

## **The Club of Rome Global Youth Summit 2020**

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It is undeniable that we are in the midst of an unprecedented time in global history. Our planetary boundaries are approaching their limits, global economic and financial systems are no longer accessible for many, and the polarization of our political systems is creating mistrust in our governments as a functional avenue to avoid these wicked and intertwined problems that are putting our future at risk.

We often see youth at the forefront of activist approaches through leading protests or petitions, but youth voices are commonly relegated to the sidelines when it comes to crafting policy, excluded by those in positions of power due to their ‘lack of wisdom or experience.’ These ageist attitudes stigmatize the young (and old), impeding their ability to influence policy and the future of their world. Youth have the most to lose from a future that has failed to consider their perspectives, but they also have the most to gain from being integrated into these conversations to help determine what this future should look like.

Meanwhile, policy is crafted by those who tend to draw upon a set of experiences that don't accurately reflect the lived reality of many in the younger generation. By bringing together both young and old, we all can benefit from shared wisdom, hopes for the future, and transformative strategies that reflect shared values. With the Club of Rome's mission to address the “future of humanity and strive to make a difference,” it is imperative that all generations are represented and empowered to fulfill this mission. The Club's fifth pillar, “Youth Leadership and Intergenerational Dialogue,” is the first step in responding to an overwhelming call from young people to participate in the dialogue. As an organization that convenes a diverse and expert group of government, business, and academic leaders, it also has the obligation to also develop a network of young leaders elevating their voices in concert with these world-renowned experts.

Young people are not a homogenous group. Their perspectives and lived experiences differ across cultures, religions, geographic regions, and ethnicities, yet are all connected by their age and the need for collective action to ensure a prosperous future. There is a small set of youth leaders that have gained international recognition, like Greta Thunberg, but there are tens of thousands of Gretas in the world who have not been given a platform. We need to intentionally seek out and welcome diverse participation regardless of socio-economic, cultural, or geographic boundaries ensuring that we capture voices from the margins of society. Therefore, it is not enough to just include a small group of young people charged with representing their entire country or a token young person to speak on behalf of their generation in conversations that dictate their futures.

The inaugural success in the Youth Summit during the 2019 Club of Rome gathering in Cape Town demonstrated that convening a global youth summit through the Club of Rome is not only appropriate but greatly beneficial to all involved. Youth need a formalized space to gather and critically discuss issues impacting both present and future, find their collective voice, and shape their future. And, in turn, youth leaders can embolden policymakers and international leaders to integrate moral courage and care for future generations into their work.

The purposes of this proposal are to:

1. develop a cohort of global youth ready to engage with each other, increasing their ability to genuinely listen, build diverse relationships and their capacity to engage with peers about global issues;
2. provide a structure for youth to use these skills to engage their peers in regional listening sessions;
3. synthesize these findings and submit a formal report to the Club of Rome; and
4. develop a framework on how to initiate a culturally inclusive international and intergenerational dialogue.