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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNESCO80 ROADMAP

OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE YOUNG LEADERS OF THE 14TH UNESCO YOUTH FORUM

SUMMARY

This document presents the outcomes of the consultation with the members of the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum undertaken between July and September 2026.

Within the context of UNESCO80, the consultation engaged 145 young people from 135 UNESCO Member States and Associate Members in a collective, youth-led reflection on the future of the Organization and the continued relevance of its mandate in the service of peace. The consultation resulted in the **Call by Young People for a New Culture of Peace in the Minds of Women and Men for the 21st Century** building on the **Young People's Reflection Document.**

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Call by Young People for a New Culture of Peace in the Minds of Women and Men for the 21st century

Paris, 3 September 2026

We, 145 youth leaders from 135 Member States and Associate Members, representing diverse regions, contexts and lived experiences across the world, brought together through the UNESCO 14th Youth Forum and on the occasion of the Organization's eightieth anniversary,

Recall that UNESCO was founded on the conviction that, since wars begin in the minds of women and men, it is in those minds that the defences of peace must be constructed – and affirm that this remains an unfinished task, not a historical statement.

Observe that peace today is threatened as much by structural violence, displacement, planetary crisis and the erosion of trust within and between communities and generations as by armed conflict. Education, sciences, culture, as well as communication and information can either help prevent these threats or, when poorly governed, further undermine the foundations of peace. In an era reshaped by artificial intelligence and rapid technological development, these fields are also increasingly intertwined with digital environments that can amplify mis- and disinformation, polarization and division, while also creating new opportunities for dialogue and learning.

Determined to apply the lessons of our history in order to prevent conflicts by addressing their root causes and to resolve problems through dialogue,

Recognize that social cohesion and intergenerational solidarity are essential components for lasting peace, and that addressing discrimination, exclusion and inequality, while creating meaningful opportunities for dialogue, cooperation and shared cultural life, can strengthen trust within and between communities and generations, as well as contribute to more inclusive, peaceful and resilient societies.

Underline that young people are already taking action – as mediators, researchers, educators and builders of digital and cultural spaces – yet too often without the recognition, resources or meaningful role in decision-making needed to sustain and strengthen their contributions.

Call on UNESCO, its Member States and their partners to turn these principles into sustained action through the following measures:

1. Embed youth partnership in decision-making systemically and structurally.

Youth participation in peace processes, conflict prevention and reconciliation remains far too limited today. In line with Security Council Resolution 2250, youth must therefore be better recognized as partners in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and included in institutional mechanisms for conflict prevention and mediation.

Within UNESCO, youth engagement should evolve from consultation to meaningful partnership. This means ensuring that opportunities to provide input are complemented by meaningful participation in decision-making: youth representation in National Commissions and Delegations to the General Conference, and in mechanisms such as the SDG 4 Youth & Student Network which ensures that youth are represented in education decision-making bodies alongside ministers. It also requires systematic follow-up: consultations, including this one, should be followed by public reporting on the recommendations adopted, actions taken in response and the implementation outcomes. UNESCO should build on the Global Youth Grant Scheme and networks such as the Youth Climate Action Network to connect, resource and give visibility to youth-led initiatives already under way, rather than creating parallel structures, with particular attention to young women and girls, Indigenous youth, youth in African and Afro-descendant communities, youth from Small Island Developing States, as well as youth from marginalized and underserved communities.

2. Treat education as the first line of defence against hatred and division.

Discrimination and hate speech, online and in classrooms, disproportionately affect youth, especially girls and minorities. It can deepen existing divisions within communities, making inclusive and peace-oriented education essential to build understanding, challenge harmful narratives and strengthen social cohesion. Education has a critical role in equipping young people with the knowledge, skills and values needed to navigate differences, challenge harmful narratives and participate constructively in society.

UNESCO's Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, media and information literacy, digital citizenship, social and emotional learning and the non-violent handling of disagreement should be integrated into school curricula and teacher training as core components of education. This should be complemented by clear guidance to distinguish hate speech from legitimate criticism and disagreement, strengthen civic education and critical-thinking skills, and equip teachers to recognize and address discrimination and hate speech. To this end, national education policies should also include frameworks to protect minors and other vulnerable groups from violent, hateful and manipulative online content. Schools should further promote a "language of peace", equipping young people with the skills to express disagreement constructively, engage in dialogue and navigate differences without hostility or violence. Curricula should also reflect the histories and contributions of African and Afro-descendant people as well as Indigenous peoples on their own terms, including their cultures, knowledge systems and diverse contributions. In crisis and conflict settings, where schools serve not only as places of learning but also as spaces for protection and psychosocial support, UNESCO, Member States and relevant partners should invest in continuity plans, cross-border recognition of learning and the reopening of schools wherever conditions allow.

3. Turn memory and culture into bridges for mutual understanding, not battlegrounds for division.

The traumas of history cannot be overcome through silence or by forgetting; a peaceful future requires acknowledging the past and learning from it. When history and culture are used to divide, they can entrench mistrust and resentment. Teaching the history of conflict should be evidence-based, open to multiple perspectives and designed to build empathy rather than resentment, drawing on UNESCO's Programme on Holocaust and Genocide Education and its Memory of the World Programme to keep archives, testimonies and documentary heritage accessible to educators and young people. Youth meaningful participation can be fostered through initiatives such as oral history projects, community mediation and digital efforts to counter misleading information and harmful narratives. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as Indigenous knowledge systems, require the same level of protection: stronger risk assessment and preparedness before conflict, and genuine accountability for attacks against them during conflict.

Protecting cultural heritage and the memory of the world is not only about preserving the past; it also helps sustain cultural continuity and enables communities and generations to engage with history, different perspectives and identity in ways that foster mutual understanding. Cultural exchange and engagement with different historical memories can create space for mutual understanding, helping communities encounter one another beyond inherited narratives of division, particularly in contexts shaped by historical conflict. This also highlights the importance of supporting teachers in connecting historical memory to reconciliation and the prevention of future violence.

4. Advance Open Science and access to knowledge as pillars for peace.

Science education and critical thinking can strengthen resilience to information manipulation and polarization, particularly in digital spaces. Open Science complements these efforts by making scientific knowledge more accessible, shareable and inclusive across communities and borders. Yet financial, technological and linguistic barriers continue to limit access to scientific knowledge, especially for researchers and institutions with fewer resources. Open Science should therefore

support equitable participation in scientific collaboration, publishing, innovation and knowledge creation through investment in digital infrastructure, connectivity, scientific capacities and science communication. UNESCO's 2023 Open Science Outlook reports that only around one-third of academic articles published between 2000 and 2021 were openly available, rising to around half for articles published in 2021. By strengthening international scientific cooperation, enabling knowledge-sharing across borders and connecting researchers and communities around shared challenges, Open Science can contribute to a culture of peace. This should include advancing the proposed Global Open Science Fund – supporting countries and communities in developing the capacities needed to participate in and benefit from Open Science. Together, these efforts position science and knowledge as drivers of peace, strengthening international cooperation and informed decision-making, which are essential to solving today's complex global challenges.

5. Defend the integrity of information as a condition for peace.

Dis- and misinformation can spread faster than reliable information can be verified or corrected, while an estimated 2.6 billion people remain offline, with access most limited in low-income developing countries. A safe and inclusive information environment requires both closing the digital divide and strengthening the quality and diversity of information available to communities. This includes accessible information, community-based fact-checking, local-language journalism, greater transparency around the systems that shape what information people encounter, as well as stronger protection for journalists, whose killings rose by 38 per cent in 2022–2023 alongside an impunity rate of 85 per cent in 2024. UNESCO should build further on its Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms and the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists, while supporting independent journalism, community media and spaces for young people, particularly those in rural and marginalized communities, to access information and participate in civic life.

6. Govern artificial intelligence to serve peace rather than division.

Artificial Intelligence trained on a narrow range of languages and cultural contexts can reproduce the inequalities it claims to address, and without appropriate safeguards, its use may contribute to bias, surveillance and discrimination, particularly affecting young people. UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence requires stronger implementation in practice, including independent and periodic scrutiny of AI systems for bias and disparities in content moderation, ethical impact assessments involving diverse populations, and greater transparency around AI-generated content and the algorithms that shape content recommendations.

As digital spaces have become increasingly central in young people's lives, youth should be meaningfully included in discussions on how these digital spaces and technologies are governed. Young people should be recognized not only as users of AI systems, but as partners in shaping the policies and systems that affect their lives, while supporting them in developing the AI literacy skills needed to participate meaningfully in these processes. Given the distinct and rapidly evolving impacts of artificial intelligence on young people, UNESCO and its Member States should explore, through the appropriate processes and with the meaningful participation of young people and relevant partners, whether the existing normative framework should be complemented by youth-focused guidance, including, as appropriate, a dedicated standard-setting instrument on youth and artificial intelligence. Any such work should build on and complement UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, with particular attention to young people's rights, safety, well-being, agency and meaningful participation throughout the AI life cycle.

Beyond these safeguards, it is essential to address inequalities in access to AI and its impact on youth employment, while ensuring that its benefits are shared equitably through the development of local skills and capacities.

7. Safeguard education, sciences, culture as well as communication and information for a culture of peace in times of conflict and crisis.

While prevention and early action to address the root causes of conflict and crisis must remain a priority, when crises and conflicts do occur, education, sciences, culture and communication and information must be protected from disruption. An estimated 272 million children and youth were out of school in 2023, a figure UNESCO itself considers an underestimate due to data gaps in conflict-affected countries and regions. The rights to education and to participate in cultural life, as well as the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, must be upheld even in situations of displacement, crisis and conflict. By protecting access to learning, cultural expression, knowledge, and reliable information during crises, UNESCO and Member States can help preserve the connections, cooperation and shared understanding on which peace depends. This should include expanding the UNESCO Qualifications Passport to ensure that displaced students' qualifications and previous studies are recognized across borders, establishing pre-arranged financing through mechanisms such as the SDG4 Emergency Fund, and providing support for young researchers and knowledge holders working under conflict or crisis-related pressures. In times of crisis and conflict, maintaining access to reliable information is equally important to sustaining education, scientific cooperation and cultural life, helping communities remain connected and able to respond to challenging circumstances. Together, these measures help safeguard UNESCO's fields of education, sciences, culture, and communication and information as essential pillars of a culture of peace.

Looking ahead

These recommendations will only matter if they are followed through with and by youth. We call for transparent follow-up on the conclusions of this consultation, reflecting the standards of transparency we are asking UNESCO to foster in its work. UNESCO's mandate to build the defences of peace in the minds of women and men was written for a different century, but it was written to last. Eighty years on, it falls to this generation, working alongside UNESCO, its Member States and their partners, to carry that mandate into an era of profound societal, environmental and technological change, shaped by planetary boundaries and an increasingly fragmented international landscape. We must ensure that the peace envisioned by UNESCO becomes a peace we truly get to live in.

Together, we call for a new culture of peace for the 21st century: one that we build across generations, make a reality in our time, and pass on to those who come after us.

Young People's Reflection Document

1/ UNESCO's work as seen by young people

1. **How is UNESCO's constitutional mandate to build "the defences of peace in the minds of men and women" through education, science, culture, communication and information being carried out today?**

UNESCO's constitutional mandate to build "the defences of peace in the minds of men and women" remains highly relevant today, as the Organization continues to foster peace by creating spaces for dialogue, cooperation and shared understanding. The 14th edition of the UNESCO Youth Forum, held in 2025 in the historic city of Samarkand, offers a concrete illustration of this role: 145 young people from 135 Member States and Associate Members came together across diverse national and regional contexts to exchange views, find common ground and develop a shared voice on climate change and its social impacts. The Forum demonstrated how bringing diverse perspectives together can help build a common understanding of shared challenges and translate different experiences into collective priorities and action, as reflected in the Conclusions of the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum. This convening role is at the heart of UNESCO's broader mandate, which connects education, sciences, culture, communication and information with dialogue, norm-setting and multilateral cooperation to address the global challenges of our time. Creating spaces where diverse perspectives can come together is particularly important in an increasingly fragmented international environment, where dialogue and cooperation are more needed than ever.

UNESCO's comparative advantage lies in connecting global norms and expertise with local knowledge and networks through its normative, monitoring and operational roles. This includes setting international standards, monitoring global trends and challenges, and supporting implementation and technical assistance at the grass-roots. Together, these functions enable UNESCO to connect international standards and expertise with local realities, working with schools, academia, cultural institutions, research entities and youth-led projects. However, there remains an opportunity to further strengthen the visibility and reach of the Organization's work. While UNESCO is widely recognized by young people particularly for its work in cultural heritage, its equally significant contributions in areas such as education, the sciences, communication and information are less visible or consistently associated with the Organization. This visibility gap is particularly important to address in rural, remote, small island and other underserved communities, where access to UNESCO's work and opportunities for engagement can be more limited. Ultimately, UNESCO's mandate and added value should be measured not only by the norms it adopts or programmes it delivers, but by their sustained impact on people's lives – and by its ability to build bridges, foster understanding and strengthen dialogue across differences.

2. **What is expected from UNESCO today, from all the people we represent?**

UNESCO is expected to translate its mandate and global commitments into accessible, concrete and sustained action that advances peace, gender equality, sustainable development and multilateral cooperation. This includes strengthening quality and equitable education, scientific cooperation, cultural preservation, climate action, reliable information, ethical AI governance and digital transformation, as well as opportunities for youth innovation and leadership. UNESCO should strengthen its presence beyond capitals and established networks, particularly in rural, remote, conflict-affected, island and underserved communities, by supporting locally designed solutions and making programmes, funding and participation opportunities more accessible, including through simpler application and administrative processes.

Meaningful youth engagement should be embedded throughout these efforts, moving beyond consultation towards partnership and co-decision. In UNESCO's 2026 Youth Report, *Lead with Youth*: among 93 responding Member States, only one in three reported having formal bodies to engage youth or students in education policy. Young people should be engaged as stronger partners and co-creators alongside experts, educators, scientists, cultural practitioners, Indigenous

communities and other relevant stakeholders, from priority-setting and programme design through implementation and evaluation. The UNESCO-led SDG 4 Youth & Student Network, for example, provides a concrete model, with youth and student representatives holding a seat on the SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee, enabling them to contribute directly to decision-making alongside Ministers of Education and other global leaders. UNESCO should leverage its Toolbox for Youth Policy and Programming, to systematically strengthen meaningful youth engagement in public policies, and to build youth-specific institutional capacities in Member States, across its mandate. To ensure measurable impact, consultations and similar processes should be followed with transparent public reporting on which recommendations were adopted, what actions were taken in response, and within what timeframe. Youth engagement should also include meaningful youth representation in National Commissions and National Delegations to UNESCO's General Conference, as called for in the Conclusions of the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum.

Ultimately, youth participation should be measured not only by the number of young people consulted, but also by the extent to which their recommendations influence public policy, budget allocations and programme implementation. As 2030 approaches, UNESCO is expected to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically prioritizing quality education, climate change adaptation, scientific cooperation, and peace, justice and strong institutions. Trust in UNESCO will ultimately depend on consistency between its commitments and actions, with transparent follow-up showing how recommendations translate into decisions, resources and measurable results on the local, national and global level.

3. **What opportunities exist for UNESCO to strengthen its contribution in the areas of peace, human rights, and sustainable development?**

The most immediate opportunity lies less in creating new programmes than in connecting, resourcing and giving visibility to youth-led initiatives that are already operating, often informally and with minimal means across diverse contexts worldwide. Rather than creating parallel structures, UNESCO can strengthen and connect existing youth initiatives by linking them to funding, technical expertise and relevant decision-makers, while building on established networks with regional reach and demonstrated capacity. Small grants, technical mentorship and regional innovation hubs can provide practical pathways for strengthening youth-led initiatives and translating them into sustained action and impact. The UNESCO Global Youth Grant Scheme provides a strong model for this approach, combining small grants with capacity-building and personalized mentoring; UNESCO should build on and expand this mechanism to reach more youth-led initiatives across diverse contexts. UNESCO's Youth Climate Action Network (YOU-CAN) provides another important example of this approach, connecting young people around climate action and creating opportunities for them to contribute to sustainable development in their communities.

The Conclusions of the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum also underscore the value of sustained youth engagement beyond individual events. Building on this, continued investment in follow-up and cross-sectoral youth mechanisms can help ensure that youth perspectives inform UNESCO's work, turning one-off participation into sustained engagement and cooperation. Particular attention should be given to ensuring the meaningful participation and representation of young women and girls, young people from Indigenous communities, youth from African and Afro-descendant communities and Small Island Developing States as well as other underrepresented groups in decision-making, ensuring that their perspectives are meaningfully reflected in policy development. Within its mandate, UNESCO should promote inclusive and representative decision-making, recognizing that diverse perspectives and meaningful participation are essential to addressing the complex and interconnected challenges of our time.

4. **Which areas of intervention or support should be prioritized or reinforced to better respond to increasingly complex and prolonged crises (for example: higher education, heritage protection, information integrity, early warning systems)?**

Prioritization should begin with a broader understanding of how crises are defined and experienced. While not all countries are currently experiencing conventional armed conflict, many face interconnected forms of structural violence, forced displacement, organized crime, climate-related disasters such as wildfires and other natural hazards, environmental degradation, racism, disinformation, and weakened or absent essential public services. These challenges can disrupt education, undermine cultural life and weaken social cohesion, with particularly significant implications for Indigenous and underserved communities. Globally, at least 242 million students – from pre-primary to upper secondary education – have experienced school disruptions due to climate events in 2024.

Interventions should therefore be selected based on their potential to address multiple challenges simultaneously, respond to the specific risks faced by Indigenous and underserved communities, and deliver impact across immediate, short-, medium- and long-term horizons. This requires recognizing the close interconnections between education, culture, social cohesion, environmental resilience and access to essential services, rather than addressing these areas in isolation. Their interdependence is practical rather than rhetorical: early warning systems fail when the underlying information is not trusted, and preparedness is consistently more effective and less costly than recovery after loss. Alongside these priorities, particular attention should also be given to mental health and psychosocial support, particularly for young people living under prolonged crises. This should build on UNESCO's existing work, including on social and emotional learning, notably the recent policy guide *Mainstreaming social and emotional learning in education systems* as well as UNESCO's work in Education in Emergencies. Youth employment, entrepreneurship and economic resilience should likewise be recognized as integral elements of crisis prevention and response, since skills development, innovation ecosystems and pathways into decent work can reduce the vulnerabilities that sustain instability. Finally, effective interventions should be designed and implemented in ways that reflect local contexts and enable meaningful participation by the communities they aim to serve. Greater use of community-led design, locally relevant indicators and context-responsive approaches can help ensure that interventions are better adapted to local needs and more effective in practice.

5. **How can UNESCO's interventions contribute to strengthening resilience, recovery and social cohesion in the context of crises?**

The United Nations estimates that 239 million people will need urgent humanitarian assistance in 2026, reflecting the vast scale of communities affected by crises. This underscores the importance of UNESCO implementing community-led, inclusive and gender-responsive interventions that extend beyond the immediate emergency to strengthen resilience, support recovery and foster social cohesion. This requires maintaining access to education, protecting cultural and educational spaces, strengthening media and information literacy, supporting livelihoods, and using culture, science and local knowledge to rebuild trust and social cohesion.

UNESCO should strengthen community-led recovery by supporting young people and local knowledge holders to contribute to needs assessments, document cultural memory and knowledge, and help design and implement context-specific responses that strengthen social cohesion and resilience. Particular attention should be given to Indigenous youth, women and girls, and communities affected by conflict or displacement. Indigenous youth and other local knowledge holders should also be supported to shape context-specific responses that safeguard cultural memory, identity and knowledge systems. UNESCO should also strengthen collaboration between schools, academia, cultural institutions, community organizations, local media, public authorities and other relevant stakeholders to build local capacities and facilitate knowledge exchange. It is essential that resilience-building integrates disaster preparedness, climate adaptation, digital continuity of learning and community-based early warning systems, particularly in Small Island Developing States

and other climate-vulnerable contexts. Preparedness measures and recovery should be co-designed with affected communities and assessed through locally defined indicators, ensuring that UNESCO's interventions strengthen communities' capacity not only to withstand crises, but to shape a more inclusive and peaceful future.

6. **Looking ahead, where should UNESCO focus its efforts to best serve future generations?**

Serving future generations requires UNESCO to embed long-term and intergenerational thinking across its work, recognizing that today's decisions, actions and inactions will shape the conditions in which young people and generations yet to come will live, learn and participate in decision-making. An intergenerational approach is therefore required, meaning that knowledge, culture and opportunities are not only preserved and passed on, but continuously renewed and carried forward, while enabling each generation to contribute meaningfully to shaping what comes next. This calls for a stronger focus on foresight, anticipatory planning and policies that safeguard the needs and interests of future generations, in line with the 2024 UN Pact for the Future and its Declaration on Future Generations. This also requires a stronger culture of foresight and intergenerational responsibility across all of UNESCO's fields, guided by the principle affirmed in the 1997 Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations and carried forward by the Futures of Education initiative. In practical terms, this could take the form of an intergenerational impact assessment integrated into UNESCO's major strategies and programmes, evaluating their potential long-term implications and ensuring that short-term considerations do not undermine long-term objectives, particularly in areas involving lasting or irreversible consequences.

Serving future generations also means keeping them connected to the generations before them by strengthening intergenerational exchange. This also requires safeguarding cultural heritage, biodiversity, languages and collective memory in increasingly digital environments, while ensuring that communities retain meaningful ownership and influence over how their knowledge and heritage are documented, preserved and transmitted. Young people, including Indigenous youth, should be recognized as important partners in these efforts and in carrying cultural knowledge forward across generations.

7. **Across its full range of areas of competence, where – and to what extent – does UNESCO continue to exercise recognized leadership, demonstrate legitimacy and benefit from a comparative advantage?**

UNESCO continues to exercise recognized global leadership across education, sciences, culture, communication and information through its unique ability to combine normative standard-setting, technical expertise and inclusive multistakeholder cooperation, despite the increasingly complex challenges confronting the multilateral system.

UNESCO's particular ability to develop internationally recognized standards and normative frameworks enables it to translate emerging global challenges into common principles and standards, providing guidance for Member States and other stakeholders. This is for example the case with the Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, the Recommendation on Open Science, the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and its work on media and information literacy, freedom of expression and SDG 4 on Quality Education.

Sustaining UNESCO's leadership requires strengthening the implementation of existing frameworks while developing innovative approaches to address emerging challenges, supported by strategic financing, efficient resource utilization, monitoring, public reporting and accountability to ensure tangible, concrete and local impact. Young people's lived experience and diverse perspectives are essential to keeping UNESCO's work responsive and relevant. Expanding youth leadership across

education, science, culture, communication and peacebuilding will help ensure UNESCO's comparative advantages continue to evolve to meet the needs of future generations.

2/ Education

Promoting intercultural dialogue and inclusive education

8. **What forms of discrimination or hate speech do you observe most frequently in your school or digital environments, and how should education respond?**

Discrimination in schools and digital spaces takes diverse forms, including racism, xenophobia, gender-based discrimination, ableism and prejudice based on language, identity or background, disproportionately affecting minorities, marginalized groups, women and girls. The UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues to the Human Rights Council highlighted in 2021 the disproportionate impact of online hate speech on minority communities, noting that, where disaggregated data were available, approximately 70% or more of those targeted tended to belong to minorities. Digital environments can amplify discrimination and polarization through engagement-driven recommendation systems, anonymity and the rapid spread of harmful content. The misuse of generative AI also further increases risks of disinformation, hate speech and non-consensual manipulated content, with women and girls disproportionately affected, while coordinated online hostility can deepen tensions between communities and undermine social cohesion.

Education must respond preventively, before harm occurs, rather than limiting itself to punishment afterward. This calls for the embedding of media and information literacy, digital citizenship, empathy, intercultural dialogue, and the non-violent management of disagreement across the different components of the education system (curricula, teacher training, learning environments), rather than being confined to occasional awareness-raising activities. It should be delivered in the languages and dialects used by young people in digital spaces and focus on developing the capacity to critically assess specific claims and narratives, alongside broader principles of tolerance and respect. UNESCO's 2023 Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, the guide Addressing Hate Speech through Education, and the Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research, among other initiatives, provide a foundation for this work, and must be translated into national curricula, teacher education, and school policies.

Diversity should be embedded in practice through learning about different cultures, promoting inter-cultural awareness and dialogue, supporting multilingual education, cross-border collaboration and the integration of Indigenous knowledge into everyday learning. Curricula should represent the histories, knowledge, and contributions of African and Afro-descendant peoples with depth and accuracy, drawing on the Routes of Enslaved Peoples programme and the General History of Africa initiative, enabling learners to engage with these communities through their knowledge, contributions and agency, rather than mainly through histories framed primarily through oppression. UNESCO can strengthen teachers' capacity to recognize and address discrimination and hate speech, support affected students, and foster inclusive learning environments that recognize the knowledge, experiences and contributions of marginalized communities. Clear guidance can help distinguish hate speech from legitimate criticism and disagreement, with young people meaningfully involved in shaping these approaches.

Invest in education and training to promote peace

9. **What links do you see between lack of access to quality education or training – including in times of crisis or conflict – and the risk of marginalization or violence?**

The relationship between educational exclusion and violence resists a simple cause-and-effect account, and must not be framed in ways that stigmatize poor, racialized, or marginalized youth as naturally associated with violence. Rather, the lack of quality education reduces alternatives and increases exposure: when young people cannot study, certify their skills, or access decent work,

trust in institutions declines and vulnerability to exploitation, misinformation, illegal economies, forced recruitment, and extremist narratives increases. Where communities are systematically denied education, that exclusion itself can be a form of structural violence, producing a sense of relative deprivation that can tip frustration toward marginalization through the experience of exclusion itself as much as through the missing qualification. Education functions as a protective factor only when equitable access, uninterrupted participation, and quality learning are guaranteed together, a principle affirmed in the 2023 Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development.

In crisis settings, schools serve as essential hubs for learning, protection, psychosocial support, reliable information and community connection. Conflict, displacement and economic hardship can disrupt this role, while structural barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, transport costs and the digital divide continue to limit access to education. Access alone, however, is not sufficient: the values embedded in education, particularly regarding gender, consent, and human dignity, matter as much as access itself. Investment in equitable, uninterrupted, and quality education must therefore be recognized as a preventive strategy for peace, combining academic learning with critical thinking, social-emotional and civic skills, digital literacy, and relevant vocational training. This also requires providing flexible learning pathways, protecting schools as safe spaces and supporting their reopenings in zones affected by crisis and conflicts, when possible, as well as developing effective distance learning possibilities for displaced students. Progress should be tracked through indicators covering access, learning, safety, well-being and transitions to decent work, enabling policies to better address persistent exclusion. The SDG 4 indicator framework developed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics could serve as a useful model for education-focused progress tracking, combining multiple indicators to measure access, learning, equity, safety and skills. Similar frameworks could be developed or adapted in other areas to identify gaps, track progress and better inform policy responses to marginalization and violence.

Invest in restoring education/training conditions in areas weakened by conflict

10. How can continuous access to education be guaranteed in conflict-affected areas, and what role should UNESCO play?

Continuous access to education in conflict-affected areas requires preparedness, flexible delivery models and protection of learners, teachers and educational infrastructure before and during crises. The scale of the challenge is significant: the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report together estimate that 272 million children and youth were out of school globally in 2023, with the figure likely underestimated by at least 13 million due to data gaps in 10 conflict-affected countries. UNESCO should support Member States in developing and resourcing education continuity plans that ensure safe and flexible access to learning through community and mobile classrooms, digital and offline solutions, radio and printed materials, accelerated learning pathways, and cross-border recognition of learning for displaced students. In connection with its global mandate in advancing education, UNESCO should support Member States and relevant partners in accelerating progress towards SDG 4 on Quality Education. Particular attention should be given to girls, refugees and internally displaced learners, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups, including through accessible learning materials, education materials in local and Indigenous languages, psychosocial support, and measures that help reintegrate young people whose schooling was interrupted due to conflicts and crises. For refugee learners in particular, UNHCR's 2024 Education Report estimates that, at the end of 2023, 49% of school-aged refugee children (7.2 million) were out of school. UNESCO should strengthen teacher training for education in emergencies, including protection and psychosocial support, while promoting the protection of schools and educational personnel in line with international standards. As a coordinator and standard-setter, UNESCO can facilitate cooperation among Member States, local communities, civil society, youth and other relevant stakeholders, share evidence and effective practices, and support locally adapted solutions rather than imposing uniform approaches. UNESCO should also encourage pre-arranged financing and rapid-response mechanisms that can be activated when crises disrupt education, including through the UNESCO SDG 4 Emergency Fund

(SEF) and other rapid-response mechanisms, with increased support to enable timely education responses during crises. Meaningful participation of young people and affected communities in designing and evaluating continuity measures is essential to ensuring that education systems remain accessible, context-sensitive and resilient throughout crises.

3/ Culture

Protection and promotion of heritage and culture

11. How can cultural heritage be better preserved in times of conflict and crisis?

The preservation of cultural heritage should be understood as an ongoing effort to safeguard and transmit knowledge, traditions, practices, and cultural identities across generations. This preventive measure calls for the strengthening of risk assessments, inventories, risk maps, early warning systems, climate adaptation, and preparedness measures to protect cultural heritage before, during, and after conflicts and disasters. Preventive efforts should begin in early childhood by integrating cultural heritage and practices into education and everyday learning, while strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders, youth, artisans and public authorities to foster appreciation, awareness and shared responsibility for safeguarding cultural heritage. Protection must encompass both tangible and intangible heritage to ensure the transmission of knowledge, traditions, and practices, and must also protect languages and collective memory, ensuring their continuity over time. It is imperative to recognize that conflicts and crises lead to the displacement of communities, making it difficult to care for, practice, and transmit their heritage. In these contexts, protecting vulnerable communities is essential to safeguarding the intergenerational transmission of knowledge and practices. Preventive documentation, community archives, inventories and digital tools can support this effort, provided they are developed with communities' consent and participation and preserve their control over cultural knowledge and records. During conflicts and crises, documentation and monitoring alone are insufficient to ensure effective protection of cultural property, as outlined in the 1954 Hague Convention and its 1999 Second Protocol. Therefore, they must be accompanied by rapid responses to attacks, looting, and illicit trafficking. Highlighting the urgency of protecting cultural heritage in conflict, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre reports that approximately half of the 56 World Heritage properties currently on the List of World Heritage in Danger were inscribed due to the potential or ascertained impacts of conflicts. The UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund could be further strengthened to provide sustained resources and rapid-response capacity for the emergency protection of cultural heritage. It is also essential to advance accountability and justice mechanisms to hold accountable those who engage in these activities and for the international community to condemn such acts preventing impunity.

Circulation of cultures, interculturality

12. What obstacles currently limit cultural exchange and mutual understanding between societies or communities?

Obstacles to cultural exchange are structural before they are attitudinal, and they compound one another rather than acting in isolation. Restrictive visa policies and the cost of mobility can disproportionately limit opportunities for young people from low- and middle-income countries and Small Island Developing States to participate in educational, cultural and scientific exchange. These barriers can be particularly significant for regional mobility, where exchanges between neighbouring countries and communities may remain more difficult or costly than mobility across greater distances.

Language barriers can further hinder cultural exchange, as digital platforms often favour dominant-language content, limiting direct exchange between communities. Financial inequality, the concentration of exchange opportunities in capitals and major cities, and uneven digital access further narrow who is able to participate at all. Similar concerns were raised in the MondiaYouth Perspectives 2025 document developed at MONDIACULT 2025, which highlights unequal

technological access, biased algorithms, misinformation, economic disparities and systemic marginalization as barriers to cultural participation and dialogue.

Misinformation and disinformation, alongside social fragmentation, political polarization, conflict and displacement, can reinforce stereotypes and deepen tensions around shared cultural heritage and practices, undermining mutual understanding and reducing opportunities for meaningful exchange. Strengthening inclusive spaces for dialogue and cultural exchange can help communities build trust and engage with different perspectives.

Addressing these obstacles calls for a combination of expanded mobility and infrastructure that treats digital representation as a matter of governance, not only access. UNESCO, in line with the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist, should support Member States in expanding youth exchange, mobility programmes and scholarships, including through the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, UNESCO fellowships and thematic gatherings such as the MAB Youth Forum, with particular attention to South-South and intraregional exchange rather than exchange oriented primarily toward high-income countries. UNESCO should also promote more inclusive digital cultural spaces through multilingual and interoperable access to cultural content, stronger digital representation of minority and Indigenous cultures, and platforms designed and curated by young people, elders and knowledge holders, as well as communities themselves rather than platforms that merely feature them. Clear standards on consent and attribution are essential to ensure that communities retain ownership and agency over their cultural heritage and knowledge.

Mutual understanding may also require space to acknowledge past injustices and engage with different historical memories, allowing communities to learn from specific contexts without reducing them to a single narrative. These efforts can be supported through long-term, community-led cultural projects, school and university partnerships, and joint initiatives in creation, memory and education, with UNESCO helping to build trust incrementally, both across borders and within them.

4/ Sciences and action in response to environmental challenges

Young people, climate, and sustainable management of natural resources

13. **How can young people – particularly women and young scientists – participate more meaningfully in climate-related decision-making processes and in the sustainable management of natural resources in their regions?**

The scale of the climate and environmental crisis underscores the urgency of collective action: wildfire smoke is linked to an estimated 1.5 million premature deaths annually, while seven of Earth's nine planetary boundaries have already been breached. Young people, particularly women and young scientists, should be recognized as equal partners in climate governance and sustainable natural resource management, rather than only as beneficiaries or implementers of decisions made by others. This is reflected in the Conclusions of the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum, which called for at least 30% active youth representation in climate decision- and policy-making processes.

Meaningful participation requires moving beyond symbolic inclusion toward genuine representation, decision-making power, access to resources, and recognition of youth expertise. Many young people already contribute to climate research, biodiversity conservation, environmental education, citizen science and community-based solutions, yet often face barriers to funding, research opportunities, networks and leadership spaces. Their expertise and experience should be better recognized by ensuring meaningful youth representation across climate councils, environmental governance structures, adaptation planning processes, climate action bodies and scientific advisory platforms. UNESCO's Youth Climate Action Network (YOU-CAN) provides a useful existing platform to build on, demonstrating how young people can be connected across regions to exchange knowledge, collaborate on climate action and contribute to sustainable development.

Governments, institutions and UNESCO, as well as other international organizations should increase investment in youth-led climate action, research and innovation through accessible climate finance, research grants, mentorship, scholarships and entrepreneurship opportunities to scale up solutions from local levels to global ones. Such support can help translate young people's ideas and scientific knowledge into practical solutions for climate resilience and sustainable development.

Particular attention must be given to young women and women scientists, who continue to face barriers including unequal access to education, financing, professional networks, leadership opportunities, safe working environments, and recognition of their expertise. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, women accounted for only 31.4% of researchers globally in 2023, underscoring the persistent gender gap in research. The L'Oréal–UNESCO For Women in Science Prize and Programme provides a strong example of supporting women in science, with further impact possible through a greater emphasis on young women and early-career researchers, alongside stronger collaboration with universities and research institutions. Education systems should strengthen the integration of climate education and data, environmental literacy, scientific capacity-building and green skills, building on UNESCO's Greening Education Partnership (GEP) and its work on green schools, curriculum, education systems and communities. UNESCO should further formalize meaningful youth representation within GEP governance and working groups, ensuring that young people help shape the implementation of climate education and green skills initiatives. In line with UNESCO's 2025 Global Report on Cultural Policies, this should be complemented by stronger recognition and integration of Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge, which offers valuable insights into the stewardship of ecosystems, forests, biodiversity and natural resources. UNESCO should build on its Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme to support documentation, intergenerational learning and the integration of local knowledge into national climate and science policies.

Open science and access to knowledge

14. What are the main barriers to universal access to scientific knowledge in your regions, and how can "Open Science" reduce these inequalities?

Universal access to scientific knowledge remains unequal across regions due to interconnected financial, technological, institutional and linguistic barriers, as well as historical inequalities rooted in colonial legacies and other structural factors. While scientific knowledge continues to expand, many researchers, students, communities and policymakers still face challenges in accessing, producing and applying scientific information.

Open Science must be supported by investments in science education, media and information literacy and public engagement to ensure that scientific knowledge is not only available but also understood and effectively used by society. UNESCO should build on its Open Science Toolkit and Open Science Capacity-Building Index, strengthen regional capacity-building efforts and advance consideration of a Global Open Science Fund, which was still under discussion in 2024, to support countries and communities in developing the capacities needed to participate in and benefit from Open Science.

Financial inequality is a major barrier to equitable access to knowledge. High costs associated with scientific publications, journal subscriptions, databases, research tools and publication fees limit participation in global research systems, particularly for researchers and institutions with fewer resources. These barriers are compounded by limited access to research outputs themselves: while open access is expanding, UNESCO's 2023 Open science outlook 1: status and trends around the world reports that only about one-third of academic articles published between 2000 and 2021 were openly available, rising to around half for articles published in 2021.

Knowledge inequality between people and regions is not only about accessing existing research but also about the ability to produce, share and influence scientific advancement. Open Science must therefore support researchers from all regions to participate equitably in scientific collaboration,

publishing, innovation and knowledge creation**.** Achieving this requires investment in the digital infrastructure, connectivity and scientific capacities and digital literacy needed for equitable access to and participation in Open Science. Language barriers and gaps in science communication can limit equitable access to knowledge and informed decision-making, underscoring the need for stronger multilingual and accessible dissemination of scientific knowledge across diverse contexts.

Openness must be guided by ethical principles and equity, and the sharing of scientific information must respect Indigenous knowledge, traditional practices, biodiversity data and community rights. Safeguards based on consent, recognition and fair benefit-sharing are essential to ensure that knowledge is shared responsibly and contributes to a more inclusive global scientific ecosystem. UNESCO can further promote Open Science by supporting citizen science and community-based research programmes, such as the UNESCO Youth As Researchers programme, strengthening partnerships among universities, governments and communities and creating greater opportunities for young scholars, Indigenous Peoples and underserved communities to actively contribute to and benefit from scientific knowledge.

5/ Digital technology/artificial intelligence

Threats in the digital space

15. **What are the main risks (bias, discrimination, surveillance) that the unregulated use of artificial intelligence poses to young people, and how can we ensure AI is ethical and inclusive?**

Artificial intelligence is reshaping both opportunity and perception. AI systems can reproduce existing inequalities when their training data reflects a limited range of languages, cultures and contexts, failing to adequately reflect Indigenous languages, knowledge and local needs. While this is a global challenge, UNESCO highlighted in 2026 how AI-powered educational technologies in Africa are often built, shaped and trained around Western realities, culture and languages. These challenges extend beyond representation: as UNESCO and the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education noted in their publication in 2020, algorithmically personalized content can shape what information people encounter and reinforce existing views through selective exposure, contributing to broader challenges to information integrity. In addition, surveillance without meaningful consent can threaten privacy and freedom of expression, while technological capabilities, data and decision-making power become increasingly concentrated among a small number of major technology companies and technologically advanced states.

Policies should also address inequalities in access to AI technologies, the effects AI systems can have in youth employment, and ensure that their benefits are available equitably, by fostering the development of local skills and infrastructure, lifelong learning models that respond to the effects of AI on the job market, on information and on discrimination and capacities that enable more equitable governance of artificial intelligence. AI systems also require greater scrutiny for bias, contextual inconsistencies and environmental impacts, including the risk of unequal content moderation, discriminatory decision-making, inconsistent responses to comparable conflicts and the significant energy and water consumption of data centres. Highlighting the environmental and developmental dimensions of AI, the International Telecommunication Union reports that electricity consumption by data centres – which power AI development and deployment, among other uses – increased by 12% annually between 2017 and 2023, four times faster than global electricity growth.

AI systems should also be developed and tested with diverse populations, ensuring that the perspectives, languages and needs of underrepresented communities – including Indigenous Peoples and communities in low- and middle-income countries – are reflected throughout their design and deployment. UNESCO should prioritize equipping young people with AI literacy, recognizing that they are growing up in an increasingly digital and rapidly evolving technological environment. This should enable them to understand, critically assess and responsibly use AI, while ensuring their meaningful participation in AI policy-making and the development of systems that

affect their lives. Stronger implementation of UNESCO's 2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence can provide a shared foundation for this work.

Access to verified information

16. **How can media, digital technologies and access to reliable information help strengthen civic participation, inclusion and dialogue between populations?**

Media and digital technologies can strengthen civic participation by offering a way for populations to organize, engage in public debate and make their voices heard. This is especially the case for marginalized and Indigenous communities, for whom public-interest, non-commercial digital spaces can give greater visibility and protect vital cultural knowledge. Increasing access to digital technologies can also be a way of expanding access to reliable information. However, with this increased access, there comes a need to verify the reliability of the information being circulated. This requires investment in community-based fact-checking, local-language and fact-based journalism, open public data and accessible translation and participation tools, particularly where unverified information circulating on messaging platforms become a primary source of information.

Greater transparency is needed around media funding, algorithmic recommendations and AI-generated content, alongside stronger protections for journalists and human rights defenders. Building on these safeguards, UNESCO and Member States should recognize that community media, including radio, and constructive online spaces can connect rural and marginalized youth to civic life and foster dialogue across differences. This can be supported through UNESCO's *Community Media Sustainability Policy Series* and the *International Programme for the Development of Communication*'s work on recognition, funding and capacity-building, while World Radio Day can serve as a global visibility platform for community and local-language media. Access to essential services and participation should not depend solely on digital systems, and appropriate non-digital alternatives should remain available.

6/ Communication and information

Hate speech and freedom of expression

17. **What are the main drivers of hate speech and polarization among young people online today? How can they be better regulated, including as it relates to protecting freedom of expression?**

Hate speech and polarization among young people online are driven by misinformation and disinformation, algorithmic amplification, political manipulation, social inequalities, limited digital literacy and the misuse of artificial intelligence, while digital platforms can reinforce echo chambers and divisive content.

UNESCO should continue advancing the implementation of its Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms and Media and Information Literacy Framework, while supporting Member States and partners in developing clear, human rights-based regulatory frameworks, strengthening digital citizenship and enhancing education systems through critical thinking and AI literacy.

UNESCO should further strengthen efforts to equip young people with the skills to critically assess information, recognize harmful narratives and engage constructively across differences. Protecting freedom of expression must go hand in hand with protecting independent, factual journalism and the safety of journalists, in line with the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, as a free and reliable information environment is essential to countering hate speech, disinformation and polarization without restricting legitimate expression. The urgency of this protection is clear: in 2024 UNESCO reported that journalist killings rose by 38% in 2022–2023, reaching 162, while the global impunity rate for journalist killings stood at 85% in 2024.

Responses should also account for differences across regional, linguistic, gender and socioeconomic contexts, as young people do not experience online harms equally across communities. The 2024 GEM Gender Report, *Technology on Her Terms*, highlights that increased engagement with digital platforms can expose youth, especially girls, to risks including reduced online safety and privacy, cyberbullying and harmful content. Particular attention should therefore be given to young people and communities disproportionately exposed to online harassment and hate speech, including through gender, ethnic, religious, linguistic or other forms of discrimination. Long-term resilience requires coordinated action across the UNESCO Family, bringing together Member States, youth, academia, civil society and the private sector to strengthen safe, inclusive and constructive digital participation while protecting freedom of expression and access to reliable information.

Combatting disinformation

18. **In your view, what are the main challenges related to information and communication today (disinformation, unequal access to information, artificial intelligence, privacy protection, freedom of expression, etc.)? How do you think they affect young people and societies?**

Emerging technologies are rapidly evolving and transforming the digital landscape. This enables the rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish between genuine content and content created to mislead. The design of social media platforms can incentivize engagement-driven content, with algorithms often amplifying sensationalist or polarizing material. Rapidly evolving technologies, including generative AI, are further complicating this landscape by enabling increasingly sophisticated synthetic and manipulated content, making it harder to distinguish reliable information from misleading content and to access and trust quality information.

Further, the digital divide therefore remains a significant barrier to equitable participation in digital societies, with high connectivity costs, unreliable electricity and limited access to information infrastructure disproportionately affecting rural, remote and crisis-affected communities. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2.6 billion people – 32% of the global population – remained offline in 2024, with access particularly limited in low-income countries. In many regions and contexts, exclusion and unequal access to digital spaces, compounded by barriers to reliable information and connectivity, shape how people understand and respond to elections, public health, climate change and other issues of collective concern. The divide is particularly pronounced in Africa: UNESCO reported in 2024 that only 46% of Africa's population, or approximately 646 million people, had access to the internet, highlighting the need for continued investment in connectivity and digital skills.

UNESCO should strengthen its efforts to promote meaningful and inclusive connectivity by advancing digital competencies, online safety and the effective integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning, while supporting policies and partnerships that help underserved communities benefit from digital opportunities. These efforts can be advanced through initiatives such as UNESCO, UNICEF and ITU's Gateways to Public Digital Learning, which support countries in developing accessible, inclusive, open, safe and secure public digital learning platforms. Media and information literacy should also be part of broader efforts to strengthen trust, protect privacy and improve access to reliable information, equipping young people to navigate increasingly complex digital environments critically. This should be complemented by inclusive governance, with young people – among the primary users of digital spaces – meaningfully engaged in the co-design of regulatory frameworks and educational strategies.

7/ Inclusiveness, dialogue and culture of peace

Reconciliation and Memory

19. **How should the teaching of the history of conflicts be designed without fuelling division or hate speech? What role can young people play in reconciliation, mediation and peace processes?**

The teaching of conflict history should be evidence-based and informed by multiple perspectives, while avoiding politicization, denialism and falling into narratives that divide. UNESCO and Member States should support teachers with appropriate training and resources to facilitate difficult discussions and connect historical memory with reconciliation and the prevention of future violence. UNESCO's Programme on Holocaust and Genocide Education provides a useful reference. History education should foster critical thinking, empathy and respect for human dignity while helping learners recognize how discrimination, hate speech and violence emerge.

UNESCO should also strengthen the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage through its Memory of the World Programme, recognizing archives, original documents, testimonies and other documentary sources as essential resources for evidence-based history education and the preservation of collective memory. Building on the 2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage including in digital form, such sources should be made accessible to educators and young people, including through digitization and educational resources. Young people should be supported as active contributors to reconciliation through oral-history and memory projects, intercultural dialogue, community mediation, cultural initiatives and digital efforts to counter disinformation and harmful narratives.

In line with UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, young people should be recognized not only as beneficiaries of peacebuilding efforts, but as active partners in conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding. Yet, youth inclusion remains limited in formal peace processes. As Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary A. DiCarlo stated in her 2024 remarks to the UN Security Council, the engagement of youth in peace processes continues to be minimal, representing a missed opportunity. By investing in young people's leadership while ensuring institutional commitment to historical truth, inclusion and justice, lasting reconciliation and social cohesion can be strengthened.

Mediation

20. **How can Member States and international organizations better protect access to education, science and cultural life for forcibly displaced populations or populations living in conflict zones?**

UNESCO, Member States and other International Organizations should strengthen coordinated, human rights-based and context-specific mechanisms to protect access to education, science and cultural life for forcibly displaced and conflict-affected populations, ensuring that they are recognized as essential rights and embedded as core components of humanitarian and development responses. Conflict and displacement should never result in the denial of fundamental rights to education, participation in scientific and professional life, or the preservation and transmission of cultural identity.

A key priority should be ensuring that educational qualifications are recognized and portable across borders. UNESCO should build on the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education and expand the UNESCO Qualifications Passport (UQP) for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants (UQP) to more host and transit countries, with stronger links to higher education admissions, recognition of prior learning and employment opportunities. This should be complemented by secure, portable digital credentials, simplified enrolment processes, bridging programmes and scholarships.

Moreover, Member States and UNESCO should strengthen preparedness and emergency response by protecting schools, universities, research institutions and cultural sites in line with international humanitarian law, while integrating education, science and culture into contingency planning and ensuring timely support for displaced students, teachers, researchers and cultural practitioners. Flexible learning and digital solutions should help maintain continuity, while complementing accessible non-digital public services and prioritizing children, youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. Responses should be locally led and participatory, enabling communities and young people to safeguard their languages, traditions and heritage. Finally, support for displaced populations should be treated as a shared international responsibility, requiring sustained cooperation, financing and common standards.

This document reflects the views and recommendations of the young people who participated in the consultation. It does not constitute an intergovernmental outcome or entail any commitments on the part of UNESCO or its Member States.
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