

Closing words by Adam Lamarti and Inès Dehogne, members of our Youth Forum

Translated from French

Adam Lamarti

Unity is strength, engagement shapes the future.

Youth is diverse, just like its commitments, and it learns to face the challenges of its time.

But as a young person, I've always felt that some of our elders tend to delegate everything to us.

All current and future issues, as if we weren't all equally responsible to act.

Because young, less young, or no longer young – as contemporaries of society, its problems concern us all.

So I'm delighted to see you all here today, in your diversity of origins, languages, and fields,

All united by the will to do better – better for society, for others, for our fellow citizens; better together.

I was pleased to hear in your presentations that within your structures, young people are not just spectators,

But real actors – that instead of offering them a chair to sit in, you offer a hand to help them rise.

With your help, young people take on roles as administrators, managers, captains, coaches, and many more.

And these young people prove they are already leaders of today – and tomorrow.

Some of you expressed concerns about young people's willingness to engage,
That if there's nothing in it for them, some won't give their time.
Don't see this as a lack of will from youth,
But as a symptom of a world that promotes individualistic behaviour.
Don't see a defeated youth without a cause,
But a part of the public that we must reach with more strength and faith.
Yes, some young people are no longer interested in engagement,
And as an engaged young person, I understand them,
Because engagement sounds political, and youth has learned to distrust politicians.
But that doesn't mean they aren't politicized.
Youth is moved by injustice and denounces oppression, hatred, and inequality with
intensity.
As associations, foundations, and organizations promoting engagement,
We must go find these young people – full of hidden desires and battles,
Deeply engaged, politicized but not politicians.
It's up to us to find them again, to show them the virtues of engagement.
Engagement has never been more important than it is today.
Let's not stop seeking it,
Let's not stop defending it,
Let's keep building everywhere without ever discriminating,
Let's never stop engaging.
Engagement is a porcelain plate we must care for.
Let us be its dishwashers, its caretakers, and its guardians.

Inès Dehogne

We're often told that young people don't engage.

That they chase money.

That they hide behind their screens.

That they only think of themselves.

But what if I told you that this view is wrong?

What if I told you that engagement is everywhere, even where it's not visible?

Let me tell you a story.

A few years ago, a young girl, whom many would describe as "too dreamy," decided to take a microphone and debate with political leaders.

She had no wealth, no prestigious title.

Just one conviction: her voice could matter.

That girl was me.

And I can assure you of one thing – engagement doesn't begin with grand speeches but with small steps.

Engagement is not an abstract word.

It's that teacher who stays an extra hour to help a student.

It's that neighbour who opens their door to a refugee.

It's that young person who, despite being tired, chooses to attend an association meeting instead of going home to sleep.

Some will say: "But it doesn't change anything. It's too small. The world is too big."

I reply: "The world always changes through those who dare to start small."

Engagement isn't just about politics.

Engagement takes a thousand forms:

Solidarity, when we reach out.

Justice, when we refuse to look away.

Creativity, when we invent projects no one dared to imagine.

Then you might say: “But what’s the point? Young people aren’t listened to.”

So I say to you:

Even a lone goat may seem weak, but when the herd moves together, it becomes unstoppable.

It’s because we’re not heard that we must speak louder.

It’s because we’re told it’s impossible that we must keep trying.

It’s because we’re told youth is lost that we must show it is the engine of tomorrow.

Today, we’re not here to promise we’ll change the world.

We’re here to tell you that we can shake it together.

That each of you carries a share of responsibility.

And that united, we can transform despair into hope, indifference into movement, apathy into action.

So I leave you with one sentence:

Engagement is not waiting for the world to change – it’s being the heartbeat that starts to make it vibrate.

Samen

My name is Inès Dehogne, a young woman engaged in society.

And I’m Adam Lamarti, engaged for a future I choose. Thank you for listening to us – and above all, keep engaging.