The role of young people

Sustainable development concerns everyone, but young people and youth organisations play a central and indispensable role in the implementation of a sustainable future. Both, as agents for change and as young leaders in their own right.

1. The Right to Participate
Young people have a right to actively shape their own future. The right to participate is enshrined as a human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as in several other international instruments. Young people’s rights to participate are enshrined in the Critical Rights of Youth (CRY) and the Declaration of Human Rights of Young People.

2. Energy, Creativity and Innovation
Young people possess the energy, creativity and innovation to take on the challenge. And they possess a strong commitment to change the world for the better.

3. Intergenerational Solidarity
Youth organisations can champion intergenerational solidarity as a tool to overcome the vested interests of future generations.

4. At the Frontline of the Impacts
Young people are at the frontline of the impacts of unsustainable models. Young people have experienced the consequences of the serious economic, social, political and environmental problems inherited from previous generations.

5. Intergenerational Solidarity
Youth organisations can champion intergenerational solidarity as a tool to overcome the vested interests of future generations.

6. Work More Effectively
Through the framework of sustainable development, youth organisations can explore interconnections between policy areas, as well as the long-term impacts of policies, in order to work more effectively towards sustainable societies.

7. ADEQUATE RESOURCES
Governments need to ensure that adequate resources are collected and channelled towards sustainable ends.

Youth organisations are central actors in processes for participation. They represent young people’s voices and advocate for their rights and interests. Youth organisations are also engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The European Youth Forum (EYF), based on the experiences of more than 100 youth organisations, which bring together tens of millions of young people across Europe, calls on the European Union (EU) and its Member States to adopt a comprehensive framework for sustainable development.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals are the best tool we have to achieve a sustainable future.

To remain relevant in a fast-paced and digitalised world, young people need the right policies and a conducive institutional environment that is created with young people and for young people. The European Youth Forum calls on the European institutions and the Member States to adopt a comprehensive framework for sustainable development.

The European Youth Forum acknowledges youth as "critical agents enshrined in the 2030 Agenda, which are called to participate in the decisions shaping their own future. The right to participate is a human right and as rights-holders in the change process: sustainable development must involve young people as active agents for change and as rights-holders in the change process.

The European Youth Forum challenges the EU to adopt a comprehensive framework for sustainable development, which is created with young people and for young people, with the overarching goal of sustainable development.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals are the best tool we have to achieve a sustainable future.

Today young people meet with serious problems inherited from their parents such as poverty, inequality and climate change. Yet, young people are lacking the space to challenge the status quo in order to debate public policies and social norms. Young people possess the energy, creativity and passion to create a sustainable Europe. The European Youth Forum calls on European youth organisations and agents of their own to step up and take action.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should become the new yardstick for success for European Union members and a blueprint for success for Europe's youth organisations.

This call to action is based on policy positions adopted by the Member Organisations and the Board of the European Youth Forum. The European Youth Forum is the platform of youth organisations in Europe. We represent more than 100 youth organisations, which bring together tens of millions of young people across Europe.

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**THE CURRENT UNSUSTAINABLE PARADIGM**

- **Environmental Crisis**: Today, humanity uses on average 1.5 planet’s worth of natural resources and it could rise to 2.9 by 2050.
- **Societal Crisis**: A system that values economic growth and profit over people and planet.
- **Democratic Crisis**: Deterioration of trust and cohesion, growing inequality generally experience lower insecurity, way to poverty reduction. Societies with lower inequality generally experience better health and happiness levels.
- **Inequality Crisis**: Shrinking of local cultures and languages are disappearing.
- **Values Crisis**: The current system promotes values of individualism, competition and maximisation at the expense of others.
- **Social and Economic Crisis**: A system that values economic growth and profit over people and planet.
- **Economy**: A system that values economic growth and profit over people and planet.
- **Society**: A system that values economic growth and profit over people and planet.
- **Environment**: A system that values economic growth and profit over people and planet.

**HOW TO CHANGE: 5 ALTERNATIVE MODELS**

1. **New Economy**
   - **NEW ECONOMY**: A system that values wellbeing of both people and the planet must be a real game changer and eventually be scaled up globally.
   - **APPLICATION**: Changing the logic of organisations at the local level to one based on democracy and empowerment for local and gender equality and effectively realising the potential of women. The inclusion of marginalised groups.
   - **CHALLENGES**: Managing the transition from a traditional economic system to a new one is extraordinarily complex, the transition will require a fundamental change in how we value and measure wellbeing.
   - **RECOMMENDATIONS**:
     - **Business and civil society**: Design a finance system focused on the health, the environment, quality jobs with decent wages and working conditions, and the protection of workers’ organisations.
     - **Governments**: Implement policies that ensure a sustainable and socially just allocation of profits.
     - **Business**: Refuse to pay above the line of avoidance and be reviewed.
     - **Abolish**: The need for policy capture.
     - **New investments** in policies that benefit young people.

2. **A More Equal Society**
   - **MORE EQUALL SOCIETY**: A system that values wellbeing of current and future generations within planetary boundaries.
   - **APPLICATION**: Strong evidence of erosion of social cohesion and of the consequences for young people.
   - **CHALLENGES**: Providing quality education, both formal and informal, can be challenging for young people.
   - **RECOMMENDATIONS**:
     - **Recognise**: The limits of market solutions for funding of those measures.
     - **Ensure**: A just transition through education, training, and support the movement by setting the right policy parameters.
     - **Adopt**: Regulations to prevent political capture.
     - **Support**: The movement by setting the right policy parameters.

3. **Sustainable Production and Consumption**
   - **SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION**: A system that values wellbeing of current and future generations within planetary boundaries.
   - **APPLICATION**: Using alternative indicators measuring ‘wellbeing’ or ‘value’ by both people and the planet most require GDP, which is linked to measuring progress.
   - **CHALLENGES**: Measuring GDP as the dominant indicator of progress.
   - **RECOMMENDATIONS**:
     - **Measure**: A fundamental debate on which progress metrics and new society can be built on and linked to measuring progress.
     - **Adopt**: Alternative measures of progress based on sustainable development and the real wellbeing of people and planet.

4. **New Forms of Democracy**
   - **NEW FORMS OF DEMOCRACY**: A system that values wellbeing of current and future generations within planetary boundaries.
   - **APPLICATION**: The European Youth Forum has identified five areas where alternative approaches have the potential to result in great progress towards a sustainable future.
   - **CHALLENGES**: Fostering and support innovation, and ensuring access to sustainable models of progress.
   - **RECOMMENDATIONS**:
     - **Recognise**: The limits of market solutions for funding of those measures.
     - **Ensure**: A just transition through education, training, and support the movement by setting the right policy parameters.
     - **Adopt**: Regulations to prevent political capture.

5. **Alternative Measures of Progress**
   - **ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF PROGRESS**: A system that values wellbeing of current and future generations within planetary boundaries.
   - **APPLICATION**: The European Youth Forum has identified five areas where alternative approaches have the potential to result in great progress towards a sustainable future.
   - **CHALLENGES**: Fostering and support innovation, and ensuring access to sustainable models of progress.
   - **RECOMMENDATIONS**:
     - **Recognise**: The limits of market solutions for funding of those measures.
     - **Ensure**: A just transition through education, training, and support the movement by setting the right policy parameters.
     - **Adopt**: Regulations to prevent political capture.

**THE SUSTAINABLE PARADIGM**

- **Social Justice**: A high priority is the importance of solidarity among and within communities and countries, respect for human rights and recognition of the universal rights of people. The wellbeing of young people is at the heart of our global agenda.
- **Conservation of Natural Resources**: A system that values wellbeing of both people and the planet.
- **Economy**: A system that values wellbeing of both people and the planet.
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**THE CURRENT UNSUSTAINABLE PARADIGM**

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