



**ECOSOC
YOUTH
FORUM**

#YOUTH2030

8th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

ONLINE REPORTING

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

**8 April 2019
CR 12, 4-6 p.m.
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

IDENTIFICATION	
Session focus	Sustainable Development Goal 4
Session lead	Lily Gray, UNESCO
Session rapporteur	Victoria Ibiwoye, MGCY / SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee
Session moderator	Victoria Ibiwoye, MGCY / SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee
Session note-taker 1	Alina Kirillina, UNESCO
Session note-taker 2	Daniela María Pérez Obando, UNHCR Global Youth Advisory Council
<u>CURRENT LANDSCAPE</u>	
What is the current landscape for this region or SDG, including issues, opportunities, recent trends, gaps, challenges?	
The ECOSOC Youth Forum's breakout session on the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education and lifelong learning brought together more than 120 young participants to highlight the transformative power of education. The session was organized by UNESCO, together with UNICEF, UN MGCY, OHCHR, UNFPA, UNHCR and UN-Habitat. The youth-led and youth-driven interactive	

discussion had with a special focus on the role of education, inclusion and equality, skills for the 21st century and youth empowerment and inclusion.

Recognized as a standalone goal, the SDG 4, central to its achievement as inclusive access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, drives progress across all other goals while supporting building peaceful sustainable and resilient societies.

Education serves as the foundation for the achievement of all other SDGs: it increases the productivity of individuals and strengthens the potential for economic growth; develops skills needed for decent work; develops knowledge needed to promote sustainable development, including the importance of water and sanitation, green energy or the conservation of our natural resources; helps eradicate poverty and hunger; support greater access to health services; promotes gender equality and can reduce inequality; and promotes peace, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Thereby, the success in achieving the 17 SDGs would be impossible without reference to education as a public good.

Yet, 263 million children, adolescents and youth worldwide are out of school, most of them are girls. Millions more who attend school do not acquire basic numeracy and literacy skills. Among most vulnerable and marginalized, 61% of the world's refugee children are out of school. This violates a fundamental human right and stalls progress towards all the Sustainable Development Goals.

The digital revolution, combined with the interdependent and global nature of issues, from climate change to rising intolerance and violent extremism are increasing pressure on education systems to transform, and to give students the knowledge, competences and values they need to navigate a world of increasing complexity with opened mindsets and a sense of shared responsibility.

In this framework, the implementation of the SDG 4 is of utmost importance, as inclusive access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities have reciprocal linkages with almost all other SDGs and will play a key role in building peaceful, sustainable and resilient societies.

YOUTH SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

(What are youth doing to address the current situation and leverage opportunities? And what are some of the most transformative solutions?)

Participants emphasized that young people are dynamic, resourceful, and powerful agents of change and they must be recognized as full-fledged partners in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Young people can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, including the Goal on education, in their roles and capacity as:

- young scientists in higher education institutions, bringing fresh ideas and innovations in advancing sustainable development, in all its dimensions;
- young teachers, transmitting knowledge and skills for life and work to next generation;
- community leaders and volunteers, who are messengers of change bring the global message to the local level and take part in the decision-making processes; promoting healthy school environment and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for adolescents and young people.
- young entrepreneurs, who create opportunities for decent work for their peers and enable positive change.

- young advocates, promoting and supporting non-formal education to reach left behind young people; challenging cultural and structural barriers between the health and the education sectors to achieve healthy school environment. As well as promoting environmental sustainability and resilience.

LOOKING TO THE HORIZON

What can the UN and youth do together to make sure young people's contributions have a deeper and wider impact, and that they are better served and engaged by member states?

Elaborated by young participants, the outcomes and recommendations to advance the achievement of the SDG 4 include:

- Ensure the right to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all learners.
- Young people should have equitable opportunities acquire skills for work and life through formal, informal and non-formal education, both hard and soft skills.
- Youth should have to access quality and accessible training opportunities, such as internships and volunteering.
- Education should be recognized beyond economic returns to enabling learners to be responsible agents of sustainable change and driving forces for social progress.
- Governments should include migrants, refugee and other marginalized groups, in the education systems and facilitate the recognition of their qualifications, skills, and competencies.
- Teachers should be provided with trainings to be able to address diversity and hardship.
- We call to support access to youth-friendly and right-based comprehensive sexuality education.
- Education for human rights and global citizenship education should be mainstreamed to fight discrimination, xenophobia, and violence.
- Finally, there should be more opportunities for active and meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes in their communities, as young leaders, volunteers, scientists, educators and entrepreneurs.

The UN recognizes it cannot achieve its mission without partnering with young people and ensuring they are not only heard but understood, not only engaged but empowered, and not only supporting but leading global efforts and processes. At the SDG Summit, where Heads of State and Government will gather at the United Nations will review progress in the implementation of the whole 2030 Agenda, young people must volume up our voices, given the centrality of education for all the goals. Young people should be provided an opportunity to engage not only in the implementation of these global event, but also in planning, coordination and follow-up processes.