



JOINT CLOSING STATEMENT

International Intellectual Symposium

“Different Contexts, Shared Aspirations: Young People Reimagine Quality and Excellence in Education”

Celebrating International Youth Day 2026

Convened by

UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education

in cooperation with

Ministry of Education of the Republic of Yemen

Issued in Jubail Industrial City, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

12 August 2026

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In celebration of International Youth Day 2026, the UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education (RCQE), in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Yemen, convened on Wednesday, 12 August 2026, the International Intellectual Symposium entitled “Different Contexts, Shared Aspirations: Young People Reimagine Quality and Excellence in Education”. Held via videoconference, the Symposium brought together young people from diverse countries and contexts, alongside decision-makers, experts, researchers, and representatives of educational and youth institutions and international and regional organisations.

The Symposium was grounded in the belief that differences in economic, social, cultural, and geographical contexts do not diminish young people’s shared aspirations for quality, equitable, and inclusive education, decent opportunities, and a secure future; and that young people are not merely beneficiaries of education, but partners in advancing it and leaders of change, innovation, peacebuilding, and sustainable development.

The Symposium addressed four interrelated themes: equity in educational opportunities across diverse contexts; shared aspirations for quality education and a better future; reimagining quality and excellence in education from a youth perspective; and moving from shared aspirations to collective action. The international session, youth dialogue, and interactive survey also provided a safe space to listen to youth voices and explore their priorities and aspirations.

Participants hereby announce the launch of the **Global Youth Network for Quality and Excellence (GYNQE)**, to serve as a voice for young people, a space for their ideas, a bridge linking their aspirations to education policy-making and initiatives, and a global platform through which they can lead the advancement of quality and excellence into the future.

Priorities and Recommendations

Based on the presentations, youth dialogue, and interactive survey, participants identified the following priorities and recommendations:

1. **Meaningful Youth Participation in Education Decision-Making:** Establish regular institutional channels that ensure the meaningful engagement of young people, including underrepresented youth and those affected by crises and conflicts, in designing policies, curricula, learning environments, and assessment systems, as well as monitoring their implementation and evaluating their impact.
2. **Equity, Inclusion, and Context Responsiveness:** Develop flexible policies and models for quality and excellence in education that respond to national and local contexts and safeguard the right to education, continuity of learning, and equal opportunities for groups most at risk of marginalisation.

3. **Future Skills and the Transition from Learning to Work:** Align education and training with economic and social transformations and labour-market needs; develop future, digital, and entrepreneurial skills; and support an effective transition to decent work and community participation.
4. **Digital Transformation and the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence:** Expand access to safe and inclusive digital learning, promote youth-led innovation, and embed the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence while protecting data and privacy and narrowing the digital divide.
5. **Education for Peace, Sustainability, and Global Citizenship:** Harness education to promote shared human values, intercultural dialogue, climate action, peacebuilding, and individual, institutional, and community resilience, particularly in crisis- and conflict-affected contexts.
6. **Youth-Led Innovation, Research, and Knowledge Production:** Provide pathways to incubate youth-led initiatives that are actionable, scalable, and sustainable; promote youth-led research, studies, and policy papers; and connect them with community needs and decision-makers.
7. **Documenting Youth Voices and Priorities:** Produce “Youth Voices 2026: Different Contexts and Shared Aspirations for Quality Education for All” and establish an initial database of youth priorities in educational quality and excellence, drawing on the survey results and dialogue contributions.
8. **Activating the Global Youth Network for Quality and Excellence:** Develop a phased first-year plan that includes clear governance, diverse youth leadership, thematic working groups, a secure multilingual digital platform, and pathways for participation, learning, networking, and initiative development.
9. **Building International, Regional, and National Partnerships:** Strengthen cooperation among young people, educational, youth-focused, and governmental institutions, international and regional organisations, National Commissions for UNESCO, civil society, and the private sector to exchange knowledge, build capacities, support initiatives, and scale their impact.
10. **Follow-up and Impact Measurement:** Translate these recommendations into an implementation plan with defined timelines, responsibilities, and indicators; monitor progress periodically; and present the Network’s achievements and youth voices at an annual forum held in conjunction with International Youth Day.

In closing, participants affirmed that diverse contexts do not diminish shared aspirations and that quality and excellence in education cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation of young people as partners in reflection, design, implementation, evaluation, and decision-making. They also expressed their appreciation to the UNESCO Regional Center for Quality and Excellence in Education and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Yemen for organising the Symposium and called upon partners to support the implementation of these recommendations, thereby transforming youth voices and ideas into policies, initiatives, and sustainable educational and developmental impact.

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Jubail Industrial City, 12 August 2026