



Intellectual Property and Youth: copyright laws must advance the right to education

On the occasion of a World Intellectual Property Day focused on Intellectual Property and Youth, we call on governments to ensure that national and international copyright laws ensure the right to education for all.

We applaud the choice of theme, which draws attention to the largest generation in history, who will be the driving force for sustainable and inclusive development.

Yet, young people today are faced with considerable barriers to engage politically, economically and socially. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing challenges and created new obstacles that prevent youth and students from thriving. This has been particularly evident with regard to education.

As affirmed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, education is a human right and a public good that plays an essential role in enabling young people to transform their lives and their communities. The right to education includes access to knowledge and, as highlighted by UNESCO's International Commission on the Futures of Education, it is a life-long right that is “closely connected to the right to information, to culture and, to science”. Alarming, the world is completely *‘off track’* to achieve SDG 4 on Quality Education by the 2030 deadline.

Overly restrictive and outdated intellectual property laws are among the factors that have aggravated the situation facing educators and students, adding complexity, confusion and unnecessary costs. Consequently, young people and students throughout all sectors of education have been hindered from fully participating in society, from innovating and fully unlocking their creativity to benefit themselves and their communities.

In short, we must *act now* to ensure that Intellectual Property rules are a support, and not a barrier, to inclusive, equitable, adaptable, and high-quality education.

We call on governments to help empower youth by:

- ***Defending the right to education by providing broad and flexible copyright exceptions and limitations for education and research*** that are fit for modern ways of teaching and learning, and allow educators and students to access and use complementary teaching materials.
- ***Consulting teachers and education support personnel, including young educators, as well as students and their representative unions as well as libraries, museums, and other stakeholders*** involved in supporting education in copyright reform.
- ***Defending the academic and professional freedom and autonomy*** of educators, researchers and students as well as the librarians and others who support them, to choose and adapt materials for teaching and learning.
- ***Engaging in discussions at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to find global minimum standards for education and research exceptions***, as well as to find solutions for cross-border collaboration and exchange.

World Intellectual Property Day 2022 comes at an important time ahead of the 42nd Session of WIPO's Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights. It is a time to reaffirm commitments and should be a wakeup call for governments to put education and research high on their agendas. Youth and students rely on decision-makers to find solutions for today's crises and develop Intellectual Property policy accordingly. After years of debates in which youth and students have been left behind, it is time for *action now*.

Signatories:

-  Education International (EI)
-  Global Student Forum (GSF)
-  International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)
-  Fight for the Future
-  Creative Commons
-  Open Access India
-  Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL)
-  Wikimedia Deutschland
-  International Council of Museums (ICOM)
-  COMMUNIA
-  Knowledge Rights 21
-  Corporación Innovarte
-  Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC)
-  Creative Commons Italian Chapter
-  Fundación Karisma
-  Creative Commons Uruguay
-  Data and Society Lab (Datysoc)
-  UK Libraries and Archives Copyright Alliance (LACA)