

Thematic Breakout Sessions



SDG 4 – Youth Engagement in Transforming Education

Education empowers youth to become active participants in the transformation for better societies by strengthening the teaching and understanding of shared knowledge, values and attitudes enabling individuals to live together in diverse environments. Education and lifelong learning for all is also a recognized driver and enabler for progress across all SDGs, peace and security and human rights. While significant progress in expanding access and equity in educational opportunity across the world has been made over the past decades, promises for inclusive education remained still unfulfilled. Persistent barriers to the full realization of the right to education – as also highlighted by the pandemic – remain, especially to most marginalized people. During the interactive panel of the SDG 4 breakout session, youth participants from around the world shared their insights on issues of achieving gender equality, leveraging the digital revolution, addressing the refugee emergency, as well as advancing education for peace, human rights, and development.

Several solutions and actions have been identified by youth to create sustainable and equitable education. Speakers agreed on the key principle to ensure youth empowered engagement in forging a new social contract for education. With 40% of the world population aged under 25, youth are best placed to define what relevant education looks like – one that provides meaning, sense of purpose and agency to act, and that is tailored to prepare youth to find solutions for the challenges of today and the future. It was recommended in this regard to include students in the creation of curriculum and extra-curricular activities. To advance gender equality in education, participants identified urgency to advance gender-responsive education systems including by mainstreaming gender-sensitive education and training in the education policies and creating education budgets specifically targeting the needs of girls and women. Moreover, to respond to the rapidly changing new technologies and the advent of the digital revolution, improving connectivity and access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is necessary. It should be complemented by a focus on skills development both for learners and teachers and enhanced international cooperation to bridge the digital divide in developing countries, as well as across the gender divide. To ensure quality and inclusive education for refugees, actions need to be taken to strengthen language learning and increase financial literacy of refugees. There should also be a focus on the creation of child-centered reception and integration services. The international community should strengthen global humanitarian efforts in support of governments that provide such education services. Additionally, to advance global peace and improve the welfare of humanity through education, it is important to ensure that students and learners are engaging in dialogue with people belonging to different cultures and ethnic groups.