



I. BACKGROUND:

Among the major consensuses on the issue of education, there were more than 500 young leaders of the hemisphere gathered in the IV Youth Forum of the Americas. The forum was carried out in the framework of the VII Summit of the Americas in Panama on April 9th 2015 – the highlights of it are the following:

"The young participants of the IV Youth Forum of the Americas aspire to universal education, from kindergarten to university, of the highest quality, free, multicultural, pluralistic and innovative, to prepare us for the challenges that we will face as future leaders in the Western Hemisphere. "

"To concretize our vision, we call our authorities to set the work agenda post-2015 according to two priorities: 1-The first priority is Participation and advocacy, which implements participation channels in the Inter-American Committee on Education in order to present proposals and that the Ministers of Education establish a methodology to ensure the inclusion of our perspective from the IV Youth Forum of the Americas".

For this reason, the authorities of the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT) and the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE) of the Department of Human Development and Education at the OAS, began talks to explore for participation of young leaders. Additionally, these talks also look for participation of other young people in the process of political dialogue of ministers of education which are currently concentrated in the construction of an Inter-American Education Agenda that prioritizes: Education of quality, inclusive and equitable; strengthening the development for professional educators; and comprehensive early childhood care.

The adoption of the construction process of the Inter-American Education Agenda led by the ministers of education was the main outcome of the VIII Meeting of Ministers of Education carried on in Panama, in February 2015. The goal of implementing this process was to revitalize the political dialogue and the inter-American cooperation in the priority thematic areas. This way, the construction of the Inter-American Education Agenda could become a tool to advance the development goals of national education policy with a clear focus based on integration and solidarity partnership.

One of the first steps in the process of building the Inter-American Education Agendas is to define which American cooperation actions are to be performed in each of the priority areas considered at this stage. This step will be defined through working groups, and will take into account that youth participation could be critical to reaching the region's ministers of education and the ideas of young people.

The YABT along with the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission on Education plotted and launched an online consultation to encourage and ensure the participation of young people in the process of building the Inter-American Education Agenda. Specifically, this virtual consultation focused on knowing the priorities and interests of young people based on the three priorities identified by the Ministers of Education, as mentioned above.

The virtual consultation was composed by general questions about the education issue and specific questions relating to the development of the above described priorities that were prioritized by the Ministry of Education. The virtual consultation was open for a month, from June 5th until July 5th, 2015.

As activity support to explain the survey and encourage the participation of young people, a virtual session was held with the young participants in the Working Group "Education" of the IV Forum, led by education specialists DDHE: Ambassador Abigail Castro de Perez, Patricia Quiroz and Romina Kasman.

The results of this virtual consultation will be distributed in various processes of virtual and face political dialogue taking place both in the scope of the work of the YABT and the Technical Secretariat of the Inter-American Commission on Education. In the latter case they must be shown to the leaders of the working groups for each of the priorities to identify the actions.

- Quality Education, Equity and Inclusive: Costa Rica (President), Chile (first Vice-President) and Mexico (Second Vice-President)
- Strengthening Teacher Professional Development: Bolivia (President), Barbados (First Vice-President) and Guatemala (Second Vice-President)
- Comprehensive Care for Early Childhood: Dominican Republic (President), El Salvador (First Vice-President) and Nicaragua (Second Vice-President)

II. RESULTS OF VIRTUAL CONSULTATION

There were 57 young people from 13 countries of the hemisphere participating in the virtual consultation. Among the participants, 49% were female, 49% male, and one transgender. The age range with the highest participation was 18-24 years (45.5%) and 25-30 years (45.5%). There were

no answers from those who were under 18 years old and there were only 2 of the 31- 34 years age range, and 3 participants over 34 years old.

Regarding their education level, 61.79% of survey participants hold a Bachelor Degree, followed by 15.09% with degree in technical or commercial studies and 10.85% with Masters. Regarding their occupations, 50.95% reported to be students, 42.86% employed and 6.19% unemployed.

When they were asked about whether they have worked or work in an educational program or institution in their country, 36.73% said they have not worked in an educational program in their country, 26.53% work in an non-governmental organization, 24.9% work in his country on public policy and only 10.20% work in private sector initiatives.

Regarding the question *"What are the topics most discussed on educational projects for young people that you know?"* They were required to select 3 options. The themes chosen were:

- "Entrepreneurship" with 58.82%
- "Youth leadership" and "use of new technologies" with 45.10%.
- "General training" with a total of 35.29%.

Other issues highlighted by the participants were: resilience, multiculturalism, environmental policies and management.

Considering the priorities identified by the ministries of education for the construction of the Inter-American Education Agenda, participants were asked about the topics that they believed their governments should focus on to work with other countries on the continent. The 43.14% of respondents felt that governments should focus on inclusive education quality and equity: 27.45% understood that the priority should be to strengthen teacher professionalization and 23.53% considered as first choice for comprehensive care for early childhood.

Importantly, more than half of those surveyed, 62.75% considered that these three issues listed above are important and should be treated with the governments of their countries. They also proposed that governments focus on other issues such as entrepreneurship, educational methodologies according to each context, development of skills in the TIC's and achieve synergy between the education sector and the productive sector.

Subsequently youth were consulted regarding investment in public education in their countries. 85% considered it is very important to invest more in public education in their countries, mainly on issues related to improving the infrastructure of the education sector and educational strategies -

incorporating greater use of ICT - and the implementation of a comprehensive education that is also inclusive.

Reviews of the youth...

"Particularly the cooperation of the member countries of the OAS, as the characteristics of the educational diagnosis of our continent is very particular and very different from the characteristics of Europe or Asia. In our countries, very little research is done; on the other hand, the study of social and humanistic race predominates over scientific careers; academic achievement (reading comprehension and logical-mathematical reasoning) in early childhood and primary education are far from the results obtained by countries in other continents; cultural diversity of our continent, like any other, is unique. The perceived "success in life" of American citizens is also different to those elsewhere, since it considers essential to the relationship with family and friends, for about professional development and education, therefore does not occupy the same place in personal fulfillment in Latin America and the Caribbean. Given these characteristics, among many others, it is essential that the educational development of the continent does not happen through models from elsewhere, but develop models that will fit us" says one young adult who was consulted.

The participants affirmed the need for education to boost young people to study in technical careers and participate in research activities.

On the subject of "Quality Education, Inclusive and with Equity," 94.44% of young people surveyed highlighted the importance of following up and monitoring education policies in their country.

The total of respondents agreed that improving the quality of education could benefit from strengthening information systems, statistics and more accurate indicators by region. Participants affirmed "strengthening systems of statistical information and statistics would address the improvement of education with a real and effective strategy based on the needs of each region and population sector." They also said they "would know real data on the situation and on the scope and impact of the projects already implemented".

There was a complete agreement among respondents that there should be joint work with all countries to promote youth culture in educational research. Young people, as a whole, postulated that "In the field of education and development, research represents one of the roles of greater weight for the benefits it creates to the implementation of measures aimed at improving training in schools where there are weaknesses. In this process, cooperation between countries is essential. "

Later, the consultation involved themes like the most important areas where improvements should be implemented in the education sector. Their answers were: family and community participation (25.71%), Infrastructure (22.86) and equipment (17.14%).

According to the youth, another aspect that should be taken into account in the construction of the Inter-American Education Agenda, is to encourage the development of quality education, inclusive and equitable, multiculturalism is the inclusion in the

educational curriculum, with the postulate that over 97% of respondents agreed.

For an effective plan to take place the following ideas were proposed: *"Through dynamic involvement with the social environment, allowing students to perceive multiculturalism as a natural part of everyday living, strengthening values as belonging and identity"* and *"The fact of the importance of including this subject in the educational curriculum of the countries of the region, as this will indirectly promote tolerance and respect for minorities."* Another idea was that *"It would be essential to establish mechanisms for cultural exchanges through learning skills. Also, to manage multicultural education through regional mobilization in correspondence to inclusion in academic curricula of the Americas."*

Note that 100% of participants agreed that all teachers are trained to educate students with special educational needs. One participant said for example *"It is essential that in the context of a process of awareness of society in terms of accessibility, teachers have adequate training for the transmission of educational content and the formation of a citizenry empowered beyond the particular requirements for interaction and development that may arise. Provide adequate training to all teachers; allow end exclusionary practices of previous conceptions of education."*

*"Most Latin American countries have formalized policies on inclusive education. It is not only related to the strengthening of access to education, but in terms of education for all. Independent of special educational needs, however, despite this official recognition, in practice the income allows a student with special needs to a school that does not necessarily imply that it receives adequate adaptation to their needs and education of quality. Declarations of entry should not remain mere words and schools should not become nurseries, so it is imperative that all teachers are trained in inclusive strategies and excellent methodology to address the little known Universal Design for Learning "*saida young adult who was consulted.

Thinking of promoting education of quality, the consultation asked young people *What areas should be a priority in the development of new educational programs?* The responses were as follows: Development of critical, analytical thinking and understanding (88.89%), respect and tolerance for diversity and multiculturalism, environmental education and risk management (38.89%).

Young people who participated in the survey said that a key factor in achieving the goal of education with equity is to improve the quality of services offered by schools in terms of the following: infrastructure, equipment, connectivity, accessibility, nutrition and scholarships (55.56%); Improving the distribution and application of public education spending (52.78%) and development of programs to promote experimentation, critical thinking, respect for diversity and multiculturalism, among others (50%).

As for the second priority identified by the ministers of education– Strengthening of Professional Development for Teachers –69% of respondents considered cooperation between the countries of the Americas to strengthen the teaching profession to be very important. Regarding the question *"What cooperation activities is considered effective to achieve the strengthening of the teaching profession?"* Some of the young adults said: *"Exchange programs that provide training for teachers", "continuing education", "doctoral academic mobility", "comprehensive education and research", "access funded by states for post graduation programs", "promote research and publication",* among others.

Subsequently, it was asked for the participants to define 3 actions that they would consider necessary for strengthening the teaching profession in their country. About 66.7% prioritized programs of continuing education for teachers. The same percentage agreed outweighs the implementation of financial support programs, such as scholarships or academic exchanges, for the qualified teacher. While 44.4% preferred to emphasize support for institutions that promote training for teachers.

The two areas that teachers should be trained for inclusive and equitable development according to the young respondents are: "New pedagogies that are in tune with the new TACs (Learning Technologies and Communication)" and "Strategies to create a 'thinking culture' in the classroom to encourage students to think critically and creatively. " Other areas that were proposed by young people: "Environmental Education", "identity issues", "natives", "intercultural" "multiculturalism" and "training on Universal Design for Learning" (which allows teachers to consider styles of learning and the skills of their students).

About what actions are required to upgrade teacher training facing the challenges of Latin America in the XXI century, 69.4% postulated that there should be a promotion of the exchange of educational experiences and innovative teaching practices. While 63.9% expressed a preference for increasing academic mobility programs at national and international level and 47.2% said they receive training in emotional intelligence and coaching to motivate students and prevent bullying compartments, which must be the priority.

The last item scanned through the virtual consultation was focused on the "Comprehensive Care for Early Childhood". It resulted in 93% who considered that the universalization of preschool education is an important step towards an inclusive and equitable education theme. In that sense, some ideas to note were: *"Early childhood education or preschool should be key and strengthened in the Americas to ensure social emotional development of children in the hemisphere"* and the other idea was that *"It is a right that every preschooler receives instances of emotional support, cognitive development and socialization with their environment and community. However, this universalization of access of support does not mean that all instances must be homogeneous, because if the projects are standardized preschool educational support would require different forms each child facing different situations, challenges and various problems in the region, rural and urban areas, characteristics of vulnerability in which they were born or live."*

Over 90% of respondents said *"The universalization of preschool education should be prioritized in national education budgets."*

In the online survey answered by almost 60 young specialists in education, participants were required to name two strategies that promote universal preschool education in their countries. Among the highlighted

recommendations were: *"Free education", "Mandatory preschool education from the age of 3", "rural pre-school", "programs of care and education of children from the native communities."*

Later, it was requested for the participants to select the actions considered most effective to achieve greater quality of comprehensive early childhood care. Recreational activities (learning and cooperative games) as the main focus of the teaching and learning were the most important by 71.9% of the participants, followed by the appropriate stimulation as a suitable growth strategy with 53.1%.

Before concluding the survey it was asked: *"Does the public centers of your community dedicate full attention for comprehensive care to early childhood?"* About 78.1% answered affirmatively.

The last question answered by the young adults was the reasons why youth project could carry out to contribute to the construction of the Inter-American Education Agenda. From the responses the following ideas can be highlighted: *"Implementation of technological practices and interpersonal interaction focused on affordable development in the classroom", "develop educational projects where students can perform emotional intelligence, artistic, analytical, the artificial intelligence along with new technologies and workshops."* Other responses included: *"The creation of an Inter-American Education Network to strengthen the knowledge and skills of teachers and students, through universal education"* and *"Immediate aid to public schools most affected by violence and crime"* among other valuable contributions.