



16TH Annual Psychology Day at the United Nations

Psychology Day at the United Nations 2024: Concept Note

Title: Reducing Global Inequalities Through Education: Psychological Contributions

Date: April 25th, 2024

Education is a human right and, as noted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it is also “one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development.” Over the past 20 years, there have been remarkable advances in education globally. For example, there have been increases in literacy attainment and girls are enrolled in school at higher rates than at any other time. Despite these laudable successes, educational disparities continue to be significant between urban and rural communities. In some areas of the world, close to half of the girls are out-of-school. Additionally, the access to education of children living in conflict affected areas is perilously limited, while millions of children lack essential literacy and numeracy skills. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately disproportionately affected communities and has exacerbated school refusal.

Access to quality education also has significant impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities. Research has identified an association between an increase in educational attainment and more positive mental health outcomes. In addition, schools can directly support the psychological wellbeing of students, families, and communities through strengthening social-emotional skills, promoting resilience, and providing structure/routine. Given the essential role of teachers in these efforts, it is necessary to offer effective training, resources, and supports to educators.

Furthermore, education is a key to nurturing respectful intergroup relations and cultivating peaceful societies. For instance, the United Nations has developed peace education resources to engage young people in action to support the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and promote disarmament. Education also has the potential for supporting the development of young people as informed global citizens.

Notably, the Secretary General's agenda for the 2024 UN Summit of the Future includes a call to "transform education" including the recommendations to make essential shifts in the teaching professions, learning environments, and the way that the purpose of education is viewed. The agenda also acknowledges the importance of securing multilateral support and investment for the access to quality education for all.

Psychology is uniquely positioned to respond to the challenges facing our international community related to access to quality education. The 2024 Psychology Day program will feature experts from diverse regions who will offer concrete strategies to promote the specific sustainable development goal targets through the lens of psychological science and practice. The planning committee will invite psychologists with expertise in the areas of educational psychology, developmental psychology, health psychology, and clinical/counseling psychology, as well as allied psychologists to take part in the discussion, and provide their perspectives on working with individuals and communities across different regions of the globe. Important issues to be considered while selecting speakers is their knowledge and expertise in how conflict, climate change and disparities impact different communities around the world and the role of education in addressing and resolving these issues.

The 16th Annual Psychology Day at the United Nations will leverage knowledge from the vast field of psychology to highlight promising practices designed to increase equity in education, as well as address issues of inequality through education. By promoting empirically-supported interventions and the wisdom of local communities, this event will offer the United Nations, Member States, and NGOs culturally-responsive strategies for ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all – underscoring the contributions of psychological science in advancing the achievement of the 2030 Global Agenda.

Sincerely,

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