



Summit of the Future Action Days Side Event

Accelerating Opportunities for Young People - Transforming Responsible Leadership Education Together

20 September 2024, 16:45-18:00, UNHQ

Organized by: UN Global Compact, Principles of Responsible Management (PRME), and Singapore

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Given that the private sector is one of the key drivers in global development, engagement with businesses is crucial to accelerate action on the SDGs. However, 96% of chief academic officers believe that they are preparing young people well for the workforce, while only 41% of university students and 11% of business leaders share that same view. The data show there is a great mismatch, and the immense need for more engagement/discussions among all stakeholders to ensure young people are ready to lead in the world of work and respond to the 2030 crisis. UN Global Compact and PRME together with relevant partners held a side-event (to the Summit of the Future) entitled “Accelerating Opportunities for Young People - Transforming Responsible Leadership Education Together” gathering stakeholders from various disciplines to discuss the importance of responsible leadership education and what is needed to address the mismatch mentioned above as well addressing climate change, digital transformation, and beyond. Invitees included civil society, young people, academia, researchers, governments, UN officials, private sector, and more.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- There are 1.8 billion young people in the world between the ages of 10-24, and there were discussions on how to create more opportunities for young people to engage through responsible leadership education.

- Youth mentioned that there is a need to move away from cosmetic engagements with youth to more meaningful action to create actual impact together with young people.
- Stakeholders mentioned the need to advocate for responsible leadership that can enable and amplify youths' voices and provide them with the resources they need.
- Participants highlighted that education is not just about schools but also that education is a network that needs to flourish in communities/families, etc. There is a need to rethink education as different types of education are needed in different contexts.
- Change is needed, and the private sector has a big influence in education. However, youth, businesses, and business schools are not speaking in the same language; thus, meaningful engagements and discussions between youth, the private sector, academia, and other stakeholders need to continue.
- Several participants also mentioned that SDG 4 (Education) cannot be achieved without SDG 5 (Gender); thus, gender must also be at the center of discussions. In addition, data regarding a youth survey conducted globally was shared, which stated that the top priority for youth was actually learning how to live together again (the environment was a secondary concern).
- Several participants mentioned that inequality is also a big challenge for young people. Systems are replicating the same structures that allow those inequalities to exist; thus, those systems need to be addressed (i.e., opportunities for youth to be meaningfully engaged).
- The need for providing more green/digital skills opportunities and skills that are dynamic in an ever-changing world were also discussed.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- All stakeholders need to engage youth meaningfully with concrete dialogue and actions and without tokenistic engagements. Youth should be involved in every step of all processes rather than after decisions have been made.
- Policymakers and other relevant stakeholders need to provide educational opportunities that provide more digital/green skills and skills that are dynamic to an ever-changing environment.
- Decision-makers need to invest more in education and green policies.
- Work with diverse populations (including women, indigenous communities, people with disabilities, etc.) to understand unique needs in the intersection of youth engagement.
- Continue to support education for sustainable development within responsible leadership education as climate action cannot take place without education.

Webpage to find more information: www.unprme.org