

Committee: Young Delegates Forum (YDF)

Issue: Promoting civil responsibility: a duty to one's country, community and the world

Student Officers: Konstantina-Maria Mexa and Ioanna Stathakarou

Positions: President (Konstantina-Maria Mexa), Deputy President (Ioanna Stathakarou)

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION (Konstantina-Maria Mexa)

Dear Delegates,

My name is Konstantina-Maria Mexa and I will have the honor to serve as the President of the Young Delegates Forum (YDF) in the 6th session of the Arsakeia - Tositseia Schools Model United Nations (web edition). Regarding my MUN experience, I have attended six MUN conferences as a delegate and this will be my second time as a student officer. I am really looking forward to this session of ATS MUN, since I am aware of the fact that every single MUN conference helps you broaden your horizons by knowing other countries' problems, debating, studying, learning the art of argumentation and developing a global picture of various global problems.

It is accepted that The Young Delegates Forum (YDF) is mostly referred to younger ages, thus it is a challenge for us, the chairs to work mostly with newcomers who consist almost every year the majority of the delegates in this committee. To my point of view, the topic of the YDF this year is very intriguing and deals with an issue that the modern world needs to encounter. The topic of "Promoting civil responsibility: a duty to one's country, community and the world" demands the delegates' full attention to their countries policies and interests. I strongly encourage you all to read this study guide and get a clearer image of the situation, and then do your own research regarding your country and any latest updates.

Serving as your Chair, my goal is to make all newcomers in the committee eager to participate and ensure that every delegate enjoys the whole experience and benefits from it. If any query arises, please do not hesitate to contact me at: konstantiamexa@gmail.com.

Looking forward to meeting you all,

Kindest Regards,

Konstantina-Maria (Konstantia) Mexa

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION (Ioanna Stathakarou)

Dear Delegates,

My name is Ioanna Stathakarou and I am thrilled to be serving as this year's deputy president in the Young Delegates Forum. At the age of 15 and having attended 5 conferences as a delegate, I am truly honored to be a part of the 6th ATSMUN conference. As this signifies the eve of my chairing career, I look forward to getting to know the newcomers and debating on the topic of civil responsibility. In spite of this being a web conference, I am ready to contribute in making this yet another successful session of the Arsakeia Tositseia Schools Model United Nations.

The Young Delegates Forum targets students of the youngest age group of those taking part in the conference. Consequently, the number of newcomers far exceeds those in most of the other committees. I understand that it might seem as an overwhelming experience for most of you. It is, however, our responsibility as your chairs to help you overcome any difficulties that may arise both during the preparation period and throughout the conference.

This guide serves merely as an introduction to the topic that is to be debated. I strongly advise you to carry out your own research as to your delegation's policy and aspects of the topic that might be missing from this guide. In case any questions arise please do not hesitate to contact me on my personal email: (istathakarou@gmail.com). I wish you the best of luck with your research and your general preparation and I am looking forward to meeting you all!

Sincerely,

Ioanna Stathakarou

INTRODUCTION

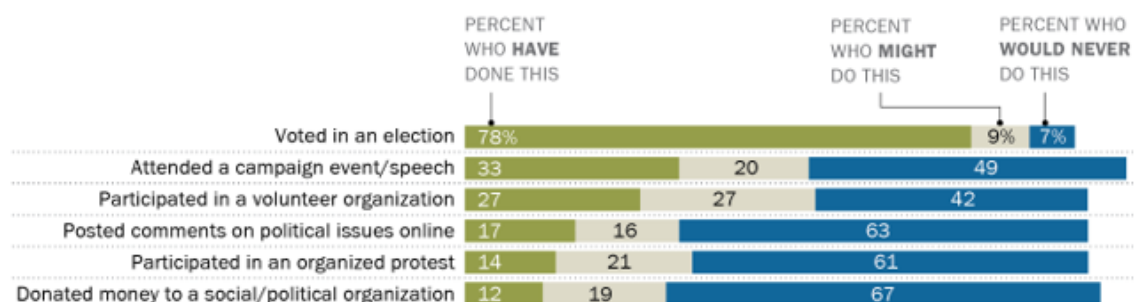
What is civic responsibility? Civic responsibility means active participation in the public life of a community in an informed, committed, and constructive manner, with a focus on the common good. It's about actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social participation.

Civic participation encompasses a wide range of formal and informal activities, such as voting, volunteering, participating in group activities and government, serving on nonprofit boards or school boards, as well as less traditional forms of political participation, such as community organizing and social activism, but it also means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.

An engaged citizenry is undoubtedly connected with a healthy democracy and in general, high levels of political and civic participation contribute to making the voices of the citizens heard. To better understand public attitudes toward civic engagement, Pew Research Center conducted a survey in collaboration with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) as part of their International Consortium on Closing Civic Space (iCon), which includes countries from Africa, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Although the study does not represent every region and cannot reflect the globe as a whole, with around 15,000 participants across such a wide variety of countries, it remains a useful snapshot of key, cross-national patterns in civic life.

Beyond voting, political participation relatively low

Median across 14 countries



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q63a-f.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

According to the results of the survey, aside from voting, other forms of participation such as those with more education and those on the political left and social network users are much less common.

But why is this happening? According to many researchers, this situation is due to the increasing unemployment rates and the job insecurity among people. Also, regarding the youth, we should mention that the difficulty of transitioning from school to the work life can be considered another reason for this decreasing political commitment.

Nevertheless, it is indicated that people are still defending their democratic beliefs and values, they stay engaged in their civic behavior although some of them feel marginalized from the political process. People's voices won't be heard unless they get involved in political debates and the decision-making process.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Civic

According to Oxford: relating to a city or town, especially its administration; municipal or relating to the duties or activities of people in relation to their town, city, or local area.

Responsibility

Responsibility refers to "the state or quality of being responsible or something for which one is responsible such as a duty, obligation or burden". ¹

Civic Responsibility (duties, obligations)

Civic Responsibility is defined as the "responsibility of a citizen" (Dictionary.com). It is comprised of actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social participation. Civic responsibility can include participation in government, church, volunteers and memberships of voluntary associations, obeying the law, paying taxes and being informed and attentive to public issues. Actions of civic responsibility can be displayed in

¹ <https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/civic-responsibility>

advocacy for various causes, such as political, economic, civil, environmental or quality of life issues.²

Citizenship

According to the Cambridge dictionary, citizenship is the state of being a member of a particular country and having rights because of it but also the state of living in a particular area or town and behaving in a way that other people who live there expect of you.

Citizen

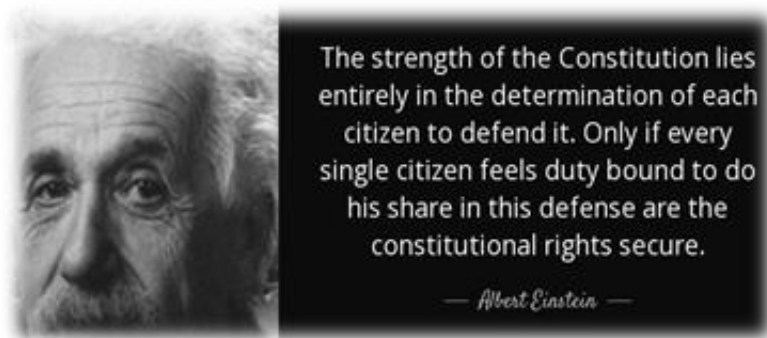
A citizen is a person who is a member of a particular country and who has rights because of being born there or because of being given rights, or a person who lives in a particular town or city.³

Civil rights

Rights that guarantee to all citizens equal opportunities (as for employment, schooling, housing, or voting) regardless of race, religion, sex, or national origin.⁴

Civic engagement/participation

According to the New York Times, civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.



² <https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/civic-responsibility>

https://www.civiced.org/papers/articles_role.html

³ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/citizen>

⁴ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/civil-rights>



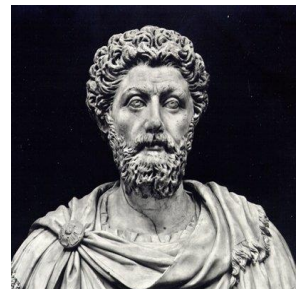
Rights of true citizenship accrue only to those who serve the State to which they belong.

— Mahatma Gandhi —

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ancient Routes

Civic Responsibility dates back to ancient Rome. Roman citizens wanted to actively contribute to their respective society. It is possible that the notion of civic responsibility may have started with Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus in 519 BC. Back in the day, the Romans could not rely on a king or dictator to rule them and make decisions for them. Instead, they had to take an active role in their government.



Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus

The Wider Sphere of Public Goods



Volunteerism and Philanthropy as a form of civic responsibility

VOLUNTEER



Volunteering may be a sort of civic duty, which involves dedicating one's time or labor without the expectation of monetary compensation. Active participation includes being involved in community service, voting, learning about civic life, and taking a lead in identifying and ameliorating social ills. Engaged citizens have a keen understanding of social problems and the way those have arisen. With the assistance of social connections, they will develop strategies to bring about positive change. Many people volunteer through local churches, animal shelters or food banks. Civic responsibility is also tied to the philanthropic sector in many ways. Through citizen and corporate participation, nonprofit organizations prosper from the donation of time and money.

Civic Participation and Responsibility

In the 18th and 19th centuries and through the 1930s, civic responsibility in America was tied to a commonwealth perspective. From voluntary fire departments, to the public arts, to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), citizens participated in projects that



Ratification of the United States Constitution

shaped communities, at times even the nation. Due to civic responsibility, citizenship was understood in terms of the labors of ordinary people, who created goods and undertook projects to benefit the public, as opposed to the high-minded, virtuous and leisure activities of gentlemen. This particular kind of civic identity created an important balance between pursuit of individual wealth and the creation of public things.

Youth participation and democracy

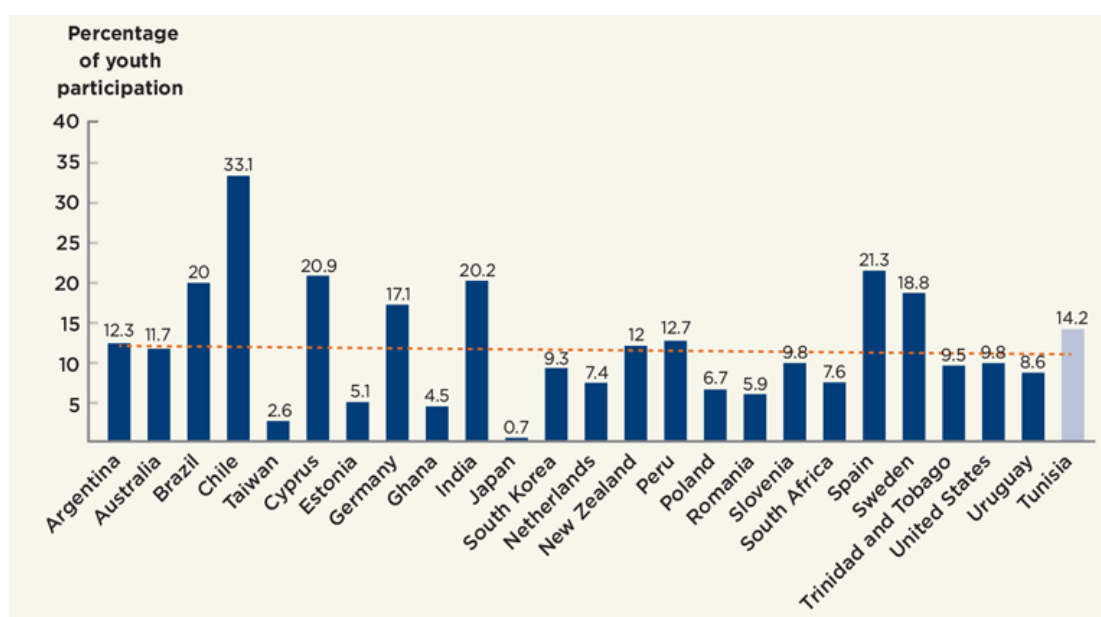
Young people have been instrumental in bringing about political change through protest; however, they are often left out of political conversations following political transition. It is common knowledge that young people have increasingly moved from



Greta Thunberg leading a youth climate strike

engagement with institutional politics to engagement with more cause-oriented political activism. Involving youth in addressing the issues that face them creates more democratic governance and community connectedness.

Youth participation apart from the fact that it strengthens personal and social development, it provides expertise for children and youth programs and services, thus promoting a more democratic society. Unfortunately, as mentioned in the beginning, one of the key indicators to describe the problematic situation of young people today is their poor political participation and the rate of youth unemployment whereas the advent of the financial crisis in 2008 aggravated the situation. I would like to mention, that in most countries, according to some researchers, the long-term youth unemployment rates surpassed those of adults. So, it's time that we foster integration, share power, offer responsibilities so that we contribute to a greater political participation of the young generation.



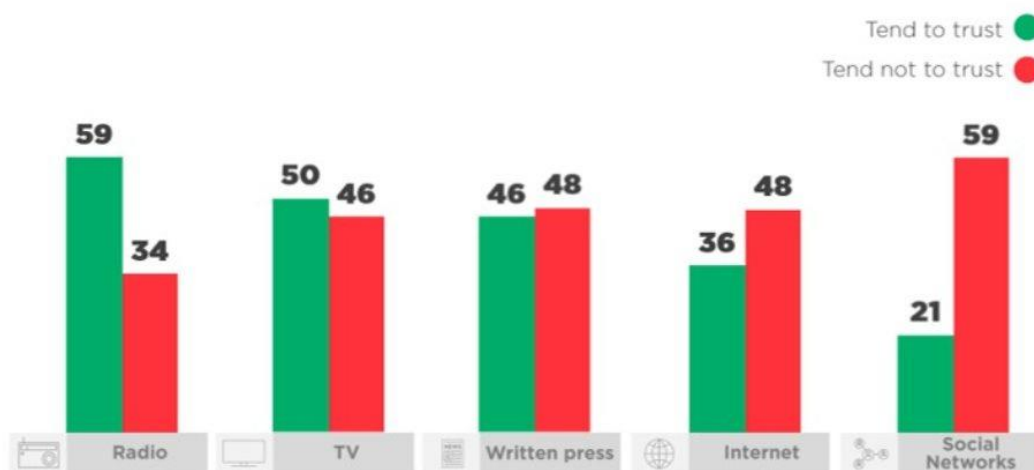
Today's percentage of youth in transitioning states and democracies who say they have participated in a peaceful demonstration

Obstacles to civic responsibility

There has been an excellent proliferation of media outlets online which has enabled citizens to access a way greater amount of data than ever before. The downside of this media proliferation, though, is that media consumers have grown increasingly polarized as they

tailor their media diet during a way that reinforces their individual ideologies—indeed, some media outlets tacitly or maybe explicitly market themselves to at least one or the opposite side of the ideological spectrum. Social media has had a mixed effect on citizenship, too. But whereas traditional media curate their content in order to guarantee a particular level of accuracy and significance, the user-generated content on social media is nearly completely unfiltered. This makes it harder to differentiate fact from fiction, accuracy from distortion.

TRUST IN MEDIA ACROSS THE EU (% of population, 2016)



MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

USA

The United States is home to the largest number of youth civic participation organizations in the world. These organizations are active both domestically and internationally and the following provides just a few examples.

The Points of Light Institute, founded in 1990, is an independent, non-partisan, nonprofit organization to encourage and empower the spirit of service.

Be the Change, Inc. creates national public awareness campaigns to help raise awareness and momentum for service as a solution to problems facing communities in the United States. Using active coalitions, collaborative policy making, bipartisan advocacy, and the

engagement and participation of well-known voices in entertainment, government, retail, etc., Be the Change, Inc. reaches Americans of all ages and backgrounds.

Established in 1983, the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) works to “link young people, educators and communities together in an effort to redefine young people’s role in society.” Several other large organizations in the US use youth volunteers to carry out their programming and develop initiatives to promote youth leadership. These include the American Red Cross, Save the Children, Boy Scouts of America, Girls Scouts of the USA, and more.

European Union (EU)

International organizations can be found in abundance in the European Union and its member states. For instance, the Youth Forum Jeunesse (YFJ, European Youth Forum) is an independent, non- governmental organization founded in 1996 that represents over 90 national youth councils and international youth



organizations from Europe. This organization aims to empower young people to actively participate by representing their interests and needs. To accomplish this, the YFJ advocates positive policies for young people in partnerships with international institutions such as the EU, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

Another example of a youth organization operating at the regional level is the European Youth Press (EYP). Founded in 2002, the EYP is comprised of young journalists throughout Europe and boasts over 48,000 members under the age of 30 through its national member organizations. Through coordination and planning of discussion forums, events and projects for young European journalists, the EYP encourages young people to actively participate in civil society by thinking critically and voicing their opinions.

Finally, the European Youth Parliament, founded in 1987, is an independent organization that encourages socio-political initiative in young people. Consisting of a network of 34 national organizations, EYP serves as a platform to over 20,000 young people for political debate, intercultural encounters and exchange of ideas.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO has a longstanding commitment to youth and its work's overall objective on youth is to ensure that young women and men are engaged in policies and programs affecting them and lead action to promote peace and sustainable development in their countries and communities. As such, the organization promotes the civic engagement of young people as



means of empowerment and preventing violence. UNESCO's cross-cutting approach focuses on building skills for successful transitions to adulthood (including advocacy, employability and leadership skills), raising awareness of crucial issues for youth development (such as HIV/AIDS) and providing youth with opportunities to engage in development and building peace.

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It is on the ground in 170 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and its wide range of partners. UNDP attaches critical importance to the promotion of civic engagement. Guided by the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and in keeping with the UNDP Corporate Strategy on Civil Society and Civic Engagement (2012) and UNDP and Civil Society Organizations: A Policy of Engagement (2001), UNDP promotes the important role to be played by citizens, communities, and civil society organizations and specific marginalized groups in shaping public decision-making and holding governments accountable.



The World Bank (Group)

The World Bank Group (WBG) is committed to contribute to the fight to end poverty and boost shared prosperity in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Engaging citizens and mobilizing communities can help bring greater transparency, accountability, and social inclusion, thus improves development results.



More specifically, the World Bank Group has developed a strategic framework to more systematically mainstream citizen engagement in Bank Group-supported operations with the goal of improving their results. The approach proposed in the framework was informed by inputs from civil society groups and other stakeholders, as well as by the external Advisory Council on Citizen Engagement. Basically, this WBG strategy incorporates citizen engagement, including beneficiary feedback, specifically in its treatment of inclusion, which entails empowering citizens to participate in the development process and integrating citizen voice in development programs as key accelerators to achieving results.

The Civic Responsibility Project

The Civic Responsibility Project is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works with businesses, nonprofit experts, and local government leaders to increase voter



**CIVIC
RESPONSIBILITY
PROJECT**

participation. Our most recent project with Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation examines the ways in which companies can play a role to engage their employees and consumers in elections.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
519 BC	Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus may have set the foundations for civic responsibility.

1787	The ratification of the United States Constitution is officially sanctioned as a blueprint for democracy.
1930s	Citizens participate in projects that shape communities and ultimately whole nations.
1950s	Civic engagement, Union membership and participation are at an all-time high in the years after World War II and the beginnings of the modern feminist and civil rights movements are beginning to stir.
1960s	Community responsibility and civic responsibility becomes more popular, people feel empowered in entirely new ways to change their worlds for the better, they demonstrate in the streets, at colleges, and at city halls to protect the rights of all people, regardless of their skin color or gender, and to change the status quo of oppression. Martin Luther King gives his famous "I have a dream" speech to 250,000 civil rights supporters in 1963. The National Organization of Women (NOW) and the Peace Corps and Americorps, which enabled people to make a difference at home and abroad, are founded.
1970s	Actions for the protections of the planet characterize the decade, people raise social consciousness, protesting against the Vietnam war and fighting for the increase in rights for women and people of color.
1980s	This decade is characterized by low volunteerism and civic engagement. Spurred on by the emergence of the AIDS epidemic, a new movement towards LGBT rights and healthcare rights reform is pioneered. The movement to end Apartheid in South Africa also inspired and engaged countless people in this country and globally.
1990s	Young people are apathetic, irony-obsessed slackers. However, thanks to Rock the Vote, founded in 1990, the 1992 election ends the 20-year decline in youth voting. The 1990s sees an increase in non-profit organizations, and the end of the Cold War brings a renewed interest in peace building work. It also sees the rise of the anti-sweatshop labor movement. Lastly, in 1993, Teach for America , a program that empowers young people to make a difference through teaching is founded, and in 1998 the UNESCO Strategy for Action with and for Youth provides the youth with

	opportunities to engage in development, building peace and politics.
2000s	The rise of the internet and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter drastically change how people interact with one another. Some argue that the internet divides us, while others say it contributes to civic engagement. On the positive side, it has emerged as a useful tool for staying in touch with our communities, political organizing, and for spurring on movements and aiding disaster relief efforts. There is also a rise of service learning as an educational model, and the continuing fight for human rights, particularly around LGBT rights.
2008	The advent of the financial crisis which induces the increase in youth unemployment and the isolation and social exclusion of the young in many European countries.
2018	The corruption perceptions index reveals that the continued failure of most countries to significantly control corruption is contributing to a crisis in democracy around the world.
2020s	The COVID-19 pandemic is turning into a jobs crisis far worse than the 2008 crisis. Women, young people and workers on low incomes are being hit hardest, according to a new OECD report and unemployment statistics released today. Coronavirus is impacting civic engagement programs, organizations, and people. This pressure has become a mandate at institutions across the United States and worldwide. Everyone is obliged to stay largely confined to their homes. Lockdowns prevent activities that require meeting physically (the mainstays of social accountability initiatives such as community meetings, social audits, and group sessions, as well as demonstrations or protests). Education institutions are under rising pressure to increase the number and variety of online courses, promoting by this way civic literacy, skills, and engagement, because developing this generation's civic literacy is vital to maintaining and strengthening the foundation of democracy.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

- Resolution on policies and programs involving youth (58/133, 22 December 2003). Adopted by the UN General Assembly, the Resolution focuses on the importance of youth participation at all levels.
- Resolution on the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers” (63/153 , 11 February 2009). Adopted by the UN General Assembly, the Resolution focuses on volunteerism.
- UNDESA DSPD and UNESCO organized an Expert Group Meeting on the theme “Youth Civic Engagement: Enabling Youth Participation in Political, Social and Economic Life” at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on June 16th to June 17th.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

While youth participation has always been desirable, it is only in the recent years that so many steps are being taken towards it. In May 2010 the Council of Europe’s Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education is adopted. The Charter is an important reference point for all those dealing with citizenship and human rights education. It provides a focus and catalyst for action in the member states and it is also a way of disseminating good practice and raising standards throughout Europe and beyond.

On 18 April 2012 the European Commission proposes a new employment package identifying concrete measures to boost jobs. In February 2013 the European Council creates the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) to increase the EU financial support available to the regions and individuals struggling most with youth unemployment and inactivity.

In April 2013 the Youth Guarantee Recommendation is formally adopted to ensure young people's successful transition into work. On 15 July 2016 the World Youth Report, which is the flagship publication on youth issues of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, launches the World Youth Report on Youth Civic Engagement, in response to growing interest in and an increased policy focus on youth civic engagement in recent years among governments, young people and researchers. The World Youth Report on Youth Civic Engagement, represents a collaborative effort made possible by the input and contributions of experts in the field of youth and civic engagement, and its objective of is to provide a basis for policy discussions around youth civic engagement in order to ensure that young people are able to participate fully and effectively in all aspects of the societies in which they live. On 8 April 2019 the World Bank and UNICEF announce a

new commitment to promote education, skills and training for young people in developing countries, boosting their employment prospects.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The solutions proposed below, taking into account the issue and the importance of the promotion of civil responsibility and the fact that in many nations around the world, much of the public is disengaged from politics, are mainly focused on education, on raising awareness, on volunteering and on service learning.

Education

To start with, we need to tend our focus towards schools. Civic Education is a method in which to teach civic responsibility. According to the Center of Civic Education, it is a way to promote responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles. Civic education is a means to actively engage people in the practice of democracy in many countries (Center for Civic Education). The health and the development of the country requires the participation of its citizens. All citizens should understand their own rights and act for the common good so that they protect the rights of all individuals from unconstitutional abuses by the government.

Moreover, a relevant curriculum emphasizing on democratic values should definitely be included whereas providing a well-educated and skilled teaching staff is extremely important. In addition, since one of UNESCO's main influence is on education, it is vital you further analyze new methods to be proposed, and thus provide quality educational opportunities including courses on civic and political education, leadership opportunities within the school, participation in debate and simulation exercises such as Model UN and attendance to lectures on current political issues. Other alternatives would be to promote strategies, programs for training, initial employment, and participation in the economic, social, and cultural development process, and policies that involve young people in activities that take their interests and needs into account.

Education of the young can undoubtedly work as an instrument to enhance democracy and increase the involvement of young citizens in shaping the future. Through educational practices the young engage in politics, develop democratic abilities, ideals, principles and practices and they are being offered learning experiences to fight social discrimination. Furthermore, the creation of new employment opportunities and the participation of the

young in local, national and regional councils promotes, strengthens and defends democracy.

Service learning

In addition, service-learning can be an effective teaching tool for developing citizens' civic engagement, a notion which is substantiated by a number of studies and researchers. More specifically, service learning is a way in which people learn civic responsibility, as it is an instructional strategy that ties the study of academic objectives to community service. For example, students can learn about the causes and effects of famine, as well as how hunger can be prevented. Through service learning, citizens participate in projects such as assisting at low-income day care centers and homeless shelters, clearing park paths, conducting art or music lessons for youth and tutoring other students and adults, in order to help or serve the needs of other people, experience the value and impact of giving to people and learn to be productive members of society.

Volunteering

Volunteering allows citizens the opportunity to share their skills and talents as well as the to learn new skills while helping those in need of assistance. Volunteering gives citizens agency and actively builds up the communities that support our political processes by developing closer interpersonal relationships and giving people an active role in change-making, concrete tools and hands-on experiences, and developing closer interpersonal relationships. A delegate could propose solutions regarding promoting citizen engagement through volunteerism or concerning the role of the governments or local communities in pushing the public to vote in elections and start serving on boards or commissions.

Raising awareness

Additionally, strengthening civil responsibility is a topic which requires the raising of awareness to all member states. Thus, the creation of online sites which will contain important information on the importance of participating in democracy and being civically engaged and will be formatted such that they may be printed off for distribution, should be outlined, so that people are informed and they become eager to contribute to the promotion of civil responsibility. Moreover, the media play a big role in public political education, influencing public perceptions about what and who matters in politics. Public service media could do more to give people reliable information on issues and also campaigns, strategies and tools for action, so that people can make up their own minds about issues and take action. The importance of civic education and youth volunteering as

well as of the benefits of volunteering should be communicated to the general public through televised public forums, print media, and public service television announcements so that the knowledge and skills for active citizenship is developed. Parents, civic leaders, and the media are important influences and have significant contributions to make to civic education, and their support should be enlisted.

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<https://www.u4.no/publications/supporting-civil-society-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

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