



**Global Education
Cooperation Mechanism**
SDG 4 Youth and Students Network

SDG4Youth Statement

Transforming Education Summit

Acknowledgements

This document was developed by the SDG4Youth Network; a network of youth and student education activists. This network was launched by UNESCO with the support of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, the Global Partnership for Education, Generation Unlimited, Global Campaign for Education, Global Student Forum and UNESCO Associated Schools Network.

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Introduction

Meaningful engagement with youth and students is key to strengthening education as they know what is most relevant for them and how their schools and communities can best support their education and wellbeing.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the fragility of conventional education systems and its inability to ensure that all children and young people have access to quality education. The detrimental impacts of this pandemic on education disproportionately impacted the most marginalised students and young people, particular girls. The Transforming Education Summit is an opportunity to provide a platform for meaningful youth and student engagement as we reshape education systems amidst the continuing learning crisis exacerbated by this pandemic.

This SDG4Youth Statement includes a list of recommendations on how youth and student engagement can be strengthened before, during, and after this summit. It has been prepared by the SDG4Youth Network- a group of over 100 young education activists who are transforming education in their communities as well as through their engagement with the multi-stakeholder SDG4 Education 2030 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC).

SDG4Youth members hold a plethora of youth-led solutions and perspectives that will be invaluable when exploring the HLSC’s thematic focus which shape the Summit. Below is a table which maps out how the four SDG4Youth Working Groups can contribute effectively to the HLSC themes:

SDG4Youth Working Groups	Link to HLSC thematic focus areas
Inclusive Education	This working group develops youth-led actions that ensure all students and youth have access to quality education, including digital learning. This is most relevant to the HLSC’s thematic focus on inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools as well as on digital learning and transformation.
Sustainable and safe education	This group works towards developing solutions that empower students and youth to address the climate crisis, mental health crisis, unmet human rights and poverty. The work of this group is mostly linked to the HLSC thematic focus on learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development.
Future-proof education	To ensure that education is future-proof, it is vital that education curriculums extend beyond knowledge and includes teaching relevant skills and attitudes. Youth-led solutions that form this working group are most relevant to the HLSC themes of learning and skills for life, working and sustainable development, as well as digital learning.
Education policy and infrastructure	This working group focuses on strengthening education policy and infrastructure by providing recommendations on re-shaping teaching and learning, re-energising research and increasing access to higher education, and closing the digital gap. This is highly relevant to the HLSC theme on the teacher profession and digital transformation

** See Appendix A and B*

Young people and students are at the centre of SDG4 ‘Quality Education.’ Youth participation isn’t optional; it’s mandatory if we are to transform education.

Youth and student engagement principles

Effective youth and student engagement is based on the following three principles:

- 1) It is inclusive and empowers youth and students to engage in intergenerational dialogues
- 2) It enables youth and students to work on commitments specific to the context of their country and region
- 3) It builds upon existing youth-led solutions

The effectiveness of youth and student engagement is embedded in the proposals below, which are organized by the core Summit pillars. The SDG4Youth network looks forward to working with UN agencies, member states and partners on the following proposals:

Youth and student proposals for transforming education

1. The Pre-Summit, Summit, and its Action Tracks

1.1 Ensure that the four youth priorities listed in this SDG 4 Youth Statement are connected to the Transforming Education Pre-Summit and Summit Action Tracks and programme structures. The four priorities identified by the SDG 4 Youth Network include: Inclusive education; Future-proof education; Sustainable and safe education; and Education policy and infrastructure.

1.2 Establish a Youth Delegate Programme for the Transforming Education Pre-Summit and Summit, where participants are included and supported to participate in their respective national delegation. The process for nomination should:

- a. Enable nominations for 2 or 3 young people from every region
- b. Be an open call
- c. Delegates to be selected through an open, transparent and independent voting system open to young people internationally.

1.3 Include a youth segment during the Pre-Summit and / or Summit where youth and student speakers are invited to highlight their priorities and solutions, which involves:

- a. A panel discussion with 5-6 youth speakers
- b. Minimum of 50 minutes dedicated to the youth segment
- c. Ensuring the youth segment is presented at the beginning or middle of the programme, rather than at the end.

1.4 Provide youth and students a variety of speaker roles outside of the youth segment at the Pre-Summit and Summit alongside other education stakeholders. This includes:

- a. Inviting youth and students to participate as speakers for at least three of the following opportunities: speakers in panel discussions with other education stakeholders; providing framing remarks; sharing reactions and potential solutions; sharing opening remarks; sharing closing remarks; and moderating panel discussions
- b. Minimum of 90 minutes in total allocated for youth and students to participate in the aforementioned speaker roles.

1.5 Establish a Youth Transforming Education Summit as part of the Transforming Education Pre-Summit and/or Summit.

1.6 Ensure the involvement of youth and students in the action tracks and ensure that they are involved in shaping and finalizing the tracks in the next few weeks.

1.7 Ensure that youth delegates are remunerated for their time and travel expenses to attend the Pre-Summit and summit.

2. Ongoing national dialogues

2.1 Member states engage in intergenerational dialogues with youth and student delegates to shape their national education commitments prior to the Transforming Education Summit. Ensure that youth and student delegates are meaningfully engaged to report on these briefings at the Pre-Summit and Summit.

2.2 Encourage all member states to seek youth and student participation in decision-making processes relating to transforming education at local, state, national and regional levels during the Pre-Summit and Summit, which includes:

- a. Opening and closing remarks at the Pre-Summit and Summit that encourage member states to engage with youth in the follow-up actions after these events
- b. Providing an opportunity for youth delegates to engage directly with their respective regional governments and other policy-making institutions during the Pre-Summit and Summit.

2.3 National, state, and local governments create or strengthen Youth Advisory Councils who will be included in ongoing dialogues on transforming education.

- a. This Council will be engaged during planning processes, consultations, implementation, validation, and reviewing procedures to shape and implement their country's education commitments
- b. Youth representatives who form the Youth Advisory Council are remunerated for their time to attend Council meetings.

2.4 SDG4-Education 2030 convening agencies and partners to publish an international guideline for curriculum development and revision processes to provide clear recommendations to member states on how they can engage meaningfully with children and young people in transforming formal education

- a. Engage directly with youth and students to create this international guideline for curriculum development and revision processes
- b. Engage with schools, teacher organizations, and community organizations that work directly with children and young people to develop this international guideline for curriculum development and revision
- c. Ensure that the international guideline is adaptable and culturally responsive to the various contexts of member states.

3. Public mobilisation

3.1 Member states to provide opportunities for youth to be involved in public engagement and mobilisation that will:

- a. Enable youth to spotlight youth-led solutions in their communities
- b. Enable youth to advocate and raise awareness for the four youth priorities identified in this SDG4Youth statement
- c. Enable youth to develop and showcase education resources that are created by youth for youth.

3.2 Sustainably fund existing youth platforms and programmes such as the SDG 4 Youth Network and existing National Youth Advisory Councils, which includes:

- a. Ensure that youth are remunerated for their time and travel expenses to attend face-to-face events that are related to the education sector, including but not limited to the Peacebuilding Commissions, Together to #ENDviolence Solutions Summit Leaders' Event, and COP27

- b. Providing grant opportunities for youth-led social enterprises and initiatives relating to transforming education.
- c. Providing funds to support the governance and operational costs of youth platforms and programmes.

3.3 Develop a Transforming Education digital hub showcasing youth and student-led solutions relating to education, including teaching and learning resources.

3.4 Establish a global #YouthVoicesforEducation challenge and prize

- a. Establish a challenge aimed at member states with a view towards incentivising them to engage with youth and students in their countries to achieve their national education commitments, as well as to recognise the efforts of member states that effectively engage with youth students
- b. Establish a challenge where youth and students can showcase their youth-led solutions relating to education.

Appendix A: Youth-led solutions

Youth-led actions will be key to meaningful engagement of young people pre- and post-the Transforming Education Summit 2022. These actions will create a sense of ownership by young people as guardians of the future. This will further encourage them to hold stakeholders accountable to the implementation of proposed summit commitments. Youth-led actions will also give an opportunity for young people to share innovative and creative ways in which stakeholders can make education more inclusive and equitable. Below are examples of how youth and students are transforming education in their communities from around the world.

STEMinism in India

STEMinism in India (SII) is a grassroots project in India to raise awareness around Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.) subject through feminist approaches to bridge gender gaps in STEM. SII is building the capacity of young female students of 11 –16 years of age, by engaging them in STEM subjects through an interactive way of the project-based learning, active learning, and gamification methodologies. The educators in public schools are trained using Training of Trainers (ToT's) methodology on the implementation of EdTech programs in their schools. A 45-min class is allocated, termed as an 'SII-Club' in schools every week for the interested girls.

Currently we're using open resources provided by the UN, Microsoft, and Government of India. More than 500 girls, the first-generation learners from tribal and underserved communities of UP, Jharkhand and Bihar have been supported to continue their education in STEM subjects. SII was recently named amongst the top social impact projects in the world and was supported by the Western Union Foundation and Watson Institute, Colorado. The program is also being used as a case study for gender equal advocates of South Asia and MENA region by the Swedish Government and has been highlighted as one of the most inspiring projects in 51-ASEM countries.

The Walkway School

Supported by Youth Co:Lab, Asia Pacific's largest social entrepreneurship movement co led by UNDP and Citi Foundation, The Walkway School (TWS) has been working on enabling the access to education for the underprivileged children in rural Pakistan for the last four years. Through its intensive community engagement, TWS aims at reducing the gap between communities and public and private sector institutes in order to contribute greatly to reduce the number of out-of-school children. Headquartered in Hyderabad - Pakistan, TWS has been able to send over 3000 children to schools over the past four years, while expanding to three different geographic locations from one. As a part of its 2025 expansion plan, TWS is aiming to build atleast 50 cost-effective sustainable inter-community schools to further the access to primary/secondary education in the remote rural areas with no access to education. The 2025 expansion plan will not only contribute to the increase in enrollment of children in general, but is also going to create and provide more educational opportunities to underaged girls. Through TWS various interventions, it is highly expected that over ten thousand children will be facilitated in the next 5 to 8 years.

Youth for Climate Turkey

Youth and Climate Turkey has launched a signature campaign to provide climate crisis education to children and youth through education.

Our current education in our country (Turkey) is not sufficient in terms of climate change. Students are not prepared to face the effects of climate change, they are not taught the importance of carbon-free life for the solution of this crisis, and they do not develop empathy feelings that will enable them to connect with nature.

Sustainability and climate change should be taught in the curriculum, the importance of future generations' demand for carbon-free life, the process of adaptation to living conditions and the green jobs of the future should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills. This education will give every young person the ability to contribute to a more resilient and sustainable society.

The campaign we launched on change.org aimed to provide comprehensive and up-to-date education on climate emergency and ecological crisis to all school-age youth and children regardless of how they go to school. Through this, we created change with 33,535 supporters and with the news announced by the Ministry of National Education, climate crisis education was added to the curriculum.

Give Him A Dream

At G.H.A.D we highly consider the mental state of the students, and we try as much as possible to take into account all the struggles students go through. Their needs and wants are prioritized, their opinions are heard, their passions are considered, and their talents are valued.

We believe that each and every single student when encountered properly will find his way to success.

We believe that the system presents a lack, and we try as much as possible to fill that gap, by teaching the same material but in a different way, a way that makes it easier to be understood and easier to be transmitted to the students.

It's about time to tailor a system that is able to match the needs of the students instead of asking them to fit in a box that doesn't suit them.

“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

OBOR Legal Research Centre

OBOR legal Research Centre is an education and research powerhouse. We advocate for education and vocational training policies that prepare students for the dynamic Industry 4.0, in light of the important SDG Target 4.4. We closely work with young and pioneering professionals in search for the most effective policy suggestions. This agenda is in line with realizing one of the most fundamental and essential goals of education, which is to prepare people for securing fuller employment, obtaining decent jobs, and achieving entrepreneurship and innovation.

We are also committed to broadening access to quality education on specialised areas including sustainable development and international human rights law, pursuant to SDG Target 4.7. With a firm belief that education is about inspiration of others, we are dedicated to providing, via various platforms, open access research and learning materials as much as possible. Our motivation is fuelled by the fact that young, keen and passionate knowledge seekers from different parts of the world have found the materials both thought-provoking and informative.

Earth Charter International

Recognizing the power and importance of youth as agents of change, Earth Charter International has been inspiring, engaging, and empowering young people from around the world to contribute to the transition towards sustainability. Through the Leadership, Sustainability and Ethics online course, we offer a space for young people to reflect on their role as a sustainability leader while at the same time learning from each other, from nature, and from systems thinkers from around the world.

Northwind Foundation

Since 2019, Northwind Foundation has been focusing on empowering youth from low-income families who have low levels of education in Uganda through education and skills development with a view of producing an empowered and skilled generation of young people who have the right skills that are matching with the current needs and trends so that they can attract legitimate income. Practical skills' training also enhances self-employability and job creation hence reducing youth unemployment, income inequality, and poverty. Each year we offer over 70 fully funded scholarships to young people to undertake high-quality skills training in wide range of practical programs including ICT, Fashion & Design as well as Hairdressing & Cosmetology among others. In addition, through workshop series with invited distinguished guests, we offer an expansive array of complementary life skills to our beneficiaries such as financial literacy, social entrepreneurship, leadership, public speaking, etc. As a result of our intervention, over 200 youth were equipped with skills ranging from ICT, Fashion & Design, and Hairdressing & Cosmetology. Over 30% of them started their own business from which they earn a regular income and employ and train other young people.

Appendix B: HLSC thematic focus areas



HLSC's thematic focus areas (revised) and examples of sub-themes



1. Inclusive, equitable, safe and healthy schools

- Gender equality
- Education in emergencies (including conflicts and natural disasters)
- Education for persons with disabilities
- School health and nutrition



2. Learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development

- Foundational learning (from the lifelong learning perspective)
- Skills for employment and entrepreneurship
- Education for sustainable development including environmental education



3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession

- Initial and continuous professional development – Pedagogies
- Professional status and working conditions
- Educational leadership



4. Digital learning and transformation

- Connectivity/narrowing digital divide (based on income, gender, residence)
- Inclusive digital technologies (esp. gender, disabilities)
- Free, open and high-quality digital education content
- Digital citizenship

