Your Voice Matters: Shaping our actions for UN Summit of the Future

Information

Date: 6th September 2024

Location: Learning Planet Institute | Online

Participants: Over 50 participants, attendees represented every continent, ranging in age from 20 to 45

Meeting Purpose
The youth consultation workshop aimed to gather input from a diverse group of youth in advance of the UN Summit for the Future. The event sought to create a platform dialogue on issues such as the future of global governance and policy-making, particularly around education and youth engagement.

Key Takeaways

- **Inclusivity and Collaboration**: There was a strong emphasis on inclusivity and collaboration when co-designing future learning institutions and policies.
- **Youth Engagement**: The need for improved accessibility and engagement methods to involve more young people in decision-making processes was highlighted.
- **Intergenerational Dialogue and Indigenous Knowledge**: Participants stressed the importance of fostering intergenerational dialogue and incorporating indigenous knowledge to enrich global discussions on the future.
- **Technology as an Enabler**: Technology was seen as a key tool for aggregating diverse voices and opinions, making global dialogue more inclusive.

Opening Icebreaker

Participants were asked how they felt about the future—whether they were optimistic, pessimistic, or neutral. The responses were:

- **5** felt negative about the future.
- **19** felt positive about the future.
- **9** felt agnostic or neutral.

Comments from the Icebreaker (Pola Game)

- **Optimistic View**:
  - **Participant 1**: Very optimistic, feeling there is much to learn and discover. Believes the future is heading toward a more caring and inclusive world where young people are increasingly involved in leadership and change-making.
- **Pessimistic View**:
  - **Participant 2**: Feels pessimistic, citing the lack of progress towards sustainability goals and human rights issues. He finds the news and headlines overwhelming.
  - **Participant 3**: Despite being very involved, she feels a lack of agency to drive meaningful change, citing the challenges of physical and mental health as demotivating factors. She also noted that acting alone made the task seem daunting.
- **Neutral View**:
  - **Participant 4**: Takes a neutral stance, believing that feelings about the future can fluctuate depending on the day.
- **Positive but Community-Dependent View**:
  - **Participant 5**: Generally positive but recognizes that this depends heavily on her network and community.
- **Chat Comments**:
  - Many participants expressed hope, emphasizing that there are many tools and technologies available to help shape the future.

Breakout Room Key Takeaways

Group 1: Codesigning the Future of Learning with Youth - Learning Planet Institute

This group explored the idea of co-designing educational institutions that are responsive to current societal challenges. The concept of co-design, as discussed by participants, emphasizes inclusivity, creativity, and shared decision-making. Key themes that emerged include:

1. **Inclusion of Marginalized Communities**: Several participants stressed the importance of incorporating the needs of marginalized communities into the design process. They advocated for empowering the disadvantaged by leveraging the support of privileged individuals, allowing for a more diverse and inclusive educational environment.
2. **Real Decision-Making Power for Youth**: Participants highlighted the necessity of giving youth actual influence in decision-making processes, rather than token consultation. For example, Zineb stressed the need for education to be hands-on and connected to real-world experiences, such as climate change and social justice.
3. **Experiential Learning and Diversity**: Many contributors emphasized experiential learning and the inclusion of diverse voices. They described an ideal learning institution

where students learn through real-life challenges, such as farming to understand climate change or visiting the Global South to grasp decolonial issues. They advocated for moving away from standardized education models to embrace diverse perspectives.

4. **Visions for the Future of Learning**: Participants encouraged envisioning multiple positive futures, discussing potential solutions, and considering mechanisms that could create a functioning society by 2050. They stressed the difficulty but importance of involving both experienced professionals and youth in co-design, especially when addressing major global issues like climate change and poverty.

In summary, the co-design approach for learning institutions calls for genuine youth participation, a focus on diversity, real-world problem-solving, and adaptability to societal challenges.

Group 2: Future Generations Policy - Building on the 'Future Generations' Track of the Summit of the Future

This group focused on ensuring the wellbeing of future generations through policy-making, touching on key topics like sustainability, education, and intergenerational dialogue. Key insights include:

1. **Inclusive Decision-Making**: A strong emphasis was placed on including different generations, particularly youth, in decision-making processes. As Anya from India mentioned, it's crucial to avoid assuming the needs of communities and instead listen directly to their voices. Yelena highlighted the importance of creating spaces where youth and elders can meet, fostering skill development and mutual support.
2. **Education and Sustainability**: Many participants, including Faiz, stressed the need for educational systems to be time-relevant and responsive to future challenges. Ananya Anand suggested teaching youth about global citizenship, human rights, and climate change to prepare them for leadership roles. Others, like Zineb, advocated for reducing external pressures (e.g., international debt) to focus on local justice, education, and healthcare systems.
3. **Building Resilient Institutions**: Zineb proposed that future generations' well-being requires creating resilient institutions that are tailored to local contexts, avoiding over-reliance on external forces. This would allow for long-term growth while protecting sovereignty and addressing community-specific issues.
4. **Technology and Data-Driven Governance**: Faiz emphasized the use of technology in governance to collect comprehensive data from citizens, which would serve as the foundation for predictive policymaking. This data-driven approach would ensure policies are proactive, targeting areas like education, healthcare, and sustainability to benefit future generations.

In summary, this group focused on developing inclusive, data-driven policies that prioritize sustainability, education, and intergenerational collaboration to ensure the well-being of future generations.

Group 3: Building Hopeful Futures through Multilateral Collaboration (SOIF)

Guiding Questions:

- How can multilateral spaces (e.g., UN, G20, AU) better represent intergenerational voices and ensure the wellbeing of future generations?
- What steps can countries take to collaborate more effectively for the future?
- How can institutions like the UN make intergenerational voices more meaningful?

Summary of Discussions:

- **Representation from All Levels**: Voices from different regions and local communities must be represented in global decision-making, moving beyond just capital cities (Benedicta, Diana).
- **Leveraging Technology for Collaboration**: AI and digital platforms should facilitate global input, making it easier for everyone to contribute their perspectives and opinions (Julie, Cynthia).
- **Access to Platforms & Education**: There is a need to create accessible platforms and use in-person education, particularly in schools, to raise awareness of global issues (Catia).
- **Big-Picture Vision**: Participants emphasized the need for a comprehensive and hopeful vision for the future, which includes tackling major global challenges like ocean restoration and Arctic ice management (Steve Willis).
- **Global Collaboration Platforms**: Technology, such as the World Systems Solutions platform, can enable long-term global collaboration focused on sustainability (Sammi Berwick).

Group 4: Futures of Well-Being: UNESCO Futures Literacy

In advance of the youth consultation, the participants were asked to provide some key priorities to bring forward at the Summit of the Future. One priority that was raised by many included 'well-being'. This was an opportunity to unpack the various interpretations of well-being, understand what some common youth visions were in relation to the future of well-being, and what key milestones and which key actors were required in order to achieve that vision.

Guiding Questions:

- What is your vision of well-being in 2054?

- How will well-being look in different roles, such as a teacher, parent, or government official?
- What are the key milestones and who are the important actors for achieving this vision?

Summary of Discussions:

- **Mental Health and Digital Well-being**: In 2054, there will be greater access to mental health resources, with new technological tools supporting well-being. Digital well-being will be critical as the world becomes more digital (Tariq Lawal).
- **Prevention and Early Intervention**: There will be a stronger emphasis on preventing health issues through early intervention, with healthcare systems shaped by multigenerational input (Catia Snyman).
- **Culturally-Specific Development**: Well-being should focus on self-acceptance and cultural diversity. Development models should be tailored to each country's unique identity rather than being driven by globalization (Zineb Ben Abderrazik).
- **Inclusive Infrastructure and Youth Participation**: Future infrastructure must be inclusive and safe for all, especially women in lower- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Youth should play a key role in policy creation and implementation (Prof. Dr. Prerana Arora Singh).
- **Cultural Transformation for Well-being**: Structural changes in organizations and education systems must promote well-being and psycho-emotional awareness through research and a cultural shift (Manon Sala).
- **Climate and Well-being**: Addressing climate crises (e.g., SDGs 13, 14, 15, and 6) is essential for long-term well-being and survival (Steve Willis).
- **Collaboration and Education**: Human security is central to well-being, requiring collaboration across all sectors and transformative, lifelong education to create a more human-centered future (Janani Ramanathan).

Pictures: