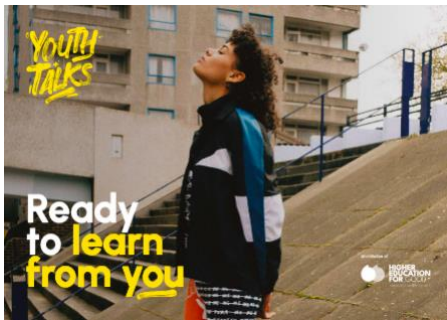


Global *Youth Talks* survey reveals that young people prioritise values and call for a systemic change in education



Between October 2022 and May 2023, the Swiss [Higher Education for Good Foundation](#), together with a network of partner institutions, carried out a global survey entitled [Youth Talks](#), which asked young people aged 15-29 from all continents about their expectations, concerns and interests for the future for themselves and the world in which they live. Among the issues addressed, they were asked what they felt they needed to learn both

inside and outside formal educational institutions in order to build their desired future.

Like IFCU's [Newman Framework on University Social Responsibility \(USR\)](#), this study was also designed in an innovative way as it relied on an artificial intelligence (AI) tool for both data collection (via an online platform) and analysis. Notably, an open-ended question format was proposed to which young people could answer freely through different channels, including audio-visual recordings of themselves. More than 45,000 participants from 212 countries took part in this massive survey.

While it was clear that there is no single voice, commonalities and shared convictions could be identified:

- The huge importance that young people attach to **understanding, dialogue, values and virtues**;
- A clear desire among young people from all continents to reform society in order to **bring peace** to tomorrow's world;
- The **deterioration of the environment** is one of the main collective challenges that most worries them in relation to the future of humanity, followed again by the eventuality of wars and armed conflicts.

If we position ourselves in terms of the contribution we can make from universities, it is worth highlighting the following points:

- ✓ The world's youngsters unanimously think (with the exception of China) that they should **be taught more about values and how to live better together** in harmony.
- ✓ There is a need for a **profound transformation of education** to encourage learning about personal values and virtues, about living together and interacting in harmony.

- ✓ The **obsolescence of current education systems** has been pointed out by all young people, particularly those in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.
- ✓ The systemic reform they yearn for implies offering **holistic education** that goes beyond the classical academic path, that transcends the simple transmission of knowledge, and that manages to integrate personal development, the transmission of values such as respect, empathy and solidarity, while reinforcing cognitive skills and problem-solving abilities.
- ✓ Young people do not discard core academic subjects, but call for a balance between practical skills and academic foundations in the framework of a **hybrid education system that is connected to reality** and prepares them well for their professional future.
- ✓ There is a call for **active citizenship education and openness to social awareness** so that they are prepared to face major global challenges and can take an informed part in democratic processes.
- ✓ It is considered that education should give greater recognition to the **role of emotional intelligence and mental health/well-being**, as well as to other competences that will enable them to adapt more easily to a changing context, which requires individuals who know how to act autonomously, as well as to collaborate together according to each given situation.

The main results of this survey correspond to the **Worldwide study on students' cultures** carried out by IFCU in 2013 and again in 2017. They also correspond to the expectation that Catholic universities offer their students an integral education including not only technical knowledge and skills, but also soft skills, the transmission of values and the teaching of harmonious living. At IFCU it is precisely from the **University Social Responsibility (USR)** perspective that we have been working for an education system that takes into account the whole person and ensures that universities have responsible policies and practices for all members of their community, for their territories and for the planet.

Likewise, approaches such as service-learning, which is being the focus of attention thanks to initiatives such as **Uniservitate**, participate in this connection with the world and this transformative teaching that young people are longing for. Aspects related to well-being and personal health have a lot to do with the **culture of care** that is being built in our institutions and on which IFCU has carried out a study with the support of **AON**, for the time being on a European scale, the results of which will be communicated in 2025.



***Dr. Montserrat Alom, Director of CIRAD
International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU)***