



Our Time. Our Turn. Our Future.

The Calling of Our Time

Young people today live in a world of unlimited potential. A world of mass connectivity, enhanced mobility and unprecedented technological progress. A world in which more children survive and receive an education than ever before.

With education, skills and opportunities that are relevant to their lives and future employment, more than 1.8 billion young women and men will be poised to make the most of their potential and contribute to the peace and prosperity of their families and communities.¹

But the reverse is also true. A changing global economy is putting an onus on them to acquire skills aligned with dynamic labour needs at a time when many education systems are struggling to deliver better learning outcomes for young people. The skills needed in the workforce are also in transition. Digitalization, technological change and automation make many jobs vulnerable while also creating new opportunities for young people with adaptable knowledge and skills.

As young people face these realities, we are also learning more about the critical importance of the adolescent years, which shape a range of outcomes and skills formation – from brain development to psychosocial skills and executive function. For adolescents and young people, empowerment and the opportunity to have their voices heard and participate in the decisions that affect their lives are particularly important for their well-being.

When young people are prepared, and empowered, they can use their energy, creativity and talent to turn an uncertain landscape into a world of opportunity – for themselves and us all.

Generation Unlimited

Generation Unlimited is a new partnership established to help adolescents and young people succeed. Generation Unlimited's goal is to make sure that every young person aged 10 – 24 is in some form of school, learning, training or employment by 2030.

Generation Unlimited brings together public and private partners – and young people – to identify and scale solutions, unlock investments and empower all young people to play a positive role in their societies. It unleashes the voices of young people, creates synergies between major global actors and accelerates momentum towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Generation Unlimited focuses on adolescent girls and boys, young men and women and all young people, especially those in the greatest danger of being left behind – girls, the poor, young people with disabilities, young people on the move, and young people affected by conflict and natural disasters.

Generation Unlimited is dedicated to taking urgent action today so young people have the support they need to assume leadership roles tomorrow.

Achieving this goal is the calling of our time.





A Time of Opportunities

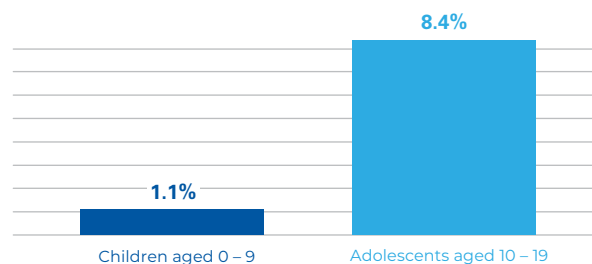
In recent decades, survival rates have risen as fertility rates have declined. The combination of these demographic trends has created a growing generation of adolescents and young people in many parts of the world.²

It is a generation that, for a limited period, will continue to grow. Most of the population growth will be in low- and middle-income countries.³ For example, about 22 per cent of young people aged 10 – 24 live in Africa in 2018. By 2050, the share will be 35 per cent.⁴

In countries where the working-age population grows larger than the dependent population, there is a potential for a demographic dividend.⁵ When this population is employed, standards of living increase. If public financing improves, greater investments in human capital are possible, laying the ground for more sustainable and equitable growth for all.⁶

However, the demographic dividend is not assured. And world leaders face a time-bound challenge: Invest now in young people or miss an unprecedented opportunity to improve lives, nations and economies.

By 2030, the percentage increase of the global population aged 10 – 19 will be nearly eight times higher than the percentage increase of the population aged 0 – 9. Most of that increase will be in low- and middle-income countries.



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2017 revision – Key Findings and Advance Tables*, Working Paper No. ESA/P/WP/248, UNDESA, New York, 2017.

Three Priorities

Distinct challenges affect young people as they transition from education to employment and adolescence to adulthood. Consider that:



In 2016, nearly 200 million adolescents and young people aged 12–17 were out of school and many had never started or completed primary education.⁷



In 2017, an estimated 21.8 per cent of young people were not in employment, education or training (NEET), 76.9 per cent of them female.⁸



Poverty, conflict, discrimination, gender-based violence, sexual violence and confining social and gender norms can get in the way of opportunities for empowerment and meaningful participation. They compound the vulnerabilities of marginalized young people at a time in life when they need support to learn, create, grow, and dismantle inequalities.

To have maximum impact, Generation Unlimited will focus on three priorities:

1. **Secondary-age education:** Adolescent girls and boys need support so they can complete primary and secondary education with meaningful learning outcomes. This support should include accredited and flexible learning opportunities for those who cannot attend regular school. Efforts need to begin with the most disadvantaged such as adolescent girls, adolescents from poor households, adolescents with disabilities and adolescents who live in conflict situations or who are on the move.
2. **Skills for learning, employability and decent work:** Young people, especially young women, should have access to opportunities to develop skills for learning, employability and active citizenship. They also need support as they transition from education to work. Examples of support include apprenticeships and internships. They will need digital and technological skills for the workforce of the future and for emerging economies.
3. **Empowerment, with a focus on girls:** Adolescent girls, boys and other young people need support to understand their rights and build their own assets and agency to make life choices. This includes opportunities to civically engage, including digitally, and to voice their opinions on issues that affect them. When they start at a disadvantage, girls need extra support to build lifelong assets like networks, capital, knowledge, skills and self-belief.

Co-creating Solutions

Generation Unlimited focuses on identifying, co-creating and supporting solutions that have the potential to deliver results at scale for young people, especially those in the greatest danger of being left behind. Valuing and maximizing the existing strengths, reach and experience of its diverse partners, Generation Unlimited will provide a platform to mobilize funding, technical assistance, political support and access to networking and learning to scale up these solutions, thereby connecting global support to country implementation.

Examples of these promising solutions include a broad spectrum of approaches, among them:

- Public-private partnerships to provide access to quality and certified secondary education for adolescents living in poverty in remote rural areas.
- Online and long-distance learning for young people in hard-to-reach communities.
- Provision of mentoring and job shadowing opportunities for vulnerable young people, and especially girls.
- Creation of and access to quality apprenticeships and internships.
- Promotion of personal empowerment, workforce readiness, active citizenship and provision of life skills training, especially for girls.

- Psychological support for conflict-affected young people.
- Empowerment of young people to build thriving, sustainable careers and to provide employers with highly skilled, motivated talent.
- Promotion of new digitally-enhanced youth employment opportunities.

Generation Unlimited will continuously work to identify new solutions through a growing partnership base, and it will increase the number of countries committed to accelerating implementation. There is also the potential for a new fund that can pool grants from public and private donors to fund promising solutions.

This platform will also facilitate linkages among all partners and initiatives within and across the three thematic areas of focus in order to maximize synergies, alignment and impact. This includes: identifying and amplifying good practices; driving consensus on key interventions that can achieve scale and impact in different contexts; and learning and sharing lessons. Generation Unlimited will also provide a space for young people to participate meaningfully in all its activities and particularly in the co-creation and implementation of solutions.

Secondary-age education

Skills for learning, employability and decent work

Empowerment, with a focus on girls



Exploring Promising Ideas

Aspirational 'grand challenges' to spur the co-creation of promising ideas are being developed with partners. These promising ideas are distilled from global trends – such as technological innovation, digitalization, and the new green and care economies – and have the potential to accelerate efforts to overcome barriers to progress for young people. Bottlenecks such as language barriers, distance, lack of digital connectivity, poverty, and relevance of skill sets, particularly among young people affected by conflict, will be targeted. Concrete and actionable business plans will be developed, and promising ideas modelled and tested to support the co-creation of solutions.

10 Challenges to Spur Promising Ideas

Digital Connectivity



What would it take to affordably connect all schools to the Internet?

Job-matching



How can we harness data from labour markets to shorten the feedback loop between employers and education providers so that young people can develop skills that are in demand?

Green Economy



How can we assist young people to acquire the skills necessary for jobs in the rapidly growing renewable energy sector (i.e. solar/wind/bio)?

Remedial Learning



How can new breakthroughs in personalized technology-supported learning be deployed to support remedial education for young people whose education has been disrupted by conflict, shock, or migration?

Remote Learning and Work



How can we expand access to remote learning and work opportunities for young people who live in refugee camps or have limited local opportunities?

Mental Health



How can we expand access to cognitive behavioural therapy for young people affected by conflict and effectively combine it with other interventions?

Instant Translation



How can we utilize AI-based translation technology to enable more young people to access resources for learning, skills development and employment?

Portable Certification



How can we make sure that the certifications that young people receive are portable and recognized across national boundaries?

Data and Measurement



How can we better measure/quantify the effects of young people's empowerment?

Innovative Financing



How can innovative financing mechanisms unlock the potential and solutions for young people?

Participation of Young People

Generation Unlimited will be informed and steered by young people's ideas and opinions. Through their involvement with Generation Unlimited, young people will also be empowered to become a force of change in their local communities and throughout the world. Young people will be co-creators of solutions in two ways: They will be directly engaged with partners in the identification process; and they will play a leading role in the Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge, a recurring global youth co-design competition in which young people will devise and implement solutions that address their key concerns.

Young people will play a central role in Generation Unlimited governance structures. They will also actively contribute their perspectives on the partnership through online and offline platforms.



How Generation Unlimited Adds Value

The co-creation of solutions, support for new ideas and participation of young people are at the core of the Generation Unlimited business model, but its value proposition also includes:

- Demonstrating meaningful participation of young people from all countries and backgrounds, to the extent that they are empowered to inform and steer the partnership.
- Knowledge exchange in Generation Unlimited's three priorities. Generation Unlimited can identify good practices, drive consensus on solutions that can achieve scale, and develop robust monitoring and evaluation tools to expand the evidence base about young people.
- Facilitating linkages among partners and solutions in Generation Unlimited's three priorities to maximize synergy and impact.
- Visibility and networking support for solutions that have potential for scale.
- Supporting approaches to systems strengthening and systems change to achieve large-scale results for young people.



Governance

The governance structures of Generation Unlimited will include participants from government, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and young people from around the world. It features:

Leaders: Visible drivers of Generation Unlimited who use their influence to open opportunities, advocate and mobilize resources.

Global Board: Oversees the partnership, provides strategic direction and mobilizes knowledge, resources and leadership.

Partnership Forum: Implements Generation Unlimited's plans by participating in the co-creation and implementation of solutions; includes global, regional and local members who will be able to mobilize networks in communities and regions around the world.

Champions: High-profile individuals such as celebrities, heads of state, experts and young people who will lend their voices and credibility to support Generation Unlimited's objectives.

Secretariat: Responsible for planning, young people's participation, investment and programme support, communication and advocacy, and operations.



Endnotes

1. United Nations Population Division, 'World Population Prospects 2017', <<https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery>>, accessed 7 August 2018. Figure is 1.807 billion for ages 10–24.
2. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2017 revision – Key Findings and Advance Tables*, Working Paper No. ESA/P/WP/248, UNDESA, New York, 2017, p. 13; and United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, *Levels and Trends in Child Mortality Report 2017*, IGME, New York, September 2017, p. 4.
3. <<https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery>>, accessed 7 June 2018.
4. UNICEF analysis based on United Nations World Population Division, Population Prospects 2017', <<https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery>>, accessed 7 August 2018.
5. World Bank Group, *Global Monitoring Report 2015/2016: Development goals in an era of demographic change*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2016, p. 168, <<http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/503001444058224597/Global-Monitoring-Report-2015.pdf>>.
6. Ibid.
7. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 'One in Five Children, Adolescents and Youth Is Out of School', Fact sheet no. 48, UIS, Montreal, February 2018, <<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs48-one-five-children-adolescents-youth-out-school-2018-en.pdf>>.
8. International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017: Paths to a better working future*, ILO, Geneva, 2017, p. 2, <www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_598669.pdf>.

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