



UfM Regional Dialogue

# SHARED VIEWS ON KEY ISSUES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

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A contribution to the  SOMMET  
DES DEUX RIVES

## **“Rethinking education: An opportunity for strengthening youth and women’s empowerment”**

Quality education is and will remain an indispensable means of both guaranteeing the inclusive sustainable development of nations and addressing societal challenges. As the world is experiencing increasing globalisation and substantial technological advances, it has never been so important to invest in people, and in particular in youth and women. In the Mediterranean, improvement in access to education, as well as academic achievement, did not always translate into higher workforce participation rates, as women and youth have seen their share of unemployment rise over the past decades.

Globally the rising mobility of goods, services and persons as well as the transformation of the nature of work have drastically changed the portfolio of skills one needs to live, communicate, consume and work. It is well established that a majority of today’s high school students will end up performing jobs that have not been invented yet. Preparing Mediterranean societies for these disruptions, resolutely turning them into new opportunities for all, and in particular ensuring that women benefit from them, entails collective efforts from all educational stakeholders along the value chain to quickly react, anticipate and adapt.

Profound changes across labour markets and, consequently, teaching and learning processes could indeed generate positive implications for gender equality in the workplace, notably by opening up a wider range of careers to women, provided that this issue is tackled at source. Even though women begin to have equal or even better levels of educational attainment compared to men in the region, significant gender gaps still persist in workforce participation, leadership positions and pay due to cultural, structural and workplace factors.



At the same time, the Mediterranean region is facing specific challenges of an unprecedented scale. Its youth population, representing both the largest population segment and the most educated Mediterranean youth ever, needs to be properly prepared to respond to such challenges. This requires harnessing all the potential of multi-disciplinarity and new teaching and learning approaches notably to foster critical thinking, curricula adjustment, vocational training modernization. This also means that the opportunity of building a truly Mediterranean generation through enhanced academic ties across the region and increased higher education internationalization should not be missed.

How can we rethink teaching and learning systems to meet evolving skills demand and rightly prepare Mediterranean youth and women to the regions' needs of today and tomorrow, empowering them to be fully integrated in society?

UfM and partner organisations wish to contribute through this Roundtable to **gather the insights of youth representatives, civil society and non-state actors on ways to address these educational challenges at the Mediterranean level – from the angles of 1) New learning paradigms in a comprehensive approach to education, 2) Specific challenges faced by vocational training, 3) Women and Youth in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education.** Each one of the above issues will be the object of a specific round of interventions during the Roundtable which will contribute to shape a Mediterranean vision on SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

In the context of the preparations of the Summit of the Two Shores, the Roundtable will benefit from the input of the preparatory fora for the Summit, and in particular from the Valletta Forum « The Mediterranean Generation: Malta's Contribution to the Summit of the Two Shores » (24-25 April). The initiatives or projects emerging from the Roundtable will be a contribution from youth and civil society stakeholders of the whole Mediterranean to the Summit of the Two Shores.

The Roundtable is organised jointly by the UfM and CMI, with the collaboration of INJUVE and will include presentations from relevant regional youth and civil society representatives active in the fields of education, youth and women empowerment. An open and interactive discussion is expected with a view to gather concrete proposals which can be presented as an outcome of the event.



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