

# FAST FACTS

United Nations  
Development Programme



Empowered lives.  
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## Youth as partners for the implementation of the SDGs

*"The future of humanity and of our planet lies in our hands. It lies also in the hands of today's younger generation who will pass the torch to future generations."*

2030 Agenda, paragraph 53

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, is the international community's ambitious response to today's most pressing global development challenges and will guide our development priorities for an entire generation. Young people played a key role in shaping this agenda and experience first-hand many of the issues it seeks to address.

Recent decades have witnessed significant advances in terms of human development, but deep challenges remain. Progress has been uneven, with many young people across the globe still experiencing interlocked forms of discrimination, limited political inclusion, high levels of poverty, and limited access to health systems, educational opportunities and decent jobs.

The goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda are interconnected, aiming to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Explicitly or implicitly, young people are deeply embedded within their fabric. Their knowledge, reach and innovative solutions are essential if sustainable development is to be realized.



Youth of Antananarivo – CDA / WFP / UNDP development project in Madagascar  
© UN Photo / Mark Garten, 2016

### MATTERS OF FACT

- Today's generation of adolescents and young people (between 10 and 24 years old) is close to 1.8 billion – more than at any other time in history – approximately 90% of whom live in less developed countries.
- The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a total of 169 targets, were adopted in 2015.
- More than one third of SDG targets reference young people explicitly or implicitly, with a focus on empowerment, participation and/or well-being.
- There are 20 youth-specific targets spread over six key SDGs: Goal 2 (hunger), Goal 4 (education), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 8 (decent work), Goal 10 (inequality) and Goal 13 (climate change).
- Young people's involvement is also key if the call for participation, inclusion, accountability and revitalized global engagement embedded in Goals 16 (peaceful, just and inclusive societies) and 17 (partnerships and implementation) is to be achieved.

### UNDP's approach

Achieving the 2030 Agenda will require strong partnerships between young people and all stakeholders so that the challenges faced by youth are addressed, their contributions recognized and they are included at all levels of decision-making. UNDP's human-rights based approach is founded on supporting youth empowerment and partnering with youth across all dimensions of sustainable development.

UNDP promotes the empowerment of youth through programmes across its global network, which spans more than 170 countries and territories. We work with civil society partners, including youth organisations and networks, other UN agencies and development partners to advance youth empowerment for sustainable development and peace. UNDP's Youth Strategy "Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future" 2014-2017, sets out the vision for our work with youth in governance, decent jobs for youth and resilience-building.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## UNDP partners with young women and young men as champions of the 2030 Agenda by:

- **Supporting** governments as they integrate the SDGs into their national and local strategies, and supporting young people by creating formal spaces for their engagement, such as national youth platforms, to provide viable opportunities for young women and young men to be at the table, bring evidence, inform decisions and influence development priorities and budget allocations.
- **Identifying** obstacles to accelerate progress on goals and targets, and to define effective interventions that help achieve outcomes on a number of fronts, such as those against youth discrimination or those promoting enhanced youth participation and civic engagement.
- **Providing** effective, demand-driven, context-specific and evidence-based policy advice and technical assistance, drawing on the depth and breadth of knowledge and our programming experience across the world.

**Monitoring & Accountability:** UNDP supports government and other stakeholders' efforts in producing the quality data needed to capture the underlying development realities of youth. UNDP also works with parliaments and relevant institutions supporting oversight and accountability.

**Research:** As a global convener, UNDP partners with academia and civil society organisations to produce fresh research and insights connecting local, national and global knowledge to address gaps in emerging areas of youth participation and development, such as research on financing for youth and on youth and peacebuilding. UNDP also regularly publishes human development reports on youth.

**Advocacy:** UNDP supports spaces for national dialogue, consultations and social media campaigns, reaching out to the most marginalized and promoting young people's role as advocates and partners in the implementation of the SDGs.

## UNDP in action

**Global:** In 2016, UNDP launched its Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace, "Youth-GPS": a 5-year global programmatic offer designed to sharpen the organisation's response to the challenges young people face worldwide by supporting young people as agents of change in the 2030 Agenda at the global, regional and country level; providing cutting-edge research and tools; fostering innovative partnerships; as well as piloting and scaling-up catalytic initiatives.

UNDP and Restless Development are convening a global Youth, Governance & Accountability Partnership advocating for the systematic and meaningful inclusion of young women and young men in the implementation, monitoring and accountability of the 2030 Agenda; supporting youth participation in decision-making at all levels; ensuring youth participation in governance and wellbeing is measured; and promoting youth in the data revolution for the 2030 Agenda.

**Africa:** UNDP is now scaling up its "YouthConnekt Initiative" across Africa, which uses ICT tools to connect young people to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities – supporting skills development and inclusion in local and national dialogues.

**Arab States:** In 2016, UNDP convened the Youth Leadership Programme 2 focusing on "Innovation for Sustainable Development" to support young people across the region as citizens, innovators, effective leaders and agents of change.

**Asia Pacific:** In 2016, UNDP launched the "2030Youth Force" regional network and "Case4Space" campaign, focusing on empowering young people to more effectively engage in social and political debate and as critical stakeholders in the implementation of the SDGs.

**Europe and Central Asia:** From challenging gender stereotypes in the work-place and supporting the spirit of innovation in Kosovo's youth to promoting anti-corruption and transparency in education in Moldova – UNDP is working with young women and young men throughout the region to enhance their participation in civic spaces and boost entrepreneurship.

**Latin America and the Caribbean:** UNDP, in partnership with OIJ (*Organismo Internacional de Juventud para Iberoamérica*), supports "Juventud con Voz" ("Youth Voice"), a digital platform led by young people to engage in issues relating to democracy, political participation, public policies and the 2030 Agenda.

## For more information:

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