

8th UNESCO YOUTH FORUM
29-31 October 2013
UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

RECOMMENDATIONS

“Youth are not just the future generation - youth are partners today.”
Ahmad Alhendawi, UN Special Envoy for Youth

The 8th UNESCO Youth Forum,

Welcoming the initiative of UNESCO to organize the 8th Youth Forum on "Youth and Social Inclusion: Civic Engagement, Dialogue and Skills Development", held at the Headquarters, in Paris, from 29-31 October 2013, prior to the 37th General Conference;

Reaffirming the recommendations that were adopted by the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum in 2011 and the previous Forums;

Applauding the initiative of the General Conference in integrating youth in its strategy development, and encouraging UNESCO and its Member States to continue integrating youth in decision-making and in the implementation of the operational strategy;

Emphasizing the importance of youth as a high priority in the work of UNESCO;

Acknowledging the challenges young people face today and taking into account the gender balance, with a specific focus on marginalized and disabled youth, and underlining that these groups should receive specific attention in the implementation of our recommendations;

Recognizing that young people in all countries are key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation, and affirming that investment in youth development and education is crucial for sustainable social, economic and cultural development;

Recalling the importance of a Youth Forum prior to and feeding into the General Conference and encouraging UNESCO to continue involving youth through a Forum in the future;

Puts forth the following recommendations to the 37th General Conference of UNESCO:

AXIS 1 : Policy formulation and review with the participation of youth

1. Ensure that autonomous, inclusive youth structures are established and strengthened in every Member State by 2021, as well as a permanent UN youth forum in the UN system. Assure closer cooperation between UNESCO and non-governmental youth organizations and reestablish a youth NGO commission within the UNESCO-NGO liaison committee. We call on UNESCO to formalize youth participation at the General

Conference by ensuring a youth delegate is included in the national delegation by the 38th session. Equal participation from young people of all Member States should be ensured.

2. UNESCO must ensure that the implementation and follow-up of the Operational Strategy on Youth involves young people as well as youth organizations in the decision-making, implementation and evaluation procedures. To do so, UNESCO should urge Member States' National Commissions for UNESCO to include permanent and full youth representation.
3. Promote and conduct formal and non-formal education on active national and global citizenship. This should include participation in democracy and decision-making, knowledge of existing law and policy-making procedures. Equal opportunities for participation among different groups of youth should be highlighted.

AXIS 2: Capacity development for the transition to adulthood

4. Youth's skills and competences gained through non-formal and informal education and training should be recognized by the Member States, by developing tools and mechanisms to officially value and validate them.
5. Improving the quality of the formal educational systems should be a priority in the post-2015 agenda, especially in terms of measurable outcomes. Media and information literacy, entrepreneurship skills, technical, vocational education, education for sustainable development and peace, should be included in the curricula. We urge Member States at the General Conference of UNESCO to thoroughly consider a proposal for a global convention for recognition of higher education.
6. Member States must prioritize youth employment by undertaking the following measures: narrow the gap between educational systems and labour markets; supporting quality internship opportunities accessible for all; providing job opportunities especially in green economy; encouraging entrepreneurship and social business; and providing information, training centers run by government and civil society to be accessible to all young people.

AXIS 3: Civic engagement, democratic participation and social innovation

7. It should be a high priority to encourage organizations, non-governmental organizations, and Member States to sustain teaching young pupils civic and ethics education within formal, non-formal, and informal settings. It is imperative to teach youth what social entrepreneurship is and how it operates through utilizing and promoting peer to peer education. Member States should include mandatory early childhood civic education that will include dialogues between youth and politicians. It is imperative to promote intercultural dialogue and this dialogue should include discussions on the environment, the economy, health, and education which will aid in preventing conflicts.
8. We urge Member States to support economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable youth development projects. This should include private/public partnerships



that provide guidance and/or funding for these projects, social entrepreneurship and intergenerational learning with mechanisms to help youth finance these projects and articulate the importance of their projects to potential investors and the general public. UNESCO should promote collaboration and development of knowledge and technological skills across developed and developing countries.

9. We call upon UNESCO, the Member States, and non-governmental partners to make sure that funding opportunities for youth initiatives are increased and constantly present, in part through engaging in different finance initiatives that help fund youth-led initiatives, and technical support. UNESCO also needs to promote financial responsibility and accountability amongst youth-led initiatives. UNESCO should urge partner organizations to allocate CSR from corporations to youth entrepreneurship. In particular, funding for the following programs should be increased: social entrepreneurship, and programs that encourage more women and minorities to study science, mathematics, engineering, technological fields, and other underrepresented fields as well as the creative arts.
10. We invite UNESCO Member States to incorporate, in the national laws, action plans to secure the development, participation, and inclusion of all young people, which will encourage youth participation and social inclusion. To foster this, ICT should be one of the targeted tools, especially social media. To ensure free and open participation, the protection of online and offline media as an open space for collaboration must be ensured. It is imperative to promote a culture of “inclusiveness,” free from all possible forms of discrimination. In order to do so, Member States should support the integration of existing youth immigrants, indigenous, and marginalized youth into society and promote intercultural diversity, so as to safeguard the interests of people in all sectors of society. In addition, all countries are required to detect and eliminate all social, cultural, and economic factors that contribute to, and propel, systemic and autonomic oppression and inequalities. UNESCO must urge Member States to improve media infrastructure and literacy among youth as a basis for dialogue and collaborative opportunities between decision-makers and all youth. Policies to eliminate intercultural barriers based on ethnicity, religion, age, language, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and ability should be a global direction.