UNICEF: TOWARDS A CHILD AND YOUTH POWERED ORGANIZATION

U-REPORT AND VOICES OF YOUTH CONSULTATIONS ON UNICEF’S STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

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ADDITIONAL DATA
As UNICEF develops its new Strategic Plan (SP) 2022-2025, a global consultation with children and young people was organized in 2021 to ensure that their views and suggestions were taken into consideration in the process of developing UNICEF strategies that will inevitably affect their lives. A consultation manual and guiding questions were developed by a cross-divisional working group to facilitate the process.

The purpose of this consultation was to give a space for children and young people to meaningfully contribute to the development and subsequent implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

Their engagement will help UNICEF accelerate the realization of the SDGs and drive change forward, by working and creating solutions together.

The Youth Engagement Team used its two main platforms U-Report and Voices of Youth (VoY) to gather young people’s opinions to feed into the SP. The team adapted the open-ended consultation questions to fit the technical specifications of U-Report and Voices of Youth.

The polls collected a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data related to four topics: education, climate change, mental health and discrimination (VoY only).

The U-Report SP poll was rolled-out in 17 countries and U-Report Global and gathered feedback from over 214,000 respondents.

Several polls were conducted on the Voices of Youth website, receiving almost 400 answers, and on Twitter and Instagram with a reach of over 126K and more than 6,000 responses.
The poll was conducted in **17 countries** and the U-Report Global platform and feedback from **214,233 respondents** was gathered.

**COUNTRIES**

Afghanistan / Brazil / Bulgaria / Côte d’Ivoire / Guatemala / India / Indonesia / Iraq / Kosovo / Lebanon / Nigeria / Philippines / Sierra Leone / Tanzania / Uganda / Ukraine and Uzbekistan*.  

*Regional data is analysed according to World Bank region definitions to align with the World Bank’s country income level classifications*
Between February 2nd and February 10th 2021 several polls were conducted on the Voices of Youth website and social media channels:

**WEB**
3 polls were published on the website from February 2nd to 12th, receiving 517 visits and 394 answers.

**TWITTER**
8 polls were done with a reach of 93.5K and receiving 805 answers.

**INSTAGRAM**
16 polls were conducted with a reach of 32.6K and 5,340 answers were gathered.

517 visits / 394 answers

93.5K reach / 805 answers

32.6K reach / 5,340 answers
To ensure a transparent process, participants across all platforms were informed that the data they shared with UNICEF will be used in the process of developing UNICEF strategies under the new Strategic Plan.

A page was created on Voices of Youth to share basic information about the consultation. Participants were also informed that the data would be shared on both internal and external UNICEF channels.

Results from the poll will be published on U-Report global website and shared with participating country offices to disseminate on their own websites and channels. A follow-up message with the consultation results will be sent to U-Report poll participants.

The results will also be shared on the Voices of Youth website where everyone can access more details.
RESULTS
RESULTS OVERVIEW

Results from polls and open-ended questions from both U-Report and Voices of Youth platforms are presented in the following slides according to the theme they focus on:

- **EDUCATION**
- **CLIMATE CHANGE**
- **MENTAL HEALTH**
- **DISCRIMINATION**

Due to rounding off, some totals may not correspond with the sum of 100%.

These specific themes were selected out of a wider list given their relevance to these communities of young people and in alignment with the Global Advocacy Priorities.
How do you think COVID-19 has impacted the education of children in your country?

Most respondents believe COVID-19 has impacted education negatively (76%).

A minority think it got better (10%) or stayed the same (8%).

*Answers gathered through the U-Report SP poll rolled-out in 17 countries and U-Report Global with over 214,000 respondents.*
Nearly half of the respondents feel that they have the digital skills they need in life.

30% think they don’t have them and 22% are not sure.

When analysed by gender the percentage of male respondents who believe they have the necessary skills (52%) is higher than among females (43%).

Across the different regions the percentage of respondents who feel they have the necessary skills was more or less consistent. In the Middle East and North Africa and in East Asia and the Pacific the percentage of respondents who answered “not sure” was higher than the average (32% and 40% respectively).

In North America the percentage of respondents who feel they have the skills they need rises up to 61%.

*Answers gathered through the U-Report SP poll rolled-out in 17 countries and U-Report Global with over 214,000 respondents.*
What is the **most urgent thing that can be done in schools** to help children and young people develop the skills they need?

Most U-Report respondents believe that the most urgent actions are to **have better access to technology and improve training for teachers**. A small percentage believe that adding new subjects would be the most urgent intervention.

In **South Asia** results differ from the global trend. Only 21% of the respondents feel that better access to technology is the most urgent thing, however the creation of new subjects was identified by 20% of respondents in the region.

*Answers gathered through the U-Report SP poll rolled-out in 17 countries and U-Report Global with over 214,000 respondents.*
What is the **most urgent thing that can be done in schools** to help you and your peers develop the skills you need?

- Better teachers. Better curriculum that is not centered around “instruction” following.
- Not sticking to old education system and teach more about things which will really help.
- Talk about currently important topics (politics, pandemic, healthcare, terrorism, racism...)
- I think providing knowledge on consent and sex education to teenagers is very important.
- Focus on life and emotional skills.
- More emphasis on mental health problems like depression, anxiety, pressure...
- Teachers who are supposed to be teachers and put effort into doing the jobs right.

Nearly a third of respondents felt that what they are learning is not necessarily the most relevant and that curricula need updating and new skills, activities, approaches need to be incorporated.

Additionally, around one fifth of respondents believed that **training and upskilling for teachers** is urgent.

There was also a recognition that some students do not have the necessary resources to succeed – Wi-Fi, textbooks, etc. Several respondents also mentioned the need for **mental wellbeing interventions** and the need to **reduce pressure** caused by high assignment/class loads.

*Quotes and observations based on 104 qualitative answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel. Some respondents provided more than one intervention in their answer.*
What is one thing that would help more children do better at school?

**The teacher to student ratio to be closer so the students can have more attention.**

**A more teacher-student friendly environment. May times teachers are mean and children feel hurt.**

**Enough academic resources, stable internet connection, study-friendly environment.**

**Schools caring about mental health.**

**Teachers and staff spending more time on students’ mental health.**

**Less theoretical and more practical.**

**Less emphasizing on marks and make them realize practical value of different aspects.**

Better trained teachers/improved teaching skills emerged as the most important things that would help children do better at school.

This includes teachers being more sensitive to the needs of students, using more modern teaching methods, and nurturing individual talent.

Respondents also mentioned the role of improved resources and access to resources such as the internet; mental wellbeing interventions; motivation, confidence building and empathy; and more practical or relevant skills learning as things that could improve schooling outcomes.

*Quotes and observations based on 176 qualitative answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel. Some respondents provided more than one intervention in their answer.*
OBSERVATIONS
EDUCATION AND SKILLS

• Young people feel that COVID-19 impacted the education of children negatively.

• Around one-third of respondents think they don’t have the digital skills they need to succeed in life. This will need to be addressed to prevent a widening digital divide.

• Better access to technology, training for teachers, and updates to what is being taught are seen as urgent interventions for young people’s education and skills development.

“Access to tech and being taught digital skills would help more children do better at school. Our world is changing so schools should adapt”.

*Quote gathered from Voices of Youth Instagram channel poll answers.
Do you feel **you have a responsibility** to tackle climate change?

Most of the respondents believe they have a **responsibility to tackle climate change** (76%).

The percentage of female respondents who feel they have a responsibility (73%) is slightly lower than among males (79%).

The only region where this result is substantially different is the Middle East and North Africa, where only 59% of the respondents believe that they have a responsibility to tackle climate change.

*Answers gathered through the U-Report SP poll rolled-out in 17 countries and U-Report Global with over 214,000 respondents.*
What is the **most important action to fight climate change and reduce damage** to the environment in your community? (pick one)

Most of the respondents believe **raising awareness is the most important action**.

This is followed by recycling waste, investing in renewable energy and reducing the consumption of resources.

Reducing CO₂ emissions and banning plastic were the least selected options.

It’s worth mentioning that awareness raising ranked really low in North America (9%) where renewable energy was the most popular option among respondents (35%).

*Answers gathered through the U-Report SP poll rolled-out in 17 countries and U-Report Global with over 214,000 respondents.*
What is the **most important action to fight climate change & reduce damage** to the environment in your community?

- Awareness about the responsibilities we hold for our better future.
- Teach people, school should talk about it more.
- To take care of our world, our environment. Playing our own role. It’s starts with us.
- It starts with us. With consistent sustainable choices. Actions speak louder than words.
- Stop using a lot of plastic and start using things we can recycle.
- Most important action is to demand accountability in nonrenewable energy companies.

Just over one-third of respondents believe that **reducing waste, proper waste disposal and recycling are the most important actions to fight climate change and reduce damage** to the environment. Within this, reduction of plastic use was specifically mentioned by several people.

Changing **personal attitudes and taking action** was also identified by just over a quarter of respondents as very important, closely followed by education and awareness-raising.

Less than 10% of respondents identified government action and accountability as being the most important intervention.

*Quotes and observations based on 66 qualitative answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel. Some respondents provided more than one intervention in their answer.*
CLIMATE CHANGE
QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

How can **children and young people be supported to fight climate change** and damage to the environment?

- Educate them and engage them to the reality about what is happening in our environment.
- Educating children to advocate at their own respective location. Advocate local and affect global.
- We should be given opportunities to raise awareness in social platform and governments should consider our pleas.
- Educative programs to teach young children and the youth how to keep the environment clean.
- By spreading awareness through social media.
- Young people are not taken seriously by the majority of people who consider themselves adults.

Almost **40% of respondents replied with suggestions related to taking individual action or changing practices.**

However these were not necessarily focused on supporting children but more broadly related to combating climate change and damage to the environment.

Education and raising awareness were also identified as important interventions. A little over 10% of respondents identified the use of social media and running campaigns as part of these efforts. A handful of respondents mentioned that children and youth need to be taken seriously.

*Quotes and observations based on 85 qualitative answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel. Some respondents provided more than one intervention in their answer.*
The majority of respondents feel they have a responsibility to tackle climate change.

Among the most important actions to fight climate change and reduce damage to the environment, the most popular answers were raising awareness; reducing waste, proper waste disposal and recycling; and individual action. Government accountability or action was mentioned less frequently.

Education, raising awareness, using social media and running campaigns were identified as interventions to support children and young people to fight climate change.

“Children and young people can be supported to fight climate change and damage to the environment by educating them to advocate at their own respective location. Advocate local and affect global.”

*Quote gathered from Voices of Youth Instagram channel poll answers.*
MENTAL HEALTH
Where would you like to learn about mental health? (pick one)

When asked where they would like to learn about mental health, school was the most popular option (37%) followed by social media (29%) and at home (19%).

The percentage of female respondents who chose “at school” (33%) was lower than among males (41%). Also, the percentage of male respondents who chose social media was lower (25%) than among females (33%).

It’s worth noting that “at school” scored substantially higher in North America (66%) and that social media scored higher than the average in East Asia & Pacific (41%) and substantially lower in North America (14%).

*Answers gathered through the U-Report SP poll rolled-out in 17 countries and U-Report Global with over 214,000 respondents.
MENTAL HEALTH
QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

Where would you like to learn about mental health?

In educational institutions. I feel it’s the most effective place to increase mental health awareness.

Your page (Voices of Youth), blogs, YouTube channel.

By regular WhatsApp messaging (professional acc).

At a safe place away from stress (I’m not sure where exactly).

Educational institutions and social media.

I think there has to be more information on the subject, since parents think we want attention.

The two most important channels/spaces to learn about mental health were educational institutions and social media/digital channels. A few respondents mentioned UN channels, including Voices of Youth, as good places to learn about mental health.

The home/family environment was mentioned infrequently, only by a small number of respondents.

Several respondents didn’t specify a location but talked about the desired quality in a location - safe, calming, etc.

*Quotes and observations based on 87 qualitative answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel. Some respondents provided more than one intervention in their answer.
Who would you like to learn about mental health? (pick one)

From the options given, 58% of the respondents affirmed that they would like to learn about mental health from professionals, NGOs or organizations.

14% stated they would like to learn about it from their parents.

Teachers and youth movements were selected by 10% of the respondents.

In South Asia the percentage of respondents who chose professionals/NGOs/organizations was lower than the global average, at 36%.

*Answers gathered trough the U-Report SP poll rolled-out in 17 countries and U-Report Global with over 214,000 respondents.
MENTAL HEALTH
QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

Who would you like to learn about mental health from?

- A qualified person but someone close to our age group who can relate to us better.
- Those who’ve faced it and lived in the society where nobody understands them.
- Anyone who truly understands what it is and how it affects a person’s wellbeing.
- Experts, people who have been through it all.
- My teachers. I wish we learned to be accepting from an early age–senior year of high school.
- Local mental health practitioners.

The most widely given answer to this question was “from mental health professionals”. However, learning from people with direct experience of mental health issues was also recognized as important by around 15%.

Smaller numbers of respondents mentioned teachers, friends and peers as well. It is interesting that teachers rated quite low, when the school was mentioned most frequently as the place where young people want to learn about mental health. It suggest schools may need to bring in specialists to do this.

*Quotes and observations based on 90 qualitative answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel. Some respondents provided more than one intervention in their answer.
MENTAL HEALTH
QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

What is the best approach to **fight against stigma and raise awareness on mental health** among young people in your community?

I feel educating youth about mental health would be the best way to combat stigma.

Teach them that it is okay to not be okay and also how to make active efforts to take care of our mental health.

I think inculcating this stuff in popular media - movies, cartoons, etc..

Communicate real stories to make people realize about that problem in every person.

Tackle the stereotypes surrounding therapy and the people receiving therapy.

Telling our stories! Mental health isn’t a visible issue a lot of the time. Sharing will help end stigma.

By far, the most important approach identified by respondents is education and awareness raising. Linked to this, several respondents identified real life stories/actual experience of people as important to addressing stigma and raising awareness.

There were also several respondents who spoke about ways in which we can change how and what we communicate, for example making sure that we cover more stigmatized issues or position mental health issues just like other diseases that might affect a person.

*Quotes and observations based on 62 qualitative answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel. Some respondents provided more than one intervention in their answer.*
OBSERVATIONS
CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Educational institutions and social media/digital channels** were the two main channels/spaces chosen to learn about mental health.

- When asked who they would like to learn about mental health from, **professionals, NGOs/organizations** emerged as the most popular. Despite the popularity of educational institutions as places to learn about mental health, teachers were identified in the “who” questions by much smaller numbers of young people.

- **Education and awareness raising** are considered the best approaches to **fight against stigma on mental health** among young people.

“**Educating youth about mental health** would be the best approach to fight against stigma and raise awareness on mental health among young people in my community”.

*Quote gathered from Voices of Youth Instagram channel poll answers.*
DISCRIMINATION
How can children and young people fight discrimination?

Teaching that we are all just as important and valuable as human beings.

Not staying silent, acting compassionately and in solidarity.

If children are given the right to speak and show their opinions, that’s what we need!

Giving speeches to other young people to make them conscious about the consequences of discrimination.

With good education. And education as a basic right, not a privilege.

By saying something about micro aggressions!

The majority of respondents believed that children and young people can fight discrimination by speaking up and taking action, as well as changing mindsets.

Around 20% of respondents stated the need to educate oneself, as well as others.

Less than 10% of respondents specifically mentioned creating awareness and getting support from adults as ways to fight discrimination.

*Quotes and observations based on 69 qualitative answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel. Some respondents provided more than one intervention in their answer.*
What support do children and young people need to fight discrimination?

- Education must be given to children that is more powerful to change their mindsets.
- We need adults that support us and let us speak and participate to give a massive message.
- Global leaders who legislate policy against discrimination.
- To be taken seriously, voices taken to decision-makers.
- We need the support of today’s youth as well as platforms where we can make their voices reach.
- We need education to learn how to fight it and to understand what it really means.

More than 40% of the respondents believe that children and young people need support, in particular from adults like parents and teachers, to fight discrimination.

Additionally, around one quarter of respondents mentioned that education about racism, different cultures, how to fight discrimination etc. are important in supporting young people and children to fight discrimination.

A few respondents stated that creating awareness and more youth resources can support the fight against discrimination as well.

*Quotes and observations based on 46 qualitative answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel. Some respondents provided more than one intervention in their answer.*
Many young people believe that discrimination is part of their environment or community.

Respondents felt that children and young people can fight discrimination by speaking up and changing mindsets. Respondents also stated the need to educate oneself, as well as others.

Respondents said that children and young people need support from adults like parents and teachers to fight discrimination.

“To fight discrimination, we need adults that support us and let us speak and participate to give a massive message”

*Quote gathered from Voices of Youth Instagram channel poll answers.*
The Youth Engagement Team is responsible for strengthening UNICEF’s capacity to engage young people as advocates for their rights through our flagship campaigns and initiatives; and ensuring their perspectives and voices are an integral part of our communications and advocacy.

Why young people? More than 1.8 billion young people live in the world today – about 1.4 billion in just 20 countries. This generation is an active force driving change.

By investing in young people as active citizens and advocates for the rights of children, UNICEF will help young people reach their full potential and deliver on our strategic organizational priorities more effectively and sustainably.

We continually support and work with UNICEF Offices around the world. You might also recognize some of our global platforms and campaigns:
U-Report is a messaging programme for adolescent, youth and community participation. It’s a key tool to share information, raise awareness, and collect quantifiable data on specific areas that impact children, including the most vulnerable.

Responses received are analysed in real-time, mapped and displayed on a public dashboard.

Partnering with 13,111,266 U-Reporters worldwide.

76 Countries worldwide.

U-Reporters around the world.
**Voices of Youth**

Voices of Youth (VoY) is UNICEF’s platform for youth by youth to learn about development issues and express their opinions.

It’s a community space that helps young people develop into active global citizens equipped to communicate and collaborate effectively to make a positive difference in their countries and communities.

*Our main audience is young people.* Therefore, our platform, our channels and all our content is specifically designed to attract them and leverage their voices.

**3.5M**
Organic web sessions in 2020*

**54%**
Instagram followers under 24

**430K**
Followers on social media

**210M**
Instagram organic reach**

*Average from last 6 months 2020. **Average from last 5 months of 2020*
**Do you feel like COVID-19 impacted the education of children negatively?**

- **YES***: 91%
- **NO***: 9%

*Answers gathered via VoY Instagram Stories Poll (1,030 responses) / **Answers gathered in VoY Twitter channel (464 responses). / ***And in VoY website (131 responses).

**What has been the most important issue for education during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

- **LACK OF DIGITAL RESOURCES**: 22.4%
- **BEING FAR AWAY FROM PEERS**: 26.7%
- **SCHOOLWORK AND HOMEWORK**: 50.9%

**TWITTER RESPONSES**

- **LACK OF DIGITAL RESOURCES**: 24%
- **BEING FAR AWAY FROM PEERS**: 23%
- **SCHOOLWORK AND HOMEWORK**: 53%

**WEB RESPONSES***

- **LACK OF DIGITAL RESOURCES**: 23%
- **BEING FAR AWAY FROM PEERS**: 24%
- **SCHOOLWORK AND HOMEWORK**: 53%
Do you think you have the digital skills you need in life?

- **Yes**: 67%
- **No**: 33%

What can be done to help children and young people develop the skills they need to succeed at school?

- Training for teachers: 21.3%
- New subjects: 44.7%
- Better technology: 34%

*Answers gathered via VoY Instagram Stories Poll (1,015 responses).  *Answers gathered in VoY Twitter channel (47 responses).
Do you feel you have a **responsibility** to tackle climate change?

- **YES**: 96%
- **NO**: 4%

Do you feel you have the **tools** to address climate change?

- **YES**: 59%
- **NO**: 41%

*Answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel (572 and 547 responses).*
What is the most **important action to fight climate change** and reduce damage to the environment in your community?

Do you feel there is **stigma** in your community around mental health issues?

- **YES**: 92%
- **NO**: 8%

*Answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel (557 responses).*

Who would you like to **learn** about mental health from?

- **MY PARENTS/TEACHERS**: 39%
- **MY FRIENDS**: 10.2%
- **CELEBRITIES**: 40.7%
- **ACTIVISTS/NGOs**: 10.2%

*Answers gathered in VoY Twitter channel (59 responses).*
MENTAL HEALTH

Where would you like to learn about mental health?

**TWITTER**

- **On TV Shows**: 7.1%
- **At School**: 56%
- **On Social Media**: 34.5%
- **In the News**: 2.4%

**WEB**

- **On TV Shows**: 9%
- **At School**: 56%
- **On Social Media**: 33%
- **In the News**: 2%

*Answers gathered in VoY Twitter channel (84 responses).*

*Answers gathered in VoY website (129 responses).*
**DISCRIMINATION**

Do you feel like discrimination is part of your environment or community?

**INSTAGRAM RESPONSES**

YES 85%  |  NO 15%

Answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel (436 responses).

**TWITTER RESPONSES**

YES 90.7%  |  NO 9.3%

Answers gathered in VoY Twitter channel (54 votes).

Do you feel you and other young people are equipped to deal with discrimination?

**INSTAGRAM RESPONSES**

YES 61%  |  NO 39%

Answers gathered in VoY Instagram channel (397 responses).

**TWITTER RESPONSES**

YES 58.3%  |  NO 41.7%

Answers gathered in VoY Twitter channel (24 votes).