United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

16th meeting, 10 and 11 May 2021

Information Paper 2

Summary notes of the side event of UNECE Steering Committee on ESD "*ESD as a key driver for youth empowerment for confronting socio-economic impact of Covid-19*", organised in the framework of 2021 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development[1]

Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda:
Implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development: Regional framework of cooperation for sustainable development: participation in the 2021 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and outcomes of the side event organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development in the framework of the Forum

Prepared by the Secretariat

---

[1] This information document was not formally edited

Regional forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region
Geneva and online
10 March 2021 12:15
SIDE EVENT OF UNECE STEERING COMMITTEE ON ESD: *ESD AS A KEY DRIVER FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR CONFRONTING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19*

Opening segment:

Chair of SC:

- Thanked participants, members of SC, observers, representatives of international organizations.
- Introduced herself and briefly referred to the establishment and mission of the SC on ESD.
- Mentioned that youth is a key player for implementation of new strategic planning.
- Referred to the launching of UNECE youth network on ESD and its aims.
- Strained the importance of enabling youth to take the lead for a healthier and more just and sustainable society in which no one is left behind.

UNECE Secretariat (Zaal):

- Thanked for attendance, introduced side event.
- Stated that youth is the most flexible part of society- can lead to adjustments to the new circumstances.

SEGMENT 1- Innovative examples on the role of ESD in empowering youth to become change agents for sustainability and to participate in mitigating the impact of post-pandemic crisis. **Moderator: Simon Herteleer**

Presentation 1.1. Innovative ideas for youth participation in ESD policy processes (by Clara Lauer & Nicolas Klasen, youpaN)

This initiative took place in Germany aiming youth engagement in German ESD implementation. Presenters provided examples on inner and outer activities including the public debate on covid-19, events, and discussions involving NGOs and publicity for ESD.

Presentation 1.2. The EC at the forefront of supporting youth empowerment in times of Covid-19 (by Maric Krajacic Hasna, European Commission)

Participants were informed on the EU Youth Strategy, a key policy cooperation framework for all relevant stakeholders, which supports youth empowerment through quality innovation and recognition of youth work and fosters young people's participation in civic and democratic life. The EU Youth Dialogue was presented, the biggest participation tool for youth, in which youth empowerment is aimed via influencing policy choices. Eleven (11) Youth Goals were presented, a vision from the youth of Europe. Presenter referred to the New Erasmus+ Program (2021-2027) and its new priorities (inclusion and diversity, green and digital). In addition, reference was made to youth employment support actions addressing the consequences of the pandemic, such as Youth Guarantee and Youth Engagement Support (YES) package. In addition, delegate presented the objectives of

Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027), referring to future changes in digital education in a lifelong perspective.

Presentation 1.3: Methodological and psychological support to the teachers and educators with youth engagement as key agents in adaptation to new educational environment in the pandemic and mitigation of post-pandemic crisis in resilient and sustainable way (by Valentyna Kyrychencko, Ukraine)

Presenter referred to environmental, psychology concept principles (positivity, constructiveness, eco-friendliness), presented methodological examples, and guidelines on how to arrange personal living microenvironment.

Presentation 1.4: The "juniors for SD in Bordeaux schools" (by Michel Ricard, Planet'ere)

Presenter referred to the initiative as an education system that places younger generations at the heart of action. It is an eco-citizenship awareness program implemented in the schools of the city of Bordeaux providing training, tools and materials. The program was created in 2001 but, since 2020, the actions take into account the current health crisis, specially fostering the understanding of information and the development of a critical mind for students.

Presentation 1.5: The role of the Central Asian Leadership Program on Environment for SD (CALP) in empowering youth to become change agents for SD in Central Asia (Tatyana Shakirova, CAREC)

CALP is a flagship initiative of CAREC undertaken since 2010, designed to improve leadership capacity of young and mid-level managers on various environmental agencies of the region. It involves governments, academia, private sectors and NGO representatives. It covers various SD themes and promotes participation of young leaders in environmental decision-making and in transformations in the field of environment and SD and in promoting regional change. It covers six (6) Central Asian countries and Afghanistan.

Closing

No questions were posed.

Moderator and Chair summarized the section.

SEGMENT 2- Identify and reflect on the challenges of ESD in empowering governments to design inclusive and fair recovery measures that no-one is left behind and to provide that young people are engaged in actions for creating more resilient societies in UNECE Region

Moderator: Monica Reti

Presentation 2.1: Reflecting on approaches related to ESD challenges and governmental mechanisms focused on youth empowerment (by Radu Georgescu, Romania)

Delegate elaborated on ESD as a key driver for youth empowerment for confronting the socio-economic impact of Covid-19, referred to several initiatives of the Romanian Government involving, and supporting youth in the process of overcoming the consequences of the pandemic:

1) Romanian national strategy for the implementation of the 17 SDGs and to public consultations (used of funds – European Union Recovery and Resilience Facility- in various endeavors with the aim of developing and implementing non-formal learning methods, supporting the progress of youth-led start-ups, nurturing opportunities for youth organizations, establishing stronger crisis management procedures, and fostering sustainable communities).

2) The strategy regarding the digitalization of the Romanian educational system, entitled SMART-Edu.

3) Established the National Youth Council in August 2020 (an official consultative body providing technical assistance with policy design, monitoring the application of youth-related policies, operating under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Youth and Sports).

4) The United Nations Youth Delegates of Romania - a governmental program started in 2006 and managed by both the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - continues to play a significant role in promoting ESD-related policies.

Presentation 2.2: Action on both Education and Sustainable Development Itself (Cathal Swan, UNEP MGCY)

1) Leave no one behind- Europe is privileged in this sector. 2) Climate and biodiversity crisis/social/economic/health crises can be faced through the 2030 agenda and the SDGs- facilitating societies that are more resilient.

Presentation 2.3: Futures Forward Academy: Youth empowerment for a sustainable future (by Tammy Randal and Daniella Tilbury)

Futures Forward Academy is a program seeking for youth leadership recognizing the need to make tangible changes to the lives of others. Four (4) key parameters of the program are:

1) to shake up traditional ways of learning on SD, placing more emphasis on engagement, 2) to reclaim the future, 3) to ask youth to join the dots- to work across cultural boundaries and issues, 4) to build scaffolds for young people to help them access critical platforms where decisions are being made that affect their future.

Future makers were presented (e.g. fostering intergenerational equity for local communities and shifting mindsets towards future thinking leadership). Under the academy, an intensive program will be offered over the next five (5) months, consisting of interactive workshops, and networking with innovators and leaders from across the international community to prepare participants for the challenges in their own leadership journeys and to engage them in projects. In the future, a reverse mentoring program is planned and a trip to Geneva.

Presentation 2.4: The EIT Climate- KIC Young Innovators Programme in Cyprus (by Stelios Yiatros, Cyprus University of Technology)

Young Innovators is a comprehensive ESD pilot for schools in Cyprus, which has offered teacher training to 21 teachers and involved 121 students from five (5) Cypriot schools who participated, among others, in the Young Climathon Hack events. Multiple stakeholders are involved continuing into 2021 with Young Changemakers and 2nd iteration of young innovators.

Closing

No questions were posed.

Moderator and Chair summarized the section.

SEGMENT 3- Identify and reflect on the role of ESD in empowering a wide range of the national and international stakeholders to support governments in accelerating youth actions for creating more sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies in post COVID-19 era

Moderator: Daniel Burgos

Presentation 3.1: Education for a Green Future-What is in it for the young? (by Ulrike Pisiotis, EC)

Referred to the challenges of our times, to the European Green Deal and to European Education Area (by 2025). Presenter also referred to parameters of education for the green transition (e.g. education for climate coalition, proposal for a council recommendation on education for environmental sustainability, the European competence framework on climate change and sustainable development, the Green Erasmus+).

Presentation 3.2: Empowering and mobilizing youth in favour of ESD for 2030 (Bernard Combes, UNESCO)

Presenter referred to ESD for 2030 goal and objective. As Key Feature 1, he referred to the emphasis placed on education's role for the 17 SDGs. Key feature 2 referred to the emphasis placed on the big transformation (transformative action, structural changes and technological future) and Key Feature 3 referred to the emphasis on MSs' leadership. One of the five (5) priority action areas for ESD for 2030 is youth and how to strengthen them to be agents of change, how youth organizations can systematically provide training for youth and youth trainers on ESD. In addition, the audience was informed on youth action areas through specific examples.

Presentation 3.3: Synergies with National and European ESD initiatives with young people and their organisations (by Liam Wegimont and Ditta Dolejsiova, Global Education Network Europe- GENE)

Presenters referred to synergies between national and European initiatives. After elaborating on the concept of global education, they presented the actions of GENE. Referring to actions at the formal, informal and non-formal settings, they emphasized the importance of youth engagement in all settings. Presenters provided an example of youth engagement in Ireland, the NYCI partnership and GE/DEAR program.

Presentation 3.4: International Cooperation Schemes and their role in empowering youth for creating more just and resilient societies (by Michael Scoullos, Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development MIO-ECSDE)

Presenter referred to youth empowerment and how it can be achieved through internal and external dynamically linked interactions. International cooperation's schemes empowering youth widely involve youth volunteering as a key dimension/tool of many youth organizations and programs. International cooperation schemes empowering youth include organizations from youth within education systems, youth involved in vocational/training/ re-employment schemes and youth outside education/training schemes. Presenter referred to MIO-ECSDE International networking for youth showing an integrated approach to empower youth. Particularly, MEdIES is a network of about 6000 educators across the region and MIO-ECSDE is a network of 133 NGOs implementing a series of actions in the field.

Closing

No questions were posed.

Moderator and Chair summarized the section.

WRAP-UP SEGMENT

Chair:

- 168 million children are deprived of education due to the pandemic
- We need to give youth the value it deserves.
- Chair thanked participants and presenters and closed the side event.