



Transforming Education Pre-Summit: International Young Leaders Council (IYLC) Recommendations

Vienna, 27 June 2022

Children, youth, and especially girls have been adversely affected by the global education crisis, being victims of an era of wars, conflicts, financial crises and pandemics. The climate crisis further deepens inequalities globally. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reimagine education for a more just and inclusive world and a better future for current and future generations. The ***Transforming Education Summit (TES)*** creates the necessary momentum to strengthen world leaders' commitments to prioritise and fund youth empowerment, and inclusive and free education for all, and by doing so, keeping the Our Common Agenda's promises to youth and future generations.

The Paris Pre-Summit is our collective responsibility to children, youth and future generations to initiate a courageous, fundamental, paradigm shift in education. It is now or never.

1. The following are our **recommendations for the zero draft of the TES Youth Declaration:**

**We emphasize today's opportunity to create a new education system that will enable the youth of the world to acquire the skills and nurture the empathy, ethics and moral values that will provide the foundation for building a better world today and in the future;*

**We commit to promote intergenerational, intercultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation in education systems across all communities, countries and regions, and to create a better world built on compassion, tolerance, mutual understanding and respect.*

**IYLO's Commitment to Youth and Future Generations Declaration*

The following are **our recommendations for inclusive, transparent, open and meaningful youth engagement towards the Transforming Education Summit in New York highlighting the necessity of intergenerational leadership**:

1. **The current TES youth engagement strategy must be reviewed to create open, inclusive, transparent and meaningful youth engagement structures and youth participation towards TES and beyond.** IYLC members are ready to support and advise UN leadership and share our valuable experiences from many UN intergovernmental processes, UN Summits and engagements with global youth networks. Our critical but constructive voices are important if we are serious about implementing the Our Common Agenda and not repeating the same mistakes in UN youth engagement.
2. **Most of the TES engagement processes have been advertised to a digital audience.** We would like to have the capacity to bring together the views of other youth, adolescents and, especially, adolescent girls of all communities to the Summit; indeed, engaging persons of all descents and demographics, regardless of whether they have the privilege of a stable internet connection. This is more than essential when we speak of offline alternatives for resources to be available to children and youth, specifically concerning the recovery post-pandemic period through which offline youth and adolescents continue to be left behind.
3. We believe that the submission of 30-second long videos, by youth, as a form of "meaningful engagement" to the Pre-Summit won't replace any **inclusive in-person participation and any global consultations with diverse youth from all backgrounds on the critical issues that youth are currently facing due to the global education crisis.** Accordingly, this downplays the voices and youth-based solutions we seek to bring to the table.
4. **Only three Member States asked about TES youth involvement when addressing representatives of the thematic areas.** Are we not supposed to be speaking about the problems in current education system pointing to the fact that youth and adolescents make up the majority of our education systems globally? We need to address this lack of concern by Member States to have youth at the front and centre of the negotiation table.
5. **There is a notable lack of information how young people and adolescents, especially adolescent girls, are being centred during national consultations.** We would like to stress the importance of diversity and inclusion at the national, regional and global levels in all TES engagement processes and discussions.

6. **Youth empowerment and youth leadership are at the heart of the United Nations.** Having young people and adolescents share and reinvent the tables of decision-making is crucial to our collective success. However, as previously outlined, we have found these values to be the exact opposite during the preparations of this Pre-Summit. Accordingly, we recommend full transparency of how UNESCO chose the funded youth participants and how young people are engaged in the entirety of the Pre-Summit; from (i) the design to the (ii) selection, (iii) attendance, (iv) monitoring and evaluation, and most importantly, (v) the accountability and follow-up processes of the Summit. **As the IYLC, we seek to provide a transparent and inclusive platform for global youth engagement and coordination that ensures transparency and accountability in all engagement processes leading towards the Summit and beyond.**

Beyond our above recommendations addressing the current youth engagement, we propose the **following recommendations relative to the TES Thematic Action Tracks:**

Action Track 1: Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools

- 1) In accordance with Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "everyone has the right to education".
- 2) Prioritising gender equality and inclusive and free education in formal and non-formal education.
- 3) Linking education with mental health services and support.
- 4) Educating, promoting and implementing a healthy lifestyle, i.e. free healthy meals at least once a day during school hours, sports and activities, and health classes.
- 5) Linking education with gender-responsive health and protection services; i.e. water, sanitation and hygiene, child and social protection, domestic violence and abuse, gender-based violence, comprehensive sexuality education, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- 6) Addressing inequities and inefficiencies in education delivery will require a systemic approach. Addressing failures in information and accountability systems should also be taken into consideration.
- 7) Identifying and amending harmful gendered rules and practices.
- 8) Providing safe spaces for children and youth to thrive free of harassment, abuse, violence, bullying and hate speech.
- 9) Ensure a fully focused, healthy and stimulating learning environment without distractions, e.g., using personal devices during learning hours.

Action Track 2: Teachers, teaching and teaching profession

1. Teacher training relative to how to actively promote human rights, ethics and gender equality in their teaching practices and how to address harmful gender stereotypes; patriarchal teaching methods, toxic masculinity etc.
2. Promoting art and science, innovative and critical thinking.
3. Training for teachers on identifying and removing gender biases, harassment and bullying of all forms.
4. Promote intergenerational knowledge sharing and respect towards senior people.
5. Lifelong learning.
6. Promoting intercultural and interreligious understanding and respect.

Action Track 3: Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development

1. Prioritizing human rights, sustainable development, and climate and ethical education.
2. Technological Literacy, Cognitive Flexibility, Problem-Solving Ability and Creativity are the skills of the future.
3. Building inclusive and skills-oriented vocation and technical education (VTE) systems reduces inequalities and provides concrete career paths.
4. An approach focused on the transition from school to decent work opportunities.
5. A focus on the green jobs agenda and the subsequent link that can be made with education in an integrated manner from the high school to tertiary fields.
6. Access to education that promotes decent work to reduce vulnerabilities to women and girls being engaged in exploitative labour practices (forced and child labour).
7. Decent work opportunities for women and girls in STEM fields.
8. Establishing transparent partnerships with the Member States, businesses, philanthropic organisations, international organisations, and NGOs to provide PAID internships and fellowships within the United Nations Secretariat. It is above time.
9. Invest in professional opportunities for youth-capacity building and leadership training.
10. Promoting intergenerational, intercultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation in education systems across all communities, countries and regions to create a better world built on compassion, tolerance, mutual understanding and respect.

Action Track 4: Digital learning and transformation

1. Online safety protections for children and youth engaged in digital learning to prevent tech-facilitated sexual and gender-based violence.
2. Structurally shifting harmful cultural barriers and attitudes that may prevent girls from having access to digital learning.

3. Investing in digital infrastructure, especially in rural areas, ensures children have access to quality education.
4. Universal access to digital and technological learning.
5. Education on programs and software that can aid with digital learning.
6. Mapping out best practices in digital learning and transformation all over the world to effectively replicate these lessons.
7. Innovations on digital learning.
8. Accessible digital environments, also for youth with disabilities.
9. Partnerships with tech companies to promote gender-transformative access and digital literacy.
10. Safe and secure digital learning, ensuring the protection of children's and youth's personal data.

Action Track 5: Financing of education

1. Financing education of children and youth from disadvantaged social backgrounds.
2. Provide free nutritious meals for all school children. No child should go hungry.
3. Centre human rights, gender equality, inclusivity, creativity, innovation and ethics at the heart of education sector plans, budgets and policies.
4. Investments in social protection to support children in education and prevent them from engaging in forced child labour and/or child marriage.
5. Ensuring coordination between the ministries of finance and education in a way that allows allocating sufficient funds to education, including, among others, setting yearly spending floors on education at a minimum 4% of GDP.
6. Prioritising public education budgets and funding to the most marginalised children, regions, areas with the most significant gender divides in education, areas where the impacts of war, conflicts and climate change are felt, and areas with a high prevalence of gender-based violence.
7. Financing refugee and migrant education.
8. Financing girl-centred opportunities in STEM through scholarships.
9. Financing youth-led organisations that centre their work around education.
10. Flexible and accessible funding to formal and informal youth networks, especially those that are girl-led.
11. Accountability for ministries of education for the allocation of funds with a specific focus on the gap between public and private schools when it comes to quality of education.
12. Dedicated financing for non-formal education and lifelong learning.

It is our primary recommendation for Governments to prioritise safe and inclusive schools, free education, and acknowledging the significance of girls' education while implementing the principles of intergenerational justice, intergenerational equity and intergenerational leadership.

Young people have the knowledge, expertise and lived experience. If young people are not meaningfully, and equally involved in the decision-making, designing, and implementation of youth policies and programmes, there will be no progress. It is not enough that our voices are being heard. It is necessary that our recommendations are actively implemented and supported by dedicated financial resources, to help us co-create a resilient, inclusive and fully functioning education system for all children and youth, and future generations. We don't want to hear any more excuses.