



United Nations
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Organización
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para la Educación,
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Message from Ms Audrey Azoulay,
Director-General of UNESCO
on the occasion of the International Youth Day
“Transforming Education”**

12 August 2019

Across the world, young people are faced with inequalities in education. Yet, they are also key actors in the transformation of education that we are calling for. Their ideas and innovative spirit need to be heard in order to reach our common goals inscribed in Agenda 2030, which is our greatest opportunity to build more inclusive and fair societies.

Education is the heart of UNESCO's action towards a world where quality education is available for everyone, leaving no one behind. Education is not only about getting a diploma – it is about learning, building systems enabling young women and men to acquire new skills and qualifications, and to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of societies.

This is why transforming education is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. On the occasion of the International Youth Day, UNESCO steps up and calls for an education which is more inclusive and accessible for all young people, in all corners of the world. We must thus minimize barriers to learning and ensure the inclusion of all learners in education. Youth must be fully on board in reshaping an education that is for them and belongs to them.

If we fail to include the views of young women, men, members of the LGBTQ+ community, indigenous youth, youth with disabilities or young migrants to our way of building education systems, we are all losing something valuable; the richness of understanding different cultures and minds, the treasure of learning from one another.

Today, UNESCO is working with young people as pro-active contributors and not just beneficiaries in its programmes and projects. Young people are highly engaged in our work in reducing inequalities and building peaceful societies through our Youth Space Initiative, Youth Climate Action Network and Preventing Violent Extremism Project, only to name a few. We are making special efforts at promoting plans that are responsive to gender and disability as well as crisis-sensitive, including by taking into account the special situation of refugees and forcibly displaced persons. We are conducting trainings for youth capacity development for the creation of innovative futures.

Let us revive our collective commitment to ensure that education systems around the world not only eliminate all forms of discrimination, but also allow youth to be agents of change, so that, as Rumi said, “they are not a drop in the ocean, but they are the entire ocean in a drop.”