



IIEP Policy Forum
16-18 October 2012, Paris

ENGAGING YOUTH IN PLANNING EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



International Institute
for Educational Planning



UNESCO Chair in Education for Pluralism,
Human Rights and Democracy
UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and
Civic Engagement



Acknowledgements

The IIEP Policy Forum ‘Engaging youth in planning education for social transformation’ involved a great number of people from many organizations across the world. The Policy Forum partnership was first initiated with the two UNESCO Chairs from the National University of Ireland, Galway and the University of Ulster, with the World Assembly of Youth, the Université Laval and the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies quickly joining the collaborative efforts. The UNESCO head office played an active role in the process, with particular thanks to colleagues in the Education and the Social and Human Sciences Sectors.

Many organizations contributed ideas, knowledge and funds. We are especially grateful to UNICEF for their generous contribution to the organizational costs of the forum and the participation of speakers and youth. The Atlantic Philanthropies contributed significantly through its partnership with the two UNESCO Chairs. The International Fund for Agricultural Development, with whom UNESCO partners on research, has supported logistical costs. The Open Society Foundations sponsored a number of youth and speakers, helping to ensure diversity of perspectives. American Institutes for Research and Université Laval supported in kind by sponsoring participants. The European Training Foundation authored a background paper. The outcomes from the Policy Forum are able to be published thanks to the contribution of The Spencer Foundation.

Finally, we wish to thank all the keynote speakers, presenters and of course all the ministers, agencies, youth and other participants, as well as all the staff of the organizing agencies who made this event and its outcomes possible.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in no way imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO or IIEP concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city, or area, or its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AIR	American Institutes of Research
CCCA-BTP	National Coordination Committee of Apprenticeships in the Construction Industry (France)
EFA	Education for All
ETF	European Training Foundation
GMR	<i>Global Monitoring Report</i>
HE	His/Her Excellency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
MASK	Mobile Art School in Kenya
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	non-governmental organization
NORRAG	Network for Policy Research, Review and Advice on Education and Training
SIS	(American University) School of International Service
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAY	World Assembly of Youth
WIMPS	Where Is My Public Servant?

Introduction

Since the establishment of the Education for All (EFA) goals at the World Education Forum and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the Millennium Summit over a decade ago, education has retained its prominence on national and international agendas as a key component of sustainable and equitable development and growth. The criticality of education as a fundamental pillar of development was most recently reinforced with the launch of the United Nations (UN) Global Education First Initiative: a four-year programme to bolster global action on education.

Youth are an obvious stakeholder in this agenda as they are the front-line and direct beneficiaries of education systems. Yet youth involvement in developing the policies and programmes that affect them has often been slow. After the UN proclaimed the year 1985 as the International Youth Year, a World Congress on Youth was hosted by the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Barcelona, Spain. One of the main outcomes of this congress was the understanding of the importance of recognizing the civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights of young people 'so that they can play a more direct and prominent role in political institutions' (UNESCO, 1985: 4) and engage more actively in their societies. Yet it took over a decade after this event for initiatives such as the UNESCO Youth Forum to be established in 1999 as a biannual event.

Over 25 years later, the issue of youth engagement remains on the political agenda. The 2007 *World Development Report* (World Bank, 2007) was subtitled 'Development and next generations', underlining the importance of youth in the development agenda; the UN proclaimed the year starting 20 August 2010 as the International Year of Youth with the theme of 'Dialogue and mutual understanding'; the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) developed its first policy on youth in development in 2012, subtitled 'Realizing the demographic opportunity'. Youth-led protests in many countries in 2011 and 2012 confirmed the importance of ensuring that youth voices are heard and their needs responded to.

New factors that have catapulted the youth issue onto the global stage include demographic changes, globalizing forces, and increasingly accessible social networking technology. Although different definitions of youth encompass those up to the age of 35 years, if the UN definition of those between the age of 15 and 24 is used, 43 per cent of the world's population is youth, and this percentage reaches as high as 60 per cent in the least developed countries

(UNFPA, 2011: 8). Social networks such as Twitter, media such as YouTube videos, and increasing internet access around the world, have also opened up new forums for young people to engage in how issues affecting youth are addressed and hold decision-makers accountable.

Education has an important role to play in developing the knowledge and skills for youth to become positive agents of change. This implies fostering their ability to build and maintain peace, to engage in political and civic processes that work for the public good, and to create an economic future that provides sustainable livelihoods. These are crucial, interdependent building blocks that support and underpin healthy and sustainable societies. Providing the skills and spaces needed for civic engagement can give youth a sense of belonging and community which helps steer them away from recruitment into gangs or armed groups. Youth civic engagement also helps to build leadership and teamwork skills which are instrumental in most work environments.

The World Bank provides evidence that unemployment and job loss are associated with lower levels of trust and civic engagement, so planning an education system that facilitates the transition for youth to the world of work can be of equal benefit in terms of their civic motivation. Decent work opportunities may decrease relative deprivation and a sense of alienation, a common driver of conflict. As the World Bank notes, jobs ‘that shape social identity, build networks – particularly for excluded groups – and increase fairness can help defuse tensions and support peaceful collective decision making’ (2012: 47).

Cultural sensitization skills gained from peacebuilding activities are also important for post-conflict work environments where social tensions may remain. This sensitization can also foster civic motivations to build more equitable and socially cohesive societies. Education that conveys values of peace and equality encourages youth to critically examine and challenge the status quo if these values are lacking.

Taking into account all of the above, the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) decided to hold a Policy Forum that built upon the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum. The UNESCO forum was devoted to showcasing how youth can be active social agents in driving change under the following themes:

- Citizens in action: youth in political and public life;
- Countering youth exclusion, vulnerability, and violence;
- Breaking through employment barriers.

Therefore IIEP's 2012 Policy Forum 'Engaging youth in planning education for social transformation' was structured around the following three interconnected themes:

- Youth supporting education for conflict transformation and peacebuilding;
- Strengthening young peoples' skills and opportunities for civic engagement within formal and non-formal education systems;
- Connecting education, learning, and the world of work: developing skills for youth transitions.

The event

The Policy Forum was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 16–18 October 2012, and was organized in collaboration with multiple partners, including the UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement at the National University of Ireland, Galway; the UNESCO Chair in Education for Pluralism, Human Rights and Democracy at the University of Ulster; the World Assembly of Youth (WAY); and UNESCO’s Education and Social and Human Sciences sectors. The strengths and expertise of each organization were vital to the overall structure and content of the Forum. It was also made possible thanks to the funding and technical advice of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Université Laval, the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Spencer Foundation, American Institutes of Research (AIR), and the Open Society Foundations.

The Policy Forum examined the issue of youth engagement and the benefits it can bring to education policy, programming, and research. The Forum aimed to promote the engagement of youth within the educational planning processes, so that their voices are heard and they are actively represented.

Specifically the Policy Forum had three main objectives:

- Examine recent policy, practice, and research initiatives on youth engagement within education policy-making and programming in different countries and across different contexts.
- Provide a space for youth, policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers to engage in dialogue on how youth may be active partners in planning their education.
- Identify promising strategies to help policy-makers plan for and promote meaningful youth engagement in education and training settings.

The Policy Forum was designed to review the main issues affecting youth engagement in the three themes outlined above. It employed a mixed approach of panel presentations and debates, structured discussions, and group work to engage the participants, and aimed to ensure that all stakeholders (i.e. youth, policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers) were given an equal to chance to influence the discussions.¹

1 Visit www.planwithyouth.org/resources/photos-and-videos/ to review video recordings of all keynote and panel presentations at the Policy Forum.

The Policy Forum was structured to review the evidence on the above-mentioned themes and to explore experiences from different geographical, social, economic, political, and environmental contexts as a means to better understand how stakeholders could collaboratively address critical issues and promote innovative solutions for moving forward. To provide a practical outcomes-based approach, the presentations and group work sessions were organized around the following:

- Policy: how youth should be engaged within the various levels of government to help design, implement, and monitor national education and youth policies and plans;
- Programming: how youth should be engaged as a major stakeholder in the design and planning of education and training programmes;
- Research: how youth should be engaged in strengthening the evidence base for effective education interventions.

Within the group work, participants were asked to deliberate on a number of specific questions and issues, such as:

- What programming recommendations would you make to ensure formal and non-formal education respond to conflict in your context and promote youth participation in transformation and peacebuilding?
- What are the key questions and gaps in research in terms of learning about civic engagement as an approach to working with young people?
- What are examples of policy developments that successfully link education and labour policies and developments? What are the implications for governance and funding?

Recommendations from the group work were fed into the summaries of each session, which were presented to the assembly and served as the foundation for the strategies for action in the main Policy Forum outcome document. A concrete Agenda for Action,² based on the key recommendations emerging from the Policy Forum and from the virtual debates around the world, was produced in collaboration with participants in the weeks after the Forum. It was then presented with a call for commitments to ensure all participants, both Paris attendees and online subscribers, had an opportunity to follow up and take the youth engagement in education agenda forward.

2 Visit www.planwithyouth.org/2013/04/05/the-agenda-for-action-is-complete-plan-with-youth-policy-forum-proposals-are-being-taken-forward-with-your-help/

Each of the thematic sessions was initiated by one or more keynote speakers (a young person, practitioner, academic, or government minister). These were followed by different formats of panel presentations that allowed key stakeholder groups to present their views and experience on a specific thematic area. Participants then broke out into smaller groups to discuss the issues, after which a rapporteur closed the session by summarizing the keynote, panel, and group work discussions. During the final session, the three session rapporteurs gave a final summary in collaboration with the keynote speakers, and a panel of youth and ministers was convened to discuss expectations and commitments based on the outcomes of the Forum.³

Launch of the Education for All *Global Monitoring Report*

The Policy Forum was held back to back with the launch of the 2012 EFA *Global Monitoring Report (GMR)* on the morning of 16 October. The theme of this year's *GMR*, *Youth and Skills: Putting education to work*, was closely linked to the Forum's third stream on connecting education, learning, and the world of work. Additionally, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, and His Excellency (HE) Emmanuel Bonginkosi Nzimande, South African Minister of Higher Education and Training, provided further linkages as they were key speakers at both events.⁴

The *GMR* launch provided an overview of progress towards the EFA goals and the challenges the international community faces as we move closer to the 2015 deadline. Currently, one in eight young people are unemployed and over a quarter are trapped in jobs that keep them at or below the poverty line. Two hundred million young people aged 15 to 24 have not even completed primary school. The global economic crisis, combined with political instability in many regions of the world, further lessens the chances of real progress for youth. The launch also provided a thorough understanding of the different types of skills and pathways young people need in their transition to sustainable livelihoods, and how these vary according to context and environment.

Inauguration of the Policy Forum

Following the *GMR* launch, the IIEP Policy Forum was opened and inaugurated by Khalil Mahshi, IIEP Director, and Irina Bokova respectively. Ms Bokova's

3 Visit www.planwithyouth.org/about/programme/ for a full programme of sessions and presentations.

4 Visit www.planwithyouth.org/about/speakers/ for the list and biographies of all presenters at the Policy Forum.

message highlighted the importance of working not only ‘for’ youth but ‘with’ them as we research, design, and implement solutions at both government and grassroots levels, with ‘every young man and woman fully engaged’.



UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova discussing working with youth at the Policy Forum inauguration

Welcoming remarks from UNESCO Chairs Alan Smith and Pat Dolan, and the Hon. Datuk Wira Ir. Idris Haron, President of WAY, then set the stage for the rest of the event by introducing the three streams. Mr Dolan highlighted:

‘Just as we should not see youth as evidence of problems in communities, but rather see them as the source of solutions which they are and have to be for all of us, similarly we should not just look on youth as something that is an investment into the future, youth do contribute, have contributed and continue to contribute now to civic society’.

The Hon. Mr Haron reiterated Ms Bokova’s comments by noting the importance of shifting decision-making to ‘among and with the youth’.

Global perspectives of youth engagement

IIEP’s Deputy Director, Suzanne Grant Lewis, opened the session by introducing a group of panellists devoted to the issue of youth engagement at the highest level of policy development. Nicola Shepherd, Focal Point on Youth and Head of the Programme on Youth at the United Nations, Moufida Goucha, Team Leader for the Youth-led Social Innovation Team within the Social and Human Sciences Sector at UNESCO, and Miika Tomi, youth co-rapporteur of the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum ‘How Youth Drive Change’, brought a diverse yet cohesive perspective to the issue of youth engagement on a global scale.



Suzanne Grant Lewis and Miika Tomi in the Global perspectives of youth engagement session

Ms Shepherd initiated the panel discussions by introducing the UN's Interagency Network on Youth Development which is currently developing a five-year UN system-wide action plan on youth. The plan has been structured to focus on five priority areas identified by the UN Secretary-General: Employment; Entrepreneurship; Education, including education on sexual and reproductive health; Citizenship and protection of rights; and Political inclusion.

Part of the planning process for this initiative has involved surveying the perceptions of youth, youth-led organizations, and others regarding the most challenging and pertinent issues currently faced by youth. With over 13,500 respondents, the survey provided important findings in understanding how youth perceive their opportunities and obstacles in regard to these five areas. As highlighted in the presentation, the lack of job opportunities and the limited availability of secure and decent waged jobs are of key concern. Another key finding was that youth were particularly interested in training and skills development, and how policy-makers might develop related programmes to improve the transition from education to employment. The statistics also showed a strong interest in promoting informal and non-formal educational environments as important spaces for learning beyond the classroom.

'Stakeholders view them as a problem rather than partners in coming up with solutions. We have a hierarchical system where the leadership in both public and private sector give directives. We have a negative perception about the youth, so much that they are believed to be interested only in money but not working. Moreover, the private community feel that meetings with public officers take too long, hence impacting negatively on their businesses.' (Ministry of Education official, Botswana)

Ms Shepherd's presentation ended with a focus on political inclusion as an especially important factor to consider for the Policy Forum. She reiterated the importance of the more meaningful inclusion of youth through true partnerships rather than token consultations in decision-making processes. She additionally asked the assembly to reflect on how all youth voices (including the most marginalized and hardest to reach) could be included in this partnership.

Ms Goucha noted in her presentation the important changes that have enabled youth to move towards a more powerful structure of horizontal and supranational collaboration due to the advances in information technology and virtual social networks. As a result, youth are increasingly able to engage in innovative types of exchanges and develop new accountability mechanisms for both themselves and other stakeholders.

As youth have become more involved, UNESCO has moved towards a double-pronged approach of engaging youth at both the policy and grassroots levels. At the policy development level, staff have been working to ensure the meaningful participation of youth through initiatives such as the biannual UNESCO Youth Forums and this year's IIEP Policy Forum. At the grassroots level, UNESCO has been working to ensure that youth and policy-makers have the skills, platforms, and processes necessary for meaningful youth engagement. For example, it is currently working with the Tunisian government to create citizenship and human rights school clubs which will enable youth to participate in the management of their school space and in local community projects.

Ms Goucha noted some good practices in developing national youth policies in different countries. The presentation pointed to the need for youth policies to be horizontal and with a cross-ministerial structure in order to maximize investments, ensure coherency, and avoid unnecessary duplication in different ministries. National youth councils were noted as important stakeholders and contributors in the policy-making process. Ms Goucha also presented good practices in supporting youth engagement at the grassroots level. The presentation highlighted the importance of having a holistic approach of fostering engagement in all learning environments, including the informal and non-formal sectors, and the need to build youth engagement competencies and capacities, and provide more inclusive mechanisms and processes for youth participation at all levels.

'A legal framework compelling decision-makers and planners to involve the youth, as is the case with Canada, would go a long way in ensuring youth participation as it would provide punitive measures for noncompliance,

thereby enforcing the decision to involve the youth.'

(Ministry of Education official, Zambia)

Mr Tomi rounded off the discussion by highlighting some important measures that the delegates needed to consider to ensure youth are truly engaged in educational planning. As a representative of the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum, Mr Tomi was elected from 211 youth delegates coming from 123 different countries to serve as the ongoing voice of the recommendations produced as an outcome of the 2011 Youth Forum. Consequently, his presentation channelled these recommendations into three points:

- the need to move from a youth problem to a youth solution;
- the importance of empowering learners to teach themselves;
- the need to create, fund, and support formal structures within government and law to engage youth in policy-making processes.

He concluded by prompting government representatives at the Forum with the following question, 'When in twenty years we will all look back and examine the countries that truly succeeded, they will be the ones that were able to realize their immense youth potential. Which one will your country be?'

Mr Tomi noted that many governments might be afraid to give youth a platform as they lack the resources to live up to young people's demands. The most important paradigm shift is to move beyond the demand concern and view youth as providers of innovative solutions. While listening is conducive to hearing demands and expectations, giving a seat at the table is imperative for an effective partnership that better addresses issues affecting the education and life chances of youth.

This macro-perspective of youth engagement was followed by a showcasing of youth projects from around the world, demonstrating the power of youth engagement on the ground. These 'Voices from the Field' were facilitated by Brad Brockman, General Secretary of Equal Education in South Africa, and Ediola Pashollari, Secretary-General of WAY. Projects included Where Is My Public Servant? (WIMPS) from Northern Ireland,⁵ a joint UNESCO and IFAD project on 'Learning knowledge and skills for agriculture and rural livelihoods' on how agricultural knowledge and training are being transferred to youth,⁶ a

5 Visit <http://wimps.tv/> to learn more.

6 Visit www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/technical-vocational-education-and-training-tvet/learning-knowledge-and-skills-for-agriculture-and-rural-livelihoods/ to learn more.

Mobile Art School in Kenya (MASK),⁷ an urban youth fund driven by the Latin American and Caribbean arm of UN-Habitat,⁸ and a youth–adult partnership research project through seven youth organizations around the world.⁹



Joel Gatua from Mobile Art School in Kenya (MASK)

Youth engagement in planning education for conflict transformation and peacebuilding

'We must look into the grassroots of a certain conflict.'
(Online participant from a tribal society in Mindanao)

This session was opened by Kate Moriarty, Chief, Section of Education for Peace and Human Rights at UNESCO, who underlined the importance of education in transforming young people's lives in conflict and post-conflict settings. She went on to emphasize its importance in any setting since the peace-oriented values it can foster, such as social inclusion and cultural understanding, are important for all youth in building a sustainable global peace. She concluded by remarking that a reverse relationship was equally true, in that young people have an important role to play in transforming education.

7 Visit www.mobileartschoolinkenya.org/ to learn more.

8 Visit www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=637 to learn more.

9 Visit <http://ssw.umich.edu/colc/symposium/reflection-papers/Reflections%20on%20Youth%20Partnership%20and%20Researching%20Community%20Organizing%20-Watts.pdf> to learn more.

Forest Whitaker, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace and Reconciliation, delivered a **video keynote speech** that reiterated the importance of education in building a more stable world. He noted, however, that the simple provision of education is not enough. Education delivery needs to be transformative and inspiring in order for youth to truly understand their potential as leaders of both today and the future.



Forest Whitaker, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace and Reconciliation, video keynote speaker on youth supporting education for conflict transformation and peacebuilding

If the education system is only about ensuring the adaptation of young people to today's world, it will not provide the skills for youth to design and reinvent the world into something better. This is a crucial endeavour as we can say there are two types of wisdom, a wisdom of age and experience, and the wisdom of youth, which has 'not yet been clouded by the accumulated grime of years of routine, of lowered expectations or unfulfilled dreams'. The energy of hope and confidence arising from a youthful wisdom is essential to address challenges in innovative and effective ways.

The session organizer, Alan Smith, UNESCO Chair and professor at the University of Ulster, then introduced the next keynote presenter and the structure of the panel discussion that would follow. During his speech, he highlighted the need to shift the lingering dialogue around youth as a risk to security, towards an understanding of them as true partners and resources in development. He encouraged participants to reflect on what this might mean in terms of practice and concrete action for policy, programming, and research in their smaller group discussions after hearing from the presenters.

Mark Hamilton, professor at the American University School of International Service (SIS), followed this presentation with another **keynote address** which established, much like Mr Whitaker's speech, that youth are an essential component of social transformation.



Professor Mark Hamilton, keynote speaker on youth supporting education for conflict transformation and peacebuilding

His presentation focused on the importance of context in analysing and addressing youth drivers of conflict in a given situation. As discussed in the background paper, 'Youth education and peacebuilding' (Smith and Smith Ellison, 2012), for this session, there is an important distinction to be made within the concept of peacebuilding. It is not only the pursuit of an absence of violence; it is the attempt to remove the root causes or drivers of the violence. Mr Hamilton highlighted the need for peacebuilding interventions, and educational policy and programming reforms, that reflect what is known about a country's drivers of youth conflict. His presentation focused on three main drivers:

- **Groups and identity:** During times of crisis, leaders of violent groups often deepen divisions in societies (i.e. class, religion, or region) to build stronger ties and mobilize youth groups as soldiers and supporters in a conflict.
- **Grievances and perceived injustice:** Youth can become frustrated when their expectations, such as those linked to their economic livelihood, political inclusion, or access to education, are not met. If there is no outlet for youth feedback or little accountability, this can breed violence.
- **Greed and incentives:** Youth often join violent groups based on rewards or fear of coercion. If there are few or no viable alternatives to earn decent wages, gain social status or a sense of belonging, or defend against coercion, youth are more likely to join conflicts.

The background paper (Smith and Smith Ellison, 2012) identifies a fourth driver that focuses on political environments which can play an important role in driving conflict if they fuel inequalities between different areas or groups. Examination of the political context that leads to severe patronage structures in some countries demonstrates how this can lead to the destruction of a country's social contract.

Mr Hamilton reviewed mechanisms to address these drivers through contextualized theories of change. He presented the idea of using different policies and programmes, both educational and non-educational, that would:

- transform ideas and relationships to counteract the group and identity driver,
- transform structures and expectations to counteract the grievance and perceived injustices driver,
- transform incentives and opportunities to counteract the greed and incentives driver.

He noted the importance however of ensuring that these mechanisms are reflective and aligned with the environmental context.

The presentation then looked at some of the opportunities and challenges in engaging youth in this process. Mr Hamilton noted the difficulty in understanding which youth should be included, and ensuring marginalized groups are represented. As stated in the background paper, some of the main challenges for genuine youth engagement are 'identifying the multiplicity of youth perspectives on the conflict, the politics of who represents youth opinion, and which youth organizations receive funding and resources' (Smith and Smith Ellison, 2012: 2.16).

'In my country, Burundi, women play a role in the local communities as social educator, guardians of cultural, traditional, and moral values. They act as needs providers. As they are responsible for the production of the largest food supply, water, and firewood, they are agents and key development partners who shouldn't be ignored.'

(Online participant from Burundi commenting on why the engagement of young women is needed for effective policy implementation)

Brenda Haiplik, Senior Education Advisor in Emergencies, UNICEF, echoed this statement in the panel presentation that followed, as she underlined the importance of balanced gender representation in the process.



Panelists of the youth supporting education for conflict transformation and peacebuilding session

The context-specific marginalization of certain groups of young women and men needs to be a part of the initial conflict analysis, and understood in designing effective peacebuilding programmes. As one participant from Burundi noted in the online forum, certain groups of young women play a pivotal role in Burundi's socio-economic development through their heavy involvement in agriculture, yet they are under-recognized or excluded from strategic decision-making. A peacebuilding programme in Burundi, therefore, might ensure that sensitization to the challenges these groups face is built into the education system, and that they are included in the programme design process.

'Extracurricular activities such as school national music and drama festivals, sports and games, have provided opportunities for the Ministry of Education to convey and promote messages of peace and social cohesion.'

(Online participant from Kenya)

HE Jean-Jacques Nyenimigabo, Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Burundi, provided concrete examples of how the youth engagement agenda was being currently addressed in Burundi, a post-conflict country. Through the recommendations and outcomes of a national youth forum, the government has created a national youth policy, a national youth council, and youth centres in every district that provide training in citizenship, peacebuilding, HIV and AIDS, and professional skills. It has also created a youth fund that is available to entrepreneurial youth through a microfinancing structure. Mr Nyenimigabo also underlined the importance of addressing the reintegration needs of certain youth groups that were particularly affected by the conflict, such as child

soldiers. He noted that Burundi is also making an effort to host sports and cultural events to promote peace and social cohesion.

Lakshitha Saji Preli, Director of Children and Youth at Search for Common Ground, spoke on the need to change the perception of youth in many communities, and the power that media can provide in achieving this. Lyndsay Bird, Programme Specialist at IIEP, outlined the power of effective planning, which needs to have the voice of youth embedded within it. The literature on youth engagement is littered with criticisms of tokenistic consultations; therefore events that provide a space to break down negative intergenerational perceptions and barriers are important.

Aram Barra, Projects Director of the Espolea non-governmental organization (NGO) in Mexico, having witnessed the situation in Mexico during the ‘war on drugs’, also highlighted the need for generations to come together in addressing conflict-related issues. He underlined this point by concluding his presentation in saying that between the older and younger generations, ‘if we are able to understand that our demands, our needs, and our wills are something that is common, we will be, I think, I would even assure, we will be on the right path to transformation of conflicts and building peaceful societies’.



Aram Barra, Projects Director, Espolea

This panel offered an overview of the challenges for youth engagement in planning education for conflict transformation and peacebuilding, and some of the current efforts to address them. It reinforced the importance of engaging all youth (especially the most marginalized) in every step of the process. Once the panel discussion ended, participants discussed the presented issues in smaller group discussions. The purpose of these sessions was to leverage the wealth of expertise of all participants in brainstorming concrete recommendations based on the gaps and challenges highlighted by the presenters.

The rapporteur for the group work session, Louise Haxthausen, Programme Coordinator for UNESCO’s Section for Conflict and Post-Conflict Operations,

presented the main and recurring issues from the discussions. The main concerns that arose related primarily to the need for:

- genuine youth engagement,
- conflict analysis by diverse actors,
- stronger commitments to consultative processes,
- improved accountability and effectiveness.

The main recommendations were:

Policy-oriented:

- Contextualized integration of formal and non-formal education that responds to the drivers of social conflict and violence.
- Consultative mechanisms for diverse youth groups to enhance their participation and accountability in developing government policies related to education.

Programme-oriented:

- Consult with diverse stakeholders with an emphasis on youth, to identify how educational programming contributes to peacebuilding, and addresses social and political conflict.
- Develop conflict-sensitive educational programming (content and methodology) to promoting inclusive citizenship, intergenerational partnerships, and critical thinking skills.

Research-oriented:

- Map the nascent state of research on education and conflict, with particular attention to the gaps in youth participation in research.
- Develop the conflict analysis capacity of diverse stakeholders (including youth) and use this to inform evidence-based policy development programming.

'The issue of perceived culture is definitely a big challenge. Usually the programmes for the young people are defined by the stakeholders themselves with no consultation with those who will be affected. It is customary to plan for the youth and not with the youth. This would no doubt bring the issue of generational gap to the fore, since what young people may perceive to be of importance to them may not be seen as such by the stakeholders.'

(Ministry of Education official, Dominica)

Strengthening young peoples' skills and opportunities for civic engagement within formal and non-formal education systems

Professor Pat Dolan, UNESCO Chair from the National University of Ireland, Galway, and organizer of the civic engagement session, opened with an overview of some of the key arguments and evidence for the importance of civic engagement opportunities for young people. He touched on the benefits for the individual, such as a sense of belonging, as well as the broader benefits of their increased investment in ensuring the stability and sustainability of their communities. Professor Dolan concluded his introduction by asking the assembly to reflect on whether civic engagement was a right. According to the background paper on this theme that was prepared for the forum, 'Youth civic engagement in non-formal education', Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 'clearly advocates the participation of children and youth as an essential human right' (Shaw *et al.*, 2012: 3.6). The question was posed for consideration by the Forum delegates: 'Do we believe this is true however, and if so, does this right hold the same esteem and recognition as other child rights?' (Shaw *et al.*, 2012: 3.11).

Chaeli Mycroft, founder of the Chaeli Campaign from South Africa, was the **keynote speaker** of the session.



Chaeli Mycroft, keynote speaker for the session and founder of the Chaeli Campaign

She spoke of the challenges faced in the education system by many youth with disabilities. If young people with disabilities are never taught and are not given the opportunity to make positive contributions to their society through formal and non-formal education, they are less likely to do so in adulthood. Ms Mycroft used her personal experiences as a means to highlight and reinforce Mr Dolan's overview of the positive outcomes that civic engagement can create. She stated that 'I have become a stronger person because of the struggles that I have gone through and overcome.' At the community level, she believes that the Chaeli

Campaign builds understanding and empathy among youth in her community through projects such as its Inclusive Education programme, which provides information on the various barriers to learning, peer-to-peer solution-finding, and exercises that promote growing accepting environments.

‘Educational facilities should be empowering students and provoking them to recognize areas of improvement within their community and even more broadly throughout the world.’

(Online participant from Cameroon)

Although Ms Mycroft referred to the power of youth in affecting change throughout her presentation, she concluded by emphasizing this point specifically. Ms Mycroft used the example of Malala Yousafzai, a young girl who was shot for her efforts to promote girls’ right to education in Pakistan, to demonstrate the passion of youth. Ms Mycroft believes that it is the responsibility of youth who have had their right to quality education realized, to use the skills and power that this education has brought to influence change towards an inclusive and quality education system for all. As a youth from Kosovo noted in the online forum, however, this is not youth’s responsibility alone: governments and youth ‘need to meet halfway’.

This keynote speech provided a concrete example of the positive outcomes to which youth civic engagement opportunities can lead, and set the tone for the panel presentations that followed. These panel discussions were initiated by Professor Constance Flanagan, from the University of Wisconsin Madison, who started off by speaking of the need for education to have broader purposes beyond employment. Many skills learned at both school and in community groups, although helpful for employment, are also crucial to fostering a sense of citizenship. This sense of citizenship is much more than engaging in general political processes, such as voting. It is about being a member of, and positive contributor to, a specific community. Civic engagement engenders a sense of citizenship because it helps youth to feel valued and understand that their voices matter. Adults, through formal and non-formal education settings, therefore need to mentor, coach, and encourage youth to pursue civic engagement opportunities.

‘Both sides stay in different corners, while what needs to be done is in the middle. If the government does not start walking toward the youth and encourage them to work, and assure them that their voices will be heard,

youth will not take the courage to start walking. I say the solution of this problem is to “meet halfway”.

(Online youth participant from Kosovo)

Civic participation is important to democracy, not just through its positive impact on voting rates, but in creating spaces where individuals can work together to determine their collective fate. According to the 2007 *World Development Report*, ‘active citizenship emphasizes how individuals should hold public officials accountable for their actions, demand justice for themselves and others and tolerate people who are ethnically or religiously different, and feel solidarity with their fellow citizens and human beings’ (World Bank, 2007: 160).

Little research has been done on civic participation, something that is noticeable even when searching for a consistent definition of the word ‘civic’. The background paper recognizes this inconsistency, as the authors ‘acknowledge that civic engagement is an amorphous and conceptually contested term’ (Shaw *et al.*, 2012). Therefore it is imperative that more evidence is collected to better understand the various issues and good practices needed to build effective educational policies and programmes. One research-specific recommendation that Ms Flanagan made is to build a common set of indicators to quantify civic participation, which can then be used as a baseline in comparative studies moving forward.

‘Politicians are afraid of youth and treat them as passive and as a source of problems not a source of solutions. Hence this creates top-down plans and policies which are also stagnating in fulfilling goals and faced by resistance.’

(Ministry of Education official, Saudi Arabia)

HE Frances Fitzgerald, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Ireland, joined the discussions through a video presentation. She apologized for being unable to attend the Policy Forum due to an important upcoming referendum in Ireland on children’s rights. Much in line with Miika Tomi’s call for youth engagement to be enacted in national laws (see page 13), Ms Fitzgerald hoped that youth rights in Ireland would be recognized at the highest level. Beyond the constitution, she also highlighted the need for dedicated resources, a better understanding of good practices and the creation of age specific policies.

As a ministerial stakeholder in youth issues, she commented on the importance of developing thinking around what processes governments should use when

working with young people in educational planning. Ms Fitzgerald concluded by saying that youth engagement was a significant priority for Ireland, as witnessed by the recent creation of her ministry and post, but that there was a learning process involved for all stakeholders, and that, like other countries, it would therefore take time to perfect their approach.

Brad Brockman, General Secretary of Equal Education in South Africa, gave the final presentation, which took a deeper look at the political influences in policy-making. There are many challenges in South African education policy-making processes because of the remains of apartheid. The education system is built on an informal two-tier system which further marginalizes poor black populations. As a result, learning outcomes diverge drastically depending on which system South African youth have access to. Mr Brockman highlighted this 'education crisis' by noting that roughly half of all South African students drop out before completing their secondary education.

'I have understood over the years in Nigeria that government agencies are mostly not sustainable because of the financial benefits that people seek to gain. Therefore when the money is no longer flowing or not flowing according to expectation then enthusiasm will dwindle.'

(Online participant commenting on the sustainability of youth engagement structures within government)

A participant from Nigeria had previously commented in the online forum that when government agencies are perceived as corrupt, youth question whether it is sustainable or effective to build youth engagement structures within government. Although Mr Brockman did not address this concern directly, he highlighted the need to provide youth with opportunities for civic engagement in order for them to develop skills needed to address these political challenges. In addition to fostering a sense of belonging and equality in his community, Equal Education had taught him the activism skills needed to confront his government in effective and productive ways. As the background paper (Shaw *et al.*, 2012) points out, drawing on community organizing and political mobilization strategies, youth are able to work with policy-makers 'through collaborative, consensus-oriented strategies or, as circumstances require, be open to conflictual tactics and politics of contention'.

This panel offered rich discussions that drew on the varied country and stakeholder experiences and perspectives. Most importantly, it underlined the importance of a contextual understanding of the social, political, and economic

environment when engaging youth in developing education and youth civic engagement related policies.

Professor Mark Brennan, from Pennsylvania State University, presented the main issues from the group discussions. These focused on the need to:

- value youth civic engagement in formal and non-formal education settings,
- partner with youth as key stakeholders in their engagement,
- develop education and applied practice programmes in civic engagement for schools and communities in the context of vulnerable youth,
- create a better understanding of youth civic engagement as a central agent to the development of youth and to the benefits of civil society.

The main recommendations were:

Policy-oriented:

- Intermediary organizations are needed to provide specific skills and trainings – policy planning, skills in leadership, programming, planning, evaluation.
- Recognition and university accreditation are needed for youth leadership and civic engagement programmes.
- It is important to link all levels of education (primary, secondary, higher education) in policy and programming.

Programme-oriented:

- There needs to be a youth civic engagement curriculum in secondary schools plus global youth development education across all levels of education.
- There should also be formal and non-formal youth-led civic education focusing on sport, music, and indigenous knowledge.

Research-oriented:

- International Rapid Response Research and Education Teams should be set up in the area of children and youth.
- There should be formal partnerships among stakeholders on youth leadership and community capacity-building.
- Youth should be included as researchers.
- An international formal definition of civic engagement should be established.

Connecting education, learning, and the world of work: developing skills for youth transitions

This final session was opened by Borhene Chakroun, UNESCO Chief of Section for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, who highlighted the increasing international and national interest in understanding the connections between education, learning, and the world of work. The rapid change in skills demand and the significant influences of the food, fuel, and financial crises have drastically changed the transition to the world of work for youth everywhere. As a result, this issue has gained prominence in both national and international agendas, as witnessed by the theme of the 2012 *GMR* and the International Congress on TVET (technical and vocational education and training) in Shanghai, China, which looked at ‘Transforming TVET, Building Skills for Work and Life’. The main message from the TVET Congress was that the scaling-up of existing models cannot continue, and that, as Mr Chakroun pointed out, ‘profound transformations are needed in the conceptualization, governance, funding, and organization of education and training’.

Francesca Rosso, labour market expert with the European Training Foundation (ETF), then introduced the background paper, *Youth Transition from Education to Work in the Mediterranean Region: The ETF experience with partner countries*, (Rosso *et al.*, 2012), for the session. Changes in the transition to the world of work affect youth everywhere, in both developing and developed countries. Despite the breadth of impact of these changes, Ms Rosso emphasized the importance of understanding the challenges, needs, gaps, and bottlenecks in each context so that relevant and effective policies and programmes are implemented.

‘The unemployment rate for academics in Denmark is growing each day, and I see highly qualified young people living on subsidies from the government.’

(Online participant from Denmark)

Employment challenges in this region include the fact that there are fewer long-term and secure jobs available; there is a mismatch with the skills demand; there are large discrepancies when looking at job opportunities for young women and young men; and there is now a reverse correlation between years of tertiary education completed and the likelihood of employment. ETF’s analysis noted that in addition to a lack of job opportunities, other factors had a significant effect in creating and sustaining the challenges identified in this region, such

as a weak business environment, social stigmas attached to TVET programmes, and fragmented labour market information systems.

Ms Rosso gave a brief overview of some of the recommendations coming out of this analysis. From a global perspective, her recommendation was to enhance the capacity and tools of national and local stakeholders to conduct this type of evidence-based analysis. Ms Rosso closed by reinforcing the importance of involving all stakeholders in conducting the analysis, especially young people, who need to ‘have a strong voice in the planning and implementation of the programmes’ that affect them.

‘The big challenge in getting stakeholders is that there is no clear plan or policy which organizes the work with the stakeholders.’

(Ministry of Education official, Saudi Arabia)

HE Haroun Ali Suleiman, Minister of Labour, Economic Empowerment and Cooperatives, Tanzania-Zanzibar, then delivered his **keynote address**, which broadened the focus from process and methodologies to the distinct differences between middle-income countries, like those in the Mediterranean region, and low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa. As he noted, ‘in Africa, due to the history of illiteracy, education planners have concentrated more on producing people who can read and write. Skills training is rarely provided, not even at the secondary and tertiary level of education.’ Therefore there is still a need to focus on foundation skills training in literacy and numeracy rather than a unilateral focus on transferable and technical/vocational skills, a distinction made in the 2012 *GMR*. Despite the continued need to focus on building these basic foundation skills in lower-income countries, Mr Suleiman noted that improving literacy and numeracy skills should be coupled with an effort to educate youth as future employees.



HE Haroun Ali Suleiman, Minister of Labour, Economic Empowerment and Cooperatives, Tanzania-Zanzibar, keynote speaker for the session on Connecting education, learning and the world of work

Many developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa have undergone monumental economic changes that have had a significant impact on the skills needed for employment. Zanzibar, for example, is becoming an increasingly industrial society, facing greater competition in a more globalized world, and experiencing the opportunities and challenges of inter-regional and international labour migration. Therefore there needs to be a rethinking and transformation of current school curricula, as well as improvements to the labour market.

Mr Suleiman also highlighted some of the additional social challenges that many young Africans face in transitioning from education to employment, such as ethnicity, gender, and social class. The importance of life-long learning opportunities and more recognition of non-formal learning environments are essential in light of rapid technological changes in the labour market. He also commented on the need for TVET programmes, public–private partnerships, and entrepreneurial-focused training, before finishing his presentation with a final emphasis on the need for immediate action to address these issues.

As the theme of the debate was to understand the role of the state in working with other stakeholders to better plan the transition between education and the world of work, the moderator initiated the panel debate by asking Pauline Rose, Director of UNESCO’s EFA GMR, what key programmes reinforced Mr Suleiman’s comments regarding the crucial need to tackle the lack of basic foundation skills, as a large portion of the world’s youth, especially the most marginalized groups, are still faced with this challenge. She argued that the state needed to be in the driver’s seat in addressing these challenges with relevant programmes. Although she had seen many effective NGO programmes, state support was crucial to ensuring they reached a broader audience and those in the most marginalized groups.

‘Actors such as youth organizations and informal groups can add value to the education of young people and should be complementary to the formal education system.’

(Online participant from the United Kingdom)

Ishita Chaudry, Chief Executive of the YP Foundation in India, an NGO that supports peer-to-peer education opportunities, argued that this NGO, although its reach is not all-encompassing, does look at the most excluded populations first. Although she agreed that these types of programmes need to be supported by the state, civil society also had an important role in pushing governments and providing services in the absence of immediate solutions from the public sector.

Ms Chaudry also took a moment to highlight the need to avoid education systems that act as an assembly line to feed the economy rather than foster and support the different aspirations of young people.

Rosemary Vargas-Lundius, Senior Research Coordinator, IFAD, spoke of a specific aim of supporting poor rural populations. She argued that although youth aspirations were important, it was also vital to motivate and help steer them towards sustainable futures in their rural communities. In the rural context, many young people have been migrating to urban centres because of a lack of well-paid jobs in agriculture. In many instances, their education has provided little in the way of agricultural or entrepreneurial skills to foster sustainable rural livelihoods, and has reinforced the belief that students can only progress by moving to find more lucrative work in bigger cities. Education needs to change in this regard, but other factors, such as better rural infrastructure, need to be improved to ensure sustainable rural livelihoods. Ms Vargas-Lundius felt that the responsibility for these types of initiative fell mainly on the state, but noted that governments could gain added strength by engaging other stakeholders, especially youth, in the process.

Mereana Te Père, youth delegate and member of the Māori Youth Council in New Zealand, followed on from Ms Vargas-Lundius to speak on the specifics of how youth need to be engaged in the process. In New Zealand, the government uses many different methods and approaches to engage youth in the policy-making process. Despite ticking the boxes, however, these initiatives have not guaranteed the successful integration of youth voices. For example, Ms Te Père is part of a government youth council, but it is only given an advisory role and its recommendations are rarely followed. A youth framework has been developed, but because it is only encouraged, there is little application. The government has also made an effort to provide non-formal education systems to allow for the different learning styles in various youth groups. The skills learned in these systems are not translating to better employment opportunities, however, as many of the skills are not recognized or validated.

‘What we see oftentimes in the design and development of programming is a push from donors to build programs around “x” skill when really a critical assessment of the existing labour market (formal, informal markets to be addressed differently) should be the first priority and the foundation upon which vocational training/employability/livelihoods skills training is developed and implemented.’

(Online comment from a development practitioner)

HE Emmanuel Bonginkosi Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training, South Africa, acknowledged Ms Te Père's call for true youth engagement, and noted that South Africa has to do better in terms of empowering its youth. Ineffective youth engagement has led to many protests around the world, therefore it is imperative that governments address and improve this weakness. Youth need to be a part of the broader group of stakeholders, and it is the government's job to ensure these groups have spaces for discussions. Policy-making cannot be done alone; therefore cross-stakeholder dialogue is crucial.

As head of a ministry that is cross-sectoral in nature, Mr Nzimande is very cognizant of the need to make better connections between the education and labour sectors. In South Africa, in addition to cross-sectoral ministries such as the Department of Higher Education and Training, the government has created institutions to represent each main employment sector, and has ensured that there are strong ties between these and the country's colleges. One challenge in building these stronger bonds is that, like non-formal learning, society has yet to fully recognize the value of TVET, and there needs to be a concurrent effort to change this.

'The process used and the environment in which we engage with youth is also important. It has to feel safe for youth to participate. The informal less structured group environment should be favoured. An environment that requires individual responses and where youth feel they may be singled out will not support active engagement. Simple operational issues such as the time and place of meetings can encourage, or discourage, youth involvement. These are currently not given enough consideration by those wishing to consult with and involve youth.'

(Ministry of Education official, Cook Islands)

Marek Lawinski, Head of the Human Capital Development Department at the CCCA-BTP (French National Coordination Committee of Apprenticeships in the Construction Industry), and specialist in capacity-building systems, provided an employer's perspective. His presence was reflective of Mr Nzimande's comment on the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships, and the need to be aware of and understand labour market developments and projections in policy discussions. Mr Lawinski reinforced Mr Suleiman's comments, in terms of the need to focus on life-long learning opportunities and 'soft' skills. He noted that one of the most important skills for today's labour market is the ability to adapt, as he had witnessed just how rapidly and continuously the competencies required in the French labour market were changing.

Michel Carton, an education specialist at the Network for Policy Research, Review and Advice on Education and Training (NORRAG), spoke on the importance of developing evidence-based research as a basis for all policy design and implementation. Mr Carton was unsure, however, that research at this stage was rigorous, relevant, and listened to enough to ensure effective policy-making. He ended his presentation by emphasizing the need to recognize researchers as an important stakeholder in the policy-making process.

'What is also important for us is the research to find out what goes wrong/right when choosing a career, by surveying graduates and the unemployed.'

(Online participant from South Africa)

The conclusions from this panel presentation further strengthened the argument for multi-stakeholder methods in policy-making. These reflections emerged from the various perspectives of multiple stakeholders, and their different and innovative approaches to understanding the issues on this topic. In addition, these distinct experiences underlined the need for context-based analysis and research to inform policy design and implementation.



Participants from the Policy Forum

Laura Brewer, Senior Policy Specialist in the Skills and Employability Department at the International Labour Organization (ILO), presented the main issues from the group discussions. These focused on the need for:

- more contextualized research on the linkages between the education and labour market system within each community,
- better communication of research findings to other stakeholders, especially those developing policies and programmes,

- more mechanisms to reach out to and understand the needs of the marginalized youth groups in order to create more targeted and relevant policies and programmes,
- spaces for cross-sectoral dialogue and exchange of information both at a ministerial level and between all stakeholders.

The main recommendations were:

Policy-oriented:

- Ensure that education and skills development policies are linked to employment policies and national development policies.
- Improve cross-ministerial collaboration and policy coherence (youth, education, gender, etc.).
- Broaden stakeholder involvement to include youth representatives and others.
- Support advocacy for TVET and improve its relevance.

Programme-oriented:

- Facilitate and build the capacities of youth to be more engaged in programmes and policies.
- Develop programmes (active labour market measures) to reach disadvantaged youth to support transitions to employment, including guidance and labour market information.
- Increase opportunities for work experience including through private–public partnerships.

Research-oriented:

- Undertake research to understand the changing nature of the world of work and tools to anticipate skills needs.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes (impact, tracer studies, and identifying good practices).
- Link academic, labour market intelligence, and policy research involving youth in the research process, and participatory approaches.

Recommendations and commitments

A final summary of the recommendations and suggested actions coming out of each of the thematic areas was provided in this session, in which Anton De Grauwe, Head of Technical Assistance and Sector Planning at IIEP, chaired a panel composed of the session rapporteurs and some of the main keynote speakers.

Mr De Grauwe summarized some of the common principles that had emerged from the discussions. For example, under engagement of youth, it was evident that everyone agreed with the need for the youth to be engaged in planning, to play a role in defining national visions and policies. However, what this means in reality is open to much interpretation. For instance, there are significant differences between informing youth, consulting with youth, and negotiating with youth. This implies ensuring a level of inclusiveness that recognizes the heterogeneity of the group 'youth', which consists of different sub-groups, and within youth there are young people who are excluded for various reasons, including those with disabilities. Participants emphasized the need for excluded and disadvantaged young people to be included in the 'classical' systems, and rejected the creation of special systems.

Mr De Grauwe also highlighted the need for linking education to the world of work, as well as improving the links between non-formal and formal education. Such linkage demands the existence of a comprehensive view of the education system and of social policy in general. It is not sufficient that these linkages exist in theory, or in policy; they need to be reflected in the coordination and collaboration between structures, such as ministries of education, employment, and youth.

Lastly, a fourth principle was also identified as emerging, though less explicitly: that of accountability. This implies holding public services accountable for what they do for youth, and at the same time, offering the right to youth to demand accountability from government and public services. They should be given information that allows them to assess whether public services work for them. At the same time, public services (and public servants) may need to be strengthened so that they know how best to engage with, and work with, youth.

This summary was followed by a plenary discussion to allow for a final round of comment and recommendations. The keynote speakers then concluded the discussion, with Ms Mycroft encouraging the assembly to think beyond their traditional perceptions of what was possible when they committed to actions. This final comment served to remind the assembly of how critical the 'wisdom of youth' really is in the policy-making process.

'I'm dedicated to increase the youth influence by representing them at all aspects of society I can think of. I hope the youth get inspired through me to do the same thing and realize they actually have opportunities to make a difference in this world!'

(Online youth participant from the Netherlands)

Ms Mycroft's comment echoed in the minds of the speakers in the panel presentation which followed. Five young people channelled the voice of youth from different geographic, gender, and language groups, to express their commitments and expectations of other stakeholders in carrying the recommendations forward. Two young men from South Sudan committed to help in the formulation of a national youth agenda, to become more engaged in seeking political representation, and to support their government in building cultural awareness and sensitization in their communities.

A young man from Palestine also committed to fostering social awareness as a means to build peace and equality in his society. He called upon governments in his region to recognize the importance of engaging youth in the policy-making process, the need for better-quality education, and the need for outreach programmes to marginalized youth groups.

A young woman from Cote d'Ivoire pledged to support and advocate for the MDGs and EFA goals as well as the important role of women in peacebuilding. She called on her government to build education policies and programmes that address and break down the gender and social divisions in this society, and to generate research that helps to bridge the gap between youth and labour market needs to ensure better youth transitions.

The final youth advocate was a young woman from the Philippines who committed to improve literacy and life skills in vulnerable groups through her community involvement. She called on governments to improve access to education for all youth through schools and second-chance learning opportunities, to increase the quality of education in providing the important skills highlighted in the three streams of the Forum, and to ensure proper financing for these initiatives.

Four ministers then responded to these young people by expressing their commitments. HE Cirino Hiteng Ofuho, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, South Sudan, pledged to convene all youth organizations in South Sudan to further the discussions on how to engage them in educational planning, to establish a network of vocational training centres in South Sudan, and to lobby the current South Sudanese cabinet to create a US\$1-2 youth subsidy (to be used to further youth-oriented initiatives) levied on each barrel of oil produced in South Sudan.

'Planning with youth is a new element, because we are used to vertical planning where we plan for youth without youth. To implicate youth in planning will create several challenges for our planners. We would need to

cultivate a level of dialogue and tolerance in order to abandon our former habits of vertical planning and to adopt participative planning.'
(Ministry of Education official, Haiti)

HE Waqas Akram Sheikh, Minister of Professional and Technical Training, Pakistan, committed to give youth in Pakistan a greater consultative role in designing initiatives to further youth engagement and development in the country. This entailed the continued support of the Pakistan Youth Parliament, a civil society project that focuses on youth awareness and training in politics; the creation of Provincial Youth Councils to serve as youth stakeholders in policy-making discussions; and the engagement of youth in the governing boards of various ministries, including the Ministry of Education. He also committed to targeting the national school drop-out rate, providing better skills for the transition from education to the world of work, and leveraging existing youth social networks as a means for the Ministry of Education to receive timely and relevant feedback from diverse youth groups.

HE Maker Mwangu Famba, Minister of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education Democratic Republic of Congo, committed to put a greater focus on supporting young women in education, offering better skills-building and capacity-development opportunities for youth, improving enrolment rates and the quality of education, as well as contextualizing the Policy Forum recommendations in his country to see what else the government could do to act on the outcomes of this event.

HE Moammar Eryani, Minister of Youth and Sport, Yemen, the final speaker in the panel, pledged to empower and increase the capacity of youth in designing, implementing, and monitoring Yemen educational policies; to convene a national meeting where Yemen youth would elect a National Youth Council to act as a stakeholder in Yemen educational policy-making; and to ensure transparency in these and other initiatives by creating a page on the ministry website dedicated to youth-related initiatives and commitments.



Panel of ministers and youth

Conclusions and next steps

Further commitments are expected from other participants, both Policy Forum attendees and online subscribers, upon receiving the finalized Agenda for Action. A monitoring process for these commitments is also being developed in order to capture their annual progress at the next UNESCO Youth Forum in 2013. The aim of this process is to ensure that the recommendations coming out of the Policy Forum evolve from intentions to concrete actions that aid in furthering this vital youth engagement agenda.

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Annex I: Agenda

Tuesday, 16 October
UNESCO Fontenoy Room I

09.00–10.30

Launch of the 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report: *Youth and Skills – Putting education to work*

Keynote speakers include:

Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

Mr Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education

H. E. Emmanuel Bonginkosi Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and training, South Africa

H. E. George Pau-Langevin, Minister Delegate for Educational Success, attached to the Minister of National Education, France

12.00–14.30 Lunch – UNESCO Cafeteria, 7th Floor

UNESCO Fontenoy Room II

14.30–15.00

Opening remarks by Mr Khalil Mahshi, Director, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

Inauguration of the Forum by Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

Welcome by Mr Alan Smith, UNESCO Chair, University of Ulster

Welcome by Mr Pat Dolan, UNESCO Chair, National University of Ireland, Galway

Welcome by the Hon. Datuk Wira Ir. Idris Haron, President, World Assembly of Youth (WAY)

15.00–16.00

Global Perspectives of Youth Engagement

Chair: Ms Suzanne Grant Lewis, Deputy Director, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

Ms Nicola Shepherd, Focal Point on Youth and Head of the Programme on Youth, United Nations, New York

Ms Moufida Goucha, Team Leader, Youth-led Social Innovation Team, Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO

Mr Miika Tomi (youth delegate), Finland, co-rapporteur of the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum 'How Youth Drive Change' October 2011

16.00-16.30 *Coffee break*

16.30-17.30

Voices from the field

Feedback on youth projects from around the world from event participants and online discussions

Facilitators: Mr Brad Brockman, Equal Education South Africa (youth delegate), and Ms Ediola Pashollari, Secretary General, World Assembly of Youth (WAY)

17.30-18.30

Reception hosted by UNESCO Chairs, NUI Galway, University of Ulster, and UNESCO-IIEP: Celebrating Partnership (Bar des Conférences, Level -1)

Wednesday, 17 October **UNESCO Fontenoy Room II**

Session 1: Youth supporting education for conflict transformation and peacebuilding

09.00-09.15

Introduction to the session and overview of conflict transformation and peacebuilding, by Mr Alan Smith, UNESCO Chair, University of Ulster

Video Keynote speech: Mr Forest Whitaker, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace and Reconciliation

09.15-09.45

Keynote Speech: Mr Mark Hamilton, Professor, American University's School of International Service (SIS)

09.45-10.45

Structured conversation between ministers, youth activists, and researchers/practitioners from the peacebuilding community

Discussants:

Mr Aram Barra, Projects Director, Espolea, Mexico (youth delegate)

Ms Lyndsay Bird, Programme Specialist, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

Ms Brenda Haiplik, Senior Education Advisor – Emergencies, UNICEF

H. E. Mr Jean-Jacques Nyenimigabo, Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Burundi

Mr Lakshitha Saji Prelis, Director of Children and Youth, Search for Common Ground

Moderator: Ms Kate Moriarty, Chief of Section, Section of Education for Peace and Human Rights, UNESCO

10.45–11.15 Coffee break

11.15–12.30

Group work: What are the drivers of conflict in your country? What are the theories of change, and do these match up with the drivers identified? What are the implications for youth policy and programming?

12.30-12.45

Summary of recommendations, by rapporteur Ms Louise Haxthausen, Programme Coordinator Post-Conflict Post-Disaster, Section for Conflict and Post-Conflict Operations, UNESCO

12.45–14.15 Lunch – UNESCO Cafeteria, 7th Floor

Session 2: Strengthening young peoples' skills and opportunities for civic engagement within formal and non-formal education systems

14.15-14.30

Introduction to the session and overview of civic engagement in formal and non-formal education, by Mr Pat Dolan, UNESCO Chair, National University of Ireland, Galway

14.30–15.00

Keynote speech: Ms Chaeli Mycroft, founder of Chaeli Campaign, South Africa (youth delegate)

15.00–16.00

Panel presentation: Opportunities for young peoples' civic engagement in formal and non-formal education systems

Presenters: Ms Constance Flanagan, Professor, University of Wisconsin Madison

H. E. Ms Frances Fitzgerald, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Ireland (Video Presentation)

Mr Brad Brockman, General Secretary, Equal Education, South Africa (youth delegate)

Moderator: Mr Rob Chaskin, Professor, University of Chicago

16.00–16.30 Coffee break

16.30–17.30

Group work: What skills are needed for civic engagement and promoting civic engagement of youth in education at national and local levels?

17.30-17.45

Summary of recommendations, by Rapporteur Mr Mark Brennan, Professor, Pennsylvania State University

Thursday, 18 October

UNESCO Fontenoy Room II

Session 3: Connecting education, learning, and the world of work: developing skills for youth transitions

09.00-09.10

Introduction to the session, by Mr Borhene Chakroun, Chief of Section, Section for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, UNESCO

09.10-09.25

Overview of the youth transition from education to employment, by Ms Francesca Rosso, Labour Market Expert, European Training Foundation (ETF)

09.25–09.45

Keynote speech: H. E. Mr Haroun Ali Suleiman, Minister of Labour, Economic Empowerment and Cooperatives, Tanzania-Zanzibar

09.45–11.00

Panel debate between senior policy-makers, development agencies, youth, and non- governmental providers: 'Roles of the state and other stakeholders in connecting education, learning and the world of work.'

Presenters: Ms Ishita Chaudhry, CEO of the YP Foundation, India (youth delegate)

Ms Rosemary Vargas-Lundius, Senior Research Coordinator, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Mr Marek Lawinski, Capacity Building Specialist and European Project Manager, French National Committee of Apprenticeship in the Construction Industry

Ms Pauline Rose, Director, Education for All Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO

Ms Mereana Te Père, Member, Māori Youth Council, New Zealand (youth delegate)

Mr Michel Carton, Education Specialist, Network for Policy Research, Review and Advice on Education and Training (NORRAG)

H. E. Mr Emmanuel Bonginkosi Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training, South Africa

Moderator: Mr Borhene Chakroun, Chief of Section, Section for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, UNESCO

11.00–11.30 Coffee break

11.30–12.30

Group work: How can education and learning better support youth transitions to the world of work?

12.30–12.45

Summary of recommendations, by rapporteur Ms Laura Brewer, Senior Policy Specialist in skills for youth employment, Skills and Employability Department, International Labour Organization (ILO)

12.45–14.15 Lunch – UNESCO Cafeteria, 7th Floor

Session 4: Developing an Agenda for Action

14.15–14.45

Summary of recommendations: presentation of key recommendations from each session rapporteur centred around three areas of education policy, research, and programming

14.45–15.15

Plenary discussion on summary of recommendations

15.15–15.45 Coffee break

15.45–16.30

Setting the Agenda for Action: Panel of minister representatives and youth delegates discuss their commitments to the Agenda for Action

16.30–17.00

Concluding remarks

Mr Khalil Mahshi, Director, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

Ms Pilar Álvarez-Laso, Assistant Director-General, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO

Closing statement

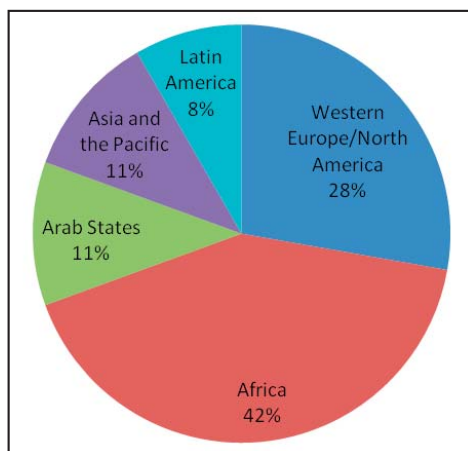
Mr Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General, Education, UNESCO

Annex II: Overview of participants and feedback

Overview of participants

The Policy Forum assembled youth, policy-makers, researchers, and practitioners both virtually through online platforms, and physically at the Paris event. Roughly 250 participants from over 60 countries were physically present at the event, including 17 Ministers of Education, Youth and/or Labour from 12 countries and 36 youth from 26 countries.¹⁰ As a result, the Forum provided a space for networking and further discussions with senior policy-makers; experts on education, youth engagement, peacebuilding, civic engagement, and employment; educational planners and specialists from donor agencies and international organizations; and most importantly, youth. *Figures 1, 2, and 3* highlight the regional distribution and various types of organizations represented by the attendees.

Figure 1: Regional distribution of youth participants physically present at the Forum



10 Visit www.planwithyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Final-List-for-Web.pdf for the full list of participants.

Figure 2: Regional distribution of all participants physically present at the Forum

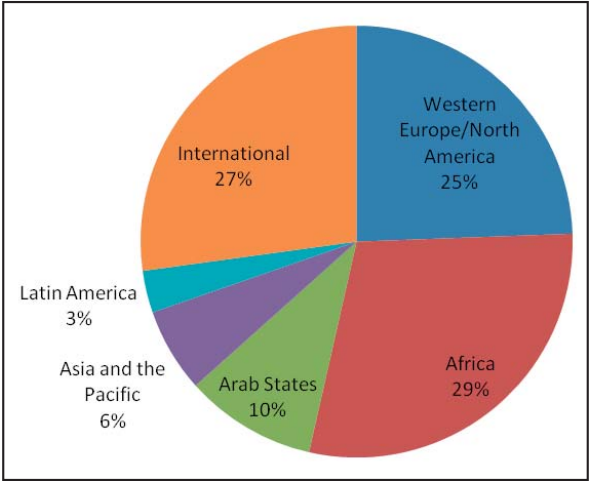
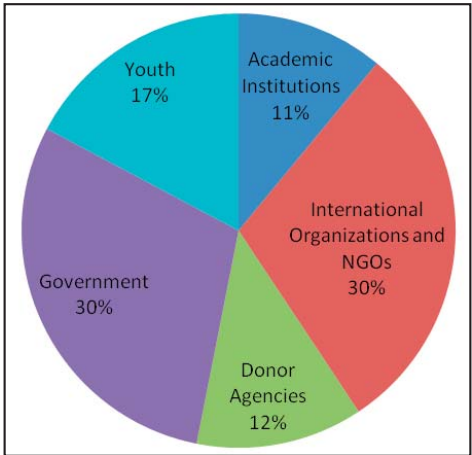


Figure 3: Distribution of all participants physically present at the Forum by organization type



Participants also engaged in the Policy Forum through an online forum on IIEP’s dedicated website www.planwithyouth.org where over 300 subscribers linked in from around the world as illustrated by Figure 4.

Figure 4: Geographical representation of online forum participants



This online space enabled the Policy Forum to reach a broader audience than the available space and funding of the Paris event. It also served as a crucial means to engage and stay connected to participants before, during, and after the Forum.

In the weeks leading up to the Policy Forum, online debates around key issues in the three thematic areas helped to shape the event sessions and feed into discussions at the Policy Forum event. New discussion topics, relevant news items, and resource documents were posted regularly to help spur these debates.¹¹ During the Forum, a live video stream of the event was made available on the website, and social media platforms were leveraged to ensure online participants could view and interact with (i.e. ask questions of and post comments to) the presenters in real time. Following the Forum, new discussion topics, outcome documents, and relevant news items continue to be posted to

11 Visit www.planwithyouth.org/have-your-say-2/ for an overview of the online discussions. Visit www.planwithyouth.org/newsroom/all-news/ for the posted news items. Visit www.planwithyouth.org/resources/youth-policies/ for a geographic representation of resource documents.

further engage online participants and ensure the dialogue around engaging youth in educational planning continues.¹²

Feedback

An online post-forum feedback survey was sent to all Policy Forum participants on 16 November. The survey remained open from 16 November 2012 to 3 January 2013. Thirty-four people completed the survey, representing 13.6 per cent of the total number of participants. Twenty-seven surveys were completed in English and seven surveys were completed in French. Of the responses received 35 per cent were from youth, 26 per cent from researchers, 18 per cent from practitioners, 3 per cent from policy-makers, and 8 per cent from others. Responses were received from participants working in Belgium, Burkina Faso, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Italy, Kenya, Mauritania, Mongolia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Tanzania-Zanzibar, Uganda, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Yemen.

Overall satisfaction with and usefulness of the event

'Excellent and timely conference. Well done UNESCO, always staying abreast if not ahead of key emerging issues.'

Eighty-eight per cent of respondents were either highly satisfied or satisfied with the event. The event and the issues discussed were seen as timely. The youth delegates who had attended the 7th UNESCO Youth Forum were also satisfied that the recommendations they had voted were taken into account at this Policy Forum.

One of the main concerns expressed was the limited participation and involvement of young people.

12 A Facebook page and Twitter account were used in addition to reach as wide an audience as possible. For more information, visit:
<https://www.facebook.com/#!/PlanWithYouth>
<https://twitter.com/planwithyouth>

'It's a shame that youth organizations were not implicated more in planning the event and also in the youth delegate recruitment process in order to increase the global level of exchanges.'

Overall participants found most of the sessions either extremely useful or useful. Youth discussions and youth presentations were particularly appreciated.

'This forum has enabled me to discover other strategies on how to work with youth and also how important it is ... to involve them.'

Group work sessions were found to be the most useful sessions of the event, giving participants a real chance to say what they thought. Question and answer sessions with panellists were also highlighted as a favourite part of the event, although participants would have liked to see more time being set aside for interaction and informal discussion with the panellists.

Criticisms included that there were too many plenary sessions, with not enough young people speaking, and that both the youth presentations and the group work sessions could have been longer. One comment was made that 'more female youths would have enriched the discussions'.

Overall, participants appreciated meeting the mix of people who attended the forum (youth, ministers, researchers, and policy people), the range of perspectives, and the different countries. It was felt that there could have been more diversity and range of participants, for example more representation from the Asia-Pacific region, as well as more of a balance between French and English speakers. French speakers commented that they sometimes felt left out of the discussion.

'I would also have loved to see more academics from Africa specifically represented in the forum, as they bring a more nuanced view to some of the Western theories presented. This would also be a great platform for them to share their arguments and wisdom, to network and to make a mark in global debates.'

The youth participation could also have been more diversified, and perhaps young people should have made up a higher percentage of the participants, given that they were the most important stakeholder.

Organization of the event

Ninety-one per cent of participants found the event to be 'very well organized' or 'well organized'. The choice of topics was seen as pertinent and the link to the launch of the EFA *GMR* was appreciated.

While it was felt that efforts had been made to allow different participants to share their experiences in terms of implementation of their programmes, a lack of time meant that there was no in-depth discussion of the different themes and that the agenda was very dense. Perhaps more informal spaces should have been created to allow the youth more of an opportunity to speak out. Often 'more is learnt off forums'. It was felt that three days was not sufficient to cover all the sessions and topics adequately.

Meeting the objectives

The majority of respondents replied that the objectives of the Forum had either been fully met or somewhat met; with few respondents replying that the objectives had not been met. It was felt that the event has been most successful in terms of its first objective, to examine recent policy, practice and research. The background papers received very positive feedback.

'The background papers were well researched and rich in information. I am still reading from the pile and sharing very intelligent ideas with teams here. Congratulations to all who wrote these papers.'

There was some concern that the examination of the research issues was too theoretical and not adapted to the language of young people. Space for dialogue was seen to be the least successful objective of the event.

Pre-Forum discussions

Over half of respondents had followed the pre-Forum debates and found them extremely useful or useful. The pre-Forum debate was seen as a welcome initiative (particularly the online debates on the Plan With Youth website and the Facebook page activity) but it was felt that there could have been more activity before the Forum. Some participants had connectivity problems or were

not aware of the online debate taking place in time to contribute. Twitter posts were the least appreciated and least followed in terms of pre-Forum online activity.

Post-Forum activity

Fifty-six per cent of respondents said they would be interested in taking part in post-Forum activities, and 35 per cent said that they may be interested. It was commented that follow-up programmes should be regionally based 'to share with more people and beyond the conference', and that perhaps this could be achieved through more cooperation with UNESCO offices in individual countries.

It is imperative to ensure that there is monitoring of follow-up. This could take place on a yearly basis in individual countries (with UNESCO in-country cooperation). Perhaps an achievement award could help encourage others to ensure commitment to any follow-up and recommendations. The needs to involve young people in the follow-up, and to check whether political leaders or decision-makers are incorporating the decisions made at the Forum in their plans or future plans, were highlighted.

