

MAB UNESCO YOUTH FORUM

GYVING YOUNG PEOPLE A VOICE TO SHAPE THEIR TERRITORIES

From 18 to 22 September 2017, 276 Youth delegates from over 138 biosphere reserves in 84 countries gathered during the first ever [MAB Youth Forum](#) in the [Po Delta Biosphere Reserve](#), Italy. They either live or work in a biosphere reserve, areas that are committed to developing solutions reconciling the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use.



The 1st MAB Youth Forum was organized by the [Man and the Biosphere \(MAB\) Program of UNESCO](#) to offer an opportunity for young people who care about the special territories in which they live in to become active in the MAB Program and to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities, in line with the [Lima Action Plan](#).

The participants have been selected and invited considering their engagement with UNESCO and the MAB Program in their respective living/working context, in order they could therefore commit themselves to follow-up concretely on the outcomes of the Forum. Important to note is that from a gender balance perspective, the Forum attracted globally more young women than men.



The World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently [counts 669 sites in 120 countries all over the world](#), including 20 trans-boundary sites.

The MAB Forum ended with the production of a Final Declaration that collects the priorities identified by the young people during the various workshops that constituted the event.



The [MAB Youth Forum Declaration](#) calls on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves to share scientific and indigenous knowledge widely and to support knowledge transmission to future generation. Biosphere reserve managers are encouraged to work with schools to develop specific programs and to strengthen ties between research institutions and local stakeholders. The young participants made a commitment to organize events with the local communities on diverse cultural, environmental and economic issues, and to train and encourage young people to be more active in their biosphere reserves.



They will also act as ambassadors of their biosphere reserves and develop tools to promote values and good practices broadly. The participants were particularly concerned with fostering attractive and long term employment opportunities linked to the values of biosphere reserves, such as the conservation of biodiversity and habitat restoration. This would retain youth in biosphere reserves and promote innovation. They suggested creating hubs and incubators, together with training programmes, to support business creation and employability.

To know more

[2017 MAB Youth Forum](#)

[Results 2017 MAB Youth Forum](#)

[Final Declaration](#)

[MAB Programme](#)

[UNESCO Venice Office website](#)

[Po Delta Biosphere Reserve](#)

