

Guidelines for the participants of the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum

The UNESCO Youth Forum

- In 1999, UNESCO became the first United Nations agency, at the time, to implement a youth engagement mechanism, the Youth Forum, in the context of the General Conference as the Organization's highest decision-making body. UNESCO being an intergovernmental organization, its General Conference consists of the representatives of the Organization's Member States. It meets every two years. It determines the policies and the main lines of work of the Organization and adopts its programmes and budget.
- For 26 years now, the Youth Forum has been a space where young people can express their views, share their challenges and propose relevant solutions. Through the years, the Forum has undergone innovations with a view to deepening its alignment to the needs and challenges of young people. The most recent editions have also aimed at designing concrete solutions to strengthen youth engagement through youth-to-youth cooperation and partnerships between UNESCO and young people and youth-led organizations, highlighting the non-governmental nature of this space.
- The theme of the 14th UNESCO Youth Forum, "Climate action and social impacts, particularly for young people" is aligned with the young people's expressed preference, and will ensure continuity with the 13th edition, for a greater and more lasting impact.
- The 13th edition of the Forum in 2023 resulted in tangible outcomes in the form of a call for action and global and regional recommendations, which were shared with Member States during the 42nd session of the General Conference. Five youth-led projects were also selected for implementation after the Forum and as part of the Global Youth Grant Scheme: on climate impact on people with disabilities (Nepal), climate education capacity-building in Petra (Jordan), mapping water-related risks (Argentina), youth mental health (Slovenia), and STEM for climate action (Malawi). See the Conclusions of the Youth Forum [here](#) (42 C/INF.13).
- Youth participants from the Forum will be selected to present its recommendations at the General Conference, ensuring their voices are heard by all 194 UNESCO Member States.

The Forum participants

- Have expertise in UNESCO's fields of competence and mandate as related to the theme of the Forum.
- Have demonstrated experience as active and engaged citizens in their communities, showcasing a commitment to creating positive change.

- Should reflect the different ways in which youth engage as active citizens: from participation in national youth councils to youth-led social enterprises, youth-led research, advocacy and media initiatives. As an ultimate goal, their perspectives should contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Are expected to bring new ideas and innovative solutions to the pressing challenges of our time.
- Are expected to contribute their perspectives to the global debate, enabling UNESCO and its Member States to integrate them into policy and programme development.
- Are expected to foster a constructive and inclusive environment for positive debate and exchange, focusing on substantive discussions while avoiding politicization.
- Are expected to respect each other's differences, embracing the diversity of cultures, experiences, and viewpoints.

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Selection criteria of the participants

The selection process will be transparent and inclusive, and based on the following criteria:

- Recognized expertise in UNESCO's fields of competence and relevant to the Forum's theme, and/or demonstrated experience in designing or leading impactful initiatives on the ground within the scope of UNESCO's work in this area
- Age range: 18-35 years old
- Gender balance
- Regional balance
- Balance in terms of experience/expertise in UNESCO's fields of competence
- Diversity of profiles, such as students, researchers/scientists/experts, practitioners, i.e. social entrepreneurs, NGO leaders, young staff in the United Nations and development organizations, representatives of youth constituencies, artists, social influencers, athletes.

From the recommendations received from National Commissions, the Secretariat will select one youth participant per National Commission.

From recommendations received from UNESCO partners, the Secretariat will select up to one-third of all youth representatives.