



MARCH 2023

# BIG BRAINSTORM 2023

LAUNCHING A YEAR OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

*This report presents results from the Big Brainstorm 2023 – a series of virtual events from 16-28 February 2023.*

*Young leaders worldwide collaborated on a two-week design sprint to explore, prototype, and launch initiatives to tackle humanity's greatest challenges.*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Our Future Agenda .....	5
UN Foundation Next Generation Fellows .....	6
Acknowledgments .....	8
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>9</b>
The Big Brainstorm 2023 .....	10
Our Destination .....	11
How Does the Big Brainstorm Work? .....	12
<b>The Design Sprint</b> .....	<b>19</b>
The Challenge .....	20
Climate & Sustainability .....	22
Transforming Education .....	24
Financing for Young Changemakers .....	26
Future Generations .....	28
Gender Equality .....	30
Jobs & Economic Opportunities .....	32
Peace, Justice & Inclusion .....	34
SDG Summit .....	36
<b>Spotlight Sessions</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>Preparing for the SDG Summit</b> .....	<b>54</b>
Engine Room .....	53
<b>How to Join a Generation of Doers</b> .....	<b>57</b>

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# OUR FUTURE AGENDA

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Our Future Agenda aims to support young people to shape the global policy agenda, building on the United Nations Foundation's track record of support to young changemakers. The program responds to the call for action set by the UN Secretary-General in Our Common Agenda for a new era of global cooperation, focusing more on the interests of young people and future generations.

Our Future Agenda hosts a group of Next Generation Fellows and convened the Unlock the Future Coalition, which harnesses the world's biggest youth-led and youth-focused organizations to reach almost 875 million people.

Following the end of the Big Brainstorm, Our Future Agenda launched the Engine Room, a virtual platform for young changemakers from around the world to connect, collaborate, and develop their 2023 work plans ahead of the SDG Summit.

There are several ways to join the movement, including supporting a Next Generation Fellow or Unlock Action Group, or inviting your youth networks to join the Engine Room. [For more information, see [pages 54-58](#)]

# UN FOUNDATION NEXT GENERATION FELLOWS

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The Next Generation Fellows program was established by the UN Foundation to respond to the Secretary-General's request for young people to shape the Our Common Agenda report.

Throughout 2021, the Next Generation Fellows spoke with over 600 young people worldwide. They refined our ideas through conversations with UN leaders, including the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, and the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

As a result, several of the Fellows' proposals were included in the Our Common Agenda report.

In September 2021, the Next Generation Fellows also launched a standalone report called [Our Future Agenda](#), setting out an ambitious vision and plan for the world's young people and future generations and acting as a manifesto for the continuing work of the Our Future Agenda program.

Building on the legacy of the 2021 cohort, a new cohort is working to deliver the vision of Our Future Agenda. Based on their designated thematic focus, Next Generation Fellows are positioned across the global system to help shape the policy agenda, inspire bold thinking, and drive solutions and innovation at scale.

# MEET THE UN FOUNDATION NEXT GENERATION FELLOWS



**INÉS YÁBAR**  
Lead Fellow  
PERU



**CLAUDETTE SALINAS LEYVA**  
Future Generations  
MEXICO



**JACOB ELLIS**  
Future Generations  
WALES



**KELECHI ACHINONU**  
Peace and Justice  
NIGERIA



**BUTTI ALMHEIRI**  
Climate  
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



**ANITA DYWABA**  
Gender Equality  
SOUTH AFRICA



**ALICE MUKASHYAKA**  
Transforming Education  
RWANDA



**THAÍS QUEIROZ**  
Transforming Education  
BRAZIL



**SARU DUCKWORTH**  
Jobs  
NEPAL / USA



**MAI SAMI AHMED**  
Child Rights  
EGYPT



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge and celebrate those who contributed to the Big Brainstorm 2023.

Our work has been supported by the team at the UN Foundation, including: Harshani Dharmadasa, Taylor Hawkins, Pelle Enarsson, Lewis Broadway, Danlei Liao, Aishwarya Machani, Rochelle Atizado, Sueann Tannis, Megan Rabbitt, Clair White, Pablo Angulo-Troconis, Ernesto Velez, Jane Frewer, Tiffany Virgin, David Steven, Elizabeth Cousens, Sofia Borges, Jill Isenbarger, and Kate Dodson.

We would also like to express our gratitude to:

**The UN Foundation Next Generation Fellows:** Inés Yábar, Kelechi Achinonu, Saru Duckworth, Thaís Lacerda Queiroz Carvalho, Jacob Ellis, Claudette Salinas Leyva, Butti Almheiri, Alice Mukashyaka, and Anita Dywaba.

**The Action Group Innovators:** Gathoni Ireri, James Blissett, Martin Manyozo, Rafik Mohamed Islam Zitouni, Oluwatomilayo Oluayamo, Yasmein Abdelghany, Kinga Szalaba, Walter Fernando Ibarra Dávila, Khushi Jain, Seyifunmi Adebote, Abraham Kahasha, Felipe Bosch, Jacob Odur, Wara Iris Ruiz Condori, Davide Fanciulli, Nohora Quiguntar, Charity Adhiambo, Jamila Karimi, Sushmina Baidya, Florence Lungu, Opey Abednego Brandy, Lame Dilotsotlhe, David Adesanya, Camila Szapari, Patricia Peace Ejang, Patrick Karekezi, Mark Ortiz, Muhammed Trawally, Trinity Ross, Michał Tuczapski.

**Our Special Guests:** Eddie Ndopu, Mia Kami, H.E Lachezara Stoeva, Esethu Sotheni, Laurel Patterson, H.E. Keisha McGuire, Nikolai Hegertun, Corina Kwami, H.E. Xolisa

Mabhongo, Soledad Patiño, Maryjacob Okwuosa, Jaïri Terpstra, Cecilia (Thea) Soriano, Amy Parker, Matthieu Cognac, Ruth Khakame, Mona Iddrisu, Sue Duke, Landry Signé, Jawhratelkmal Kanu, Nathalie Gabala, Emmanuel Ametepey, Mayowa Kuyoro, Jonah Kessel, Ileri Jaiyeoba, Hilary Smith, Olasumbo Olaniyi, Nneka Norville, Jonathan Moyer, Shuva Raha, Daniel Sherrell, Indu Murthy, Aarathi Krishnan, Maxime Stauffer, Eiko Tsukamoto, Cecil Abungu, Sofia Borges, Alaa Murabit, Dr Nina Boel, Isra Chaker, Courtney Kimmel, Mohamad Al-Jounde, Ulrika Modéer, Anna Brodowsky, and MC Millaray.

**Organizations Engaged:** BRAC, CIVICUS, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, Girl Up, Global Partnership for Education, Global Student Forum, Global Shapers Community, Global Youth Coalition for Road Safety, IFRC, Kofi Annan Foundation, Mercy Corps, Plan International, Restless Development, Save the Children, SCOUTS, World Organization of the Scout Movement, Southern Voice, Teach for All, UNA-USA, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World YMCA, World YWCA, ECOSOC, UNDP, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Purpose, UNESCO, Unilever, ASPBAE, ILO, ITUC, ACET, LinkedIn, Brookings Institution, SWEA, Mastercard Foundation, McKinsey, The New York Times, Code Red Co., NBCUniversal, African Futures Institute, Nike, Pardee Center for International Futures, CEEW, CSTEP, Simon Institute for Long-term Governance, Schmidt Futures, Legal Priorities Project, Gates Foundation, Amnesty International, Captain Planet Foundation, Essity.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# THE BIG BRAINSTORM 2023

The Big Brainstorm is **an opportunity for young thinkers and activists to design their future**. Hosted by the UN Foundation's Our Future Agenda program, it is a two-week design sprint to explore, prototype, and launch solutions to tackle some of humanity's biggest challenges.

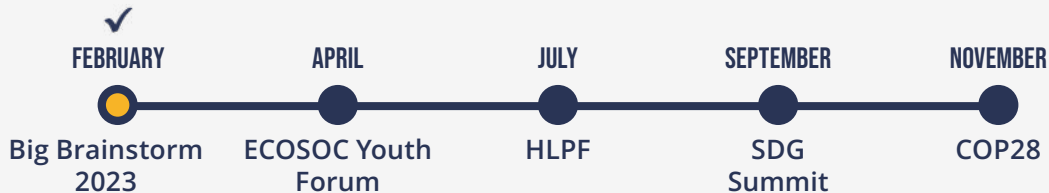
The theme of the 2023 Big Brainstorm is **"A Year of Action for the SDGs."** More than 2,500 people from 136 countries mobilized this year for the Big Brainstorm with a focus on the SDG Summit. Young people submitted 975 innovations to turbocharge commitments, financing, and action.

The Big Brainstorm is also supported by the **Unlock the Future coalition** – a high-ambition political and strategic alliance of the world's biggest youth-led and youth-focused organizations. It taps into the coalition's reach of almost 875 million people worldwide to influence the global policy agenda with and for all young people and future generations.

**2,500+**  
people registered

**975**  
initiatives submitted by  
young people

**136**  
countries represented



# OUR DESTINATION

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In September 2023, the UN will host its second SDG Summit. During this global gathering, world leaders will meet to drive collective action on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to solve global issues such as poverty, lack of access to education, and climate change.

With five months to go to the second SDG Summit in September, we will join world leaders to review how much progress has been made and set new benchmarks for the last chapter of the 2030 Agenda.

The Big Brainstorm is **an early activation moment for young people** who want more than a seat at the table and want to be part of designing and delivering a new generation of ideas and solutions. We aim to **spotlight the most successful innovations**, created by young people who participated in the Big Brainstorm during the SDG Summit to demonstrate that meaningful progress on the SDGs is possible.

*“The SDGs are really about life and death for so many of us. It is about the air we breathe. It is about going after a world where we get to really exercise our full humanity as people living on the planet.”*

**EDDIE NDOPU**  
SDG Activist



## HOW DOES THE BIG BRAINSTORM WORK?

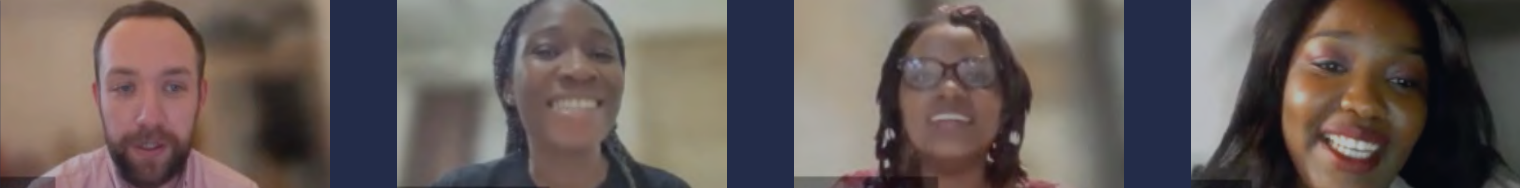
Young people, under 30 years old, worldwide were invited to submit their proposals for the 2023 Big Brainstorm to address the world's greatest challenges, each represented by one of the **eight Action Groups** (see [page 21](#)) led by the UN Foundation Next Generation Fellows.

The UN Foundation Next Generation Fellows led the selection process for the Big Brainstorm, identifying three compelling proposals per Action Groups. These were selected based on their ability to inspire young people, galvanize collective action, and benefit from the support of the UN Foundation. The young people whose ideas were chosen were invited to become Action Group Innovators, committed to accelerating action through to the SDG Summit.

*"We have to focus on the implementation of the SDGs because it is the best effort we have made to reach a near perfect world."*

**H.E LACHEZARA STOEVA**

*Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN,  
ECOSOC President*



## THE BIG KICK-OFF

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On 16 February, the Big Brainstorm's two-week design sprint then officially began at the **Big Kick-Off** with the announcement of the Action Group Innovators. Here, the political scene was set and the roadmap laid out for the run-up to the SDG Summit, including the ECOSOC Youth Forum, the High-level Political Forum, and COP 28.

We invited young changemakers to join the Action Groups to help shape their direction and design. Special guests, including SDG Activist **Eddie Ndopu**, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN and ECOSOC President **H.E Lachezara Stoeva**, activist and spoken word artist **Esethu Sotheni**, and singer-songwriter **Mia Kami**, shared their personal insights and inspirational performances.



**H.E Lachezara Stoeva**

Permanent Representative  
of Bulgaria to the UN and  
ECOSOC President



**Esethu Sotheni**

Spoken Word Artist



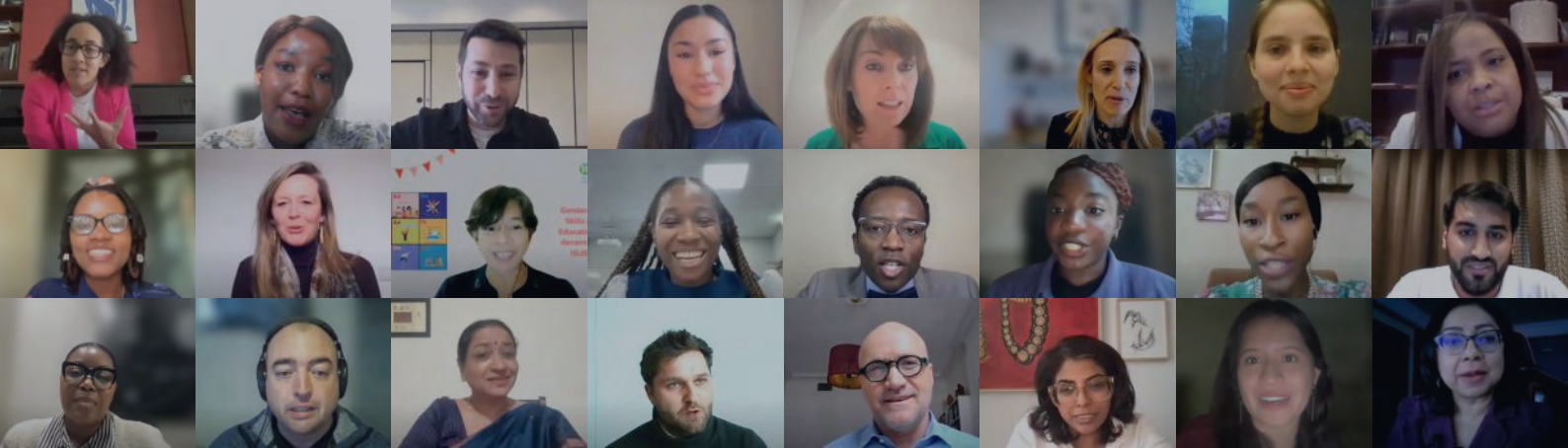
**Eddie Ndopu**

SDG Activist



**Mia Kami**

Singer-songwriter



## SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS

During the design sprint, we held **Spotlight Sessions** to inform, inspire and advise Big Brainstorm participants. These 60-minute sessions, open to all, featured leading thinkers, entrepreneurs and policymakers from UN ambassadors to representatives from Nike, Mastercard Foundation, and The New York Times.

[For more information, see [page 38](#)]

*"I am loving the discussion today! The panelists have been incredibly knowledgeable and have provided a wealth of information. I came into the discussion not knowing how I could contribute to the green economy, but now I am inspired to find ways to do my part. It has been an incredibly informative and inspiring experience."*

**BIG BRAINSTORM PARTICIPANT**

# THE BIG PITCH

The Big Brainstorm ended with the **Big Pitch**, where all eight Action Groups pitched their plans to mobilize young people for the SDG Summit.

The Action Group that generated the most public support received the Mobilizer Award. Based on popular vote, the Mobilizer Award was awarded to the Action Group for Climate and Sustainability.

During the Big Pitch, we also launched the Engine

Room, a virtual space for mobilization for the Action Group ahead of the SDG Summit. Through the Engine Room, young changemakers can forge connections, generate political and institutional support, and mobilize intergenerational solidarity for their ideas. The UN Foundation will also showcase noteworthy achievements made by each Action Group, and spotlight their stories and ambition during the UN High-level Week. [see [page 55](#)].



Sofia Borges

Senior Vice President And Head Of The New York Office, UN Foundation



Alaa Murabit

Director, Program Advocacy and Communications, Gates Foundation



Nina Boel

International Board Member, Amnesty International



Isra Chaker

Syrian-American Civil Rights Activist



Oby Ezekwesili

Former Minister of Education of Nigeria



Courtney Kimmel

Vice President, Captain Planet Foundation



Ulrika Mod er

UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director of the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP



Anna Brodowsky

Vice President Public Affairs, Essity



MC Millaray

Mapuche Rapper

# SPECIAL GUESTS

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Three young artists joined the Big Brainstorm to mobilize young people at the Big Kick-Off and Big Pitch. Their personal and powerful performances demonstrated how to connect one's life with the SDGs and express ideas about the ongoing global challenges through storytelling.

- **Mia Kami**, Singer and Songwriter
- **Eddie Ndopu**, SDG Activist
- **Esethu Sotheni**, Spoken Word Artist
- **MC Millaray**, Emerging 16 year old Music Star in Chile, using her fierce lyrics to advocate for transformative change for young people and future generations. Her personal journey was recently featured in the [New York Times](#)

*"We are the present and we are the ones who must define our future."*

**MC MILLARAY**  
Mapuche Rapper





# AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

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Wambui W.

*I am so impressed by my peers. Congratulations Big Brainstorm 2023!!*



Granny L.

*This has truly exceeded my expectations*



Thomas

*Every pitch has been electric. This tells how serious they are about bringing development.*



Anonymous

*Thanks to all the panelists, they are just amazing*

Text Message



# THE DESIGN SPRINT



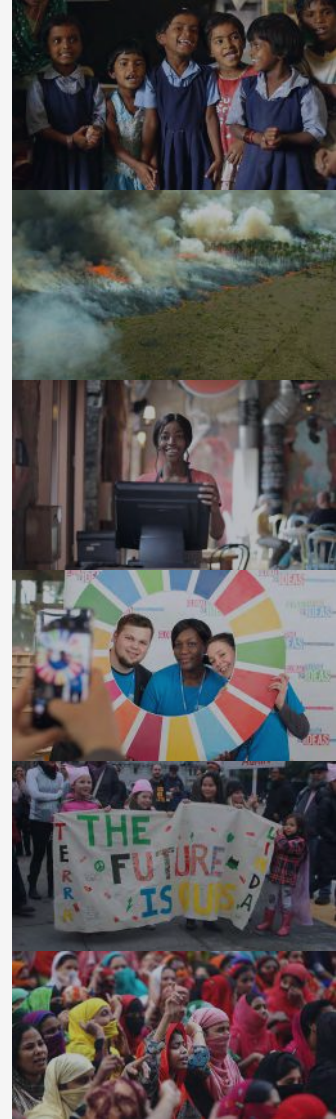
# THE CHALLENGE

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Each of the changemakers' ideas were matched with one of the eight Action Groups coordinated by the Next Generation Fellows. Each Action Group was charged with prototyping these ideas to solve real-world problems facing young people.

These ideas had to meet the following criteria:

- Feasible in the lead-up to the SDG Summit
- Supportable by Fellows' expertise
- In an area that the Action Groups felt passionate to see through to completion
- Able to be worked on collaboratively
- Innovative and able to bring something exciting to the SDG space, and relevant to the following challenges



## CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

BUTTI ALMHEIRI

In preparation for COP 28, how can we support, listen, and engage young people in decision-making discussions and processes about climate change, especially across intersectional issues on climate financing, energy security, food systems, migration, plastic pollution, and more?

## TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

ALICE MUKASHYAKA

Building on the momentum of the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, how can we encourage national and local leaders to prioritize the “right to learn”, even during a compound global crisis?

## FINANCING FOR YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS

TAYLOR HAWKINS

Youth civil society is not thriving - and in many cases, not surviving due to resourcing challenges. How can we improve the quantity, quality, and accessibility of financing for young changemakers?

## FUTURE GENERATIONS

JACOB ELLIS & CLAUDETTE SALINAS LEVYA

There are fewer than eight billion people currently alive, but more than 11 billion people are likely to be born during the rest of this century. How can we ensure that young people and young countries are in the driving seat in the lead up to and at the 2024 Summit of the Future?

## PEACE AND JUSTICE

KELECHI ACHINONO

In a world fragmented by injustices and conflict, the path to true peace, justice and inclusion requires a local-to-global approach. How can we provide young people with access to justice, taking justice out of the courtroom and into the communities in which they live?

## SDG SUMMIT

INÉS YÁBAR

Leveraging the collective action of the Unlock the Future Coalition, how can we put young people at the heart of the mobilization efforts as designers of the SDG transformation process and champions for the rights of future generations?

## GENDER EQUALITY

ANITA DYWABA

Multiple global crises have unraveled hard-won achievements on gender equality and significantly set progress back. How could we address compounding issues impacting girls and women, and collectively drive evidence-based solutions?

## JOBS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

SARU DUCKWORTH

Many young people are not sufficiently equipped for a rapidly changing world. What investments must be made to propel young people into productive employment and decent work, focusing on digital, demographic, decarbonization transitions that leave no one behind?

# CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY



Mobilizer Award Recipient,  
the most popular Action  
Group by public vote

Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of our time, with increasing global temperatures, rising sea levels, and more frequent extreme weather events threatening our planet's health. Young people worldwide are increasingly becoming involved in the fight against climate change, recognizing the urgent need for action to protect our planet and its inhabitants. According to recent surveys, youth are some of the most engaged and concerned individuals regarding climate change, with many participating in protests, advocacy campaigns, and educational programs aimed at raising awareness and promoting solutions.

95

Action Group members



Butti Almheiri

*Led by Butti Almuhairi  
(United Arab Emirates)*

## CARBON CREDITS



**Gathoni Ileri**

*(Kenya)*

This project is seeking to combat the false information surrounding carbon credits. By creating a documentary on carbon credits, this innovation will highlight the weaknesses of relying on them, and the potential negative impacts that this approach can have on neighboring communities. This documentary will focus on the mangrove region off the coast of Kenya to highlight the consequences of seeking to 'offset' climate change, as opposed to meaningfully reducing emissions.

## CLEAN CITIES



**Martin Manyozo**

*(Malawi)*

In Malawi's cities, 79% of waste ends up in landfill or the natural environment, and 280,000 tons of solid waste is left uncollected. The Clean Cities Project seeks to address this by focusing on recycling waste and transforming it into building materials, such as eco-bricks, charcoal briquettes, and organic fertilizer. Run in tandem with this, the Clean Cities Project will coordinate campaigns and coaching for local communities to address social barriers to effective recycling to educate and empower 10,000 local community members to practice recycling.

## YOUTH-FOCUSED R&D



**James Blissett**

*(Australia)*

'Youth-Focused R&D' proposes to train 1,000 young people to increase the supply of youth-led climate solutions across research and development. This will be achieved by: developing a global support network, offering skill-building to guide young leaders toward the resources they need to succeed, and mentoring to these young leaders on how to develop financially sustainable climate initiatives. Through creating a more supportive and financially viable pathway for young leaders engaging in climate innovation, the ambition is to increase the engagement, motivation, and retention of young people in the field.

# TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

After the COVID-19 pandemic – the largest disruption to education in history – many are questioning fundamental standards and inequities of the global education system. Many places in the world lack digital access, have formalistic teaching, and use outdated curriculums which do not prepare young students adequately for their future. Many young people leave school without basic reading, writing, and mathematics knowledge. With the world at a crucial juncture between the Transforming Education Summit and the SDG Summit, now is the time for innovative solutions to break down barriers and create a world where every student has access to quality education, regardless of their background or where they come from.

75

Action Group members



Alice Mukashyaka



Thaís Queiroz

*Led by Alice Mukashyaka (Rwanda)  
and Thaís Queiroz (Brazil)*



## SELF-DEVELOPMENT & SELF LEARNING



Zitouni Rafik Mohamed Islam

(Algeria)

Designed to support the development of young changemakers, this innovation seeks to empower individuals to take control of their learning by providing them with the resources, tools, and support they need to set and achieve their goals. This project is part of a growing movement to elevate lifelong learning and equip young leaders to reach their full potential by providing educational opportunities for resource-constrained young leaders through workshops, mentorship, and community networks.



Kinga Szalaba

(Hungary)

## ALLIANCE FOR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Reimagining the way that young people are engaged in the education system is not a task that any one organization can achieve. The Alliance of Partners for Education would unify a broad range of stakeholders worldwide who are committed to promoting young people's role in the future of education. This Alliance will act as a mechanism for connection, mobilization, and coordination across national, regional, and global initiatives to increase global awareness and collective impact.



Yasmeim Abdelghany

(Egypt)

## UNFOLDED



Tomi Oluyamo

(Nigeria)

While many are taking strides to transform the education system at large, special focus must be given to disadvantaged communities facing the greatest barriers to education. These barriers may be due to socioeconomic status, geographical location or other personal factors that limit educational accessibility. This innovation is designed to curate a tailored learning ecosystem of support, resources, and empowerment opportunities for these individuals. By leveraging a learner-centered curriculum design that focuses on problem-solving, the ambition is that this approach will ignite a greater level of engagement from students, delivering better results.

# FINANCING FOR YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS

Global leaders have acknowledged the strength and potential of young changemakers to mobilize and connect vast networks who can lead change in communities around the world. Despite this, talented young changemakers often lack the finances to bring their inspirational ideas to life.

As we move towards the SDG Summit, there is more and more talk about shifting from the what - the goals themselves - to the how. We know that unlocking finance is key to enabling young people to fulfill their potential as the engine for accelerating action towards the SDGs.

29

Action Group members



Taylor Hawkins

*Led by Taylor Hawkins (Australia)*



**Khushi Jain**

*(India)*

## SUPPORTING YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS

Young leaders starting their entrepreneurial or social impact journeys often face challenges in seeking funding, especially for those working to contribute to attaining the SDGs. This issue is a significant barrier for young people in starting and scaling their organizations. This project will support young people to overcome this barrier by providing a clear and comprehensive funding landscape, available development opportunities, and experiences from successful young grantees. In addition, this innovation aspires to offer mini-grant-making opportunities designed to be accessible to young leaders.



**Walter Fernando Ibarra**

*(Peru)*

## SDGS INNOVATORS PODCAST

Inspiration and community building are key to mobilizing a generation of doers to accelerate action towards the SDGs. This project will take the form of a podcast to spotlight young changemakers taking action around, sharing insights on their challenges and successes to acquiring funding, and their lessons along the way. This will not only support knowledge sharing and capability development for young leaders but strengthen support networks and bring a global perspective to discussions of how best to achieve accelerated action towards the SDGs.



**Seyifunmi Adebote**

*(Nigeria)*

## REFUGEE BANK FOR AFRICA

The Refugee Bank for Africa offers solid economic mechanisms and reserve funds to support African refugees. It builds first-hand exchanges with young people who have found themselves locked out of opportunities for financial stability or advancement due to their refugee status, fueling systemic inequity and conflict. Through providing transparent and accessible avenues to refugees for funding, this innovation has the potential to not only support financial access but also act as a proactive tool to advance educational attainment, the development of small businesses and the economy, and gender equality objectives by breaking cycles of inequality.



**Abraham Kahasha Kabral**

*(Democratic Republic of Congo)*

# FUTURE GENERATIONS

Between the Big Kick-Off on the 16 February and the Big Pitch on the 28 February, it is estimated that 4,620,000 babies were born. Already decisions taken today by our policymakers will impact them and those born tomorrow. We have responsibilities to ensure that those who are yet to be born enter a better, fairer, greener and more equal world - regardless of being born this year, or within the next 100 years and beyond.

33

Action Group members



Jacob Ellis



Claudette Salinas Leyva

*Led by Jacob Ellis (Wales) and Claudette Salinas Leyva (Mexico)*

## FORESIGHT FOR FUTURE GENS



Felipe Bosch

*(Argentina)*

This initiative will develop a toolkit of foresight exercises that would gather information about global concerns and ambitions for future generations and act as a tool for including young leaders in innovative participatory activities at a scale not yet seen. This initiative will also explore collaboration opportunities with a diverse range of foresight practitioners to inform the design of the toolkit. Once launched, the potential of a high-level event will also be explored as an opportunity to present the insights of the pilot toolkit and offer contributions for the formulation of the Declaration for Future Generations.



Wara Iris Ruiz Condori

*(Bolivia)*

## INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Future generations leadership practices are present within many indigenous communities around the world. Most future generations will also be born in 'future majority' countries, most of which are concentrated in the Global South. To support a strong path forward for future generations, drawing together and preserving indigenous cultural experiences and knowledge is essential to enabling future generations to learn from them and continue to practice them. This innovation will engage various indigenous leaders to explore new ways of gathering and preserving their insights for current and future generations.



Jacob Odur

*(Uganda)*

## A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

The series of environmental, social, health, and economic crises that the world has faced in recent years have highlighted the shortcomings of traditional models and tools for economic and social development. In response, this innovation will mobilize young researchers and thinkers to contribute to this growing body of work and have their voices heard in dialogues focussing on how we measure our success, approach sustainability, and might reimagine our social contract.



Davide Fanciulli

*(Italy)*

# GENDER EQUALITY

The UN has continued to stress a need for gender equality and innovation as an essential step in successfully accelerating the advancement of all 17 SDGs. Unfortunately, projections show we will likely not achieve all the SDGs by 2030. All genders, stakeholders, and generations need to work together to transform their communities and take a stand against gender inequality. Young people should be at the forefront of the collaborative effort to advance gender equality for all.

37

Action Group members



Anita Dywaba

*Led by Anita Dywaba (South Africa)*

## WOMEN WEAVING IN SCIENCE



**Nohora Quiquantar**

*(Colombia)*

This project will train indigenous female leaders in climate action, bringing specific focus to food sovereignty, climate change, clean energy, and project formulation. Women who participate will be empowered and equipped to develop locally driven initiatives for their communities. This approach will contribute to increasing the resilience of women and girls in the face of climate impacts by not only increasing their capacity for participation and access to decision-making and providing pathways for financial independence.

## STORYTELLING FOR CHANGE



**Charity Adhiambo**

*(Kenya)*

This initiative will foster a network and platform for creative changemakers across Kisumu to develop and amplify their unique voice. This initiative will highlight the voices of vulnerable women and girls between the ages of 15-28 years through performances in spoken word and theater to create dialogue with the communities and duty bearers. It will also focus on capacity building for women and girls on how to use social media as a tool for their own storytelling through short film training and Community Participatory Educational Theatre (CPET) to amplify their voices towards gender equality and equity.

## REFUGEE RADIO PROGRAMME



**Jamila Karimi**

*(Afghanistan)*

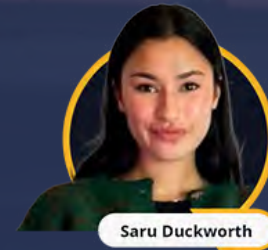
For almost two years, the access afforded to Afghan women for education, employment, and social freedoms has continued to be reduced. This innovation will create and broadcast radio programs through various platforms that will contain opportunities for capacity building and training, and community building. The long-term ambition for this project also includes the ability to provide employment opportunities to female Afghan journalists.

# JOBS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Work has never been harder for young people than it is today. From mass unemployment, to burnout, to exploitation – however they manifest, the challenges are felt universally. For one young person, an economic opportunity might mean a small improvement in their daily life – maybe the money for an extra meal – but when you multiply this across communities, these small changes together become some of our strongest drivers of long term development transformation. That extra meal becomes more energy and time for starting a business, which means more money to send a daughter to school along with her brother, more knowledge and resources to adapt to a changing climate.

58

Action Group members



Saru Duckworth

*Led by Saru Duckworth (Nepal / USA)*



## SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

---



**Sushmina Baidya**

*(Nepal)*

There is increasing evidence that the school-to-work transition can create long-term negative effects on young people. To address this, this initiative intends to develop a career aptitude and leadership development package consisting of intensive workshops, job shadowing, and traineeship to support a progressive transition into the workforce. This project aims to work with young people aged 17-21 living in Kathmandu over a six-month duration with the ambition that those supported by this initiative will have drastically improved experiences in the workforce.

## “EMPOWER HER”

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**Florence Lungu**

*(Zambia)*

This initiative aims to provide free short courses to women and girls who are not supported by the traditional education system due to being young mothers or members of rural or marginalized communities. These courses will focus on locally appropriate and desirable skills such as tailoring, catering, craft, and hair braiding that will provide them with opportunities for long-term financial independence. The long-term ambitions of this initiative include building up women’s confidence in their ideas and the provision of start-up loans for women to support the development of their businesses.

## ARE WE ALRIGHT

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**Lame Dilotsotlhe**

*(Botswana)*

Storytelling is a powerful tool for unpacking potential futures and emerging trends. Using foresight tools and data storytelling approaches, this innovation seeks to respond to the countless uncertainties emerging about the future of work and the rising prominence of ‘quiet quitting’ to unearth the individuals and stories behind this workforce trend. Through collaborative research to reveal new evidence from the underrepresented Global South perspective, the group aims to document experiences of youth disengagement and share insights to influence policy, champion youth advocacy, and lead change for young people in the workplace.



**Opey Abednego Brandy**

*(Ghana)*

# PEACE, JUSTICE AND INCLUSION

Access to justice is a basic right that everyone should enjoy, no matter their financial or social status. However, the reality is that justice is still a privilege for many people around the world. According to the World Justice Project, about five billion people have unmet justice needs. This means that millions of people are unable to obtain justice for everyday problems or take advantage of what the law offers, leaving them in unfair situations. The lack of access to justice disproportionately affects marginalized and vulnerable groups, leading to mistreatment, inequality, and human rights violations. This is a problem that we must all work to address.

33

Action Group members



Kelechi Achinonu

*Led by Kelechi Achinonu (Nigeria)*



**Patricia Peace Ejang**

*(Uganda)*

## **MOBILE LEGAL CLINIC**

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Many people worldwide struggle to access justice due to a lack of information and resources. This innovation is designed to help shape a better world by increasing access to mechanisms for justice through legal information, support for those navigating the legal process, and pro bono legal representation. The ambition of this project is that providing avenues for individuals to have a positive experience with the legal system, this may also result in a reduction in crime rates.



**David Adesanya**

*(United Kingdom)*

## **ALTA VOZ PEACE INDICATOR**

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The initiative aims to collect data, using participatory research methods, within local region/ neighborhood. This initiative serves to act as a platform to communicate priorities of local people to local NGOs, as well as encourage local NGOs to work on certain projects together, thus combining their resources. We want to act as peace facilitators of the region, constantly monitoring the level of development and consulting NGOs on how that level of development can be increased.



**Camila Szapari**

*(Argentina)*

## **THE YOUTH CAST**

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The Youth Cast will be a vibrant youth-powered platform that seeks to give young people (18-24 years) a voice to engage meaningfully as partners in key decision-making processes on issues that affect them, by 2025. This initiative will bring together diverse minds of young people to engage in intellectual conversations and brainstorm on what can help them to elevate their careers and general livelihoods. The outcomes, intended to be policy papers and youth manifestoes, will inform different programs and policies directed towards supporting the youth in Rwanda and influence those in power to put young people at the forefront of development.



**Patrick Karekezi**

*(Rwanda)*

# THE SDG SUMMIT

As humanity, we set 17 goals in 2015 with 15 years to achieve them. Now in 2023, we're at the halfway point to the 2030 deadline and it's time to do a check-in. It will be no surprise that, as humanity, we are not good at keeping to our resolutions; however, it's not too late to try again. With young people, we've seen we can move forward faster, better and leaving no one behind.

62

Action Group members



*Led by Inés Yábar (Peru)*



**Michal Tuczapski**

*(Poland)*

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

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This initiative proposes a response to the youth mental health crisis that focuses on the development of mental resilience and investing in the strengthening of the youth psyche. It allows young people to return to normal life and guarantees youth mental safety and stability in the future. This will include conducting courses for volunteers through being a Mental Health Rescuer (MHR). Through training, these individuals will have the ease of recognizing mental disorders among their peers and will be able to reach out directly to those in need, help them, and refer them to a specialist if necessary.



**Muhammed Trawally**

*(Gambia)*

## SDG LAB & CAMPAIGN

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The Lab will be designed to facilitate connections between academia, youth social and environmental movements, and NGO advocates in the service of solution-oriented research and implementation which connects youth initiatives with greater opportunity and support. In partnership with this Lab, a campaign will be run called “It is On Us.” It will be a mass campaign calling everybody to act to help achieve the global goals, helping people across all age groups to clearly understand the role that they can play in contributing to action towards the SDGs.



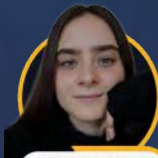
**Mark Ortiz**

*(United States)*

## GOOGLE TRANSLATE FOR THE DEAF

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Google Translate is the most globally used and accessible translation tool. However, despite it being in 103 languages not everyone can use it. 72 million people worldwide are deaf, and Google Translate can't speak to them. This initiative seeks to incorporate sign language into the existing infrastructure of Google Translate. The idea allows written English words to be translated into visual hand gesture icons, designed and animated in the world's well-loved visual emoji style. This new feature would position Google as a bigger champion for inclusivity, bridging the missing gap in sign language translation and making it universally accessible and useful.



**Trinity Ross**

*(Australia)*



# SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS

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These 60-minute sessions featured leading thinkers, entrepreneurs and policymakers with the capacity to inform, inspire and guide Big Brainstorm participants. These sessions consisted of panel discussions and an audience Q&A.

# MEET THE SPEAKERS



Laurel Patterson



H.E. Kelsha McGuire



Soledad Patiño



Maryjacob Okwuosa



Matthieu Cognac



Ruth Khakame



Landry Signé



Jawhateikmal Kanu



Nikolai Hegertun



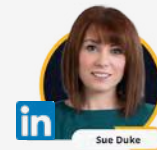
Corina Kwami



Jaiiri Terpstra



Cecilia (Thea) Soriano



Sue Duke



Mona Idrisu



Nathalie Gabala



Emmanuel Ametepey



H.E. Xolisa Mabhongo



Inés Yábar



Amy Parker



Alice Mukashyaka



Saru Duckworth



Pelle Enarsson



Mayowa Kuyoro



Kelechi Achinonu



Jonah Kessel



Ileri Jaiyeoba



Jonathan Moyer



Daniel Sherrill



Nneka Norville



Anita Dywaba



Indu Murthy



Shuva Raha



Hilary Smith



Olasumbo Olaniyi



Aarathi Krishnan



Eiko Tsukamoto



Cecil Abungu



Maxime Stauffer



Claudette Salinas Leyra



Butti Almheiri

# THE GRAND AMBITION TO CHANGE TRAJECTORIES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE SDG ERA

The focus of this Spotlight Session, moderated by lead Next Generation Fellow Inés Yábar, was on changing our approach to invest more effectively in young people through international cooperation. This is crucial as we approach the halfway point of the 2030 era and seek to better protect their interests in the future.

Speakers included:

- **Laurel Patterson**, Head of SDG Integration, UN Development Program
- **H.E. Keisha McGuire**, President and CEO, Present and Future Institute
- **H.E. Xolisa Mabhongo**, Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN
- **Nikolai Hegertun**, Senior Adviser, NORAD
- **Corina Kwami**, Director of Strategy, Purpose

The panelists shared their ideas on what investments can put the SDGs back on track, with a focus on next and future generations. They also stressed the value of advocating for a new financial system that drives resources to climate action and the SDGs, including the imperative to work together to unlock impact, commitments, and financing for young people.





*"It is not an overstatement to say, we are at a pivotal moment in time, beyond the geopolitics of our time."*

**H.E. KEISHA MCGUIRE**

*Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Grenada to the UN*

*"We need governance that responds to the needs of young people, but in order for that to happen, young people need to be part of the agenda setting."*

**H.E. XOLISA MABHONGO**

*Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN*

*"We are focusing on youth because we know, looking back at history, that youth have played a huge role. Young people, folks earlier on in their life journey have been the ones driving these mindsets and cultural shifts."*

**CORINA KWAMI**

*Director of Strategy, Purpose*

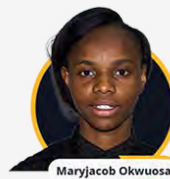
# EQUIPPING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE SKILLS TO THRIVE

Moderated by Alice Mukashyaka, UN Foundation Next Generation Fellow for Transforming Education, this Spotlight Session looked at how after the Covid-19 pandemic – the largest disruption of education in history, many are questioning fundamental standards and inequities of the global education system, which leaves many young people without basic knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics, and unprepared for their future.

Panelists discussed possible methods for transforming current education systems to create approaches to learning that are more inclusive, creative, and future-ready, covering subjects such as scaling up access to digital skills and using play to enhance the power of informal learning.

Speakers included:

- **Soledad Patiño**, Global Skills Academy Coordinator, Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, UNESCO
- **Maryjacob Okwuosa**, Youth Leader, Global Partnership for Education
- **Jairi Terpstra**, Global Future of Work Manager – Youth, Unilever
- **Cecilia (Thea) Soriano**, Regional Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education
- **Amy Parker**, Senior Learning through Play Advisor, Save the Children



*“Education is a fundamental human right and a global public good that possesses the power to transform individuals, communities, the planet, and entire generations.”*

**SOLEDAD PATIÑO**

*Global Skills Academy Coordinator, Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, UNESCO*

*“We need to create a transformative education.... We will only achieve this with collaboration.”*

**MARYJACOB OKWUOSA**

*Youth Leader, Global Partnership for Education*

*“There should be a big focus on lifelong learning... developing that mindset and encouraging young people to choose purposefully their career pathways keeping in mind the rapidly changing world we are currently living in.”*

**JAÏRI TERPSTRA**

*Global Future of Work Manager - Youth, Unilever*

# PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

Saru Duckworth, UN Foundation Next Generation Fellow for Jobs, led a discussion on how to give young people the right skills, experiences, and resources so they can enter the workforce and thrive. In a world where those same young people are facing extraordinary economic, social and cultural challenges, demographic shifts, technological advances, and the climate crisis, they are dealt numerous additional obstacles in their pursuit of meaningful future work.

Addressing these challenges, attendees looked at how dynamics between employers and employees are continuing to change, where the jobs of the future will come from and how young people can be prepared with the skills to tackle them, and how more inclusive labor markets can be built in the areas where a young workforce will be concentrated in the future.

Speakers included:

- **Matthieu Cognac**, Senior Multilateral Cooperation Advisor, International Labour Organization
- **Ruth Khakame**, ITUC Africa Youth Chair
- **Sue Duke**, Vice President, Head of Global Public Policy & Economic Graph, LinkedIn
- **Mona Iddrisu**, Head of Youth Employment and Skills at Africa Center for Economic Transformation (ACET)



Matthieu Cognac



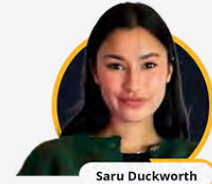
Ruth Khakame



Sue Duke



Mona Iddrisu



Saru Duckworth

*"We need to work on an intersectional approach to youth engagement...let it not be that a young worker wants to aim only for a white collar job instead of focusing on innovations around self employment and entrepreneurship, and digital and green jobs."*

**RUTH KHAKAME**

ITUC Africa Youth Chair Development, UNESCO

*"Work is being reimaged, we need to make sure we're equipping young people with the digital skills that are required to be able to take up future jobs that are coming."*

**MONA IDDRISU**

Head of youth employment and skills  
at Africa Center for Economic Transformation (ACET)

*"Historically we would've seen candidates choosing companies because of those typical metrics, salary, level, title, ability to be promoted."*

*Today we see young people asking fundamentally of companies, what do you stand for, do you share my values, do you care about the environment, do you care about diversity inclusion and belonging?"*

**SUE DUKE**

Vice President, Head of Global Public Policy  
& Economic Graph, LinkedIn

# RENEWING MULTILATERALISM AND THE RISING PROMINENCE OF AFRICA

Moderated by Kelechi Achinonu, UN Foundation Next Generation Fellow for Peace, Justice and Inclusion, this Spotlight Session examined the key role that Africa will play in any future efforts towards global cooperation.

Speakers included:

- **Landry Signé**, Senior Fellow, Africa Growth Initiative, Brookings Institution
- **Jawhratelkmal Kanu**, Founding Member, Sudanese Women Economists Association (SWEA)
- **Nathalie Gabala**, Executive Director, Pan-African Programs, Mastercard Foundation
- **Emmanuel Ametepey**, Executive Director of Youth Advocates Ghana and Convener of the African Youth SDGs Summit
- **Mayowa Kuyoro**, Partner, McKinsey Nigeria

Emphasizing the need for greater African leadership and innovation to inspire multilateral formats and approaches, the panelists specifically looked at how these might engage the continent's young people, identifying the key African interests in reforming the global order and the challenges and opportunities of multilateral cooperation in addressing Africa's current and future needs.



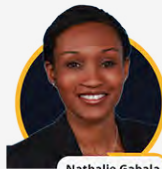
Landry Signé



Jawhratelkmal Kanu



Mayowa Kuyoro



Nathalie Gabala



Emmanuel Ametepey



Kelechi Achinonu

*"All the countries should be given a fair and inclusive seat at the table so that they can express their voice to the fullest."*

**LANDRY SIGNÉ**

*Senior Fellow, Africa Growth Initiative,  
Brookings Institution*

*"We all know and we all see that power is shifting and this might represent an opportunity for Africa and more importantly an opportunity for young people to enter into a coalition."*

**NATHALIE GABALA**

*Executive Director, Pan-African Programs  
Mastercard Foundation*

*"The challenge has always been the level of trust between institutions and young people... so you will have institutions designing programs and acknowledging that young people must be at the forefront, but it happens oftentimes, when it comes to implementation, young people are left behind."*

**EMMANUEL AMETEPEY**

*Executive Director of Youth Advocates Ghana  
and Convener of the African Youth SDGs Summit*

# HOW INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY AND STORYTELLING CAN HELP US BREAK THROUGH

After progress on the SDGs stagnated during the pandemic, this Spotlight Session – moderated by Next Generation Fellow for Gender Equality Anita Dywaba – looked at how promising emerging technologies and communications can help kickstart it once more.

Speakers included:

- **Hilary Smith**, EVP, Corporate Social Responsibility, NBCUniversal
- **Ileri Jaiyeoba**, Creative Producer, Code Red Co
- **Jonah Kessel**, Deputy Director, Opinion Video, The New York Times
- **Olasumbo Olaniyi**, Researcher, African Contemporary Institute of Design and African Futures Institute
- **Nneka Norville**, Global Marketing Communications Executive, Nike

Discussing how these developments can help break through bureaucratic and political hurdles stalling progress, they examined the importance of storytelling in the current state of the world, how creative elements in our society can help shift opinion and mobilize action, and some of the future challenges that influence our messaging and our tactics in achieving these aims.



Jonah Kessel



Ileri Jaiyeoba



Nneka Norville



Hilary Smith



Olasumbo Olaniyi



Anita Dywaba



*"Listening to your audience is so critical because if you're not listening to your audience, you're not getting feedback. It should be a conversation... it's a really good way to tell how people are receiving your stories and direct your path."*

**JONAH KESSEL**

*Deputy Director, Opinion Video, The New York Times*

*"At a crucial time like now, you have to collaborate and look for passionate citizens, passionate organizations and passionate communities then begin to chase the common good."*

**OLASUMBO OLANIYI**

*Researcher, African Futures Institute*

*"I think that if we want people to feel safe telling their stories and safely participating in storytelling. That means learning how to respond to vulnerability and different perspectives. Sometimes that is not a linear journey."*

**ILERI JAIYEGBA**

*Creative Producer, Code Red Co*

# MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Crossing the 1.5 degrees above the preindustrial levels threshold in the next five years is a real and imminent threat, as the likelihood of it happening is steadily increasing. This Spotlight Session moderated by Next Generation Fellow for Climate Butti Almheiri looked at why a meaningful consensus on responses to the climate crisis remains elusive, and what can be done to reach one.

Ahead of COP 28, they asked what key priorities should be pushed through to set the stage for greater climate ambition in the years ahead; how the Paris targets can be achieved through increased resilience, cooperation and investment; and how equity and justice can be embedded in the transition to greener economies, with the help of those most negatively impacted by the crisis.

Speakers included:

- **Shuva Raha**, Head, New Initiatives at Council on Energy, Environment and Water
- **Jonathan Moyer**, Associate Director, Pardee Center for International Futures
- **Indu Murthy**, Head of Climate Environment and Sustainability, Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy
- **Pelle Enarsson**, Senior Advisor, UN Foundation



*"We're all in this together. We're not just connected across the earth. We're also connected through our histories and our pasts. Our futures are also deeply intertwined."*

**JONATHAN MOYER**

*Associate Director, Pardee Center  
for International Futures*

*"The UN and multilateral cooperation on climate change is delivering. We just need to make it even faster and better."*

**PELLE ENARSSON**

*Senior Advisor, UN Foundation*

*"We need to embed climate [ambitions] across all the sustainable development goals. This is an intelligent way to ensure that our investments remain intact over time."*

**INDU MURTHY**

*Head of Climate Environment and Sustainability,  
Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy*

# THINKING, PLANNING, AND ACTING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

This session, moderated by Next Generation Fellow for Future Generations Claudette Salinas Leyva, focused on improvements drastically needed to the multilateral system to meet the needs of the next and future generations – including the 10.9 billion people yet to be born this century.

Speakers included:

- **Aarathi Krishnan**, Strategic Foresight, UNDP
- **Maxime Stauffer**, Chief Executive Officer, The Simon Institute for Long-term Governance
- **Eiko Tsukamoto**, Senior Manager, Schmidt Futures
- **Cecil Abungu**, Researcher, Legal Priorities Project, Cambridge

Unexpected crises and the pressing development needs of today tend to take center stage in political discourse, at the expense of matters of the future. 10.9 billion people are likely to be born this century, mostly in low and middle-income countries,

while richer countries still control and consume the overwhelming majority of global resources. Any future generations agenda must reconcile this imbalance and reimagine how the multilateral system can deliver for future generations.

The panelists discussed the inherent difficulty in addressing the needs of future generations – and the actions and investments necessary to meet them – including in decision-making by current leaders, the implementation of the SDGs, and developments in the multilateral system.



*“To think, plan and act for future generations we need to understand the systemic structures of injustice and inequity that happen now and how this might be replicated or enhanced in the future. Because whatever society looks like now, that’s what is going to unfold.”*

**AARATHI KRISHNAN**

Strategic Foresight, UNDP

*“There is a need for risk-informed development for future generations. We need to shift the way we think about development to account for all the risks we might create as we develop societies.”*

**MAXIME STAUFFER**

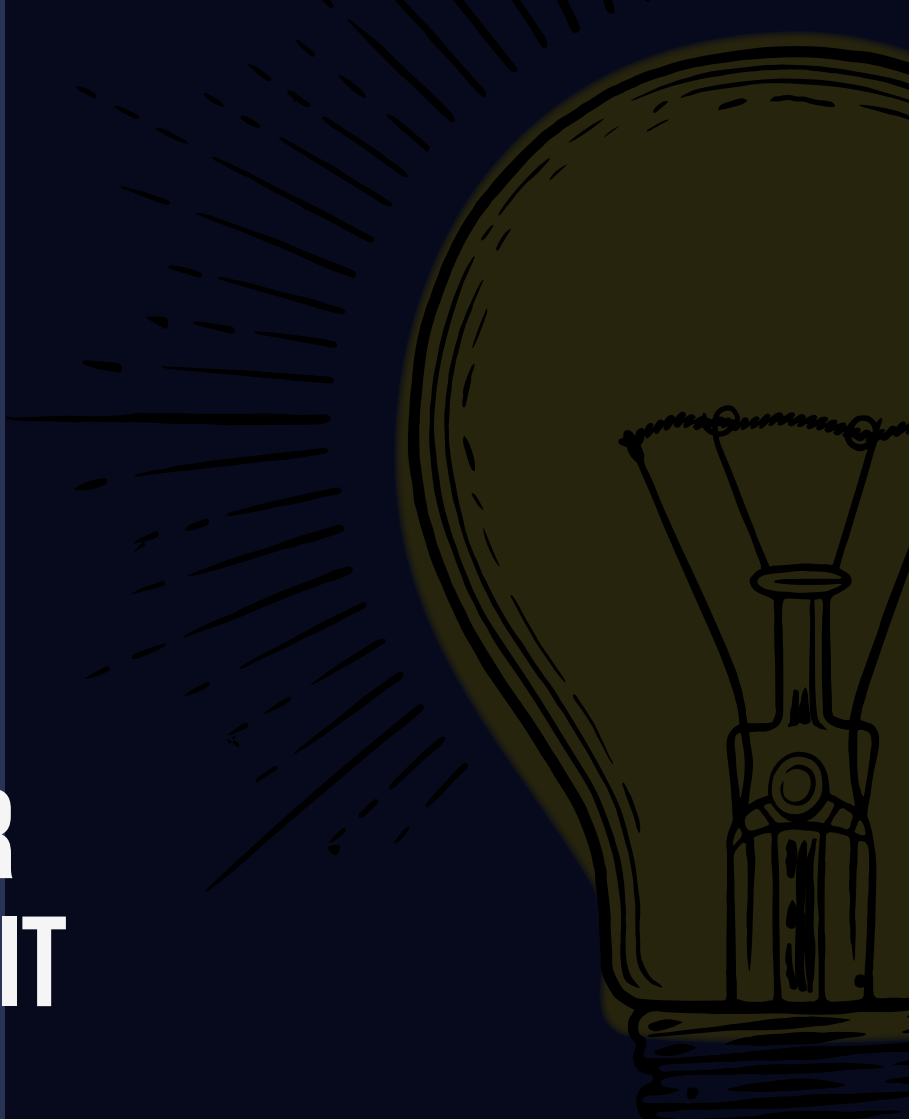
Chief Executive Officer, The Simon Institute for Long-term Governance

*“We need a new generation of leaders who can deal with the complexities of this world and support them to realize their full potential for global impact. Only by doing this will the world’s most important problems be solved in the next generations.”*

**EIKO TSUKAMOTO**

Senior Manager, Schmidt Futures

# PREPARING FOR THE SDG SUMMIT



# ENGINE ROOM

Following the end of the Big Brainstorm, the UN Foundation launched the Engine Room as an open and inclusive space for the Action Groups and young thinkers and activists to continue to develop their ideas and innovations. The Engine Room operates as a virtual platform where young changemakers from around the world can forge connections, mobilize, and develop their 2023 work plans before the SDG Summit.

## THE ENGINE ROOM WILL:

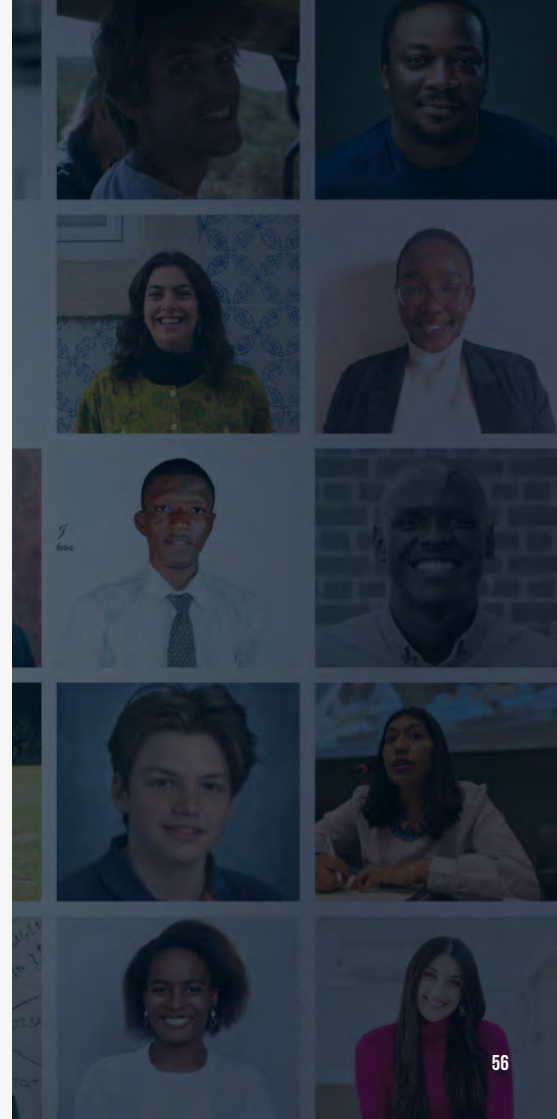
- **Drive action ahead of vital global moments**, including the ECOSOC Youth Forum, the High-level Political Forum, the SDG Summit, and COP 28

- **Spotlight the work of young changemakers** and the successes of the Action Groups in accelerating action for the SDGs
- **Provide an inclusive and accessible space** for young changemakers to develop their innovations and engage flexibly, in alignment with their capacity
- **Conduct a mid-point mentoring check-in** prior to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (10-19 July) to support progress towards the SDG Summit
- **Provide a space for collaboration, motivation, support, and empowerment** for young leaders at scale



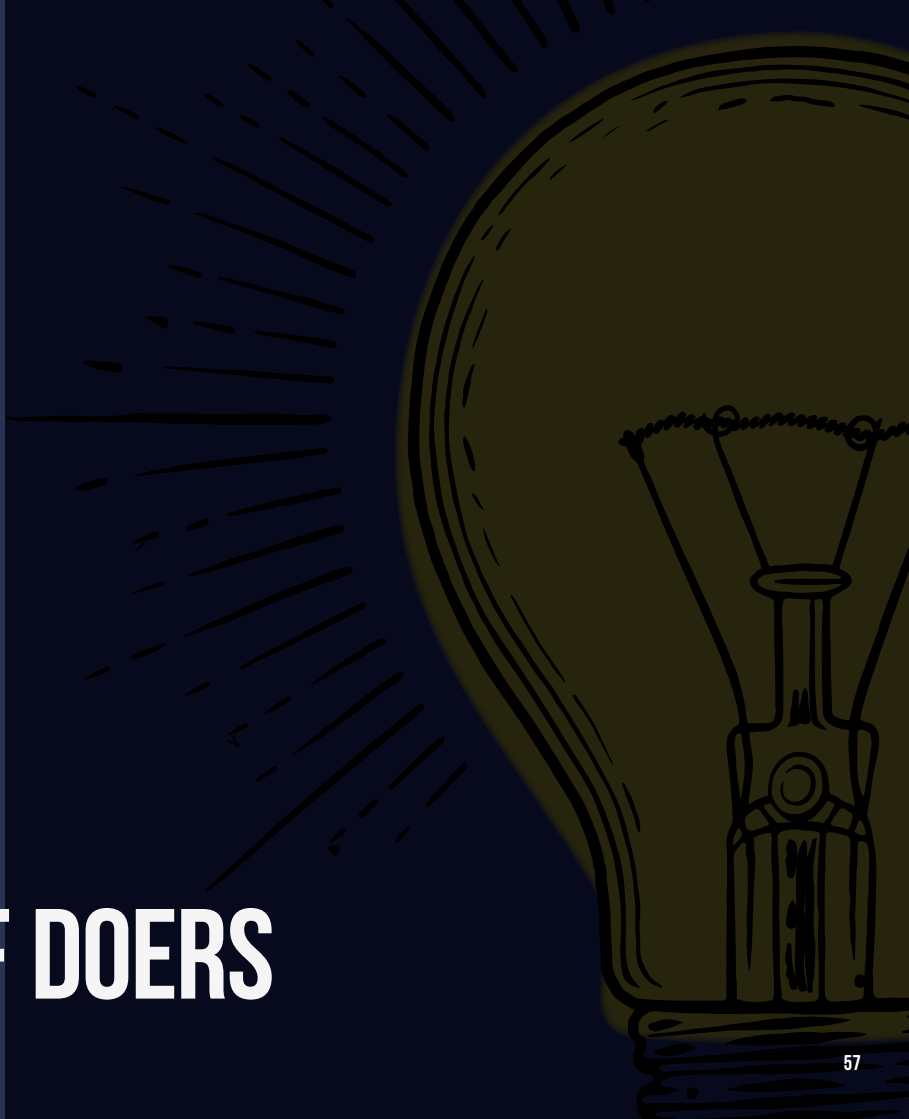
## MEMBERS OF THE ENGINE ROOM WILL:

- Be the **first to know** about curated Engine Room opportunities
- Have the consistent opportunity to **engage with the Our Future Agenda team**, gaining feedback and guidance, as well as building their network
- Be invited to participate in **regular Engine Room calls**, which will provide opportunities for networking and support
- Undertake **training and development opportunities** throughout the year
- Have **opportunities to be spotlighted** in the Our Future Agenda publications
- Be empowered to **contribute to the curation and direction of the Engine Room**, as it fulfills its mandate of being an open space by and for young people





# HOW TO JOIN A GENERATION OF DOERS



# HOW TO JOIN A GENERATION OF DOERS

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In the lead up to the SDG Summit, all eight Action Groups from the Big Brainstorm will continue their work through the Engine Room. This ongoing engagement will nurture the creativity and leadership of young changemakers as they work together to accelerate action towards the SDGs.

Want to join the movement?

- **Sponsor one or more UN Foundation Next Generation Fellows.** Support a fellow to take forward policy proposals, develop an innovation or campaign, and convene networks of young thinkers, activists, and changemakers. There are eight fellows focused on: multilateral leadership, transforming education, climate and sustainability, jobs and economic opportunities, future generations (2x), gender equality, peace and justice.
- **Work with Fellows to promote intergenerational dialogue,**


engaging policymakers and decision-makers on a focused set of issues to drive action across government, the UN and the broader international system, business, civil society, and other sectors with influence over decisions that affect young people.


- **Support one or more Unlock Action Groups.** Engage and support young people working together to deliver set projects or innovations to tackle the world's most urgent problems. Inspiring young changemakers will be spotlighted during the SDG Summit before leaders and champions.
- **Invite your youth networks to join the Engine Room.** The Engine Room is open to all, and you can join at any point by completing [this form](#)! Engage with the Engine Room for global moments at the UN, contribute to your work, deliver products or innovations with and for young people, or targeted consultations.



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