

Attachment

Insights, Opportunities & Recommendations



A Collective Evaluation

Youth Engagement at the UN Summit of the Future

DECEMBER 1 | 2024

The authors of this letter and Attachment consist of 57 individuals from 26 different countries, a majority of whom are from the Global South, and all of whom were active participants in the Summit of the Future processes, either through formal online fora or in-person events. The views expressed by individuals in this publication solely reflect the views of the 57 young people under the age of 30 consulted post-Summit of the Future and are not a representation of the views, policy, or position of their organisations, sponsors, or partners.

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A Collective Evaluation

The Summit of the Future

This Attachment provides a **Collective Evaluation** of the arrangements relied on to support the engagement of young people at the 2024 Summit of the Future and Action Days.

We weave our analysis from Global North and South, across hemispheres, 6 different continents, and 26 different countries. While our experiences as young people are unique and diverse, this evaluation presents a **common position** that the arrangements did not deliver on the ambitions or principles outlined in the Secretary-General's third Policy Brief, *Meaningful Youth Engagement in Policymaking and Decision-making Processes*.

Our Evaluation

We present a two-part evaluation:

1. Analysis of **four areas** in which we see opportunities for further alignment with the vision of Policy Brief 3.
2. **Recommendations** for the UN Youth Office to strengthen the engagement of young people and have a meaningful impact on upcoming multilateral events.

Insights & Opportunities

1

Minimising the gap between inputs gathered from young people and their impact on decision-making and outcomes:

While some opportunities were provided for young people to contribute to the design and development of processes at the Summit, these opportunities were limited for those without a formal role, and there was a clear gap between inputs and final outcomes. Moreover, the timing at which young people were invited to contribute was often only at the announcement of major decisions, such as the Pact for the Future, by which it was too late for inputs to meaningfully count or impact multilateral outcomes. While the existence of some networks and groups, such as the imPACT Coalitions facilitated a degree of participation for young people, there was a lack of access to timely information and no transparent follow-up mechanism by which young people could remain informed about how their inputs had been used to shape the final outcome documents or events.

2

Ensuring systematic and structured resourcing to support the inclusive, diverse, and affordable participation of a sufficient quorum of young people:

While some funding supports were available to support the participation of young people, the narrow cross-section of young people present at the Summit

suggests these resources fell short of what is needed to support the participation of young people in all of their diversity. For the most part, it was young people from sponsored institutions and privileged backgrounds who could afford to volunteer their time and money to pay out-of-pocket expenses that actually attended the event. This meant that the voices and knowledge systems of young people in the Global South and Indigenous communities were sorely missing. Because of this, the contributions of young people struggled to be sufficiently representative of the voices of young people worldwide. Greater resourcing could have also supported the provision of a more culturally-safe and age-appropriate environment for children and young people.

3

Providing additional guidance and training opportunities to equip young people for success and meaningful collaboration: While we celebrate the diversity of young people who overcame immense barriers to participate in the high-level week, they were challenged in coordinating across constituencies from different countries and regions. This meant that the engagement of young people was not as efficient, targeted, or effective as it could have been. It also meant there was significant variation in the equity of the experiences of young people who

participated from civil society versus from an institutionally sponsored position. Additionally, there was restricted access to clear, timely, and accessible information about the Summit itself beyond what was on the Summit website and limited additional support offered to young people in navigating the complexities of the UN system, often for the first time. For engagement to be meaningful, young people need to be equipped to think critically and systematically about the future. Additional guidance, training and upskilling opportunities prior to the Summit and Action Days would have enabled young people to develop the literacy, awareness, and confidence to succeed and participate meaningfully in the decision-making processes.

4

Ensuring equal partnership between young people and key decision-makers:

The opportunities for young people to engage in spaces with key decision-makers such as Member State delegates and key UN actors were limited. Without designated seats at the decision-making table, the engagement of young people without institutional sponsorship was reduced to occurring through UN intermediaries, such as volunteers and interns from the UNV and YPP programs. This reflects unequal partnership between young people and decision-makers. Moreover, when young people did gain access to decision-making spaces, they found themselves treated largely as spectators, creating an impression of showmanship, rather than a commitment to genuine equal partnership.

Our Recommendations

1 Transparency in the use of young people's knowledge

Make available transparent information on how young people's information and knowledge are used and interpreted to inform the outcomes of multilateral multi-stakeholder policy and decision-making processes.

2 Expand and increase funding

Expand and increase the funding allotment of the UN Youth Office that supports the participation young people at the UN-level to ensure that this participation is rights-based, inclusive, accessible, diverse and, that young people have the opportunity to participate, regardless of their race, sex, language, religion, age, ethnicity, gender identity, disability, migrant, or economic status. This expansion should include the introduction of dedicated funding allotments to support the engagement of young people from non-UN affiliated agencies and organisations.

3 Implement and strengthen cultural safeguards

Implement and strengthen cultural safeguards to protect children and young people's mental and physical wellbeing, as well as protect them from threats and attacks during their participation in multilateral multi-stakeholder decision-making processes. This includes making available and clearly indicating contact-points for young people to report feeling culturally unsafe, as well as designated Safe Spaces for young people to decompress amidst what is a highly intensive and overwhelming environment.

4 Timely and clear information

Make available timely, up-to-date, clear, diversity-sensitive, and age-appropriate information to young people leading up to and throughout the high-level week or event. This should extend beyond the general microsites created to disseminate information to other stakeholders, and encompass efforts to communicate and make accessible information to young people that is youth-specific, including information about their expected role and rights. Greater attentiveness should be given to the language used to communicate with young people, ensuring that it does not mislead, or convey an inaccurate expectation of what young people's participation or role in the event will be.

Our Recommendations

5 A UN Building Access Key

Co-design and create a UN Building Access Key that describes the physical features of the building where the event is occurring, with visuals, and how to access them. This key should be shared with young people prior to their arrival at the high-level week or event, enabling them to adequately prepare and have greater agency and control over how they participate.

6 Central communication mechanism

Design and provide a central mechanism such as a digital hub or app through which young people from different groups, coalitions, entities, and constituencies can coordinate and collaborate on their engagement. This mechanism should facilitate greater interactivity and collaboration between institutionally-sponsored young people from UN entities or Delegate Programmes, and young people from civil society organisations or there of their own accord.

7 Training and capacity building opportunities

Provide additional and clear opportunities for young people to seek guidance, capacity and literacy building, and training to adequately prepare to participate fully, meaningfully, and effectively in policy and decision-making processes.

8 Equal partnership

Ensure that young people are explicitly recognised as equal partners in the documents outlining the processes and procedures for high-level weeks and events. This recognition must be reinforced with clear definitions of the role young people will play in processes and procedures, that reflects equality compared to other actors. This definition should outline a role for young people that is interactive, rather than passive.

9 Designated seats for young people

Designate specific seats for young people in the official sessions, negotiations and events (including side-events) that take place in the lead-up to and during high-level weeks and other occasions to reduce unequal power dynamics and competition between young people and other actors for participation.



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