

# INTRODUCTION

Today's youth, over 1.8 billion people, are the biggest and most connected generation ever. Aged between 10 and 24, they are more aware of the fast-changing world around them – a world facing climate change, gender inequality, conflict, and differences between and within countries. People are living longer and populations are growing faster: especially in developing nations, youth are now finding it harder to get a job and are unsure what kinds of work will exist in the future.

At a time when information can be accessed in the blink of an eye, our world is increasingly being affected by misinformation and deepfakes.

Youth are already active in leading global movements and contributing to real change worldwide. It is clear that without involving and empowering young people, environmental conservation, sustainable development and peace cannot be achieved globally.

Raising young people's awareness of international cooperation, with the United Nations at its heart, and including them in the transformation of our societies, is necessary to ensure sustainable development and to shape a common future that includes everyone equally.

# FACTS

- ABOUT 264 MILLION CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE OUT OF SCHOOL
- THE PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH AGED 15 TO 24 KNOWN AS "DIGITAL NATIVES", IS MUCH HIGHER IN WEALTHIER COUNTRIES WITH BETTER INTERNET ACCESS
- NEARLY 600 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE IN SITUATIONS OF CONFLICT OR FRAGILITY
- 71 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE ARE UNEMPLOYED
- THERE IS A LARGER EDUCATIONAL GENDER GAP – MORE BOYS THAN GIRLS – IN THE COUNTRIES WITH THE BIGGEST YOUTH POPULATIONS
- HEALTH SPENDING IS LOWEST IN COUNTRIES WITH THE BIGGEST YOUTH POPULATIONS
- MANY YOUNG PEOPLE LACK ACCESS TO ADEQUATE HEALTH SERVICES, INCLUDING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

# WHAT MORE CAN I DO?

- Follow **#KidsWannaKnow**, which offers students opportunities to take part in discussions with experts on international cooperation topics such as human rights, the United Nations system and humanitarian work.
- Check out the **Eduki Foundation** which promotes education and awareness among young people about the work of international organizations and international cooperation.
- Learn more about **Young UN**, the **Major Group for Children and Youth**, the **UNESCO Youth Forum**, **Voices of Youth** and other youth groups focused on international cooperation.
- Join **Young Reporters at UN Geneva**, an exciting way for high school students interested in international affairs to engage with experts to research and write an article.
- Read the ***Iceberg series*** and other topical animated books on global issues.
- Watch videos from trusted sources such as the **UN**, the **Eduki Foundation** or the **World Federation of United Nations Associations** that explain global issues, and share your thoughts about how to find solutions to them.
- **Search for an NGO** located near you. Volunteering with a local group can help overcome local challenges. Contribute your ideas and watch them become a reality.
- Start your research in the **UN iLibrary**, an excellent tool for exploring the documents, treaties and conventions that guide global policy and international cooperation.

**STAY INFORMED, TAKE ACTION, BE THE CHANGE! JOIN THE DIALOGUE**

**Twitter:** @UNGeneva, @UNOGLibrary  
**Facebook:** UN Geneva  
**Instagram:** @UNGeneva  
**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/UNinformationGeneva>





# WHAT IS MULTILATERALISM?

The international multilateral system – with the United Nations at its core – works to prevent conflict by bringing countries and organizations together and supporting them in their efforts to achieve peace, rights and well-being for all of humanity.

At UN Geneva, these efforts often take the form of conferences, meetings, events, talks or discussions, which promote sustainable development and can peacefully resolve issues between parties.

# HOW CAN I LEARN MORE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

## LEARN ABOUT WORLD ISSUES AND BECOME AN ADVOCATE

Learn about the world issues that matter most to you and become an advocate to others, online and in person. Knowing about the issues and creating positive solutions can help encourage other people with similar ideas to take action and make change happen.

It is important to identify and avoid false information, by verifying your sources. Misinformation is a huge problem that can make issues harder to understand and resolve.

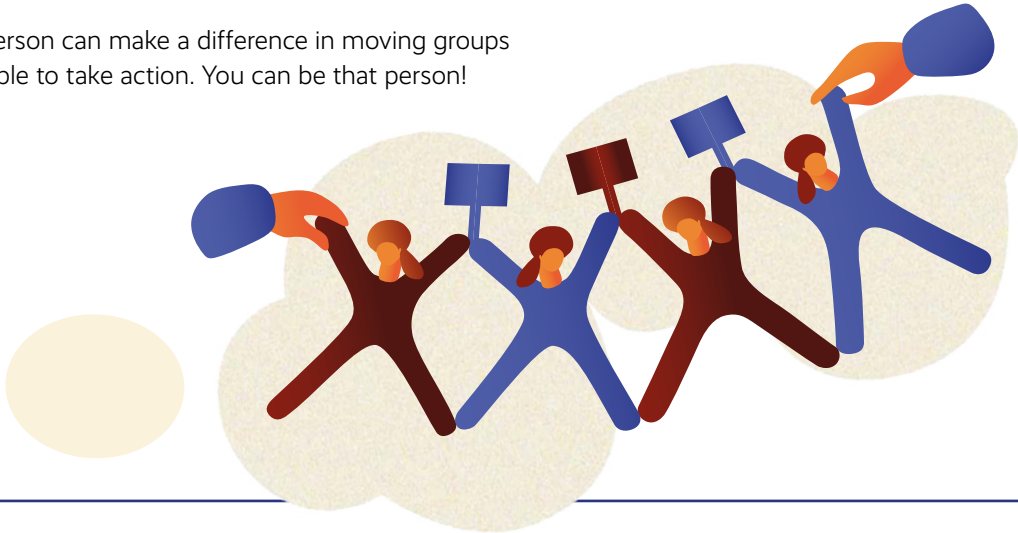
Young advocates need to know as much as they can about a subject, and find out who is responsible for making decisions and how to contact them. Even better, learn how to be in a decision-making position yourself!



## ENGAGE WITH AND MOBILIZE OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE

Be an advocate for the empowerment and meaningful participation of young people, especially the most marginalized and vulnerable youth. Forming groups online or in person, or a combination of both, will reach a large audience. Create messages and develop strategies that inspire action.

One person can make a difference in moving groups of people to take action. You can be that person!



*"It's easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer amount of constant negative news in the digital age. Problems around the world seem insurmountable, and it's difficult to believe that the small actions of individual young people can have an effect. But that's not the case; each positive action contributes to a better world, and the combined actions of young people are creating a generation of future leaders, already impacting the world in big ways."* - **Josie, 17 (Canada)**

## INCREASE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN INTERGOVERNMENTAL SPACES

Start a movement or an organization. Find a job or volunteer to work on the frontlines of political, environmental, developmental and humanitarian operations. There are a variety of youth-focused organizations within the United Nations that work for positive change through intergovernmental negotiations and UN processes, including UN Youth Volunteers, UN Environment's Young Champions of the Earth and the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth.

Through local, national and international organizations, you can work to support the causes that matter most to you and the people in your community.



*"I believe it is extremely important to talk to those who have completely different points of view. Exiting one's bubble and conversing with people who have differing points of view can open your eyes to alternate solutions to problems, and help people realize that despite differing points of view, we might have similar objectives. Never thinking that your ideas are the only correct ones is crucial to start civil and productive discussions."* - **Kane, 18 (United States of America)**

# CHALLENGES AHEAD:



Action, ingenuity and innovation are needed, for you to help overcome the planet's biggest challenges. This starts with becoming educated about the subjects, then taking action and teaching others about them. Young people, in both developing and developed countries, need to have the tools and knowledge to help guide policy, and to strive to find solutions to global problems through advocacy, participation, partnership and collaboration.

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a guide, UN Geneva continues to engage and empower youth to become leaders. As agents of change, youth must be able to recognize their potential to make a difference, to participate in developing their communities and the planet.

Global change is most successful when working within multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. These organizations must be committed to ensuring that they are inclusive, accountable, transparent and effective in supporting youth.

Important lessons of the past have proved that international cooperation really works. It is vital that young people continue to work with the United Nations and ensure that the Organization remains in touch with those it serves.

# SEVEN THINGS I CAN DO FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



Even though you might not be able to vote, all young people have national and international rights. Knowledge is power, so learn, enforce and protect your rights.

### LEARN ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES



What issues are directly affecting you? Whatever they may be, learning about the root causes of an issue can help you find solutions.

### SPEAK OUT



Educate and influence those around you. Speaking your mind, online and offline, can help raise awareness about issues you are passionate about, giving you more confidence and building support to achieve your goals.

### NETWORK



There are many inspirational young people doing amazing things for a better world. Reach out to them to learn about their challenges, efforts and initiatives.

### TAKE ACTION



Organize a public event, or work individually – pick up trash, feed stray animals, donate clothes after a disaster: however you want to solve a problem, you need to take action! If there are important issues that are going unaddressed, become the person who addresses them.

### HOST AN EVENT



Invite peers and decision makers to share their views and exchange ideas on an issue. Schools and local organizations can support these events. Be civil with each other, and try to learn what you have in common with others, as well as your differences.

### USE YOUR CREATIVITY AND SKILLS



Photography, arts and crafts, computer programming, dance, theatre, sports, street art: almost anything can be used to raise awareness of the issues you are most passionate about. Whatever your skills are, turn them into actions!