

**GFSE**GLOBAL FORUM on  
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

## GFSE Newsletter

Dear Friends of GFSE,

We are pleased to send you a short GFSE newsletter, containing highlights from our Side Event on Green Skills for the Youth at the VEF 2021 and some key insights from the Youth for VEF, which we find relevant, as well as important events and news from other stakeholders working towards youth engagement in the clean energy transition.

Enjoy reading!

The Global Forum on Sustainable Energy

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### Side Event "Green Skills for the Youth" at the VEF2021

The side event **Green Skills for the Youth** took place virtually on 5 July (15:30-16:30) at the [Vienna Energy Forum](#). It brought together representatives from the renewable energy sector to share best practices, discuss challenges and bottlenecks, and exchange experiences on green skills strategies that are needed to scale up solar energy and other renewables. The agenda can be found [here](#).

The event took off with a short introduction to the subject by Irene Giner-Reichl, president of GFSE and president of [GWNET](#), who pointed out the challenges faced by numerous countries to find qualified staff for the energy transition towards a full renewable energy system and the urgent need to educate and train the youth in clean energy technologies. After the introduction, the [SOLTRAIN](#) Initiative was presented by Werner Weiss ([AEE Intec](#)). SOLTRAIN (Southern African Solar Thermal Training & Demonstration Initiative) is a regional initiative on capacity building & demonstration of solar thermal systems in the SADC region, supported by the Austrian Development Agency ([ADA](#)). SOLTRAIN provides specialized solar thermal courses and trainings and offers a dual training for company staff and has trained about 3400 people between 2009 and 2020 in six countries. It also addresses the areas of awareness raising, R&D, financial incentives and regulations in a comprehensive concept.

During the discussion, Mr. Weiss (AEE Intec) emphasized the need to bring together university graduates and installers to allow them learning from each other. He also emphasized the importance of digital technologies for education and training and taking into account the lessons learning during the pandemic to make virtual training more effective. Virtual training represents a good way of reaching larger segments of trainees and those who cannot afford to travel long distances to attend in-person training, thereby reducing the costs and making knowledge available to a broader audience.

Thereafter, the panellists lively discussed elements of training strategies. Mr Christian Holter ([SOLID](#)), for example, emphasized the need to train young women in solar thermal energy and raise their interest in technical professions. In addition, the panelists pointed out to the usefulness of dual training that allows trainees to receive education at vocational facilities and at the same time gain hands-on experience on the job.

Michael Müllneritsch ([ARACUBA](#)) stated the importance of providing training

not only on technical skills but also on business models development, management, market assessment and marketing strategies for renewable energy technologies. He also highlighted the importance of digital tools for micro-learning, in order to provide small portions of knowledge to allow learners study at their own pace.

Marcel Huber ([Syncraft](#)) stated that STEM disciplines should be promoted equally to young boys and girls. At small age, children do not show any bias towards a particular profession and this opportunity should be tapped. It is thus very important to address them with the right tools to arise their interest in science and technology in general and, in particular, in renewable energy and energy efficiency. He also sees an important role for university in facilitating practical hands-on experience in real-life environments for students.

Several panelists, among others Ms. Giner-Reichl stressed the importance of women-led initiatives and female role models to promote training for women in the renewables sector and allow them to become technical experts and managers.

In conclusion, all panellists agreed that the young generation requires solid training in renewable energy to raise to the challenge of driving the energy system towards net zero GHG emissions. Training strategies must make use of new, innovative concepts to make the most of available time and resources, combining on-the-job training with vocational education and profiting from digital tools and cooperation. Training has to be embedded in a comprehensive concept encompassing supporting policies, R&D, business models, awareness raising and demonstration.

Educational approaches have to start early raising awareness and interest of young women and men on renewable energy. Ideally, already pupils at school should be informed about the possibilities of renewable energy and possible career paths.

The presentation of Mr. Weiss (AEE Intec) can be found here: [The Southern African Solar Thermal Training and Demonstration Initiative](#)

Please find a link to the GFSE Poliy Brief "The Youth and the Energy Transition" [here](#)



## Youth for VEF: Some Key Insights

The first ever [YouthforVEF](#) took place on 5th July 2021 as part of the [Vienna Energy Forum](#). YouthforVEF was a co-creation process with youth representatives from the very beginning. The sessions, divided into three main categories: Plenary, Networking and Skills Academy, provided spaces for dialogue with policy makers, meeting peers and experts and receiving training on policy responses and technological solutions to transform the global energy system.

#YouthforVEF discussed a number of relevant topics for meaningful youth engagement in the energy transition. Among others, some key messages from panellists and participants that we find highly relevant are as follows:

- Youth is a change agent for policy, administration and society and plays an important role in changing the current institutional setting to accelerate the transition towards clean energy. Young people need more access to training, funding and to places where the policy debate on sustainable energy is taking place. New climate governance mechanisms should include youth constituencies more thoroughly.
- At the same time, the youth have a lot at stake if climate change and pollution are not mitigated. We need a more inclusive and speedy green recovery to secure a planet worth living for the youth, as an expression of intergenerational solidarity.
- Youth's thoughts, skills and needs should be integrated in the energy transformation strategies and their implementation
- Young people want to have a sense of purpose and work for companies that share their values, environmental and social concerns and, specifically, companies that want to become sustainable.
- A qualified workforce is essential for the energy transition. Quality education and training are essential to closing the growing skills gap. Besides technical and business training, policy-making training is necessary.
- We need to make sure that enough resources are available to deliver the necessary skills and train young people in sufficient numbers. Given the scale of the global challenge, we must also explore new approaches to teach young people green skills, and thereby reducing the costs of training and reaching a larger audience
- Apprenticeships are key in providing young people with hands-on job experience facilitating their integration in the job market. Increasing collaboration between the private sector and educational institutions is necessary to improve the quality and accessibility of training
- A clean energy transition requires drawing from a diverse talent pool. Mentorships are particularly necessary for young women to promote their careers in the clean energy sector. Equal opportunities for women and men must be promoted.
- Digital skills are very much needed in the energy transition. Governments and educational institutions should ensure that pupils' basic digital competences are significantly improved. Furthermore, green skills need to be combined with digital skills to advance the adoption of new clean energy solutions and business models.
- Young entrepreneurs in the energy and climate start-up scene require early stage funding for their companies as well as support through expert coaching and training in business skills and the development of bankable business plans to succeed
- Public awareness and education are key to make people understand the need for the energy transition and to protect the climate. Education needs to start early in schools to create consciousness about the climate challenge and inspire children to become part of the solution
- Just transition mechanisms have to make sure that youth in regions that rely on fossil fuels extraction and carbon-intensive industries as economic activities are given opportunities to re-skill and up-skill towards future-proof jobs.
- International cooperation and well-structured dialogue platforms are essential to devise mechanisms to involve the youth in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 on affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (SDG 7) and connect youth across the globe through learning networks and exchange platforms.



## SADC Youth in Energy Webinar Series

The SADC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (SACREEE) in partnership with the African Union (AU) Youth Club (AUYC) is hosting a series of webinars for the youth, entitled "SADC Energy Youth Webinar Series". The aim is to provide the youth with a platform for genuine sector-specific conversations; generate and strengthen awareness on renewable energy and energy efficiency; and exchange innovative ideas amongst themselves and other stakeholders. It will also serve as a networking platform.

The second webinar will focus on **Careers, research & innovation in the RE & EE sector in the SADC Region**. The webinar will be held on the **21st of July 2021** from 14:30-16:00 Central African Time (CAT) via Zoom.

[Please register here for free](#)



# UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE UK 2021

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

## "Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition" meeting

400 young people will meet in Milan from 28 - 30 September 2021, to elaborate concrete proposals on topics that affect the negotiation process of Pre-COP26 in Milan and COP26 in Glasgow.

The '[Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition](#)' meeting in Milan is part of the process of involvement of young people, which started in 2019, also thanks to the support of Italy, with the United Nations Youth Climate Summit, held in New York on 21 September 2019. The event will offer young people from all over the world the opportunity to develop concrete proposals for Pre-COP26 in Milan and COP26 in Glasgow. The first two days will be dedicated to working groups, while the last day to a discussion between the young delegates and the Ministers attending the Pre-COP26. Prior to the meeting the #YouthforClimateLive series took place, bringing together young voices from all over the world. The series was hosted by the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, in collaboration with Connect4Climate - World Bank Group and the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. Among others, obstacles to engage with policy-makers and meaningful engagement strategies that open up spaces for democratic decision-making in environmental matters and climate change have been discussed. The nine episodes can be found [here](#)

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