

# Youth Statement

## Our education, our experience

The Second Asia-Pacific Regional Education Minister's Conference 2022

### INTRODUCTION

#### Who We Are

We are the young people of the Asia-Pacific region, coming in all our diversities.

This statement has been authored by the Asia-Pacific Regional Education Minister's Conference II Youth Steering Committee, including Elana Wong on behalf of Migration Youth & Children Platform; Maria Nguyen on behalf of Family Planning Australia and the SDG4Youth Network; and Yuki Hosoya on behalf of the Youth Committee of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO. To build on our respective constituency knowledge, we organized an online consultation on 26th May 2022 bringing together representatives of youth-led organizations and young education activists aged 18-30 years old across the Asia-Pacific region to discuss the theme: 'Education Recovery and Transformation towards more Responsive, Relevant and Resilient Education Systems: Accelerating progress towards SDG 4- Education 2030.' The Consultation was framed by three main cross-cutting themes that mirrored the discussion pillars of APREMC II, which were:

1. Achieving learning recovery and addressing the learning crisis;
2. Transforming education systems; and
3. Achieving increased and better investment in education.

This statement reflects our aspirations to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) 'Quality Education' through meaningful engagement with youth voices.

#### Background

The Asia and Pacific region is the most youthful region in the world, containing 60% of global youth, and representing 25% of the regional population<sup>1</sup>. However, access to quality education remains uneven across the region, and inequalities continue to be exacerbated through disparities in access to technology, financial support, and conducive learning environments. As today's youth have been exposed to the internet and new related sources of information from an early age, we have established new styles of dialogue and communication, digital consumption activities, and values, thus changing the ways we learn as digital natives. Furthermore, during the crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic over the last two years, youth faced inequality, conflict, violence, and difficulty connecting with people—even family or friends. The COVID-19 pandemic also deepened the learning crisis that already existed, especially for the most vulnerable learners, through protracted school closures and disrupted learning exacerbated by the digital divide. We feel overwhelmed facing simultaneously growing social, political, cultural, and ideological divisions in society, as well as uncharted territory in our recovering economy.

We need to act as soon as possible to address these social, environmental and economic challenges through considering them intricately linked with the learning crisis, and tackle them by building on community partnerships. Through supporting one another, an inclusive and

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<sup>1</sup> Morris (2019). 'In Asia, Young People are Key to Achieving National Development Goals'. Asian Development Blog

sustainable society can be formed by reflecting and empowering the voices within.

### **The importance of youth empowerment**

As leaders of the next generation, youth need to be empowered and involved at all decision-making levels in order to contribute towards a peaceful and sustainable society. This is only possible through quality education for all, and the adoption of an intersectional, nondiscriminatory, and participatory approach.

Empowering youth and enabling youth leadership as actors, experts and changemakers in their own right, is key to developing a democratic society with inclusive politics, a sustainable economy, and, in particular, social engagement in decision-making within education. This can only be achieved by taking education beyond the classroom into lifelong learning opportunities accessible to all, especially the most marginalized communities, and supporting youth innovation on the ground.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Young people are calling for action in four key focus areas:**

1. Ensuring sustainable learning for life, upholding the right to education
2. Curriculum transformation for the 21st century, building the foundations for a responsive and agile education system that responds to the needs of youth, society and the economy
3. Protecting student safety and facilitating youth empowerment
4. Funding education and ensuring teaching is an attractive, quality profession

### **Focus 1: Ensuring sustainable learning for life, upholding the right to education for all**

Young people, particularly the millennial generation and younger, are now likely to undergo multiple changes in career and profession over their lifetime, and standard formal and informal education must adapt in order to respond to such change and uncertainty. Currently, many young people report that curricula and standard ways of learning and teaching across the region still do not sufficiently teach transferable skills for lifelong learning and empowerment, such as critical thinking, problem solving, entrepreneurship, and civic participation. Simultaneously, youth communicate experiencing continued academic stress due to overcrowded curricula, high-stakes examinations and memorization-heavy teaching methods. These trends continue as documented in the UNICEF and UNESCO<sup>2</sup> 5-Year Progress Review of SDG4 in the Asia-Pacific Region, but much improvement is still needed to properly address these issues and ensure all students and youth have the foundations for future proof careers and high quality education.

#### **Recommendation 1.1**

**Provide practical opportunities for learners to enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to ensure that young people are equipped and empowered to think critically.**

Many assessments and curricula still focus on building 'hard' competencies as opposed to 'life skills', such as communication and critical thinking.<sup>3</sup>

In order to develop 21st century skills that are transferable and resilient for an uncertain future, 'communication, collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking' must be considered key competencies in education.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF & UNESCO. (2021). '5-Year Progress Review of SDG 4 - Education 2030 in Asia-Pacific.' UNESCO: Bangkok.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO (2020) 'Large Scale Learning Assessments in Asia-Pacific'

<sup>4</sup> Education2030 (2022) Transforming Education and its Systems Policy Brief, pg. 3

**Recommendation 1.2**

**Prioritize entrepreneurship skills and civic engagement in education** so that students have the competencies which enable them to take agency of their own lives and contribute meaningfully to society to tackle global issues with their strong leadership.

In 2017, the Asia-Pacific region had 30.4 million unemployed youth between 15-24, and many also not in education or training.<sup>5</sup>

In 2014, UNDP reported an average political participation of youth in East and Southeast Asia as between 30-80% for voting, 3-60% for lobbying, and 6-30% for activism amongst youth surveyed in the Asian Barometer Survey (ABS), showcasing the vast unevenness across the region of youth civic engagement<sup>6</sup>.

Education must prepare and support young people for the transition from school to work during the second decade, taking into account labour market vulnerabilities, changing skill requirements and emerging sectors and opportunities.<sup>7</sup> This must include entrepreneurship skills, with emphasis on social entrepreneurship and the green economy.

**Recommendation 1.3**

**Reform assessment practices to avoid ‘teaching to the test’ strategies and memorization-centered learning, to promote life-long learning and critical thinking.** To this end, there needs to be a greater recognition of formative assessment strategies, and the development of assessment practices which assess the learners’ application of knowledge, skills and attitudes. They could promote their growth by prioritizing a dialogic or participative approach to promote form their individual opinions, interact and discuss with others.

High-stakes examination formats of assessment continue across the region, despite increased documentation of its negative effects: including significant pressure to perform, barriers to access to prestigious schools or higher-paid jobs, and prioritizing ‘teaching to the test’ over ‘teaching to learn.’<sup>8</sup>

The reduction of such high pressure standard assessment, such as efforts seen in Singapore and the Republic of Korea to reduce reliance on high-stakes standard examinations, have demonstrated positive results of increased student engagement and happiness in education when reducing the need for short-term memorization to succeed in examinations and prioritizing meaningful learning.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Guelich, U., Bosma, N., and the Global Entrepreneurship Research Association. (2019). Youth Entrepreneurship in the Asia-Pacific 2019.

<sup>6</sup> UNDP (2014) Youth and Democratic Citizenship in East and Southeast Asia: Exploring political attitudes of East and Southeast Asian youth through the Asian Barometer Survey, pg. 62

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Education2030 (2022) Transforming Education and its Systems Policy Brief, pg. 6

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO 2018 in 'UNESCO (2020) 'Large Scale Learning Assessments in Asia-Pacific'

<sup>9</sup> ibid. <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/new-education-policies-and-practices-south-korea/>

## Focus 2: Curriculum transformation for the 21st century

Young people deserve an education that is enabling, engaging, and empowering that will help them contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable future. Currently, they face multiple challenges including poverty, migration, religious fundamentalisms, lack of access to quality education, lack of decent employment and lack of access to health care all of which intersect with harmful traditional and cultural norms.<sup>10</sup>

Reimagining education requires us to reflect upon what is most relevant and meaningful for children and young people. Curriculum transformation is needed to ensure students are empowered to protect their health and wellbeing and that of others, as well as equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes for life, work, and sustainable development.

### **Recommendation 2.1**

**Reform education to include comprehensive sexuality education** to empower young people with the skills to prevent and address sexual violence, take care of their sexual and reproductive health, and challenge gender inequality. It ensures building respect for inclusion and diversity in communities.

Although young people voiced the need for comprehensive sexuality education<sup>11</sup>, only 57 % of Asia-Pacific countries currently teach sexuality education in some form in the schools' curricula.<sup>12</sup>

Consultations to better understand young people's views and experiences of sexuality education is key to determine how it can be taught effectively, such as the Student Needs Assessment Survey conducted in New South Wales, Australia.<sup>13</sup>

### **Recommendation 2.2**

**Include life skills** including social-emotional learning, digital and financial literacy, and entrepreneurial skills, as cross-curriculum competencies for all ages.

As the growth rate of the young population in the Asia-Pacific out-paces the growth of job opportunities, young people are calling for schools to incorporate social-emotional learning, digital technology, and entrepreneurial skills to address this issue.<sup>14</sup>

To this end, the teaching profession must adequately be supported with the time, resources, and professional development to build their skills and attitudes towards using information and communications technology (ICT) in education.<sup>15</sup>

We need an education system that integrates digital literacy, and critical thinking and teaches how to recognize and overcome disinformation. We encourage governments and business entities to invest in digital platforms for people's better access to social justice and transparency.

<sup>10</sup> ARROW. (2014). Young People Of Asia: What Is The Status of Our Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights.

<sup>11</sup> 1. APFSD Youth Forum and Regional ECOSOC Youth Forum 2022. (2022) Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call to Action ahead of the APFSD 2022. <https://arrow.org.my/publication/asia-pacific-youth-call-to-action-ahead-of-apfsd-2022/>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. ARROW. (2014).

<sup>13</sup> Roth, C., Cheng, Y., Botfield, J., Stuart, A., and Estoesta, J. (2021). Opportunities for strengthening sexual health education in schools: Findings from a student needs assessment in NSW. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hpja.518>

<sup>14</sup> ILO. (2020.) Global employment trends for Youth 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Portillo, J., Garay, Urtza, Tejada, E., and Bilbao, N. (2020). Self-perception of the digital competence of educators during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A cross-analysis of different educational stages. Sustainability, 12(23), 10128. MDPI AG. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su122310128>

**Recommendation 2.3**

**Include global citizenship education and learning on the Sustainable Development Goals,** including ways to apply their knowledge and skills to further them.

Education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED) are integral elements of the SDGs on quality education and its interconnectedness with other goals.

An example of how SDGs can be prioritized in education includes the adoption of a whole institution approach to climate education in 258 UNESCO Associated Schools Network schools in 25 countries.<sup>16</sup>

**Recommendation 2.4**

**Reduce the load of overcrowded curriculums** by emphasizing key competencies that are meaningful and relevant to students, and centering the sustainability and mental health of students' educational experiences

Youth across the region continue to suffer from educational pressure-related mental health issues, such as low levels of self-confidence, life satisfaction and sense of belonging, high levels of test anxiety and bullying in East Asian schools<sup>17</sup>. This was exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, with protracted school closures and lockdown isolation removing key opportunities for regular social interaction and relationship-building.

The ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry reported in 2021 that depression amongst young people aged 10-24 years in Singapore quadrupled between 2013-2018, faster than any other age group, with prior studies continuing to find academic stress amongst one of the key psychosocial stressors.<sup>18 19</sup>

Mental health issues have been exacerbated by the stressors and isolation of COVID-19, and regional recommendations highlight a focus on developing psychosocial health and wellbeing as a priority.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> UNESCO Associated Schools Network. Climate Change Education. <https://aspnet.unesco.org/en-us/climate-education-education>

<sup>17</sup> UNESCO (2020) 'Large Scale Learning Assessments in Asia-Pacific'

<sup>18</sup> Tan et al (2021) 'A Six Year Trend of Youth Depression in a Healthcare Group in Singapore'. ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry, vol. 22(8)

<sup>19</sup> Lim et al (2017) 'Child Community Mental Health Services in Asia Pacific and Singapore's REACH Model'. National Library of Medicine.

<sup>20</sup> Education2030 (2022) Transforming Education and its Systems Policy Brief, pg. 2

### Focus 3: Protecting student safety and promoting empowerment

No education system is effective unless it prioritizes the wellbeing and safety of learners. The need for health-promoting schools which provide safe spaces for children and young people have never been more apparent than in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>21</sup>

Young people are calling for inclusive and equitable learning environments that are safe and conducive for learning, and greater opportunities for them to take ownership and agency of their holistic learning and development.

#### **Recommendation 3.1**

**Implement government and school policies and legislation that protect rights, promote inclusion, and prevent and address all forms of stigma, discrimination and exclusion.** This involves ensuring that all students, regardless of their disability; ethnicity; sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; socio-economic status; migrant status; religion; or other intersecting dimensions of their identity are able to access quality education.

Engaging with youth-led organisations that amplify the voices of priority groups enables their voices to be heard in legislative and policy decisions. For example, the Blind Youth Association Nepal has successfully lobbied for the printing and policy provision of large print books and audio books in the Inclusive Education Policy.<sup>22</sup>

#### **Recommendation 3.2**

**Foster safe schools and learning environments** that are physically, mentally, and socially safe and conducive for learning. This includes implementing protection measures which prevent and address violence in school including corporal punishment, bullying, and attacks on school. Teachers, school staff and student champions need to be trained to identify signs of abuse, violence such as corporal punishment, peer violence including cyberbullying and violence experienced outside of schools, as well as mental health issues, and address them through safeguarded and response channels. It also includes creating more flexible and inclusive learning environments, such as options for remote schooling and learning.

The prevalence of bullying in the Asia region is 30.3% and in the Pacific region it is 36.8%, mainly due to physical appearances; race, nationality or colour; or religion. Involvement of young people and the use of peer approaches have been a critical success factor in fostering safe schools and learning environments.<sup>23</sup> A youth-focused example includes Vanuatu's 'Rispektem Yu Wan, Rispektem Narafala Man' workshop series ran for young people in schools, sports clubs and churches which covers cyber safety, characteristics of a healthy relationship, and warning signs of abuse, and understanding violence.<sup>24</sup>

#### **Recommendation 3.4**

**Establish intersectoral partnerships that protect the health and wellbeing of students, including**

<sup>21</sup> WHO and UNESCO. (2021). Making every school a health-promoting school: implementation guidance. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377941>

<sup>22</sup> Blind Youth Association Nepal. What we do. <https://www.byanepal.org/what-we-do/byan-work/>

<sup>23</sup> UNESCO. (2019). Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366483>

<sup>24</sup> World Vision. (2019). Rispektem Yu Wan, Rispektem Narafala Man. [https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Vanutau%20Rispek%20brief\\_May%2019.pdf](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Vanutau%20Rispek%20brief_May%2019.pdf)

programs that provide school meals, nutrition education, deworming, iron and folic acid supplementation, vision and audio screening, vaccination, malaria prevention, comprehensive sexuality education including access to sexual and reproductive health services or referrals, mental health, water and sanitation including menstrual health-related information and products.

Long-term, sustainable and coordinated planning is required to strengthen intersectoral partnerships, including referral pathways to youth-friendly health services. An example includes long-term (10-year) policies in Bhutan that highlight a commitment to whole-school approaches to promoting health, including the National Education Policy and the National Education Blueprint.<sup>25</sup>

### **Recommendation 3.5**

**Challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes** which prevent individuals from accessing their rights to education through gender-transformative education.

UNESCO estimates that 1.2 million girls in the region are at risk of not accessing or returning to school after the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>26</sup> While girls are more likely than boys to never attend school, boys in many countries are at higher risk of failing to advance and complete their education<sup>27</sup>. The 2020 GAGE study in Bangladesh reported 91% of girls surveyed wished to return to school, but only 86% of boys held the same wish<sup>28</sup>. Key to challenging harmful gender stereotypes and norms is investing in youth-led initiatives that enable gender-transformative education.

This includes YPeer's<sup>29</sup> youth-to-youth education programs which use innovative pedagogies, such as theatre-based techniques and simulations, to explore topics such as gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health rights.

### **Recommendation 3.6**

**Ensure that young people, teachers, and organizations working to protect the rights of children and young people are meaningfully engaged through intergenerational, multisectoral and coordinated collaboration.** This includes inviting these stakeholders to co-design, be a part of consultations, and part of the validation processes in changes to strategic plans, legislation, policies and curriculum reforms

Youth must be engaged throughout the design, consultation and implementation stages of key education decision-making, and mainstreamed into national stakeholder strategies. For example, The SDG4Youth Network includes young education activists in shaping global education policies through engagement in the multi partner SDG 4 Education 2030 High-level Steering Committee, while establishing the network as an accountable and representative youth and students platform.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> WHO and UNESCO. (2021). Making every school a health-promoting school: implementation guidance. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377941>

<sup>26</sup> UNESCO and UNICEF. (2021). Situation analysis on the effects of and responses to COVID-19 on the education sector in Asia: Regional Synthesis Report.

<sup>27</sup> UNESCO. (2022). Leave no child behind: Global report on boys' disengagement from education. Paris, UNESCO.

<sup>28</sup> UNESCO (2021). When schools shut: gendered impacts of COVID-19 school closures, pg. 36

<sup>29</sup> YPeer. <https://ypeerap.org/>

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO. (2021). SDG4Youth Network: Positioning students and youth at the front and centre of SDG4. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/sdg4youth-network-positioning-students-and-youth-front-and-centre-sdg4>



#### **Focus 4: Funding education and ensuring teaching is an attractive, quality profession**

Financial investment in quality education is needed. Adequate resources are needed to invest in ensuring digital learning is equitable, to strengthen the teaching profession, to support youth parliaments in education and youth-led initiatives, and to ensure that education planning and funding is locally-led and sustainable.

##### **Recommendation 4.1**

**Invest in structural and efficient digitalization of education** through making more educational platforms accessible to schools regardless of resource disparities, or places between rural-urban, and ensure that effective training is provided to both students and teachers. Teachers should have digital tools embedded and become core to their training and qualifications, including how and when to incorporate tools.

Inadequate and unequal access to ICT connectivity and devices  
Large divides exist between countries in the region, with internet usage rates ranging from more than 90 % in the advanced economies to less than 15 % in the region's least developed economies.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, these areas may also lack reliable access to electricity to support the usage of ICT in teaching and learning<sup>32</sup>. Typically, schools with adequate access to the internet and computers are concentrated in high-income countries and within urban city centres<sup>33</sup>. Considerable divides also exist within countries, tending to trace existing lines of inequality, including social and economic status, gender and geography. For example, those living in rural areas have less access to the internet with only 37 % of people in rural areas, compared with 70.4% in urban areas<sup>34</sup>.

##### **Recommendation 4.2**

**Ensuring adequate financing for social protection measures and incentive programs to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised students and proactively mitigate school dropouts**, including out-of-school children and youth who are unable to access or return to school.

Particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there needs to be an introduction of incentive programs to bring children back to learn, like the school feeding programmes (currently in practice in some countries, for example, the school feeding programme) and incentives to promote education of girls, young people from indigenous communities, and other marginalized communities. It should include schools, but also non formal learning systems and communities to address out of school children especially for vulnerable groups.

Further, accessibility measures need to be financed, such as scholarships targeted at students from marginalized communities, and scaling support for social enterprises focusing on free education, such as Teach For Malaysia and BEASISWA10000 in Indonesia.

##### **Recommendation 4.3**

**Invest in strengthening the teaching profession** by addressing gaps in teacher shortages, and unsustainable working conditions, developing incentives and retention strategies for the teaching profession, and ensuring teachers are adequately provided the planning time and resources to teach. Incorporate the acquisition of pedagogical skills as well as transformative curricula such as ESD, GCED including peace education and sustainability and subjects into the teacher training course at the

<sup>31</sup> "Digital trends in Asia and the Pacific 2021 - ITU Hub." [https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/d-ind-dig\\_trends\\_asp-01-2021/](https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/d-ind-dig_trends_asp-01-2021/)

<sup>32</sup> "Positioning ICT in Education to Achieve the Education 2030 Agenda ...." 26 2月. 2018, <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/positioning-ict-education-achieve-education-2030-agenda-asia-and-pacific-recommendations>

<sup>33</sup> "Situation Analysis on the Effects of and Responses to COVID-19 on ...." 19 10月. 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/reports/situation-analysis-effects-and-responses-covid-19-education-sector-asia>

<sup>34</sup> "Digital trends in Asia and the Pacific 2021 - ITU Hub." [https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/d-ind-dig\\_trends\\_asp-01-2021/](https://www.itu.int/hub/publication/d-ind-dig_trends_asp-01-2021/)



university, and support educational activities that utilize the global and local fields. Furthermore, we urge country leaders, teachers, and parents to rethink education beyond the classroom, support the self-learning concept and reimagine the future of work for young people.

The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey<sup>35</sup> reported that the perception of the value of the teaching profession in 2018 was higher in Viet Nam (92% of surveyed lower teachers agreed with the statement that the teaching profession is valued in society), Singapore (72%), Republic of Korea (67%), Kazakhstan (63%) and Shanghai-China (60%) than in other OECD member and partner countries. Similarly, the Global Teacher Status Index<sup>36</sup> found that teachers in China had the highest status among surveyed countries, and teachers in Malaysia, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, India, New Zealand and Singapore were also highly respected (ibid.). However, even in countries where historically teaching is highly valued, there has been a general decline in the status of, and respect for, teachers owing to many inter-related factors such as low salaries, decrease in quality of working conditions, increased workloads and lack of support for teachers' well-being<sup>37</sup>.

In some countries in Asia, the progression and promotion of teachers display profound gender disparities, with men favoured over women. Female school leaders in Asia fall far below the OECD average of 47% with less than 10% in Japan, less than 20% in the Republic of Korea, and less than 30% in Viet Nam<sup>38</sup>.

#### **Recommendation 4.4**

**Prioritize the localization of planning and domestic funding of education** to ensure that education is sustainable, transformative and equal.

Public education spending currently fails to meet minimum benchmarks. The Education 2030 Framework for Action recommends that at least 4 - 6% of GDP and/or at least 15 - 20 % of total public expenditure should go to education<sup>39</sup>. But Asia-Pacific sub-regional averages have consistently been below the minimum benchmarks and other regions of the world. Only a small minority of countries in Asia-Pacific managed to achieve both of the minimum expenditure benchmarks by 2019. In Asia-Pacific only 0.41 % of COVID-19 related stimulus packages went towards education<sup>40</sup>.

#### **Recommendation 4.5**

**Fund and invest in youth parliaments, youth councils, and youth-led initiatives** so they have the capacity to provide peer education that is created by youths for youths to be engaged as partners.

Young people are highly affected by the high unemployment rates that have spiked since COVID-19.

<sup>35</sup> "TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as ...." 23 3月. 2020, <https://www.oecd.org/education/talis-2018-results-volume-ii-19cf08df-en.htm>

<sup>36</sup> "GLOBAL TEACHER STATUS INDEX 2018 - The Varkey Foundation." 13 11月. 2018, <https://www.varkeyfoundation.org/media/4867/gts-index-13-11-2018.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> "TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as ...." 23 3月. 2020, <https://www.oecd.org/education/talis-2018-results-volume-ii-19cf08df-en.htm>

<sup>38</sup> "TALIS 2018 Results (Volume II): Teachers and School Leaders as ...." 23 3月. 2020, <https://www.oecd.org/education/talis-2018-results-volume-ii-19cf08df-en.htm>

<sup>39</sup> "Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for ...." [http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en\\_2.pdf](http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/education-2030-incheon-framework-for-action-implementation-of-sdg4-2016-en_2.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> "Uneven global education stimulus risks ... - UNESCO Digital Library." <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379350>

We need to invest in economic recovery plans that support youth entrepreneurs, and youth-led initiatives that are COVID-19 responsive and culturally appropriate to social issues exacerbated by COVID-19.<sup>41</sup>

In particular, there must be investment in the capacity building of young people, women, girls, persons with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ communities and ensure the representation of their voices at the local and national level or by creating youth councils or youth parliament committees for climate change.<sup>42</sup>

Youth engagement needs to be mainstreamed, with more space given to collective and concrete youth-led initiatives, along with adequate financial investments to upscale youth-led social innovation. By providing safe spaces for young people to voice their aspirations and perspectives, they can act as agents of change and drive development. Digital transformation is a powerful enabler to support a human-centred approach and stimulate youth-led innovation leading to impact. Youth-centred innovation, collaborations, co-creation are critical pieces to advancing SDG implementation in the region.

### **PARTNER WITH US TO BUILD AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE FUTURE**

When youth and students think of 'getting back on track' to achieve SDG4, it does not mean getting back on the same track that we were on before the COVID-19 pandemic happened. We're determined to reflect, innovate, and implement new solutions- to pave a new road.

When we choose to invest in education, we're investing in our vision for the world we want to create together. When we choose to shape education, we're shaping the pathways available to each learner. When we choose to value education, we're valuing every human life that deserves a brighter future.

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<sup>41</sup> "Outcome Document of the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2021." <https://www.unmgcy.org/s/Voices-of-Youth-2021-Outcome-Document-of-the-ECOSOC-Youth-Forum-2021.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> "Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Call To Action ahead of the APFSD 2022." <https://arrow.org.my/publication/asia-pacific-youth-call-to-action-ahead-of-apfsd-2022/>

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SDG4 Youth Network  
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Migration Youth & Children Platform  
US-ASEAN Young Professionals Association  
ReBit  
ASEAN Youth Organization  
IYC4Peace Initiative  
Educating the Future  
Captain Earth Limited  
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