

**YOUTH
DECLARATION
— ON —
TRANSFORMING
EDUCATION**



**UNITED NATIONS
TRANSFORMING
EDUCATION
SUMMIT 2022**

We, the youth of the world, recognize that our contemporary world is teeming with multiple and tumultuous crises. With these crises unfolding globally, if we are to survive and thrive in planetary peace and righteous equality, then education is our primary source of hope and resolution. In order to redeem and remake the state of the world, **we must first transform the state of education.**

For too long, we have been excluded or only tokenistically included in the policy and decision-making processes affecting our lives, livelihoods, and futures. In transforming education, we demand that our voices be heard, our lived experiences valued, our demands addressed, and our efforts, leadership, and agency acknowledged. **We intend to achieve these goals not as passive beneficiaries but as partners and collaborators every step of the way.**

We are not waiting for an invitation to transform education. In fact, **we are at the forefront of driving change;** pioneering innovations, mobilizing our peers and communities, advocating for universal and quality education, and unceasingly working from the ground up to transform education.

We emphasize our collective responsibility, duty, and opportunity to create an education system that is fully accessible and inclusive, one that centers on the needs of girls and young women, refugees, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons, people of color, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups - also emphasizing the intersectionality of these identities. We also highlight the importance of fostering intergenerational solidarity, dialogue, and partnership in this process.

With this first-of-its-kind Youth Declaration, we – the youth of the world - present our common vision for transforming education. It is the outcome of an extensive consultation process with **nearly half a million youth in all our diversity** and from over 170 countries and territories, who contributed through over 20 in-person and online, global, regional, national, and grassroots-level dialogues; online surveys, social media campaigns, and more.

This Youth Declaration is founded on-- and is a continuation of-- the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4, and it builds on the purposes and principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Charter of the United Nations, emphasizing that education is a fundamental human right, a global public good, and a public responsibility. It also builds on Our Common Agenda, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Youth Strategy - Youth2030, and other key documents.

To achieve these ends, we assert the need for an intersectional, intersectoral, and cross-cutting approach based on the principles of human rights, sustainable development, gender equality, climate justice, inclusion, equity, equality, and solidarity across all actions to transform education and its systems at the global, regional, national, local, and grassroots levels.

Therefore, **we call upon the Member States particularly,** as well as governments, civil society, international organizations, the United Nations, and other key decision-makers in education systems (hereafter decision-makers) to commit to and ensure the implementation of the following demands:

1. **We demand** decision-makers engage with youth in all our diversity, including elected student representatives, in a meaningful, effective, diverse, and safe manner in the design, implementation, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the process to transform education – including the follow-up to the Transforming Education Summit;
2. **We demand** that decision-makers promote and invest in youth and student leadership and support systems for representation, especially for those from vulnerable and marginalized communities, and include youth and students in policy and decision-making bodies and national delegations;
3. **We urge** decision-makers to decolonize and democratize knowledge production, pedagogy, and learning by improving and mandating curricula that dismantle colonial, racist, misogynistic, and other discriminating attitudes, as well as recognizing the value of indigenous and local knowledge;
4. **We demand** decision-makers to invest in gender-transformative education to create a present and future that is feminist, equitable, and free from harmful gender stereotypes.
5. **We demand** decision-makers to ensure the provision of quality comprehensive sexuality education for all learners in and beyond schools;
6. **We call** upon decision-makers to invest in inclusive education that embraces diversity and ensures the full participation of all students in the same learning environment regardless of ability, ethnicity, religion, legal status, gender, psychosocial needs, marital status, sexual orientation, caretaker role, and any other discriminating factor;
7. **We demand** decision-makers to invest in education for sustainable development across curricula, particularly climate education to build skills and knowledge needed to build resilience, mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis and ensure climate justice, as well as invest in early-warning systems and resilient infrastructure to ensure safety, security, and education continuity;
8. **We urge** decision-makers to promote a broader and holistic vision of education that is founded upon the principles of peace and human rights and one that enables every young person to lead a fulfilling, motivated, enjoyable, and quality life;
9. **We call** upon decision-makers to promote and nurture academic freedom, foster an education that advances critical thinking, imagination, communication, innovation, socio-emotional, and interpersonal skills, and invest in effectively combating misinformation;
10. **We demand** decision-makers to eradicate all legal, financial, and systemic barriers preventing all learners, particularly migrant, refugee, and displaced youth, from accessing and fully participating in education - such as lack of recognition of prior learning, lack of recognition of academic documents, barriers related to transitioning from one level of education to another, and more;

11. **We urge** decision-makers to build a safe learning environment for all, including online, devoid of bullying, harassment, physical, sexual, psychological, and gender-based violence, discrimination, racism, sexism, xenophobia, ableism, and ageism;
12. **We call** upon decision-makers to center the mental health and wellness of all learners within and beyond the classroom throughout our educational journeys, also extending to out-of-school children and youth, as well as create the optimal environments to promote recreational activities, such as arts and sports, in order to generate complements in education equitably in all children and youth;
13. **We demand** decision-makers to invest in social protection to support the educational journeys of all children and youth, especially girls and young women, refugee youth, young persons with disabilities, indigenous youth, and more, while simultaneously ensuring that effective and efficient strategies be put in place to have out-of-school children and youth back in school;
14. **We urge** decision-makers to improve the quality of education at all levels, including by providing increased support for foundational learning to ensure all children engage in early literacy activities and learn basic reading, writing, and maths in primary school;
15. **We call** upon decision-makers to recognize and invest in non-formal education programs and organizations, particularly those that are youth-led, as an integral part of the right to education and a key approach to promoting the development of personal and collective values and civic engagement of children and youth;
16. **We call** upon decision-makers to invest in future-proof skills development, technical and vocational training, apprenticeships, and other relevant opportunities to ensure access to decent jobs for youth, especially members from vulnerable and marginalized communities;
17. **We especially** urge decision-makers to strategically invest in green and digital skills, policies, and strategies to enhance education, research, entrepreneurial opportunities, and decent jobs for youth, especially those who still do not have access to electricity, the Internet, or legal access to online services;
18. **We demand** decision-makers to provide quality and relevant training, professional development, necessary facilities, appropriate working conditions, and an innovative, safe and enriching environment for teachers, including by raising the status of the profession, and particularly by working with young teachers, women teachers, refugee teachers, and representatives of teachers' unions;
19. **We call** upon decision-makers to put in place recruitment mechanisms for teachers that are equitable, fair, non-discriminatory, and democratic, especially to ensure that people from vulnerable and marginalized communities are recruited;

20. **We urge** decision-makers to invest in the digital infrastructure of education and affordable, dignified, safe, and stable access to digital connectivity for all, to aid learning and close the digital divide;
21. **We demand** decision-makers to ensure sustainable, flexible, accessible, equitable, efficient, and data-driven sources of funding to effectively and strategically finance education transformation in a universal, fair, just, resilient, safe, and democratic manner for all learners, especially girls and young women, young persons with disabilities, young refugees, indigenous youth, and more;
22. **We demand** decision-makers, particularly the Member States, to protect and increase international and national education financing by protecting education budgets, increasing accountable resources of public funding to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized children and youth, effectively collaborating across sectors and ministries, and ultimately reaching the benchmark of 20% of government budgets for education;
23. **We also** urge decision-makers, and particularly the Member States, to support, fully fund, and establish multistakeholder and public-private partnerships to ensure dedicated funding to transform education and close the gap in quality of education between and within regions, public and private institutions, urban and rural areas, and more;
24. **We particularly** call upon decision-makers to increase funding for education during and after emergencies in the adversely affected regions and territories through official development assistance, humanitarian aid, public financing, and others until all children and youth have equitable access to quality education, particularly girls and young women, refugees, and displaced persons;
25. **We demand** the decision-makers to establish robust and democratic measures and procedures for transparent, accountable, and effective implementation of the above recommendations, ensuring especially that the youth can directly and through substantive representation, redress, and hold accountable the actions of decision-makers;

Guided by the above principles, purposes, and demands, we – the youth of the world - are committed to:

1. Continue to stand in solidarity with every young person worldwide and in all our diversity, particularly young women and girls, LGBTIQ+ youth, young persons with disabilities, young refugees and migrants, indigenous youth, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups, towards transforming education;
2. Continue advocating for transforming education individually and collectively through social movements, civil society organizations, youth-led solutions, and more;

3. Continue to hold decision-makers, especially the Member States, accountable during the entire process of design, execution, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the aforementioned demands while ensuring that our accountability frameworks are gender-transformative;
4. Launch an action plan coordinated by the SDG4 Youth Network to take the aforementioned demands forward beyond the Summit, mobilize stakeholders to continue growing a global movement for education transformation, and equip young people with the necessary skills to advocate for quality education at both local and global levels;
5. Promote intergenerational, intercultural, and interreligious dialogue and cooperation in education systems across all communities, countries, and regions to create a better world built on solidarity, diversity, empathy, mutual understanding, and respect.