

GLOBAL YOUTH WORKERS CONFERENCE 2025

Youth Workers for Global Goals: Established, Equipped and Engaged

THE ACCRA YOUTH WORKERS GLOBAL STATEMENT

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PREAMBLE

We, the participants of the inaugural Global Youth Workers Conference, 2025, drawn from Governments, Embassies, National Agencies, Development Partners, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), Civil Society Organizations, Academia, Media, Professional Associations, Students, Youth Workers, and Private Institutions, met at the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) Hall in Adabraka from June 2-6, 2025.

We express our appreciation to the Board Chair of Youth Arise Organization, the National Youth Authority (Ghana), the Country Representative of UNFPA, and the Coordinator of the Commonwealth Youth Workers Association for opening the Conference and drawing the attention of all stakeholders to youth workers across the globe. We also thank Cargill, Promasidor, Multipack (Perla and 5 Star), and Rock Chemist for sponsoring our conference.

Being at a very pivotal time in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we recognize the challenges that affect youth workers in playing significant roles to support youth in achieving the SDGs. The origins of these challenges lie in the deficiencies and inconsistencies inherent in both national and international policies and frameworks, which exert a direct or indirect influence on youth.

Cognizant of the huge efforts made by relevant stakeholders since the introduction of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we have only been able to achieve about 17% of the targets. The majority of the targets, approximately 83%, show either limited progress, stagnation, or even regression. None of the 17 SDGs are fully on track to be achieved globally, with significant challenges, especially in areas such as Food Value Chains, Climate Change, Biodiversity, Education, Employment, Peace and Security, Arts and Entertainment, Health, STEM and AI, etc.

Progress varies widely by region, with Nordic countries leading, BRICS countries showing faster-than-average progress, and less economically developed countries (LEDCs) lagging behind. The overall pace of progress has been stagnant since 2020, highlighting the urgent need for intensified efforts and reforms in global resources to meet the SDGs by 2030.

Today, participants from different parts of the world discussed the gaps in global policies and frameworks that affect the role of the approximately 2.5 billion young people in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. Including insights from the High-Level Panel Discussion on Youth Work, we present recommendations in the six (6) identified thematic areas:

1. Education, Employment, and Entrepreneurship
2. Youth in Agribusiness and Climate Change
3. STEM and AI
4. Mental Health and Wellbeing
5. Peace and Security
6. Digital Technology, Arts and Storytelling

We note that a limited number of convening platforms exist for stakeholders in the youth sector to collaborate on implementing projects that improve the lives of young people. Furthermore, platforms for the periodic review, deliberation, and proposal of solutions to enhance the overall impact of the youth sector remain insufficient.

We affirm the establishment of the Global Youth Multi-Stakeholder Platform, involving all key stakeholders of Youth Work, to be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of this Conference and the transformation agenda of the Youth Sector. The Platform shall also provide support to stakeholders in their efforts to implement the provisions of global policies and frameworks related to the Youth Sector.

We make the following recommendations for the consideration of all youth stakeholders:

1. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, ARTS AND STORY TELLING

1.1. **Establish Regional Centers for Digital Storytelling:** Create hubs dedicated to education in digital arts and storytelling, fostering local creativity.

1.2. **Integrate Digital Skills into Arts Education:** Enhance both formal and informal arts curricula with essential digital competencies for modern storytellers.

1.3. **Collaborate with Tech and Academic Partners:** Develop workshops, certifications, and mentorship opportunities through partnerships with technology firms and educational institutions.

1.4. **Promote Collaborative Storytelling Tools:** Advocate for platforms that facilitate teamwork and innovation across various storytelling media.

1.5. **Organize Inclusive Storytelling Events:** Host events that celebrate diverse storytelling styles, merging traditional and contemporary approaches.

1.6. **Create Resource-Sharing Platforms:** Establish systems that enable creators to collaboratively share resources and co-create projects.

1.7. **Investigate AI's Role in Storytelling:** Collaborate with academic institutions to research and analyze how AI technologies influence artistic expression and narrative construction.

1.8. **Develop Cultural Heritage Software:** Focus on creating tools that promote and preserve African cultural heritage through digital means.

1.9. **Raise Awareness on Ethical AI Use:** Advocate for understanding the ethical implications of using AI in storytelling, ensuring responsible practices.

2. THE FUTURE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND STEM

2.1. **Parent Education Programs:** Organize programs to educate parents about artificial intelligence (AI) and STEM and their significance in the development of young people.

2.2. **Curriculum Integration:** Implement AI & STEM courses in the educational curriculum at all academic levels.

2.3. **Collaborate Workshops:** Organize community hubs and workshops to provide essential skills in AI to local populations.

2.4. **Infrastructure Investment:** Establish infrastructure in all regions across the globe to facilitate AI & STEM awareness and education.

2.5. **Teacher Training Integration:** Integrate AI & STEM education into teacher training programs to prepare educators for teaching AI & STEM concepts.

2.6. **Open-source Resource Utilization:** Leverage open-source courses to enhance critical thinking and analytical skills among students.

2.7. **Local Material Utilization:** Use local materials and available tools to foster critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

2.8. **Policy Development Support:** Develop guidelines and support for effective policy creation related to AI & STEM education.

2.9. **Dedicated Government Body:** Establish a dedicated government body under one ministry to oversee policy standardization, funding, and strategic goals for AI & STEM education.

2.10. **Funding for AI and STEM:** Advocate for government and global policies that allocate funds to support AI and STEM initiatives.

2.11. **Institutional Alignment:** Ensure that educational institutions align their frameworks and policies with AI, STEM, and emerging technologies.

2.12. **Centralized Platforms for Collaboration:** Create centralized platforms that enable donor partners to collaborate with existing institutions, focusing on key performance indicators (KPIs).

2.13. **Policy Advocacy:** Advocate for transparency in demonstrating the policies created by the government and other stakeholders regarding AI & STEM education.

2.14. **Academic Awareness Initiatives:** Educate students through AI and academic conferences to raise awareness and apply knowledge practically.

2.15. **Youth-Led Monitoring Platforms:** Develop online platforms where students and youth teams can showcase AI and STEM projects, receiving mentorship and feedback.

2.16. **Ethical AI Awareness:** Promote awareness of the ethical use of AI in various applications.

2.17. **Faculty Training on AI Tools:** Train lecturers on the use of AI tools and methods to engage students in critical thinking and environmental problem-solving.

3. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

3.1. **Integrate Financial Education:** Incorporate structured financial education into all levels of the national curriculum.

3.2. **Experiential Learning Promotion:** Promote experiential financial learning through real-world exposure and gamified approaches to enhance engagement.

3.3. **Enhance Educator Technology Capacity:** Strengthen the technological capacity of educators to effectively integrate digital tools into teaching and learning processes.

3.4. **Include Digital Skills in Curriculum:** Prioritize the inclusion of digital skills such as coding, innovation, and AI in educational curricula to prepare students for the future.

3.5. **Establish Business Incubators:** Establish and create awareness of locally funded business incubators to nurture and support young entrepreneurs in their ventures.

3.6. **Structured Mentorship Access:** Provide structured mentorship and professional guidance for start-ups to ensure they receive necessary support.

3.7. **Frequent Training Programs:** Hold regular training and retraining programs to keep educators and students updated on best practices and emerging trends.

3.8. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Ensure active engagement of stakeholders in the formulation of youth policies to reflect real-life experiences and needs.

3.9. **Rebrand Youth Policies:** Rebrand youth-focused policies to make them relatable, clear, and actionable for better understanding and implementation.

3.10. **Regular Policy Reviews:** Conduct regular reviews of policies to align them with the evolving needs of youth development.

3.11. **Independent Monitoring Agencies:** Appoint independent monitoring and evaluation agencies to track the implementation and effectiveness of youth programs.

3.12. **Fund Utilization Audits:** Audit fund utilization and assess the impact of youth-focused programs to ensure accountability and transparency.

3.13. **Strengthen Partnerships:** Enhance national and international partnerships for policy coherence and shared development outcomes in youth initiatives.

3.14. **Empower Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Students to Recognize Their Value and Potential:** Provide exposure to success stories, industry opportunities, mentorship, soft skills training, and platforms to showcase their work, fostering confidence, professionalism, and pride in their career path.

3.15. **Education Agency Involvement:** Involve the ministry or relevant education agencies in all nations to create support programs that help young people learn essential life skills, digital skills, creativity, and active citizenship, and strengthen graduate-level courses focused on practical skills, entrepreneurship, and employability.

3.16. **Promote Knowledge Exchange:** Foster knowledge exchange through digital platforms and expand global engagement via Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and treaties.

3.17. **Foster Early Mentorship:** Promote early mentorship programs to prepare young people for leadership roles and policy engagement.

4. YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

4.1. **Intensify Youth Education:** Strengthen and institutionalize peace education within formal and non-formal learning systems to equip youth with conflict resolution, mediation, and civic engagement skills aligned with global standards.

4.2. **Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration among all stakeholders involved in peacebuilding, including governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, and youth-led organizations, to create a harmonized, whole-of-society approach to peacebuilding.

4.3. **National Youth in Peace Policy:** Develop a national policy that unites young people in their peace efforts, facilitating effective collaboration and promoting peace and security. Also, encourage the development and implementation of comprehensive national YPS policies that mainstream youth roles in peace efforts, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2250 and its successors (2419, 2535).

4.4. **Intentional Youth Engagement:** Institutions must be intentional about including youth in decision-making processes and peace initiatives through legally mandated youth advisory boards, quotas, or councils embedded in peace and security institutions.

4.5. **Targeted Policies for Youth Groups:** Design and implement specific policy tools and programs that strengthen the capacity of grassroots youth groups, especially in conflict-prone areas, to act as peacebuilders and community mediators.

4.6. **Alignment with National Policies:** Align peace-building efforts with national policies across five key pillars such as education, employment, participation, protection, and prevention to ensure coherence and effectiveness.

4.7. **Youth Involvement Measurement:** Enact government policies that measure youth involvement in peace processes to better understand their contributions and impact, as well as enabling data-driven policy refinement and funding allocation.

4.8. **Digital Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:** Invest in robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems with real-time data collection and dashboards to track youth engagement in peacebuilding, including clear indicators for measuring impact and accountability.

4.9. **Improve Existing Structures:** Review and reform existing institutional frameworks to make youth peace councils and initiatives more inclusive, efficient, and accessible to marginalized youth.

4.10. **Mass Education and Peace Capacity Building:** Conduct mass education campaigns and localized capacity-building programs to equip youth with the necessary tools as agents of peace in their communities.

4.11. **National Coordination Frameworks:** Establish national coordination platforms or inter-agency taskforces to harmonize youth peacebuilding initiatives across ministries, sectors, and international partners.

4.12. **Trauma-Informed Safe Spaces for Conflict Victims:** Set up community-based, trauma-informed safe spaces for survivors of conflict, especially youth and women, to foster psychosocial healing and social reintegration.

4.13. **Buffer Zones:** Establish buffer zones in conflict areas to reduce tensions and promote peace. Create community peace zones or dialogue corridors in conflict hotspots where youth, local leaders, and peace actors can engage in nonviolent communication and reconciliation.

4.14. **Engagement of Ex-Convicts:** Create structures and systems to engage ex-convicts in peace-building efforts, facilitating their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

4.15. **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Ex-Convicts:** Implement mental health programs for ex-convicts to support their rehabilitation and acceptance in society.

4.16. **Economic Engagement Policies:** Introduce targeted economic empowerment policies (e.g., entrepreneurship hubs, green jobs, digital skills) that address structural inequalities fueling youth vulnerability to violence.

4.17. **De-Stigmatization of Ex-Convicts:** Promote initiatives to de-stigmatize the acceptance of ex-convicts back into society, fostering inclusive communities.

5. YOUTH IN MENTAL HEALTH

5.1. **Youth-Led Awareness Campaigns:** Create youth-led campaigns to raise awareness about available mental health services in their communities, as well as to advocate for increased funding for the provision of mental health services.

5.2. **Peer Education Programs:** Encourage peer education initiatives where young people teach one another about mental health and share resources for managing mental health crises.

5.3. **Integration of Mental Health into School Curriculum:** Encourage schools to incorporate mental health education and programs into their curricula, making mental health education a regular part of student life.

5.4. **Mental Health Workshops:** Organize a 2-day or 3-day mental health workshop for young people to equip them with psychological resilience before transition from childhood into adolescence and from adolescence into adulthood, as well as build mental resilience in the face of trauma or bereavement.

5.5. **Prejudice and Discrimination Reduction Campaigns:** Organize social media campaigns to foster acceptance of mental health illness among peers through reframing languages used to describe mental illness and promote inclusivity of persons experiencing or living with mental health conditions by creating environments where they feel valued, respected, and heard.

5.6. **Youth Advisory Boards:** Establish youth advisory boards to influence local mental health policies and ensure youth perspectives are included.

5.7. **Mobile Crisis Units:** Advocate for the establishment of mobile crisis units that can provide 24-hour immediate mental health support in emergency situations.

5.8. **Crisis Response Statements:** Release Crisis Response Statements to maintain trust and credibility during mental health crises to reduce or curb misinformation surrounding mental illness and behaviors.

5.9. **Research Partnerships:** Collaborate with researchers to collect data on youth experiences and needs related to mental health to inform policy and program development.

5.10. **Design Youth-Centric Services:** Work with institutions and professionals providing mental health services to design programs and services specifically tailored to youth.

5.11. **Mental Health Officers in Schools:** Integrate mental health officers into schools to ensure easy access to mental health services for students.

5.12. **Peer Group Integration:** Integrate mental health services within existing peer groups to create supportive environments.

5.13. **Alliance Platform for Collaboration:** Establish an alliance platform to foster partnerships and collaborations among organizations. This will focus on the sharing of best practices and resources that promote youth mental health and the development of a community of practice who will coordinate the implementation of guidelines at the regional and continental levels.

5.14. **Transparency in Mental Health Care/Feedback Mechanisms:** Push for transparency regarding mental health care quality and patient rights to build trust in services. Establish mechanisms for feedback from mental health services.

5.15. **Mental Health Advocacy:** Engage in campaigns that highlight the importance of mental health alongside other critical youth issues to create a comprehensive support framework.

6. YOUTH IN AGRIBUSINESS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

6.1. **Leverage Technology:** Access and adopt the necessary technologies to enhance agricultural practices and improve efficiency.

6.2. **Increase Mechanization:** Advocate for greater mechanization and the use of modern tools on farms to make agriculture more accessible.

6.3. **Intensify Sensitization Efforts:** Encourage youth workers and organizations to intensify awareness campaigns targeting young people, starting from the basic education level.

6.4. **Reintroduce Agricultural Education:** Bring agricultural education back into the school curriculum to provide foundational knowledge.

6.5. **Develop Climate-Smart Training:** Create more youth-centered climate-smart agriculture training programs.

6.6. **Practical Agricultural Education:** Foster partnerships between agricultural organizations and schools to allow students to apply their learning through hands-on practice.

6.7. **Resource Aggregation for Youth:** Empower young people to aggregate resources and information related to agriculture, making it easily accessible.

6.8. **Increase Climate-Focused Sensitization:** Support more climate-focused organizations in conducting sensitization programs about sustainable agricultural practices.

6.9. **Encourage Collaboration with Start-ups:** Motivate larger companies to collaborate with start-ups, providing guidance and support to help them thrive.

6.10. **Promote Agricultural Research:** Advocate for increased research in agriculture to develop innovative solutions and practices.

6.11. **View Climate Impacts as Opportunities:** Encourage the perspective of seeing climate impacts not just as threats but as opportunities for innovation in agriculture, such as rainwater harvesting systems.

6.12. **Open to Mentorship:** Promote openness to mentorship from local organizations and successful individuals in the agricultural sector.

6.13. **Promote Agricultural Games:** Organize agricultural games to make agricultural education fun and engaging for young people.

6.14. **Integrate Agricultural Content into National Curriculum:** Establish comprehensive agricultural education at various levels to foster a sense of importance in agriculture among youth. Proposed subjects and levels of study are as follows:

- Primary Education (ages 6-12): "Feed the World" program
- Lower Secondary (ages 12-15): "Agriculture and Sustainability"
- Upper Secondary Education (ages 15-18): "Agricultural Value Chain"
- Tertiary Education (ages 18+): "Agribusiness"
- Postgraduate (Optional) 6.15.

6.15. **Engage Relevant Stakeholders:** Ensure that relevant stakeholders, especially youth, are actively involved in decision-making structures related to agricultural policies and programs.

6.16. **Promote a Paradigm Shift:** Raise awareness to change perceptions, encouraging admiration for agriculture as a viable and respected field of study.

6.17. **Strengthen Agricultural Policies:** Develop and strengthen policies that integrate learning and practical experience through school gardens:

- Introduce agricultural value chains to communities.
- Empower more women to engage in agriculture.

6.18. **Sensitize on Diverse Agricultural Opportunities:** Conduct awareness campaigns to highlight that agriculture encompasses more than just farming; it includes various businesses within the agricultural value chain.

6.19. **Create a Conducive Entrepreneurial Environment:** Foster an environment that supports agricultural entrepreneurship through:

- Subsidies for business registration.
- Offering a five-year tax holiday for agribusiness startups.

6.20. **Improve Access to Extension Services:** Enhance access to extension officers at the local level to provide necessary support and resources to aspiring agricultural entrepreneurs.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS BY HIGH LEVEL PANEL DISCUSSION ON YOUTH WORK: The Future of Youth Work as a Practice and a Profession

7.1**. Understanding and Value of Youth Work:** There should be a deeper understanding of youth work to drive its recognition as a legitimate profession. Awareness creation is essential to promote the real value of youth work, encouraging broader acceptance and support.

7.2. **Global Accreditation and Partnerships:** Establishing global accreditation is vital. Youth organizations should partner with accredited educational institutions to develop youth work courses, including online options for both new and existing youth workers.

7.3. **Decent Remuneration and Professional Care:** Stakeholders should remunerate youth workers. Remuneration must reflect the value of youth work. Additionally, professional care for youth workers should be enhanced to foster trust and reliability, similar to the patient-doctor relationship.

7.4. **Organizational Accreditation and Safeguarding Policies:** There should be a system of accreditation for organizations involved in youth work. Safeguarding best practice policies must be implemented at all organizational levels to protect both youth workers and the young people they serve.

7.5. **Mentorship and Training:** Mentorship programs should be integrated into youth work to train the next generation of youth workers. Continuous professional development and moral training are essential for enhancing the skills and effectiveness of youth workers.

7.6. **Award Schemes and Recognition:** Introduce award schemes based on standard criteria to recognize and appreciate the efforts of youth workers. Awards should cover various thematic areas to motivate and encourage professional growth.

7.7. **Advocacy and Public Awareness:** Intensified advocacy and publicity efforts by youth work organizations are necessary to improve the appeal of youth work. Utilizing technology and 'low-hanging' means can significantly push our agenda.

7.8. **Collaboration with Existing Organizations:** It is important for youth groups to collaborate with established organizations to leverage resources and expertise. This partnership can enhance the credibility and reach of youth work initiatives.

7.9 **Building Capacity and Branding:** Youth workers must actively engage in conversations to build their capacity and contribute meaningfully to society. Branding is key, and it starts with individual and organizational efforts to present youth work positively.

7.10 **Integration of Global Best Practices into Youth Work Project Implementations:** Global best practices such as Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) among others should be integrated into all youth-related programs and project implementations, to foster development and global recognition.

We further call on:

- All Governments, Development Organizations, and all stakeholders across the world to take steps to promote youth work and ensure greater transparency and accountability in their dealings in Youth Work.
- Youth Workers and all stakeholders to establish more effective collaborations with a clear focus on Youth Work with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) designed to improve the lives and impacts of all youth across the globe.
- All Youth for a change of mindset at all levels, including leadership positions, as a fundamental shift in the approach to policies and frameworks in accordance with the best international policies and best practices.
- Everyone to ensure that the youth is **ESTABLISHED, EQUIPPED, and ENGAGED**.



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