

RIO DECLARATION ON NON-FORMAL EDUCATION



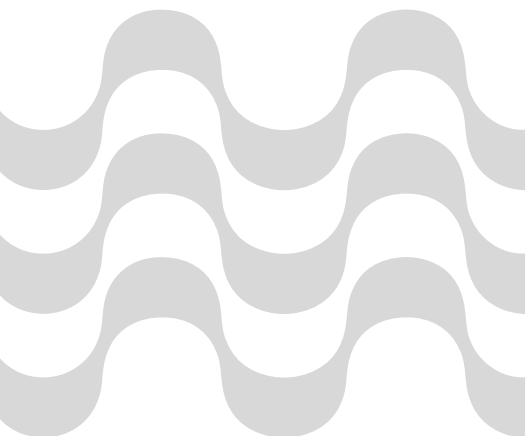
WORLD
NON-FORMAL
EDUCATION FORUM

RIO DE JANEIRO

9-11 December 2019

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A COMMON CAUSE:

The World Non-Formal Education Forum convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 9-11 December 2019. The Forum responded to the growing need for a global platform for the world's leading non-formal education (NFE) and youth development organisations and practitioners to:

- Take stock of the trends and applications of NFE;
- Coordinate the efforts towards leveraging NFE in achieving the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development;
- Address the issues organisations working on NFE face;
- Join forces to strengthen the quality and outreach of NFE;
- Recommend ways to respond to the need for more investment and recognition of NFE, and
- Position NFE as an integral part of the wider education system.

Co-convened by the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), UNICEF, UNFPA, and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth (OSGEY), in collaboration with the Big 6 Youth Organizations¹ the World Non-Formal Education Forum brought together more than 400 participants from over 70 international organisations, youth organisations and UN entities.

The outcome of discussions over the three days of the Forum helped assess the state of NFE and forged a consensus among stakeholders for actions needed to advance NFE as a powerful vehicle for the development of children and youth, and their role as active global citizens.

1. Formed in 1996, the Big 6 youth-serving organisations are an alliance of leading international youth-serving organizations, and include: World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, World Young Women's Christian Association, World Organization of the Scout Movement, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation.

THE STATE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD

NFE has witnessed more recognition and gained momentum over the past years for its defining role in empowering individuals and communities. Yet, NFE is still not sufficiently recognised at the social and political levels, and has inadequate resources². In addition, NFE has not been used to its full capacity to support those that have been left behind from accessing formal education³.

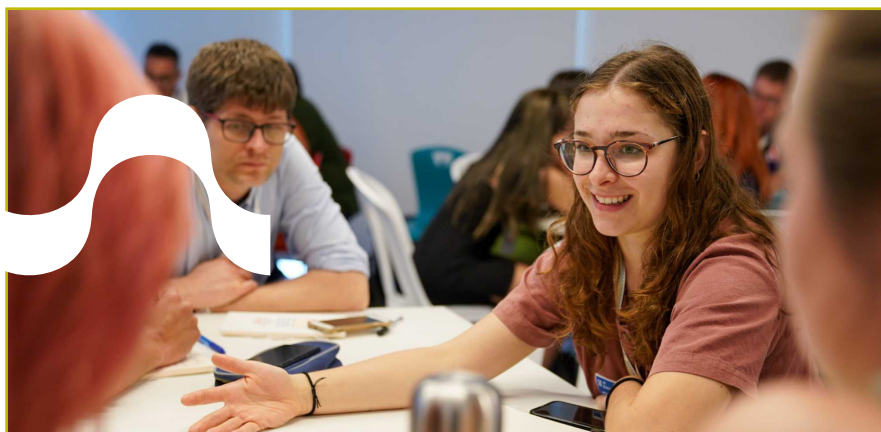


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2. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/non-formal-education-youth-work>

3. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23669BN_SDG4.pdf

In today's rapidly changing societies and economies, skill requirements for life and work have to be constantly updated. In view of this, the education system and other actors are increasingly providing learners with relevant lifelong learning opportunities in which NFE plays a major role. Furthermore, NFE methodologies are being adopted to improve the delivery of formal education.



Characteristics:

Learning is a lifelong process that enables the continuous development of a person's capabilities and agency as an individual, a member of society, and an active citizen of our shared planet.

NFE brings a unique contribution to the development of the individual as a complement or alternative to formal education. This must be increasingly recognised by any society that intends to build a modern, holistic and inclusive education system.

NFE is cross-sectoral, multi-beneficiary and context specific in nature.

NFE is learner-centred, human rights-based, and characterised by voluntary participation, experiential learning, progressive learning, peer-to-peer learning, mentoring, driven by leadership development and the development of a personal value system.

NFE provides the skills, values and attitudes that are recognised as crucial for the 21st century.

NFE is offered by a multitude of providers, from governments, youth organisations, NGOs, and also entities from the formal education sector.

NFE generates transformative impact on communities and societies by supporting the personal growth and skills development of young people.

NFE and Sustainable Development:

NFE contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

NFE is an integral part of Sustainable Development Goal 4, in particular target 4.6 on youth and adult literacy and the indicator 4.3.1 on participation rates of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education⁴.

The UN Youth Strategy, Youth 2030, calls for support to “advance youth policy frameworks that include support to non-formal education and its role in the development of young people’s knowledge, skills and competencies⁵”.

Equity and Inclusion:

- NFE can be an effective means for ensuring the right to education for millions of young people, especially girls and young women who do not have access to formal education, through quality and relevant alternative learning opportunities.
- NFE is critical for the provision of educational opportunities in humanitarian settings; building resilience and social cohesion.
- NFE is key to empowering the most vulnerable, in particular girls and young women, towards achieving gender equality.

Recognition of Non-Formal Learning Outcomes:

- More work is required to ensure the recognition, validation, and accreditation of non-formal learning outcomes.

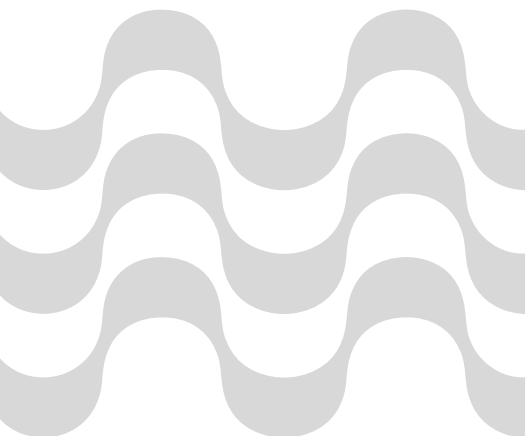
Partnerships:

- There is a need to further strengthen collaboration and partnership among NFE actors and engage a wide range of actors. The Global Partnership for Education should also recognise the importance of NFE in their work and ensure the provision of funding in NFE.
- NFE can be advanced by encouraging partnerships among youth serving organisations, such as the commitment outlined in the Big 6 Youth Organizations Joint Position Paper on Non-Formal Education “Empowering Young People in a Changing World” which further recognises the centrality of NFE for achieving the SDGs.
- Multilateral organisations need to translate global commitments⁶ on NFE into action.

4. <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/47th-session/documents/2016-2-SDGs-Rev1-E.pdf>

5. https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf

6. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000370215>



TOWARDS A COMMON VISION FOR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION:

Common Understanding:

The World Non-Formal Education Forum acknowledges that NFE is part of lifelong learning, covers all ages and is delivered through different means and modalities. The Forum recognises the various definitions for NFE, and highlights in particular the Council of Europe definition, which has been reiterated by the Big 6 Youth Organizations in their Joint Position on Non-Formal Education:

Non-formal education "refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competences⁷, outside the formal educational curriculum. [...]"

Common Objectives:

The Forum recognises that NFE provides foundational, transferable and job specific skills along with supporting young people to become active global citizens. Organisations committed to NFE should aim to support young people to become:

- **Autonomous** - able to make choices and to control their personal and social life as an individual and as a member of society;
- **Supportive** - able to show concern for others, advocate with them and for them, and share their concerns;
- **Responsible** - able to take responsibility for their actions, keep commitments and complete whatever they undertake;
- **Committed** - able to assert themselves in respect of values, a cause or an ideal, and to act accordingly;
- **Inclusive** – able to respect other paradigms, including by virtue of their gender, ethnicity, religion, language, or culture.

7. Competencies describe the specific attributes individuals need for action and self-organization in various complex contexts and situations. They include cognitive, affective, volitional and motivational elements; hence they are an interplay of knowledge, capacities and skills, motives and affective dispositions. Competencies cannot be taught, but have to be developed by the learners themselves (UNESCO, 2017).

Call for Action

The World Non-Formal Education Forum calls upon all relevant stakeholders, including governments, academic institutions, multilateral organisations, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector to invest in the potential of young people by leveraging the transformative power of NFE and learning. We call for the following actions:

- **Right to Non-Formal Education**

- A. NFE should be recognised as an integral part of the right to education, and a key approach to promoting the development of personal and collective values as well as civic engagement for young people;
- B. NFE must be anchored in legislation with adequate policies, strategies and funding;

- **Recognition**

- A. Promote a system of recognition, validation and accreditation of learning outcomes acquired through NFE and informal learning;
- B. A common framework for formal and non-formal education structures should be set up that allows for equivalencies between formal and non-formal learning outcomes;

- **Innovating Learning**

- A. Invest in technological and digital solutions to scale up NFE and learning programmes;
- B. Promote alternative flexible learning pathways at all educational levels;
- C. Promote evidence-based approaches to NFE;
- D. Strengthen the assessment of NFE learning outcomes, as well as data collection and monitoring systems;

- **Investment**

- A. Increase funding to NFE programmes and organisations at a global, regional, national and local level;
- B. Further invest in research on the learning process and impact of NFE, in partnership with academic institutions and youth organisations;
- C. Call upon the Global Partnership for Education to recognise and invest in NFE;

- **Stronger Partnerships**

- A. Enhance coordination among NFE stakeholders;
- B. Strengthen linkages between formal and non-formal education to create policies that holistically meet the educational needs of young people;
- C. Strengthen youth and volunteer organisations committed to NFE and learning, including in emergency and humanitarian contexts.



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