

Overall Goal

Youth Forum is a pre-event of the **World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (WCECCE)**. It is an opportunity to recognize young people for their efforts to transform ECCE through leading initiatives, advocating for the right to education, and supporting projects that ensure foundational learning for children and youth. The position of young people, as future parents, educators, and key partners in the achievement of SDG 4 in 2030 is critical in the discussion of the development of the Tashkent Framework for Action. Therefore, this session aims to be a starting point of continuous dialogue and commitment from young people to act and create better education and care for early childhood.

For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines 'youth' as persons aged between 15 and 24. However, this definition is not universal. As the experience of being young can vary substantially across the world, between countries and regions, we consider 'youth' as a flexible category. As such, context is always an important guide in UNESCO's definition of youth." In this framework, in some areas of our work, we go up to 35 years old (as the upper limit), which corresponds to the limit of the youth definition in Africa, and in many other Member States around the world.

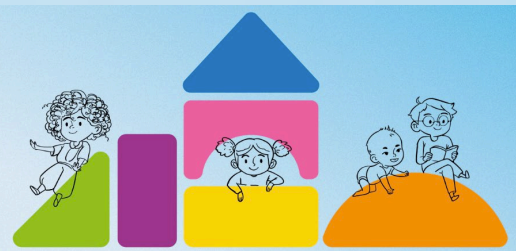
Estimates indicate that young people between 15 and 24 years of age number 1.21 billion and account for 15.5 per cent of the global population. Projections suggest that the youth cohort will reach 1.29 billion (15.1 per cent of the world total) by 2030 and almost 1.34 billion (13.8 per cent of the overall population) by 2050 (United Nations 2019ⁱ).

Youth Engagement in ECCE

Young people as educators

There is very little hard data on young educators in the field of ECCE. The limited data and studies on young educators in ECCE suggest that in general young people are not receiving enough attention in the field. Available studies suggest that the share of young people in the ECCE workforce varies across countries. The TALIS survey among OECD countries shows that the greatest share of staff (on average 52.5 percent) in ECCE is between age 30 and age 49 and





on average more than 20 percent of staff are aged above 501. In 2020, on average only 19% of ECCE teachers in OECD countries were under 30 years old². The age disequilibrium indicates that while a significant proportion of the workforce is nearing retirement, the field is not attracting enough young people to enter the workforce. Compared to OECD countries, past research has indicated that the ECCE workforce tends to be younger in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Younger teachers – those under 30 – make up 20 to 40 percent, on average, of the pre-primary workforce in LMICs³. The higher proportion of young teachers is partly the result of the expansion of pre-primary education and therefore increased demand for teachers. The pressure of enrolment increase also has led to relaxed standards and training/hiring shortcuts⁴. Studies have shown that many ECCE teachers in LMICs do not meet the national minimum requirement and have limited access to good quality in-service and professional development opportunities⁵. Existing research has revealed that young educators in ECCE are either underrepresented (in most OECD countries) or underqualified and under supported (in LMICs countries).

Young people as parents

Parents are also important actors in early childhood care and education. The quality of parenting children receive during childhood has a significant impact on their developmental competence and eventually their lifespan trajectories⁶. Young parents are therefore a group that needs to be included in the discussion of youth and ECCE. While the adolescent birth rate (ABR), the annual number of births of women aged 15-19 years per 1,000 women in that age group, has decreased globally, early childbearing remains a prominent phenomenon, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Globally, an estimated 15 per cent of young women give birth before age 18 (UNICEF, 2021⁷). In 2020, while the average ABR in high-income countries was 11, the rates in low-income and middle-income countries were 37 and 92 respectively

¹ OECD (2019), *Providing Quality Early Childhood Education and Care: Results from the Starting Strong Survey 2018*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/301005d1-en>.

² OECD Statistic <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=113482>

³ Wallet, P. (2006). Pre-primary teachers: A global analysis of several key education indicators. Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007 “Strong foundations: Early childhood care and education” (2007/ED/EFA/MRT/PI/32).

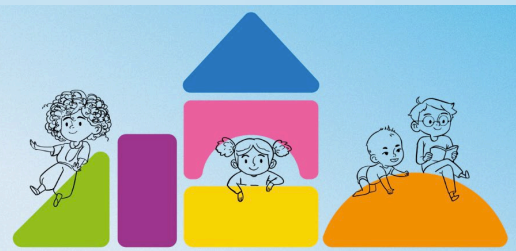
⁴ Right beginnings: Early childhood education and educators: Global Dialogue Forum on Conditions of Personnel in Early Childhood Education, Geneva, 22–23 February 2012/International Labour Office, Sectoral Activities Department. Geneva, ILO, 2012. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_171717.pdf

⁵ Neuman, M. J., Josephson, K., & Chua, P. G. (2015). A review of the literature: early childhood care and education (ECCE) personnel in low-and middle-income countries. *Early Childhood Care and Education Working Papers Series, 4*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000234988>

⁶ Sanders, M. R., & Turner, K. M. (2018). The importance of parenting in influencing the lives of children. In *Handbook of parenting and child development across the lifespan* (pp. 3-26). Springer, Cham.

⁷ <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-health/adolescent-health/>





(World Bank⁸). As of 2019, the number of estimated births to adolescent girls aged between 15-19-year-olds was 12.8 million, with an estimated 12.4 million of which were in LMICs (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs⁹). Although the importance of efforts to reduce and prevent early childbearing, the existing large number of young parents and their influence as caregivers on the childhood development of their children is also a subject that should not be ignored.

Besides being educators and parents, young people can also play other roles in ECCE. They can be leaders, innovators and advocates etc. However, young people, their involvement and contribution as well as the difficulties they face while participating in the field of ECCE are not adequately recognized and addressed. The Youth Forum provides an opportunity to facilitate communication and motivate future initiatives to promote and support youth engagement in ECCE.

Challenges

One major impediment to achieving SDG 4.2 Target (ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education) is the lack of capable ECCE teachers. A massive increase in their numbers is required for countries to fulfil the goal of universal pre-primary education, especially in LMICs¹⁰. Exploring how young people, as a component of the current ECCE workforce and the potential source of future educators, can be more actively engaged may present an opportunity to address existing challenges in the field of ECCE. As pointed out, young educators and their engagement in ECCE are not given enough attention in the field. Policies and interventions should first recognize the importance of youth and encourage greater involvement of young people in ECCE. At the same time, the obstacles and challenges young educators face when entering and working in the profession cannot be ignored. Studies have shown that teachers in ECCE face difficulties such as low earning quality, lack of resources, having too many children in the classroom, limited availability and accessibility of professional training¹¹, which may put beginning young educators under significant stress and undermine their motivation to enter and stay in the field. Therefore, it is also important to ensure promotive and effective support for young educators and their professional development to promote youth engagement in the ECCE workforce.

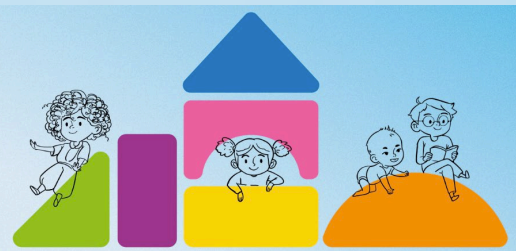
⁸ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT>

⁹ <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Fertility/>

¹⁰ UNICEF. (2019). A World Ready to Learn: Prioritizing *quality early childhood education* <https://www.unicef.org/media/57926/file/A-world-ready-to-learn-advocacy-brief-2019.pdf>

¹¹ OECD (2019), *Providing Quality Early Childhood Education and Care: Results from the Starting Strong Survey 2018*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/301005d1-en>.





Regarding young parents, adolescent pregnancy tends to be higher among those with less education or from low socio-economic backgrounds and young parents are often the most disadvantaged and socially excluded parents¹². Compared with other parents, young parents are found to be more likely to experience poverty, poor mental health and social deprivation. These issues might also affect their ability to parent their children. Disadvantaged circumstances young parents face, including the difficulties they experience with parenting, also may put their children at risk of poor physical, cognitive, educational, and social outcomes¹³. It is vital that young parents are supported to involve in early childhood care and education of their children. Also, for improved outcomes of both young parents and their children, besides involving young parents as caregivers, interventions and support should also pay attention to the well-being and development of the young parents themselves.

Objectives

To achieve and further SDG 4.2 and scaling up quality ECCE policies and programmes, youth engagement is critical and indispensable. The engagement of the young people, alongside the achievements of WCECCE with the engagement of other stakeholders, aims to develop effective and accountable ECCE policies and systems. Voices and agencies of youth will be critical in the discussions of the development of the Tashkent Framework for Action.

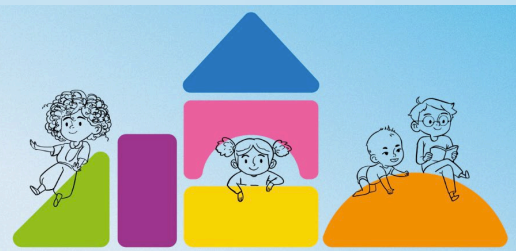
The specific **objectives** of the Youth Forum to achieve these objectives are to:

- **Engage young people in the development of the Tashkent Framework for Action.** The Youth Forum will be an opportunity to make suggestions and recommendations to the Tashkent declaration of the WCECCE.
- **Encourage and sensitize the (future) leaders, educators and parents.** Allow the change to start in the minds of new generation.
- **Make young engagement continuous.** Ensure the link and continuity between advancement in education and the voices and representations of young people.
- **Exchange ideas between youth.** Connect youth community to exchange ideas, knowledge and experiences.
- **Value the differences, advance inclusion.** Ensure the diversity of young people to better understand the needs and further reaffirm the quality of ECCE.

¹² Abbott, L., & Langston, A. (2006). *Parents Matter: Supporting the Birth to Three Matters Framework*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

¹³ Goossens, G., Kadji, C., & Delvenne, V. (2015). Teenage pregnancy: a psychopathological risk for mothers and babies?. *Psychiatria Danubina*, 27(suppl 1), 499-503.





Themes

The two themes, proposed for the Youth Forum are in line with the themes of WCECCE and are as follows:

- **Youth Engagement & Innovation**

The first section of the Youth Forum puts a focus on youth engagement to reaffirm that youth as educators, parents and other roles could and should be key partners in ECCE and call for the development of policies and initiatives that promote and support greater engagement of young people in the field. Also, the section wants to pay attention to innovation, as innovation may foster greater youth engagement and in turn youth engagement may stimulate innovation. The Youth Forum aims to identify existing and potential innovative forms of youth participation in ECCE and also innovative approaches initiated by young practitioners in the field, which can contribute to more effective and sustainable development of ECCE.

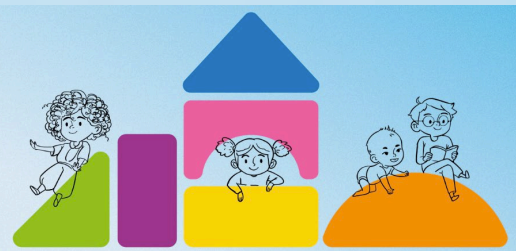
- **Inclusion, quality, and well-being for young parents**

As mentioned, young parents and young educators face many difficulties when engaging in ECCE which may affect the sustainability and the quality of their involvement. The second part of the Youth Forum therefore aims to address these issues and facilitate development and implementation of strategies that 1) are inclusive for young parents and young educators 2) provide support to increase the quality of their participation and 3) take into account the well-being of young parents and educators.

Expected Outcomes and Outputs

1. The expected outcome of the session is increased awareness of the role of young people in strengthening ECCE and produce two or three commitments (one page) that will be taken into consideration on the Tashkent Declaration and Commitments to Action for Transforming Early Childhood Care and Education.
2. Additionally, it will be the identification of initiatives and innovative projects coming from the youth on ECCE.





Youth Social Media Campaign

Youth Forum is expected to have short-term and long-term achievements motivated by ensuring youth's commitment is reflected in the Tashkent declaration. Accordingly, the proposed social media campaign to the youth networks:

- Social media will be one of the main means to engage youth influencers like the @UNYouthEnvoy and other ambassadors for early childhood education as well as the social media campaign of the world conference #EducationStartsEarly.

It will allow for building momentum and increase visibility in the lead-up to the conference. Through this engagement, all the young people who are willing to commit will find a place to make themselves heard.

Venue and format

Place: Tashkent Conference Center, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Time: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, 13 November (Tashkent time)

Format: Hybrid (in-person and online)

Languages: English, French and Uzbek

Link: https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sWGfkhUeSkCrJDorEAI08Q

Draft Agenda

Youth Forum - Thursday, 13 November 2022

10:30 – 11:10

Innovation & Youth Engagement

Moderator: Ms Kenisha Arora, Youth Representative on the SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC), Canada

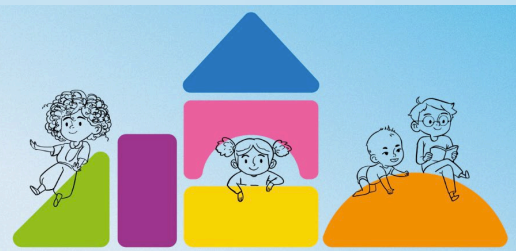
Mentimeter session

Testimony: Mr Rustam Koriev, ESL teacher and trainer at the English language education center "My school", Uzbekistan

Panel discussion

- Technology Innovation: Ms Armel Azihar, member of the SDG4YOUTH, Comoros





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Engagement: Mr Ilan Enverga, member of the SDG4YOUTH, Philippines <p>Q&A</p>
<p>11:10 - 12:30</p>	<p>Inclusion, quality and well-being for young parents</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Anantha K. Duraiappah, Director, UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP)</p> <p>Panel discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Monika Lütke-Entrup, Head of Unit, Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium Ms Shakhnoza Ganieva, Embassy of the United States in Tashkent Young parent Ms Maria Camila Londono Aristizabal, Ph.D. Candidate in Psychology UNESCO Chair: Early childhood and inclusive early intervention at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

ⁱ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2020/10/WYR2020-Intro.pdf>

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