The online community will educate children and young women and men about foresight so as to enable them to be creative and aware of upcoming possibilities in order to encourage them to protect biodiversity, to be prepared to adapt to future disasters and to preserve knowledge and practices through:
- Education on the importance of biodiversity, which in turn prevents global disasters
 - Monitoring the risk that our actions might affect biodiversity;
- (b) The online community will generate awareness regarding the linkage between local practices, biodiversity and disaster risk reduction for people and communities around the globe:
- Record historical data including local and traditional knowledge
 - Ensure accessibility for children and young women and men through environmental education both within the classroom and online
 - This form of awareness can be conveyed through peer facilitation, arts, poetry or imaginative formats
 - This form of learning reveals the difference between formal and informal education
 - This platform encourages communities, schools and industries to develop projects on the preservation of biodiversity and vulnerable local communities facing natural disasters;
- (c) The online community will allow local communities to share their experiences outside their boundaries in order to aid in mitigating natural disaster through valorization of biodiversity:
- Share the experiences both individually and within the community in order to anticipate future risk of natural disaster
 - Share disaster-risk information, including successful practices and hopeful stories;
- (d) Encourage and embrace young women and men by creating a platform that will promote crowdfunding, start-ups, kickstarters and other types of investment in innovative projects that preserve biodiversity, prepare communities for disasters-risk preparedness and encourage capacity building in local communities:
- Promote collaborative intelligence and generate new knowledge
 - Engage youth and universities through participation in research on biodiversity and disaster-risk prevention.

2.3 Sub-Theme: Capture the energy of youth

- *The UNESCO Youth Forum should be every day and everywhere, so that every voice will be heard.*
 - *The process should be from the bottom to the top with youth participants carrying all the ideas from local communities to international policy-makers.*
- (a) Extend the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme to UNESCO in order to actively involve young women and men in decision-making processes:
 - One to three youth representatives from each Member State and Associate Member should participate at meetings prior to, during and after the UNESCO General Conference
 - Submission of resolutions by youth representatives – to be discussed and adopted at the UNESCO General Conference;
 - (b) The elaboration of a guideline curriculum on environmental education, sustainable development and human rights for primary and secondary education:
 - UNESCO National Commissions should work directly with ministries of education to include Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in textbooks and other educational resources
 - Assist capacity building in education facilities for teachers and young leaders;
 - (c) UNESCO should be even more inclusive and accessible to young people:
 - The UNESCO Youth Forum should include a higher number of participants and these should be assisted by UNESCO experts
 - UNESCO National Commissions should organize national preparatory meetings before the UNESCO Youth Forum to discuss the theme of the Forum and collect and sharpen ideas;
 - (d) Create a platform and a mobile application by UNESCO to build up links among young leaders:
 - UNESCO National Commissions should be responsible for creating projects that network within and across borders, and promote the platform and its accessibility
 - TimeScape should be integrated in this platform facilitating the communication of ideas and activities;
 - (e) Develop a pollution credit and debit system to regulate maximum amounts of waste produced by countries:
 - Integrate a regulation system of all kinds of waste to the COP 21 outcome, broadening the idea of pollution beyond greenhouse gases. The policy should regulate and sanction maximum amounts of waste produced by each Member State and Associate Member
 - There should be real-time feedback from the youth on their national policies through easy-to-access platforms, decentralizing power from authorities.