

Young people dialogue with the United Nations on advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

ECOSOC Youth Forum 2019

8-9 April 2019, New York, U.S.A



The Youth Forum was held under the theme 'Empowered, Included and Equal'.

By Victoria Ibiwoye, Executive Director and Founder, OneAfricanChild Foundation for Creative Learning

The President of the [Economic and Social Council](#) convened the [2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum](#) in New York; a platform for young leaders from around the world to engage in a dialogue with United Nations Member States and to share ideas on how to advance the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). Click [here](#) to read the Presidential Statement.

The Youth Forum was held under the theme 'Empowered, Included and Equal', which aligned with the theme of the [2019 High-level Political Forum \(HLPF\)](#) – 'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality'. The Youth Forum paralleled the HLPF in that it focused on the themes that will be reviewed at this year's

HLPF at the UN Headquarters in July. They include quality education (SDG 4), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), climate action (SDG 13), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16), and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17).

Victoria Ibiwoye, Executive Director of [OneAfricanChild Foundation for Creative Learning](#) and Youth Representative to the [SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee](#), moderated the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) breakout session. In her remarks, Victoria emphasised that, "Youth had a say in shaping the goals – and today we have even more of a role in achieving them – we are drivers of positive change. We have ideas and solutions because we see what is happening day after day in our schools, our universities, and our communities. Education is the foundation for realising all the other goals – for ending poverty, reducing inequalities, and empowering people to participate in their societies."



Victoria Ibiwoye, Executive Director of OneAfricanChild Foundation for Creative Learning and Youth Representative to the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, moderated the session on SDG 4 and emphasised that the youth have a say in achieving the SDGs as drivers of positive change.

The breakout session on SDG 4, focusing on education and lifelong learning for all, brought together over 120 youth representatives from across the world. The objectives of the session were to -

- Provide a platform for inclusive youth-centred discussions on SDG 4, to be reviewed during the upcoming HLPF.
- Address the challenges faced by youth in the field of education, focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised.
- Emphasize the contributions youth can make to achieve the youth-specific targets of SDG 4.
- Highlight success stories, networks, and opportunities for youth development and engagement.
- Develop a set of concrete recommendations for the acceleration of the progress on SDG 4.

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The youth-led and youth-driven interactive session highlighted the transformative power of education, with a special focus on the role of education, inclusion and equality, skills for the 21st century, and youth empowerment and inclusion. Inclusive education was recognised as a key driver of sustainable development, including for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and crucial for building peaceful sustainable and resilient societies. Yet, hundreds of millions of children, adolescents, and youth remain out of school or not learning. Among the most vulnerable and marginalised, 61% of the world's refugee children are out of school.

Some of the key recommendations that came of the interactive session were -

- Ensure the right to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all learners.
- Young people should have equitable opportunities to acquire skills for work and life through formal, informal, and non-formal education, both hard and soft skills.
- Youth should have access to quality and accessible training opportunities, such as internships and volunteering.
- Education should be recognised beyond economic returns to enable learners to be responsible agents of sustainable change and driving forces for social progress.
- Governments should include migrants, refugee, and other marginalised groups in the education systems and facilitate the recognition of their qualifications, skills, and competencies.
- Teachers should be provided with trainings to be able to address diversity and hardship.
- We call to support access to youth-friendly and right-based comprehensive sexuality education.
- Education for human rights and global citizenship education should be mainstreamed to fight discrimination, xenophobia, and violence.
- There should be more opportunities for active and meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes in their communities, as young leaders.



Some of the recommendations that came out of SDG 4 session included ensuring the right to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all learners, and providing equitable opportunities for youth to acquire skills for work and life through formal, informal, and non-formal education.

Key messages of the session will inform the final statement of the ECOSOC Youth Forum, which will be made available to the ECOSOC High Level Segment and the HLPF in July and September 2019, that will bring together Heads of States and governments to convene the first-ever comprehensively review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. [END]