



Thursday 30 May 2024

Room I, UNESCO HQ (webcasted)

19:00 – 20:45 CET

Robert Kneschke/Shutterstock.com

## Background

The planetary crisis associated with climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution threatens the very survival of human beings. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world with a real, existential threat such as climate change, there is a growing call for lifelong education to enable individuals, as agents of change, to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that lead to the green transition of our societies.

On the occasion of World Environment Day (5 June), UNESCO, in partnership with renowned artists Farrah El Dibany and Ricky Kej, organizes an event **Connecting people and planet through education** in Room I at UNESCO HQ and webcasted on YouTube on **30 May 2024**.

Farrah El Dibany and Ricky Kej will perform their song “Life- agents of change” seeking to give full meaning to educational action and a commitment to nature protection by calling for respect for the environment and humanity, solidarity and intergenerational responsibility, and raising awareness of the environmental and sustainability challenges we are facing today. UNESCO believes that it is possible to transform mindsets to achieve momentum to be more ambitious in reconciling people with nature,

everywhere on the planet, for right now and for future generations. The performance will be followed by an inter-generational conversation between youth activists, practitioners and representatives from ministries of education, and a call to action inviting young people to engage and consider how their places of learning can change and align with green practices. New UNESCO resources prepared as part of the Greening Education Partnership will be presented in support of this effort. There will be opportunities for young people to share their experiences on the occasion of COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024 and COP30 in Belém, Brazil in 2025.

**Farrah El Dibany** is a renowned French- Egyptian mezzo-soprano. Since 2016, she has been in residence at the Académie de l'Opéra national de Paris, performing a variety of roles. She has been awarded several prizes and was named Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres by France. Farrah is also active on the international scene, singing in prestigious venues and collaborating with major institutions.

**Ricky Kej** is a three-time Grammy Award-winning Indian music composer and environmentalist. He has performed at venues in over 35 countries including at the United Nations headquarters in New York and Geneva. In October 2023, Ricky Kej was announced as a UN "Goodwill Ambassador" at the United Nations General Assembly.

UNESCO, as part of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2030 framework promoting youth engagement, organized in 2022 a global youth consultation on the quality of climate change education [Youth demands for quality climate change education](#). Young people are at the center of the climate and environmental awareness drive and are taking the lead on it at various levels. Together with young people and through the Greening Education Partnership, UNESCO leads the development of two *global guidance on green schools and greening curriculum*.

Informed by the holistic approach in learning underscored by ESD, these guidelines, valid for any formal or non-formal education programme, consider among other areas of action how to use the outdoors as learning spaces to teach about sustainability and climate change. This approach connects formal and non-formal education, which will lead to making the whole community climate-ready and resilient. Situating ESD in the local context and involving the community is key.

With its unique designated sites (i.e., Biosphere Reserves, UNESCO Global Geoparks, World Heritage sites), UNESCO has been a leader in promoting on the ground solutions to the global challenges of climate change, biodiversity and sustainability while also engaging with human culture, education and values which underpin our decision-making. They are on the frontlines of biodiversity and climate change, and can provide contextualized and action-based learning opportunity for developing climate and environmental literacy, values and skills for action in real-life situations.

UNESCO sites, as laboratories and learning hubs for sustainable development, provide unique educational and learning opportunities for nurturing essential competencies such as system-thinking, problem-solving and collaboration, and helping learners understand the complexity of climate change and its linkages with biodiversity loss, food security, ocean conservation, gender inclusivity, living heritage, energy and sustainable lifestyles.

## Agenda

30 May 2024, 19:00-20:45

Opening doors, 18:00

Moderator: Christopher Castle, Director, Division of Peace and Sustainable Development, UNESCO	
19:00-19:05	<b>Opening by Ms Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education</b>
19:05-19:10	<b>Launch of song “Life-agents of change”</b> by Farrah El Dibany and Ricky Kej
19:10-19:25	<b>Conversation between ADG/ED and Ms Farrah El Dibany &amp; Mr Ricky Kej</b> on the importance of education and arts in raising the awareness of climate change and sustainable development among children and young people.
19:25-20:15	<b>Intergenerational conversation</b> <i>Discuss how to work with schools and communities to enhance awareness and knowledge on the impact of people on nature, how best to implement lifelong learning for environmental sustainability, how to prepare for the challenges and opportunities of the future, etc. The Greening Curriculum and Green Schools Quality Standard, and UNESCO’s work in mobilizing UNESCO Man &amp; Biosphere reserves or geoparks as learning hubs for sustainability will inform questions for discussion.</i> Moderator: Ms Sahana Kaur, representative of YOUNGO Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ms Ayakha Melithafa, Youth Commissioner, Presidential Climate Commission, South Africa</li><li>• Ms Laina Timberg, Co-President and Co-Founder of the North American Young Parliament for Water, Canada</li><li>• Mr Daniel Enrique Esponda Velasquez, Minister of Education of Honduras</li><li>• Mr Bruno Maia, Director, Earth Child Institute</li><li>• A COP29 representative from Azerbaijan (TBC)</li></ul>
20:15-20:45	<b>Live performance</b> by Ricky Kej & Farrah El Dibany

## Technical Specifications

The session is conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation available in French and Spanish.

To register to the event for in person participation, kindly use the following link:

<https://indico.un.org/event/1011520/>

YouTube Webcast: TBC

## Contact

---

Section of Education for Sustainable Development  
Division for Peace and Sustainable Development  
Education Sector  
UNESCO

Bernard Combes, Programme Specialist [b.combes@unesco.org](mailto:b.combes@unesco.org)  
Maria Ferreira, Programme Assistant [mm.ferreira@unesco.org](mailto:mm.ferreira@unesco.org)