



Associação pela Saúde Emocional de Crianças _ASEC

ECOSOC Consultive Status NGO

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Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

Towards a specific or more explicit SDG target to address Youth and future generations mental health and emotional well-being under SDG 3 (3.4) connected to SDG 13 (13.3) building long term resilience capacity. A Youth and future generations human right included in the Pact for the Future.

ASEC is a Brazilian NGO that, since 2004, act nationally, to implement evidence-based methodologies to develop children and youth skills for life while promote mental health and emotional well-being. This effort aligns with the charity Partnership for Children, UK, a global network of NGOs. Our aim is to **implement mental health promotion and educational methodologies empowering young people towards healthy citizenship. Our goal is not solely to prevent anxiety, depression, self-harm, mental disorders, and suicide—suicide being the second leading cause of death for 15-29-year-olds globally, with 79% occurring in low- and middle-income countries¹—**but also to ensure no child or youth is left behind by fostering the development of life skills, especially the ability to cope with contextual difficulties.****

ASEC obtained ECOSOC Consultive Status membership in June 2023. We actively engage in local and global organizational networks such as IUHPE and GMHAN, working to enhance Agenda 2030 and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) 3, 4 and 16. Additionally, indirectly contributing to SDGs 5 and 10, based on the Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO), which highlights how mental disorders frequently lead individuals and families into poverty.

According to UN data, “Today, there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16 per cent of the global population. By 2030—the target date for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that make up the 2030 Agenda—the number of youth is projected to have grown by 7 per cent, to nearly 1.3 billion.” Considering the age range of 10 to 24 years old there will be almost 2 billion individuals, comprising over 20% of the global population, with many residing in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) facing disadvantaged conditions.

¹ Suicide, World Health Organization, available at: <http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>

These **youths and future generations** have been increasingly exposed, particularly in 2023, to **climate or environmental hazards**, directly suffering health impacts from climate-related issues. Although an under-researched area, specialists globally are recognizing the profound impact of environmental disasters on mental health and emotional well-being. **Managing the mental health consequences of climate change is becoming increasingly critical and urgently needs addressing within the “Pact for the Future”.** This action isn't solely about saving young people, youth, and future generations, but also about ensuring their human rights.

UNICEF reports UNICEF reports that almost every child (>99%) is now exposed to at least one climate or environmental hazard, with approximately 1 billion children, nearly half of the world's children, living in countries considered at 'extremely high-risk' for climate change impacts.²

Global Mental Health Action Network (GMHAN) Advocacy Briefs shed light on how **the Environmental context and Climate change** are “**deeply interconnected, and in fact inseparable area**” and **constitute a current crisis**. Both factors are arguably the most significant threats to global health, and it's needed to highlight that per the WHO's stance, "there is no health without mental health." Evidence is emerging that presents a threatening context, primarily for the youth population in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) concerning mental health and psychosocial well-being.

Despite the impact of **environmental and climate change**, the youth need to learn how to cope and maintain positive mental health to thrive in a world shaped by technology (AI), social media demands, and to have the ability to navigate in their social determinants that impact and threat any young citizen in the current context to ensure them to get to 2030 mentally healthy.

Our concrete and actionable recommendation to *Summit of Future* involves addressing the momentum needed to bring solutions to scale solutions and redirect efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. This is based on the reflection above and how mental health and well-being conditions amplified importance, even before COVID19, and is barely mentioned in SDG 3 (3.4) after 4 non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In SDG 13 (13.3) the text mention that “UN Member States have pledged to integrate climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into school curricula” **it lacks explicit mention to guarantee the mental health of youth and future generations as a human right.**

- 1. We advocate for specific or more explicit SDG targets addressing the mental health and emotional well-being of youth and future generations under SDG 3 (3.4) connected to SDG 13 (13.3) focusing on long-term resilience building and capacity development through a psychosocial network to support young people.**
- 2. We urge Member States and their Ministries of Health, Education and Environmental to develop an integrated agenda encompassing a robust set of actions related to Mental Health Promotion. This agenda should include training for health, education, and social work professionals, as well as all individuals within the psychosocial network, to better support young people.**

² <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/one-billion-children-extremely-high-risk-impacts-climate-crisis-unicef>