

# FROM PARTICIPATION TO INFLUENCE: CAN YOUTH REVITALISE DEMOCRACY?

Final report



World Forum for Democracy

Strasbourg, 3-5 November 2014





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Council of Europe

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# Contents

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<b>ILLUSTRATORS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>7</b>
No alternatives? Diagnosis of young people's discontent with democratic institutions	7
"Let's figure this out together" – Youth bringing democracy back to life	8
<b>FORUM PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS</b>	<b>11</b>
Opening Session – 3 November 2014	11
Round Table Discussion: Young people - actors of global change? – 3 November	13
Round Table Discussion: Youth empowerment for democratic transformation? – 4 November	16
The Labs	18
Round Table Discussion: From youth initiatives to system change – 5 November	82
Closing Session: The Voice of Democracy – 5 November	85
Democracy Prototyping sessions	89

# ILLUSTRATORS

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**Mr Jean Charles ANDRIEU DE LEVIS**

LAB 1 – Action Civics  
LAB 12 – Project Citizen

**Ms Violette BERGER**

LAB 7 – Artificial intelligence for Democracy  
LAB 15 – Youth in global summits

**Mr Aurelien CANTOU**

LAB 9 – Politically attractive reforms for increasing youth influence  
LAB 14 – Citizens voting for bills

**Mr Matthieu CHIARA**

LAB 2 – Understanding Democracy  
LAB 20 – Young Mayor Programme

**Mr Guillaume DELOIZON**

LAB 6 – Democracy Watchdogs  
LAB 11 – Young City changers

**Mr Daniel DEPOUTOT**

LAB 21 – Young Democracy Creators

**Ms Maria LUCHANKINA**

LAB 8 – Participatory Democracy in School  
LAB 16 – Youth participation in Elections

**Ms Nelly MASSERA**

LAB 3 – ‘Directing’ Democracy  
LAB 18 – Youth Social Moveents : challenging the system on the street ?

**Mr Jérôme RICH**

LAB 10 – Structures for Youth Advocacy  
LAB 13 – Have your say

**Mr Eugène RIOUSSE**

LAB 4 – In from the Margin

**Ms Aline ROLLIN**

LAB 17 – Hacking Democracy

**Mr Laurent SALLES**

LAB 5 – No to neo-nazis, no to hate speech  
LAB 19 – Youth Parliament

## Foreword

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While the number of democracies in the world has been growing steadily, it has to be said that these democracies, whether established or in transition, now face major challenges. Among these challenges, in particular, is the disenchantment with political representation and skepticism regarding policy decisions among young people who are at risk of being increasingly alienated from public political life. The more recent democracies also face their own challenges when it comes to involving young people, whose expectations about freedom of expression, transparency and good governance are often frustrated. Yet, in Hong Kong, Kyiv and Cairo young people have been on the front line of the fight for democracy and human rights, aspiring to live in a society based on the rule of law and human dignity. In Western democracies, according to a recent Eurobarometer survey, a large majority of young people see human rights and freedom of expression as priorities which Europe should be promoting. There is clearly a strong “appetite” for democracy. It would be wrong to say that all young people have lost interest in politics. But a gulf has opened up between traditional political structures and young people and this gulf needs to be bridged for the health and the sustainability of our democracies. To face this challenge, it is necessary to consider ways of gearing politics and democratic practice to young people’s current methods of communication and mobilisation; particularly social media.

How can we draw on young people’s energy to revitalise democratic institutions and processes? In the digital age, what tools, apart from voting, can we put in place to encourage youth participation and to enhance democratic vitality? Are youth parliaments an effective means of getting young people involved in decision-making processes? Social movements, which are the only means of expression in some countries, are often regarded as locomotives for political change, strengthening democracy and human rights, but can they have a significant and lasting impact in countries which do not yet have a democratic tradition? Should young people, who were born in the digital age, be encouraged to use online platforms for the purposes of active and responsible citizenship?

These important and relevant questions have been debated at the World Forum for Democracy 2014, organised by the Council of Europe with the support of the City of Strasbourg, the Alsace Region and the French Government. Representatives of civil society (media and business circles, academics, and young activists) and political leaders from more than 100 countries have discussed - including via a digital platform - the issues and challenges of youth participation, and have pinpointed the opportunities they offer for democratic renewal.

Thorbjørn JAGLAND, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Jocelyne CABALLERO, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe

Philippe RICHERT, President of the Alsace Regional Council

Roland RIES, Mayor of Strasbourg

*The World Forum for Democracy 2014 "Best of"*

**"The traditional concept of democracy is not any more sacred. Now we are questioning the concept. Now we are looking for alternative forms of participation."** – Mohammed Al-Saud, civil society activist from Syria

**"The most important thing is to give really the possibility to young people to have their new vision, because they are not just the future of democracy, they are the present of democracy."** – Ons Ben Abdelkarim, Secretary General of Al Bawsala, Tunisia

**"Participation in itself is not enough, it needs to lead to action and to change; otherwise people lose faith in the system."** Participant from the audience

**"Tangible change is in the air. Young people are already transforming many aspects of daily life from the way we learn and communicate to the way we do business. They are also ready to change the way democracies work."** – Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

**"Youth have a voice. They need to be heard and listened to. And that's what's so important for everyone to realise: that youth need to be given the opportunity to speak."** – Simone Bernstein, Co-Founder and President of volunTEENnation.org

**"You have a voice, you have the rights, you have all kinds of influence that are right now neglected on all areas, not only on the national area, and we need to raise our voice in order to change that."** – Katharina Nocun, civil liberties activist and blogger from Germany

**"Get into politics if you really want to change things. I think that the best way and maybe the fastest way is to enter the system, work for politics, get elected and try to bring more opportunities for youth."** – Daniela Chacon, Vice Mayor of Quito, Ecuador

**"If you are unable to change a political party, how can you change an entire society?"** – Henry B. Tam, Director of Cambridge University's Forum for Youth Participation & Democracy

**"My advice to young people is that you really don't have to wait to be Bono or Bill Gates. You can make a difference now! As a young person full of passion and creativity. There has never been a better time to take action."** – Nancy Lublin, CEO of 'Do Something' and founder of 'Crisis Text Line'

**"How many old people are ready to step back to create space for young people in political positions?"** – Participant from the audience

**"We used to look at politicians as rulers, we are moving to see them as representatives; we were consumers of governance, we are now co-creators; we were complainers, now we are problem-solvers."** – Abhishek Thakore, Founder of The Blue Ribbon Movement, India

**"This is a revolution. This is the digitalisation of the world. What is responsible for this great economic transformation is the digitalisation of society and it's all the young people in this room. You have created revolution and you don't even know it. You've created new narrative for society."** – Jeremy Rifkin, President of the Foundation on Economic Trends and economic and social theorist

**"No representation without conversation."** – Pia Mancini, Director of Net Democracy, Argentina

**"The biggest enemy of our democracy is apathy"** – Participant from the audience

**"It's very important that when you go to vote, you know that you will make a difference with what you vote for, and you don't just vote for either Coca Cola or Pepsi Cola - which is unfortunately what election currently means in most of our societies."** – Chantal Mouffe, Director of the Centre of Democracy at the University of Westminster

**"People don't go to the streets when they have nothing to lose - they go when they have something stolen from them"** – Andriy Shevchenko, Member of Parliament, Ukraine

# Executive Summary

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This summary is a synthesis of recurrent points and arguments by Forum participants and high level speakers expressed during the Forum's labs, unconferences, democracy prototype workshops and plenary sessions. The initiatives presented at Forum labs have been selected via an open call for proposals. Young participants in the Forum have been chosen on the basis of short video presentations. They have prepared their input into the Forum via online discussions over several months, and intense face-to-face work several days prior to the Forum, with the help of facilitators. Young participants made a key contribution as challengers in the labs, and as authors of the democracy prototypes presented in the closing plenary.

## **No alternatives? Diagnosis of young people's discontent with democratic institutions**

In modern democracies, there is a rising abstention among young people from participation in formal democracy. Young people feel increasingly detached from their elected officials and do not identify easily with political parties. According to the 2013 Eurobarometer study "European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life"<sup>1</sup>, the number of young people voting in elections has decreased from 2011 (62%) to 2013 (56%). 79% of the respondents would not consider standing as a candidate in a political election at some point in their life and only 5% of young people said they were member of a political party or organisation. One of the reasons for youth's frustration with party politics can be found in the fact that both centre-left and centre-right parties are offering very similar political programmes, giving young people the impression that their vote will not change anything. In fact, this was with 64% the main reason given by respondents of the Eurobarometer survey for abstaining from elections. As a result of missing alternatives, young citizens abstain from elections or increasingly vote for right-wing, extremist parties which claim to offer real alternatives and to give people back their voice. Populist organisations in some Council of Europe member states and other mature democracies criticize the "establishment" to gain voter support, further eroding trust in mainstream political parties and representative institutions. The World Forum for Democracy 2014 addressed this erosion of confidence in democracy, particularly among the young and highlighted alternative ways of engagement which increase young people's real influence in the political process.

Protests like in Hong Kong, the 'Occupy' movement, still active in many states around the world, or the Arab Spring, do not only demand the strengthening of democracy, but also an open-ended political debate which considers alternatives to neo-liberal economy and social justice. In this respect, the consolidation of democracy cannot be considered separately from economic dilemmas and the relationship between political and economic elites. Even mature democracies are at a risk of reaching a state often referred to as post-democracy. Post-democratic societies make the appearance of having operating democratic institutions, whereas most decisions are in fact strongly influenced by transnational market forces and financial institutions. Decisions are taken by an elite, justified by claiming that political issues are too complicated for citizens and should rather be taken by experts. The awareness of this reduces in turn incentives for citizens to take part in elections and other formal democratic processes. Most young people feel that they have a vote, but not a voice. There is a range of gaps dividing youth and elected officials, such as a class gap, with elites being derived among the most educated and affluent strata, a cultural gap, as the mechanisms of formal democracy are too slow and the language in which it is organized does not fit in the cultural framework of youth, a technological gap, referring to the way in which young people today discuss and organise, and a generational gap in terms of elected politicians being usually older than the average population.

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1. See: [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/flash375\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/library/reports/flash375_en.pdf).

At the same time, in states where formal participation is particularly weak, young people participate most actively on a non-formal level. Youth's impact on society – through their use of new technologies and social media, their entrepreneurship and mobility, their level of education, their lifestyle, and even their use of language – is bigger than their impact through formal political structures. This mismatch is a symptom that democracy might be out of synch with social change. While it is normal and desirable that democracy evolves slowly and with caution, democratic structures need to adapt to the age of globalisation, networked collaboration and crowdsourcing. They need to be more flexible to be able to follow the changes in a rapidly evolving society. Young people are over-represented in democratisation movements and protests, and their high activity on social media and e-democracy platforms contributes to a stronger popular oversight, raising the accountability and responsiveness of institutions.

### **“Let's figure this out together” – Youth bringing democracy back to life**

One of the Forum key messages was that in order to enhance youth participation, it is necessary to strengthen the quality of democracy in general. Youth disengagement is not an isolated phenomenon but a particularly acute symptom of decreasing trust in democracy. Youth participation schemes should not isolate youth in a corner, but should be seamlessly integrated in the democratic system, with sufficient guarantees that the voices of young people matter in decision-making. Youth participation platforms and initiatives need to be in tune with the young generation's own codes and practices for information and communication – they can thus create experimental and innovative participation opportunities which could be mainstreamed to revitalise democratic systems as a whole.

In order to reduce the generation gap, democracies tend to adopt a somewhat clientelist approach to youth, setting up youth consultative bodies and youth programmes, which give an impression of participation but do little to increase young people's influence on decision-making. If they function in isolation, youth leadership schemes and civic learning in formal education are designed more as means of reproducing the system than in order to encourage system change. Such leadership schemes are effective in diversifying the political debate and elites only if a strong effort is made to reach out to marginalised groups, and if learning and training are action-oriented, with young leaders dealing with real social issues, in interaction with the wider community, and with authorities engaging to act upon the proposals and ideas emerging from the grassroots activists. Youth organisations such as youth parliaments, youth councils or young mayor programmes, should not replicate existing structures without giving youth any genuine power to take decisions, while merely conveying the impression of including young people in order to make politicians feel and look good. Instead, young people should sit at the table with the older generation of politicians when decisions are taken, not only in policy fields that affect youth, but with respect to the full range of political and social issues.

Five main recommendations for young people to increase their impact on political decision-making have been recurrent during the Forum:

- ▶ Become part of the system – but not as a token: Young people should be able to change the system from within by joining a political party, introducing youth quota in lists of political candidates for elections, and lowering the voting age.
- ▶ Integrating social movements in democracy: There should be binding mechanisms in democracies to integrate the demands of social movements in political decision-making.
- ▶ Combining representative and participatory structures by introducing e.g. participatory budgeting, online fora, youth councils, crowdsourcing, citizen juries, federal policy conferences, online and face-to-face deliberation, or participation commissions.
- ▶ Exploiting the internet for a renewal of democracy: Social and political structures need to adapt to the digital world employing innovative forms of information, communication and transactions as used by the generation of digital natives.
- ▶ Politicians need to act upon the demands of youth.

## **Become part of the system – but not as a token**

One option for young people to directly influence the democratic system is to join a political party. The Forum has shown that parties are still perceived as one of the most important entrance cards to the political system. In order to facilitate youth's entry into politics, electoral systems could introduce quota for young people on lists of political candidates. During the last election in Tunisia, for example, thanks to the provision of a new electoral code considering the mandatory nomination of at least one young person on each list, about 40 % of the representatives is aged less than 30 years old – compared to 4 % before. At the same time, it is highly challenging to change the political system from within and not become part of its logic and structures which are dominated by claims to power. Young politicians need to remind themselves constantly of the ideals and reasons that made them enter politics.

Another problem is that youth branches in political parties very often do not fulfill the role that young people are looking for and merely reflect the pattern of the older generation. The generational gap needs to be closed in order to be able to address problems together. Young people are ready to shoulder real responsibilities, and not merely have a role confined to addressing the needs and interests of exclusively young people. Moreover, parties should develop specific strategies for the political inclusion of less privileged young people around the world, regardless of their social origin and background.

In order to attract young people to politics, besides the introduction of youth quota, states could consider lowering the voting age to 16. However, although a lowered voting age will clearly lead to a higher level of inclusiveness in democracy, it will not necessarily remove the problems associated with 'post-democracy'. It is thus equally important to give young people the possibility to engage through different alternatives, and participate in the elaboration of the political agenda and the formulation of public policies.

## **Integrating social movements in the democratic system**

In order for young people engaged in social movements to influence the political agenda, these movements need to be incorporated in the democratic system. This would not only ensure that the ideas and claims are heard, but will increase the overall quality of democracy, as social movements are often internally democratic and participatory, giving citizens the possibility to voice their opinion and weigh different actions.

In this context, it is also crucial to examine the role of affection and emotion in politics which is often underestimated. Young people need to be personally or emotionally affected to care and become active for a cause. Idealism is a strong driver for societal engagement. The Forum has illustrated that the personal concern of youth with respect to political issues can be enhanced by forms of artistic expression, as they promote structured emotional engagement. This was a particularly strong element of youth involvement in neighborhood-level democracy, including in disaffected neighborhoods, where artistic mediation can be a tool for building trust and fostering dialogue between youth and politicians.

## **Combining representative and participatory structures**

'Post-representative democracy', a stage mature democratic societies may be at the point of reaching, does not necessarily imply eradicating parliaments or elected representatives, but establishing structures that enable the participatory processes to influence decision-making in representative structures. Elements of participatory infrastructure that go along with the representative infrastructure existing today have been presented at the Forum, embodied in initiatives such as participatory budgeting, online fora, youth councils, crowdsourcing, citizen juries, federal policy conferences, online and face-to-face deliberation, or participation commissions.

Although most mentioned examples are either in an early stage of experimentation or are conceived as temporary, ad-hoc processes, they are, in one way or another, a part of participatory infrastructure within the representative system. Many of these ideas are an illustration of thick participation, taking place in small groups in which people exchange and share ideas, requiring a strong emotional and intellectual commitment. Some other initiatives represent thin forms of participation, as they are fast, often taking place online and are usually done by individuals. It is important to combine both forms of participation, by complementing offline, face-to-face deliberation among citizens with online activism, reflecting better young people's patterns

of communication. In order to become more inclusive, democracy should develop into a hybrid model of 'post-representation', containing more elements of direct, liquid and hybrid democracy. Forms of governance such as open government, legislative crowdsourcing, or participatory budgeting are successful in injecting cognitive diversity into the system of representation. Moreover, one must consider replacing the system of elections in democracy with a random selection of decision-makers which has already been practiced successfully in ancient Greece. Young people are advocating innovative forms of democracy, like for example 'lottocracies' in which decision-making assemblies are randomly selected among the population, reflecting more adequately the citizens' diversity. Youth can be the driver of these innovations and has a particular important role to play.

### **Exploiting the internet for a renewal of democracy**

To capitalise on youth engagement, it is thus important to innovate through new kinds of participatory structures and processes which have a real impact on political decision-making – not only at the level of national and local authorities but also in schools, universities, NGOs and other organisations. Along the lines of the results of the World Forum for Democracy 2013, the 2014 Forum has shown that the use of social media and communication technology will play an increasingly important role in giving youth a voice in politics. The internet is morphing into an 'internet of things' and the economic life is increasingly digitalised, allowing young people to renew societal processes. Social and political structures need to adapt to the digital world with the internet as the global medium for all kinds of information, communication and transactions. At the same time, it is crucial to regulate global internet companies as global utilities, and treat the network as public good. What is missing in the digital revolution is a global political movement of the digital generation with the aim to keep network neutrality and ensure respect for the rights of users, and in this way democratise internet governance. Forum participants suggested that this movement needs to bring a generation of activists to lay out a digital bill of rights and responsibilities and publish it online. There have to be binding mechanisms to incorporate the demands of this movement in democratic decision-making.

International financial institutions need to be more active in supporting infrastructure and programmes for young people, which are developed with the participation of young people themselves. By supporting youth's projects in times of economic crisis, international financial institutions play a crucial role in re-establishing young people's belief in their ability to make an impact and to change society, while strengthening citizenship and civic responsibility.

### **The need for politicians to act upon the demands of youth**

Youth participation initiatives add to the richness, pluralism and vitality of democratic systems, as long as they are recognised and involved in the institutional set-up and young people's contribution is taken into account by decision-makers. The Forum has shown that government officials and politicians are willing to enter a dialogue with young people. Now it is time that politicians advance the insights gained during discussions with youth by taking concrete action. It is the responsibility of those in charge – government, parliament, political parties, NGOs, international organisations – to open up for innovative forms of democratic governance in order to pave the way for a democracy that is not only striving to represent young people, but associating them effectively with the elaboration and implementation of a new vision for the future of our societies. The Council of Europe and its partners will disseminate the ideas generated at the Forum and create a network of democracy innovators in order to trigger new action and influence on political decision-making.

# Forum Presentations and Discussions

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## Opening Session – 3 November 2014

**Thorbjørn Jagland**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, opened the Forum and welcomed the guests of honour **Roland Ries**, Mayor of Strasbourg, **Philippe Richert**, President of the Alsace Region, and **Ms Pascale Boistard**, Secretary of State for Women's Rights, at the French Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights, representing the French government. He thanked the City of Strasbourg, the Alsace Region and the French government as the main partners for their support during the Forum preparations.

**Thorbjørn Jagland** introduced the topic of the Forum's third edition: "From participation to influence: Can youth revitalise democracy?". He reminded the audience of the large number of young people protesting offline and online in Tunisia, Ukraine and Hong Kong for change and a turn towards genuine democracy. How can these demands be institutionalised when young people participate more in informal networks than in traditional political institutions? The Secretary General emphasized the importance of connecting grassroots activists and citizens with institutionalised decision-making processes in order to increase the impact of young people in democracies. He welcomed 250 young participants, invited by the European Youth Foundation, who have been preparing for the Forum on an online platform for more than three months, as well as the numerous activists, bloggers, journalists, academics, politicians and business representatives from more than 100 different countries, participating in the Forum.

**Pascale Boistard**, Secretary of State for Women's Rights, at the French Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights, underlined that democratic participation should be possible for all citizens on an equal level, regardless of their gender or age. Due to the precarious economic situation of many young people, the Forum's topic is most crucial to address youth's need to participate actively in society. Together with young citizens, public authorities need to ensure that inequalities between different groups of society do not flourish. In this respect, a healthy balance between the public and private life of citizens needs to be achieved. Pascale Boistard further stated that youth participation has always been an important part of Council of Europe policies, as for example illustrated by the 'co-management' approach with young people in the European Youth Foundation, or the 'No Hate Speech Movement' fighting against discrimination of young people online. The Forum gives the Council of Europe an opportunity to update its work in the area of youth policies. The main question to be addressed at this Forum is how to increase youth participation and impact in the political life. In this respect, participants will have to analyse the obstacles to meaningful youth impact, as well as to identify potential solutions.

The Secretary General invited **Jeremy Rifkin**, President of the Foundation on Economic Trends and prominent economic and social theorist, to take the floor and deliver the keynote speech of the Forum's opening session. Mr Rifkin stated that the capitalist system will soon no longer be the dominating force of our societies. Due to its inherent logic, capitalism will be forced to get out of the way for what Jeremy Rifkin calls 'collaborative commons' framed by a 'sharing economy'. The sharing economy, leveraged by information technology, is a societal system built on sharing the production and consumption of goods and services – the collaborative commons. The digitalisation of society, triggered by young people, is the main driving force behind this development. In the last 15 years, youth has created a revolution without even recognising it. This revolution has been made possible by 'zero marginal cost' in production, describing a situation in which an added unit of a product is produced without increasing the overall cost of producing. For the first time in the history of capitalism, a technological revolution increases productivity that drastically. The invisible hand of the market is reaching its ultimate triumph by giving birth to the new economic system of sharing economy, reducing marginal costs to zero.

All great economic paradigm shifts in history share a common parameter: at one moment in time three technology revolutions converged into a general purpose technology platform. These three technology revolutions can be summarised as, firstly, new forms of *communication* to more efficiently organise economic activity, secondly, new forms of *energy* to more efficiently power economic activity, and, thirdly, new forms of *transportation* to more efficiently move economic activity. In the capitalist economy, giant vertically integrated corporations were efficient in creating economies of scale, reducing marginal costs and creating cheap goods and services. The second industrial revolution was based on the development of communication technology such as the telephone, the creation of power combustion engines as well as cross-national roads and the automobile. In 2008, the global turn-down exposed the fact that the second industrial revolution is being exhausted, causing problems such as youth unemployment and shrinking economies. The infrastructure in the industrialised nations is old and in disrepair. With India and China on the rise, there are no longer enough resources available to meet the demand when our entire economy, even entire civilisation, is made out of carbon deposits (plastic, chemicals etc.). The second industrial revolution platform does not offer solutions for these problems and it will become impossible for economy to further grow.

However, thanks to the generation present at the Forum, we stand at the beginning of the third industrial revolution in which the internet is morphing into an 'internet of things,' constituted again by communication, transport and energy. It is the digitalisation of the economic life that takes us to zero marginal cost and democratises the economy, allowing us to move our activities towards a sharing model and enabling us to combat climate change. Every device is connected with every other device in one big neural system. Smart factories and homes are constantly sending data back to a digitalised central system of the internet of things. Notwithstanding these advantages, Rifkin also addressed the need to find measures to ensure personal privacy, data security, network neutrality, and the prevention of cyber terrorism as well as the capturing of the network by a few companies. These are the challenges faced by the digital generation. In 20 years, every individual will be connected online and dramatically increase productivity and energy efficiency by producing at a very reduced or even zero marginal cost, for example by creating own apps and algorithms in the internet of things. The change is already happening all around us, starting with Napster, the file sharing music service, from free e-books and online university courses to free online newspapers and blog articles. What the older generation called cheating is now called sharing. Traditional industries, such as the music industry or newspapers, cannot compete with zero marginal cost and are on the decline.

*"This is a revolution. This is the digitalisation of the World. What is responsible for this great economic transformation is the digitalisation of society and it's all the young people in this room. You have created revolution and you don't even know it. You've created new narrative for society."*

The zero marginal cost society has also found its way into energy supply, as costs for solar and wind energy have been decreasing rapidly. Today, individuals are able to have their own solar cells on their houses, which, once set up, produce energy at a zero marginal cost. For this reason, vertically integrated energy companies from the times of the second industrial revolution are losing their economic power. Today, millions of internet users come together in energy cooperatives, producing vast amounts of electricity, undermining giant vertically integrated energy providers. Young people in India and Sub-Saharan Africa are moving now to rural areas, establishing solar panels in the villages and leasing them to local citizens for very low prices. This is power to the people – literally and figuratively. When the new generations judge institutional behaviour, they ask if it is centralised, patriarchal, top-down, proprietary and closed or whether it is decentralised, collaborative, open and transparent. Another digital innovation Rifkin mentioned is 3D printing. 3D printing uses existing material, recycling and melting, and can be powered by solar panels. The first 3D vehicle, an Italian car, is going in industrial production soon. These vehicles will be driverless or they will be drones at zero marginal cost. President Obama wants to have a 3D printer in every school. With 3D printing, children will soon be able to produce their own innovative products and share them in online communities.

The best way to understand this revolution is through the automobile. Millions of people are now car-sharing and for every shared car, 50 cars in production are eliminated. Overall, it is possible to eliminate 80% of the total number of cars in urban areas by car-sharing, making mobility cheaper. What will this mean for democratising economic life? The most illustrative example is toys which are critical to children's development. Through toys, children learn their first lesson in property and status, as the toy is owned by the child. Now, the millennial generation parents rent the toys for their children on sharing websites. They pay a subscription fee, download any toy and have it delivered to their house. They tell their kid that another child has played with the

toy before and took good care of it. In this way, children are learning that the toy is not a property or a status. They begin to share, being prepared for sharing cars, apartments, or tools, while marking the beginning of a new economic era.

At the end of the second industrial revolution five or six companies in each industry rule the market. The Internet of Things, the digital platform for communication, energy and transport, however, is collaborative, open and transparent, favouring millions of small players, while eliminating the middlemen and decreasing the marginal cost. As we move towards a digitalised world, we can connect more easily with each other and each of us can become a social entrepreneur. In Adam Smith's conception, every individual seeks to be an autonomous agent and is motivated by its material self-interest. By pursuing its self-interest, the individual in the end supports society. On the contrary, the new generation is defined by sharing and giving to each other over the network, increasing their overall capacity of production. This type of entrepreneurship is based on creativity and talent instead of mere self-interest. By enabling people to become social entrepreneurs, it is possible to put every young person back to work. We can transform the entire energy grid of each country and retrofit all building for wind and solar energy, employing millions of semi-skilled and unskilled young people for maintaining the energy system. The money for this digital infrastructure is already available, but currently still invested in the second industrial revolution platform. Last year, the European Union spent 740 billion Euros on 20<sup>th</sup> century infrastructure. When old companies push back the digital change, the digital generation needs to come forward, politicise themselves and make the change happen.

Another big struggle in the digital era is maintaining network neutrality. The original idea of the internet was that everyone should have access on an equal level. Now a range of different companies all want a piece of the pie. It is crucial to regulate global internet companies as global utilities, and treat the network as public good. What is missing in the revolution is a global political movement of the digital generation with the aim to keep network neutrality and in this way democratise the digital life. This movement needs to bring a billion people, a digital generation of activists, to lay out a digital bill of rights and responsibilities, and publish it online. There needs to be a debate between digital activists and internet companies. The power of the digital generation is that they can replace internet companies easily if these companies do not listen to youth's demands. Only the interconnected digital generation, activists from all over the world, by creating a consciousness of the biosphere, will be able to heal the planet which is currently threatened by climate change. The latter can only be combatted by the sharing of resources, the opening up of the commons, and a movement towards a biosphere conscience. Zero marginal cost is the ultimate matric to reduce the environmental footprint of every individual of this planet and to possibly hold off climate change.

### **Round Table Discussion: Young people - actors of global change? – 3 November**

**Anne Brasseur**, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, opened the first round table discussion of the World Forum for Democracy 2014 by emphasizing the need not only to talk about young people, but also with young people. She stated that the Council of Europe is a standard-setter for democracy and human rights for the European continent and in some cases on a global scale. While its basic principles remain unchanged, the practice of democracy is transforming in line with changes in society. Young people are at the forefront of societal changes. We currently see young people in Hong Kong protesting for their right to political self-determination. One needs to understand the demands of young people and accompany them, if necessary, with new standards or requirements to ensure that the ideas, needs and demands of youth are better heard in democracy today. Young people feel particularly strong about the long-term challenges and strategic orientations for their societies such as environmental sustainability, social justice, corruption and equal opportunities. However, young people have relatively little influence on strategic political choices. Furthermore, young people who are excluded from employment and education tend to be also marginalised politically and socially. The distance between young people and democratic institutions is a matter of concern. Young people's exclusion from political party leadership and electoral participation leads to a growing democratic deficit, a de-legitimation of democratic institutions, and a radicalization of political opinion.

The moderator explained that the purpose of this plenary session is to help develop a sophisticated understanding of how to increase the impact of young people in political decision-making. The main challenge is to channel young people's civic engagement in a meaningful way and inject it into the political system. New ways of communicating and organising are being forged and pioneered by the young, for example via online

media and social networks, from a perspective which may challenge established models of democratic governance. State structures may need to become more flexible and open in order to adapt to young people's needs and demands. The plenary session should outline the broad trends and challenges for young people's political participation and try to find strategies to increase the responsiveness of democracies towards youth's needs and demands. Anne Brasseur asked the panelists to make a short introductory statement about their interpretation of the way forward for young people to become drivers of societal change and how political institutions need to adapt in order to better involve youth civic engagement.

**Yuk Hui** from Hong Kong, researcher in the field Digital Media at Leuphana University, Germany, said that young people experience increasingly a feeling of powerlessness in terms of their political actions, as recently illustrated by the protests in Hong Kong. Hui is, however, not convinced that universal suffrage is sufficient to solve the problems of democracy in Hong Kong, as the Occupy movement in Hong Kong and in many other states around the world was mainly developed as a reaction to an authoritarian neo-liberal economy. The promotion of democracy is no longer exclusively a political story, but also an economic issue, demanding a re-connection of political institutions with capitalist market forces in order to enable young people to widen their social imaginary, meaning the idea of the possibility of a diverse range of different life forms. In the case of Hong Kong, such a social imaginary had been extinguished and now young people have found it again on the street. They experience how wonderful it is to participate. Participation in this context means the recognition of the individual's political right without this right necessarily being institutionalized. To make this possible is the task of political institutions.

*"My advice to young people is that you really don't have to wait to be Bono or Bill Gates. You can make a difference now! As a young person full of passion and creativity. There has never been a better time to take action."*

**Nancy Lublin**, USA, CEO of 'Do Something' and founder of 'Crisis Text Line', emphasized the importance of information technology for societal change. Through new digital tools, grassroots activists will be able to solve the problems left behind by former generations, such as climate change and high levels of unemployment. All revolutions, for example the fall of the Berlin wall, and civil movements, such as the gay rights movement, did not happen because business men and politicians sat together and came up with a plan. They were the result of the efforts of activists protesting on the streets. Lublin had three suggestions to foster societal change: Firstly, citizens need to use social media, such as Twitter and Facebook to connect with one another. Secondly, one should cut the word 'empowerment' from the vocabulary, as it prevents talking to younger generations as equals. Thirdly, one has to lower the voting age to facilitate full political participation of youth.

**Yves Leterme** from Belgium, Secretary-General of International IDEA, raised three questions: What is the problem? Why do we have this problem? And what are the solutions? Firstly, there is a problem with the participation of younger people in formal democracy. It is, however, not proven that there is also a problem with young people's political participation in non-formal democracy. In the last elections for the European Parliament, for example, the average percentage of voters by state was 40%. Among young people the number was only 30%. At the same time, young people participate actively on a non-formal level in states where formal participation is particularly weak. The main reasons for this paradox are, firstly, a lack of credibility of formal democracy in terms of delivery as well as societal and economic progress, secondly, a thematic gap, as the issues of political agendas are not necessarily the top priorities for younger generations, a cultural gap, as the mechanisms of formal democracy are too slow and the language in which it is organized does not fit in the cultural framework of youth, a technological gap, meaning the way in which young people today discuss, and a generational gap in terms of the people that are elected who are mostly between 48 and 62 years old. Politicians need to show empathy with young people, not only when it is about winning their votes, but also afterwards when a policy has to be designed. This would be facilitated by mixing representative democracy with mechanisms of more issue-specific direct democracy. Lastly, it would be helpful to lower the voting age and to introduce quota for young people on political candidates' lists in order to increase the inclusion of youth in the political system.

**Felipe Jeldres** from Chile, President of the International Union of Socialist Youth, reflected on the difference between participation and influence, the latter having a much deeper meaning than the former, signifying the capability to make an impact and take a decision. 50 years ago, the only way to have political influence was to belong to a party and go regularly to party meetings. Today, the parties themselves have to be active in social

media to learn what society is thinking. However, political parties still play a crucial role in democratic governance. They are, firstly, able to transform societal demand into political action and, secondly, offer different models of society by providing a policy-overarching approach. Political decision-making is always an issue of power. Power is likewise always related to inequality. And inequality is closely connected to poverty. In this context, all recent social movements have in common that they criticize the unequal distribution of power. In order to change this unequal distribution of power, young people have the responsibility to organize and to take part in the whole process of policy making, becoming young political actors capable of substantively influencing policies. Some participants from the audience disagreed with Felipe Jeldres statement that political impact is mainly possible through political parties and argued that political parties are rather old political bodies that do not create enough spaces for youth, women and minorities. Instead, one should join more specific interest groups in order to be able to present the interests of disadvantaged people properly. Jeldres responded that youth must be part of the discussion about all political issues, not only those which are youth specific.

*"If you are unable to change a political party, how can you change an entire society?"*

**Henry B. Tam**, Director of Cambridge University's Forum for Youth Participation & Democracy, suggested four ingredients for substantializing mechanisms for fostering young people's influence in democratic decision-making. Firstly, citizens need political literacy in order to be able to understand and criticize policies, but also to recognize when they are confronted with propaganda. Secondly, citizens need civic solidarity, bringing people with common concerns about society together. Thirdly, more socio-economic security is needed in order to enable all citizens on an equal level to participate in the political life. The last ingredient is robust organization in terms of assembling citizens in a way that facilitates having a sustainable impact on the policy making process. If all four ingredients come together, the creation of initiatives with political impact becomes possible. If any of these ingredients is missing, however, a substantive change in political decision-making will not be achieved.

**Pascale Thumerelle**, Vice President and Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at Vivendi, stated that among many other social projects, Vivendi aims at supporting young people in the digital revolution. In the media industry, it is difficult to measure the impact of certain initiatives on society. In this context, it is important that the content is diversified and available to many different publics, serving as an indicator for a positive societal impact. Young people are perceived as stakeholders and are being involved in the creation of policy documents, such as on the role of culture to support economic growth and social cohesion.

After the presentations of the panelists, the audience was invited to make comments and ask questions. Jean-Claude Frecon, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, emphasized the need to involve young people in all phases of political decision-making and encouraged their participation by stating that their voices are strongly needed in policy development. Jon Loughton, founder of the social enterprise "Dare to Lead", asked how to inspire youth furthest away from power, such as young people with disabilities or from disadvantaged economic backgrounds, to stand up and participate in politics. The need for establishing more executive positions for young people in the Council of Europe in order to offer more opportunities for young people to prove themselves was also emphasized during the discussion. Henry B. Tam reminded participants that social mobility is about changing the whole societal system into a more just one. He also rose the question of how likely it is to being able to change a complete society when one is not even able to change a political party to making it more responsive to the needs of youth. Therefore, one should not forget about the power of parties and their impact on politics.

*"Poverty in aspirations is the most dangerous threat for democracies today."*

Yves Leterme responded that it is crucial to visibly include young people at all levels of governance, including executive positions. It is, however, also the responsibility of young people to engage in politics. Nancy Lublin underlined that poverty in aspirations is the most dangerous threat for democracies today. Young people bring hope to societies and the belief that there is something better out there worth fighting for. Pascale Thumerelle added that it is not only important for young people to engage in politics, but also in other parts of society, such as the economic sphere where they can use their power as consumers. Yuk Hui ended the debate by stating that every technology which can be used for the good can at the same time be abused as a poison for society. When talking about democracy, one should not limit the discussion to industrial democracy, as industrialisation will not further democracy. Social media like Facebook and Twitter bring about a lot of

problems, such as defining the individual, the public and a corrective to their power. These can be obstacles to democracy about which citizens need to remain critical.

### **Round Table Discussion: Youth empowerment for democratic transformation? – 4 November**

**Philippe Cayla**, Special Advisor to the CEO of Euronews, opened the round table discussion on the second day of the Forum. The session's moderator stated that it currently seems as if representative democracy has come to its limits as a way of organising society. Other means of participation in democracy have emerged throughout the world during the last decades. The purpose of the plenary session was to analyse these new forms of democratic participation, which are particularly exercised by youth, in light of more traditional representative institutions in democracy.

**Chantal Mouffe** from Belgium, Director of the Centre of Democracy at the University of Westminster, addressed in her analysis why young people do not seem to be interested in politics any longer. Professor Mouffe examined the reason for a general disenchantment with democratic institutions and representative democracy among young people. The reason for the disconnection of young people with representative democracy, particularly in Europe, is that we are currently living in a post-democracy. Post-democratic societies make the appearance of having functioning democratic institutions, whereas most decisions are in fact not taken by these institutions, but are strongly influenced by market forces and financial institutions. At the same time it is said that political decisions are too complicated for citizens and should rather be taken by experts. The two developments have led to the crisis of representative democracy we are facing today. Accordingly, the slogan of latest protest movements, such as the 'Indignados' in Spain, is "We have a vote, but we don't have a voice". In a post-democracy, citizens have the right to vote, but their vote does not make any difference due to a consensus at the center of the political spectrum. Both center-left and center-right parties are offering the same political programmes, while denying alternatives to neo-liberal globalisation. As a result of missing alternatives, citizens abstain from elections or increasingly vote for right-wing, extremist parties which claim to offer real alternatives and to give people back their voice.

*"It's very important that when you go to vote, you know that you will make a difference with what you vote for, and you don't just vote for either Coca Cola or Pepsi Cola - which is unfortunately what election currently means in most of our societies."*

Many people make the mistake of identifying current problems of democracy with representative democracy per se and state that representative democracy is an oxymoron, as genuine democracy can never be representative, but needs to be direct and presentist, constituted by citizen assemblies rather than parliaments. Mouffe, however, assumes that a democracy without representation is impossible, but that instead the way in which representative democracy is currently being practiced is the main problem. On this basis, she pleads for an agonistic democracy which embraces political conflict and re-introduces political alternatives. Citizens need to have the possibility to vote for clearly differentiated projects and particularly young people need to be able to identify with certain policies in society. The solution does not necessarily lie in increased deliberation and participation, as meaningful deliberation alternatives are needed as well. In order to transform representative democracy into an agonistic democracy, one needs to incorporate protest movements and make use of the techniques with which young people mobilise all over the world. A synergy needs to be created between civil society movements and more traditional forms of democracy, as there is currently a mismatch between young people's patterns of organising and the mechanisms of democratic institutions and traditions. The two approaches need to be combined in order to create an agonistic democracy. Lastly, it is crucial to examine the role of affection and emotion in politics which is often underestimated. Young people need to be personally or emotionally affected to care and become active for a cause. Idealism is a strong driver for societal engagement. An agonistic democracy will give young people the possibility to have a voice and not only a vote. It is important not to confuse an agonistic and an antagonistic democracy, as antagonism describes an opposition of the type friend/enemy. The opponent is seen as an enemy to be destroyed, leading to civil war in a society. 'Agonistic democracy' includes the antagonistic dimension of societies and acknowledges the existence of political conflict without rational solutions. However, it transforms enemies in adversaries, recognising the legitimacy of the opponent.

**Hélène Landemore**, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Yale University, drew a distinction between democracy as a normative ideal and democracy as its current embodiment in most mature societies which is called representative democracy. Landemore does not see disenchantment with democracy as an ideal, describing a political regime that is based on inclusiveness and political equality. The current embodiment of representative democracy, however, is indeed in crisis. Representative democracy first emerged in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was further developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the creation of parties. This Schumpeterian democracy is based on the rule of elites competing for popular votes and can hence not be considered a democracy 'by the people, for the people'. In this sense, it is true that most people have a vote, but not a voice. Representative democracy is running out of steam, affecting particularly young people and leaving them frustrated. The internet offers the possibility to move towards a new form of democracy by allowing for multidirectional communication between the rules and the ruled, but also among the ruled themselves. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was based on the idea that if you want to have a smart group governing the state, you need to elect the best and brightest. However, Landemore's research has shown that in order to achieve an intelligent collective, a set of people with diverse cognitivist capabilities is needed. In contrast, representative governments consist of trained elites which are not diverse and reflect only a small portion of the larger population's interest. In order to become more inclusive, democracy should develop into a hybrid model of post-representation, containing more elements of direct, liquid and hybrid democracy. Forms of governance such as open government, legislative crowdsourcing, or participatory budgeting are successful in injecting cognitive diversity into the system of representation. Moreover, one must consider the system of elections in democracy with random selection of decision-makers which has already been practiced successfully in ancient Greece. Young people are advocating for innovative forms of democracy, like for example lottocracies in which decision-making assemblies are randomly selected among the population, reflecting more adequately the citizens' diversity. These experiments have for example been practiced in British Columbia, Canada, or in Iceland where a citizen's assembly was charged to redraft the constitution. Youth can be the driver of these innovations and has a particular important role to play.

In order to increase youth influence in the traditional institutions of representative democracy, one can start with a deliberative poll among young people in Europe to find possible solutions. Moreover, the reduction of the voting age to 16 is one way to enlarge democracy. In countries where it has been practiced, it has worked very well. Professor Mouffe added that the lowering of the voting age might be an option for higher levels of inclusiveness, but that this measure will not be able to eradicate the systemic problems of representative democracy. A reduced voting age will not necessarily pave the way towards an agonistic democracy. As the example of Austria has shown, where the voting age has been lowered, the young voters tend to elect the parties of the center just like the adults. It is thus more important to give young people the possibility to identify with different alternatives.

After the contributions of Professor Mouffe and Professor Landemore, Philippe Cayla opened the floor for comments and questions from the audience. Mr Huang Junxian, Vice Director General of the 7<sup>th</sup> Bureau of the China State Council Information Office, emphasized the importance of young people taking part in the preparation of legislation. In China, he said, youth supervises the exercise of power of authorities, and takes actively part in deliberative and local democracy. The opportunities for youth political participation will in the future be further enriched and youth will play an even more important role in the construction of democratic politics in China. A participant from Albania posed the question how agonistic democracy can ensure higher levels of representation of young people in political parties and the traditional democratic institutions when the access is often blocked by older politicians. Chantal Mouffe answered that indeed parties do not offer enough space for young people and therefore create a feeling of cynicism with respect to party membership among young people. It is therefore important to convince young people that parties are still important and that they need to force parties to make room for youth.

*"How many old people are ready to step back to create space for young people in political positions?"*

Further questions raised by the audience included how exactly youth can get a voice and not only a vote and how many old people are ready to step back to create space for young people in political positions. A participant from the audience drew the attention to the danger of lowering the voting age by stating that younger citizens can too easily be manipulated. He also emphasized the importance of political leaders opening up their party structures to create space for youth. Another participant asked what kind of countermeasures modern democracy can provide to prevent young people from joining extremist organisations.

Chantal Mouffe answered that in many cases young people join extremist organisations or the Jihad for idealism, as they have been disappointed by modern democracies and have the feeling that there is nothing to fight for. Politics is necessarily partisan and young people are only able to identify if they are able to choose political sides. This clear distinction between different ideas, such as left and right, is currently missing in our societies and urgent to develop. Opposed to Mouffe, Helene Landemore sees the solution in societal and intergenerational deliberation. She emphasized that older generations need to listen to the demands of youth in order to prevent young people from becoming frustrated with democracy.

## **The Labs**

Following the plenary sessions, the Forum continued with 21 labs where 32 initiatives that aim at increasing the impact of young people in democratic decision-making were presented and critically assessed for their relevance, impact, sustainability, innovativeness and transferability. Their potential for fostering youth participation was particularly scrutinised by the youth participants who had prepared their lab participation on an online platform before the Forum.

The labs were very well attended and assessed by participants as a real success. Despite asking participants to make a difficult choice of 10 or 11 lab options in the morning and afternoon of 4 November, the lab format and methodology were very much appreciated. The quality of the presentations was considered high and the labs have been perceived as interactive, inclusive and innovative in content.

The labs were organised around four themes:

- ▶ Influencing Minds
- ▶ Influencing Decision-Making
- ▶ Influencing Policies
- ▶ Influencing Institutions

### **Theme 1: Influencing Minds**

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Young people need to be made aware of the challenges that democracies face today, such as the disconnection between the political elite and citizens, or a lack of transparency in decision-making. Youth has to be equipped with the skills to be able to address these problems and to make their voices heard. A better understanding of public policy and decision-making does not only foster democratic values but also generates politically related questions in young minds. A range of initiatives aims at building civic engagement and leadership among young people and provides them with the knowledge to participate in democracy as active citizens. The challenge is to convince young people that their engagement can change politics and to show them the whole spectrum modern technology and alternative structures for influence offer in this respect.

## LAB 1 – ACTION CIVICS

*Building civic engagement and leadership among young people will provide them with the knowledge to participate in democracy as active citizens. But does it also have an impact on democratic structures and decision-making?*

Moderator: Mr Luca VOLONTÈ, Ceo of Novae Terrae Foundation

Cartoonist: Mr Jean-Charles ANDRIEU DE LEVIS

Initiative 1: NSS-Community Connect Fellowship, Blue Ribbon Movement, India

### Presenters

Mr Abhishek THAKORE, India, Founder of The Blue Ribbon Movement

Ms Suruchi AULAKH, India, Senior Advisor of Blue Ribbon Movement

Initiative 2: Generation Citizen, USA

### Presenters

Mr Scott WARREN, USA, Co-founder and Executive Director of Generation Citizen

Ms Noelle CORMIER, USA, Chapter Director at Generation Citizen

### Discussants

Mr Robert DOSSOU, Benin, Honorary President of the Association of Constitutional Courts that use the French language (ACCPUF)

Mr John LOUGHTON, United Kingdom, Founder and CEO of Dare2Lead

Ms Ivana SENDECKA, Slovakia, Innovator, Educator and Founder of NGLS (Next Generation Leaders of Slovakia)

### Executive summary

In a time when disengagement and frustration with traditional democracy is experiencing a peak, civic actions aim at mobilizing and inspiring young people to create change in their communities through civic services, showing them that they are not aliens to the system. Civic action programmes equip them with the skills necessary to address communities' problems and to make their voices heard, giving them a better understanding of public policy and decision-making processes. The challenges to this approach are numerous and include convincing young people that their engagement can change politics, delivering a shift from traditional volunteering to learning-by-doing how to actively participate in democracy, and sustaining motivation.

### About the initiatives

The Blue Ribbon Movement is a program set up in the framework of the NSS, the Indian national service scheme, whose objective is to transform young people from simple complainers to citizens that take action and create real change in society. Traditional youth volunteering in India, in fact, usually means cleaning streets that will be dirty again after one hour, managing traffic in place of traffic policemen paid for doing so – broadly speaking a waste of young people's time that has lower, if any, impact on their democratic trust. The Blue Ribbon, instead, aims at

developing young leaders to solve local issues, by identifying extremely bright students and by building their leadership skills (persistence, patience, understanding of the system, ability to galvanize citizens for them to solve their own problems) through one year of workshops and skills sessions.

*"We used to look at politicians as rulers, we are moving to see them as representatives; we were consumers of governance, we are now co-creators; we were complainers, now we are problem-solvers."*

SOLUTIONS COULD BE FOUND AT SCHOOL, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE



At the moment, the program can count on 145 fellows having been able to mobilize 1600 volunteers for a total of 35000 hours of volunteering. This year 4000 complaints have been solved (5%) thanks to the involvement and follow up of young leaders participating. 5% might seem a tiny share, but in fact it is quite high when considering that the act of solving a problem is a huge coordinated effort that requires citizens engaging with the government on a positive basis to create a shift.

The second initiative presented in the lab, Generation Citizen, is based on the personal experience of Scott Warren, who, after growing up in South America and Africa and after witnessing the first truly democratic elections in Kenya's history, recognized the extent to which Americans have lost enthusiasm and passion about politics. He tried to bring back to the US what he had seen internationally. A solution to disengagement was found in "active civics in school". The mission of Generation Citizen, is to make sure that every student in the US gets an effective active civic education in school, working at the same time on the demand side to create demand for civic education and actions.

The program is partnering college students (democracy coaches) with a high school class and is based on the four following strengths: Firstly, emphasizing action – students choose problems they care about and take action, getting inside the process and meeting people that are part of it, secondly, an appeal of college volunteers and not adult professors, thirdly, it is a real class, not an extracurricular activity, and, fourthly, a commitment to minority and low income students.

Generation Citizen is building a new generation of youth activists and leaders by teaching them how to actively participate in democracy. In order to become a licensed driver, in fact, one has to take lessons about the rules of the roads and practice how to drive a vehicle in order to learn how to apply these rules in action. Generation Citizen is the driver educator of civic engagement. In order to become autonomous and engaged citizens, young people have to learn the principles of governmental participation and need to have an opportunity to practice those skills by carrying out civic actions. Even if the goal set by the students is not always met, they will be given skills to accomplish something and the course will

be the catalyst they often need to become interested in and passionate for politics.

#### *Summary of the discussion*

During the lab discussion it was emphasized that education is the only way young people can be ready to step in and ameliorate politics. Education must come from families and initiatives like the two presented. It is hence important to make these initiatives sustainable, also in an economic sense. Young people need to be transformed from being energizers and volunteers to become respected business leaders and connected innovators.

The problem of the current political system is that, on one end, there are disengaged young people, thinking they cannot have an impact on democracy, while on the other end, there are politicians reaching out for young people's vote during election time. It needs to be assured that young voices are heard in all phases of the political cycle. Civic education is not a luxury of stable democracies, where, actually, people are almost expected to know already how to be an active citizen. On the other hand, the notion itself of "active citizen" cannot be univocally defined and this is creating problems in assessing the results of civic action programs.

Programs like Generation Citizen and the Blue Ribbon can only be catalysts for actions because democracy cannot be forced on students. At the end of the day, young people have to decide that they want to be part of it. In a very descriptive image, these programs have to be like the shampoo testers that are hooking you up after you used them for the first time.

Finally, the situation of youth disengagement can be described by the story of three friends hanging out by the river and noticing a number of children constantly passing in the river while drowning. At the moment, we are acting like the first two friends who are swimming and building boats to save as many children as possible. Only few are taking the example of the third friend, going upstream and trying to understand who is throwing kids in the river and what the reason behind it is. The solution for more responsible citizens is to start growing happy and satisfied children, free from rage, envy and greed. This can only be done at a family level. The precondition for democracy is a self-consciousness of people of their responsibilities and, for this, education is the key.

" I HOPE MY STUDENTS BECOME HUMAN "



## LAB 2 – UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRACY

*Understanding is the first step towards change. Simulating democratic policy-making makes young people understand public policy. How can democracy education help democratic structures to evolve instead of simply reproducing the status quo?*

Moderator: Mr Jean-Marie HEYDT, President of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) of the Council of Europe

Cartoonist: Mr Matthieu CHIARA

Initiative: SIM Democracy, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom: Regional Office for Southeast and East Asia, Thailand

### Presenters

Mr Rainer ADAM, Germany, Regional Director for Central, East and Southeast Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Ms Pimrapaat DUSADEEISARIYAKUL, Thailand, Project manager for Thailand, Regional Office for Southeast and East Asia, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

### Discussants

Mr Mensah ATTOH, Togo, Lawyer and Human Rights Activist

Ms Silvia GOLOMBEK, USA, Senior Vice President at Youth Service America

Ms Mishka MARTIN, Uganda, Youth Advisor at ActionAid Uganda

Ms Cristina RUIZ HERNANDEZ, Mexico, Membership Coordinator for the Mexican Center for Philanthropy

### Executive summary

The purpose of Lab 2 was to identify ways in which youth can be educated about democracy and the decision-making process. The initiative presented in this lab was "SIM Democracy", a board game created by the Southeast Asian regional office of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF). The purpose of the board game is to simulate democratic policy-making and educate young people about public policy. First developed in Thailand, the FNF has been successful in distributing over 5,000 units throughout the country. Additionally, they are also expanding to schools in Cambodia, Bhutan, and Myanmar, and the game is set to be launched in a number of other countries in the region.

The board game has been very well-received within both Thailand and other countries where it has been introduced. Similarly, discussants in the labs were impressed with the initiative that the FNF has put forward. The participants, however, also raised the question on the effectiveness of the board game in sustaining youth political participation and in applying what players learn in the board game about the "real world" of politics, as the complexities of political life can hardly be simplified in a game. Nonetheless, it was agreed that SIM Democracy has been an effective tool in educating youth about the processes of democratic decision-making and on the relationship between government and community.



### About the initiative

SIM Democracy is a board game that allows players to step into the role of one of two factions, one representing the government and the other representing citizen voters, in order to educate players about the

effects and processes of government decision-making. It is primarily aimed at youth, first-time voters, and young adults. In the game, players have different roles and actively perform tasks and responsibilities within a democratic society. This includes planning budgets, making parliamentary decisions, allocating resources, and actively participating in the monitoring of government administration. Players experience how different factions of the community and the government must negotiate to bring the best outcome to both government and society. As the game allows the players to step into the shoes of either the government or the citizens, it helps them experience negotiations on government policies. The game aims to bring forward questions into the player's minds regarding the implications of government decision-making for society. Thus, it seeks to create a platform for debate on political issues amongst youth and encourage them to become active and aware citizens.

The game has been successfully sold overseas and was adapted to the political climate and languages of different countries. Additionally, the FNF has recently managed to produce a smartphone application for the game which allows interested players to download it for free on their smartphones. The success of SIM Democracy has led to a prestigious position in the Council for a Community of Democracies as "Best Practices Manual on Democracy Education".

#### *Summary of the discussion*

The board game was developed in 2011, amid the Thai general elections. Concerned with low levels of youth participation in politics, the FNF developed the board game to educate youth and first-time voters about democracy and the decision-making process.

*"Democracy is in a deep sleep in Thailand..."*

In collaboration with the Electoral Commission of Thailand, the FNF was successful in encouraging high schools throughout the country to incorporate SIM Democracy in civic studies. The FNF has also cooperated with a variety of other non-governmental organizations in order to spread awareness of the board game. Although the FNF has had until now neither the time nor capacity to measure the impact of the board game on the political behaviour of its young players throughout Thailand, the board game has generally received positive feedback from teachers, students, and university professors. Students have mentioned that they have learned how decision-making in a democratic society works and how it copes with unexpected situations. Feedback sessions with teachers have shown how much students have been progressing and how much they have learned about the democratic process. The FNF has sought

feedback and advice from the Electoral Commission and university professors to ensure that the game can effectively educate youth and first-time voters about the decision-making process.

*"The SIM democracy game generates politically related questions in young minds, creating platforms for debates on political issues."*



**SIM DEMOCRACY: A TOOL TO CHANGE MENTALITIES**

The most prominent challenge that the initiative faces is its dependence on "player coaches", without whom the players may not get the most out of the game. As the game focuses on decision-making, and not on details of democracy such as parliamentarism, students require additional assistance from player coaches and teachers to explain how democratic institutions operate and how the state structures that support them contribute to its workings. As such, player coaches are an integral part of ensuring the effectiveness of the board game as a tool to educate players about the democratic decision-making process. However, an adequate amount of player coaches is currently lacking as compared to the growing numbers of players. This remains the biggest obstacle to the SIM Democracy initiative. Additionally, the FNF has also had some difficulty in educating adults and teachers about the game. They have noted that teachers have not managed to grasp the game as quickly as youth, who were able to easily understand how the game works. This particular challenge also poses an obstacle to attempts by the FNF to educate adults about democracy using the board game. Overall, the FNF continues to face many challenges in teaching adults about the game as well.

The lab participants generally welcomed the concept of the initiative and praised the presenters on its successful implementation, particularly regarding its success in cooperating with government agencies and other bodies. However, there were concerns that the board game itself is insufficient in exposing youth to the realistic obstacles of Thailand's problematic experiences with democratization, as the board game would not be able to effectively represent the "realities" of political life in Thailand. Due to Thailand's erratic experience with democracy, the game would not be able to fully equip youth with the necessary knowledge in dealing with the country's political realities and struggling democratic institutions. While the board game is a good introductory tool to learn about democracy, players require further education about democracy in order to be fully aware about democratic processes in Thailand.

*"Young people are the best teachers"*

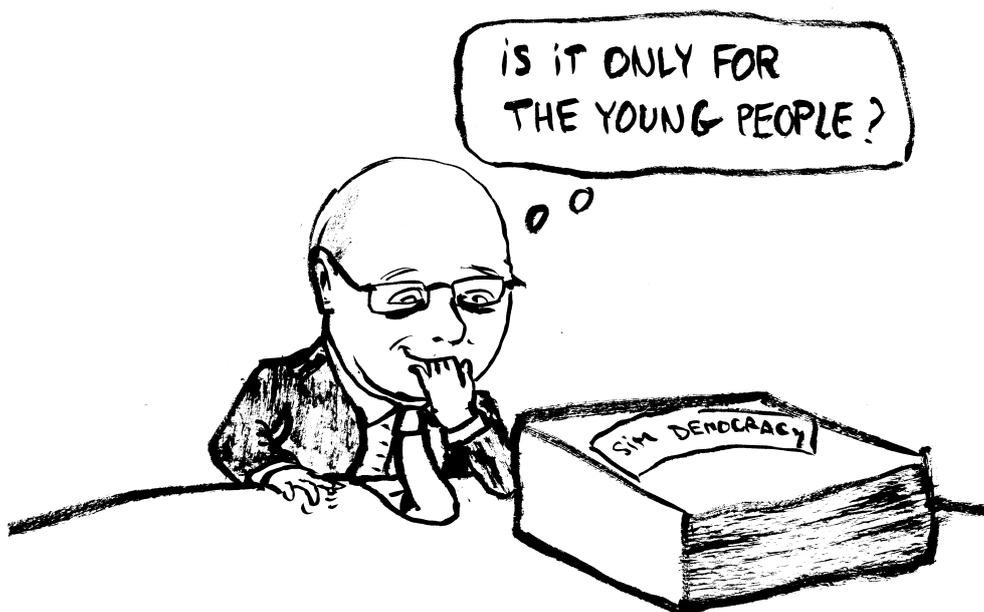
However, the board game is successful in transmitting the concept of democracy and justice as a universal value. At the same time, the FNF's efforts in attempting to "localize" the board game were appreciated, as it ensures that the board game is effective in delivering its message to players in other countries. Moreover, SIM Democracy has been successful in bringing forward the idea that democracy is a way of life and that government policy and actions affect various parts of the community differently and attract various responses. Besides, the game educates youth about the importance of negotiations and collaborations

in politics. Both of these successes have been caused by the role-playing involved in playing the game. The FNF should consider the next phase, which is to identify how democracy can be practiced by youth. The framework of the game could be adopted in the classroom (e.g. student government), encouraging youth to volunteer in civil society organizations and other institutions within a democratic society, and informing young people to also educate their families about democracy. In order for the board game to be more effective, the FNF should consider recruiting youth themselves as player coaches, as they are likely to be more understanding of the board game, considering that teachers and adults have struggled to understand the game as quickly as young people.

*"The board game cannot stop a military coup.... but it is an investment in the future of the children living under the present régime."*

Youth participation needs to be sustained throughout the election cycle while it must be made sure that there are no negative implications of the board game for the security of the students. The FNF should consider ways to ensure that players continue to practice what they learn outside of class, by participating and voicing their opinions in order to become active and critical citizens. So far, senior Thai military officials in government have not deemed the board game as a threat to their political legitimacy, but precautions with other bodies involved should be taken to ensure the protection of students, teachers, and other individuals involved with the project.

JEAN-MARIE HEYDT (MODERATOR) ALREADY LIKE IT!



## LAB 3 - 'DIRECTING' DEMOCRACY

*Do artistic forms of expression, such as movies and documentaries, have a real impact on public opinion, political debate and decision-making or are they just an outlet for the emotions of a frustrated youth?*

Moderator: Mr Roberto OLLA, Executive Director of Eurimages, Council of Europe  
Cartoonist: Ms Nelly MASSERA

Initiative: School Film Studio as Citizenship Laboratory, The European Wergeland Centre (EWC), Norway in cooperation with the Moscow School of Civic Education (MSCE), Russian Federation

### Presenters

Ms Olga BODROVA, Russian Federation, Director of the Peace Foundation in the South and North Caucasus

Ms Iryna SABOR, Norway, Advisor at European Wergeland Centre

### Discussants

Mr Li Zhongxia, the People's Republic of China, Associate Professor/Associate Dean Law School of Shandong University

Mr Ziad MAALOUF, France, Journalist at Radio France Internationale

Mr Yascha MOUNK, Germany, Founding Editor of The Utopian and Fellow of the New America Foundation

Mr Hörður TORFASON, Iceland, Human Rights Activist and Artist

### *Executive summary*

Presenters, discussants and participants in Lab 3 were almost unanimous in their belief that art forms such as films and documentaries can have a real impact on public opinion. Transforming this impact into active participation in political debate and decision-making remains, however, a more complex issue, particularly when young people are concerned. Though they are active consumers of audio-visual content online, young people often lack the training necessary to develop a critical approach both to their own activities online and to their consumption of online content. Small-scale projects tailored to their specific environment, such as the one presented in this laboratory, are ideal starting points for the development of such skills and have the advantage of situating lessons within the wider context of education for democratic citizenship. The effectiveness and impact of projects educating youth about democracy are significantly enhanced by the integration of forms of artistic expression - such as student-made documentary films - as these promote structured emotional engagement, while at the same time help young people to develop essential media literacy skills.

### *About the initiative*

The starting point for the discussion on the impact of art forms such as films and documentaries on young people's participation in democratic processes was the presentation of a project undertaken by about 250 young people in different schools in Stavropol, Russian Federation. The project's overall aim was to promote the active participation of young people in the life of their communities. Concretely, it helped

students to identify a range of topics and problems of relevance to them in their local environment. It then assisted them in preparing and making short investigative documentary films, which were used to present these issues and suggest solutions. Finally, the students worked together with teachers, parents and the local community to find the best responses and take action.



The setting in which the project takes place is of crucial importance for its ultimate impact on the skills of its participants. Schools are the first public institution encountered by most young people and the place where they learn to interact in society. Tolerance, constructive solutions to conflict and the concrete practice of democracy all find their roots here. Using artistic means, this project built a space where students could be creative and reinvent the societal order they believe in. The intended impact was to encourage solidarity, build trust, foster civic responsibility, enhance media literacy and critical thinking and strengthen tolerance and dialogue both among students and with their wider community.

#### *Summary of the discussion*

A number of speakers commented on the complexity of the relationship between art forms such as documentaries used in this project, the messages they convey, and their function as part of a wider media experience. The answer to the question as to whether artistic forms of expression can really impact public opinion, debate and decision-making was generally positive. Evidently, both diversity of information and freedom of expression are key components of a functioning democracy. Conversely, control of the media to political ends can serve to suppress dissenting voices. It is hence important to develop a critical approach to the media. The internet, with its multiple sources of information, can have the effect of creating a "free market of ideas" that is increasingly difficult to manipulate.

*"A critical approach to the media is an essential component of education today."*

The medium used for the dissemination of information is simply a vector for ideas; what matters is who uses it and how. The project presented could have had wider resonance through the use of social media to disseminate the films made and to gather the reactions of young participants in the project, but this aspect has not yet been developed. Nonetheless, the project makes an important contribution by providing an introduction to media responsibility for young people, notably by encouraging them to engage in constructive debate on the basis of facts. Young people have traditionally made a major contribution to democracy by questioning rules and voicing criticism. Means of expression such as films and documentaries can become the vectors for this activity. In this particular case, the restricted

scope of the project is clearly a result of the specific circumstances under which it was undertaken, but within its context the project makes a real impact at a local level and intelligently uses the artistic means available to create a space to speak out and ask questions. The artistic and other skills taught can be used both for positive and for negative ends.

*"Even in conflict zones, artists continue to create. But where there are no platforms to connect artists with politicians and decision-makers, the impact will always be limited."*

All means of artistic expression – song, dance and literature as well as film – can contribute to the debate on human values and provide a vital means for passing on experience gained. The emotional response generated by art and art forms can be a key factor in creating an impact on public opinion. Disseminated online, short films and related art forms can reach wide audiences, especially young people, and mobilise them, notably by moving them beyond simple frustration to real engagement with public debate and decision-makers. Nonetheless the immense gap between young people and in particular young artists, and decision-makers in some European countries must be regretted.

*"How can we move from frustration to democratic participation? Art and art forms play a vital role here by sparking the active engagement needed to move forward."*

Some lab participants detected a lack of transferability of the project presented. Though it is clearly very effective in the specific circumstances of the Russian Federation, the project lacks the scale and above all the amplification via social media that is necessary for it to have an impact in other national contexts. It was agreed, however, that implementing projects aimed at youth on a smaller, local scale is an appropriate response in contexts of democratic inexperience. Integrating an artistic/media dimension in these cases needs to be carefully prepared with local actors but can significantly improve the project. However, within societies where democracy is more firmly anchored, projects should be scaled up to move beyond the boundaries of educational institutions, notably by harnessing the power of new media and the capacity of audio-visual art forms to generate emotion. In designing such larger scale projects, the key requirement is to provide young people both with an education in democratic citizenship and with the tools necessary for a critical and enlightened approach to their own consumption of the media.



## LAB 4 - IN FROM THE MARGIN

*Today, power in democracy often rests in the hands of a few. In an inclusive democracy, however, power at all levels is equally distributed among societal groups. How can youth foster inclusive democratic structures that integrate minorities in the institutions of governance?*

Moderator: Mr Jean-Luc SIMON, France, Chair of Disabled Peoples' International, European Region  
Cartoonist: Mr Eugène RIOUSSE

Initiative: Project Unify, Special Olympics, Belgium

### Presenters

Mr David EVANGELISTA, United States, Vice President of Global Development and Government Relations for Special Olympics International

Ms Agnieszka KRUKOWSKA, Poland, Coordinator of Youth, Unified Sports & Research for Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia

### Discussants

Ms Karin ASTEGGER, Austria, Human Resources, Research & Development at Lebenshilfe Salzburg, Board member of the European Association for Service Providers for Persons with Disability

Ms Monika MACDONAGH-PAJEROVÁ, Czech Republic, Advisor to the Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic, Professor at NYU campus in Prague and Chairperson of YES for Europe

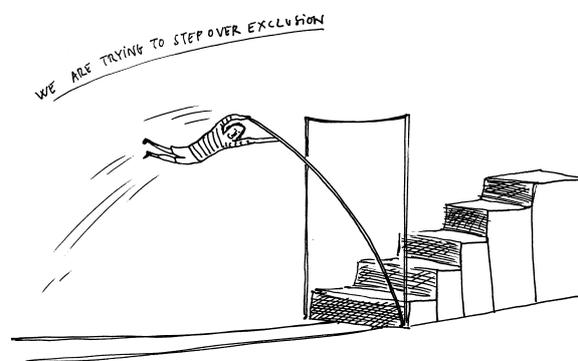
### Executive summary

Lab 4 aimed at finding ways to create an inclusive society without borders in which people with disabilities are as integrated as any other citizen. While citizens, particularly the young, are calling for a more inclusive democracy, the question how to take the power from the hands of a few and give it to under-represented citizens remains unanswered. The lab hence tackled the issue of how to create a democracy in which policies for particular societal groups are created by those groups themselves in order to improve the representation of minorities in democratic decision-making. Different organizations are working on a grassroots level in order to change the system and allow less privileged groups to take decisions. Before taking decisions, society needs to be open to diversity and minorities who, in turn, should get over their fear and bring their voices to the public. At the same time, public spaces need to be adapted to the needs of minorities, in order to guarantee that the latter can take their own decisions and represent their groups in democracy.

### About the initiative

Project Unify is a strategy developed by Special Olympics to bring together youth with and without intellectual disabilities through sports, leadership, advocacy and volunteering. The program aims to encourage the acceptance and inclusion of young people with intellectual disabilities, challenge negative attitudes and develop leadership skills among young people. Started in the USA, Project Unify was piloted for 18 months in Europe and India with over 7,000 young people, teachers and coaches trained.

Based on the pilot's success, the Project Unify concept is being expanded and adapted to suit various cultural and/or educational settings in Europe and globally.

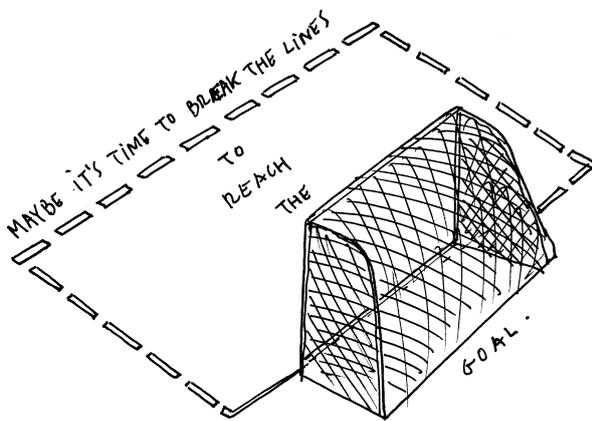


The project is standing on three main pillars: Inclusive sports, inclusive leadership and advocacy for promoting social inclusion. Everyone involved in the project has the aim of strengthening societal acceptance and inclusion, as well as challenging negative stereotypes. In this framework, the project goes much further than merely being a sports activity, as it creates an atmosphere, in which young people with and without mental disabilities communicate without barriers, develop their leadership skills and take decisions. They together strive for changing an environment of isolation, exclusion and marginalization into a space of positive attitudes. While governments take very small steps towards inclusion, Project Unify builds the

bridges of social inclusion and fosters civic engagement, participation and mainstreaming equality in the community.

#### *Summary of the discussion*

The three main directions of Project Unify's approach are firstly, providing a voice, secondly, local global community participation, and thirdly, forging social inclusion through youth leadership. Sport as a means of inclusion is building communities by assembling young people and creating an atmosphere without borders or stereotypes. However, in most sports, the stronger player wins, which could pose a problem for people with disabilities. It needs to be guaranteed that people with disabilities do not feel even more excluded by adapting sports to the needs of people with disabilities and inventing new sports specifically for the project.



It is highly important to move from confrontation to discussion in terms of the inclusion of young citizens with disabilities in democratic processes.

After the iron curtain fell, people thought that all dreams with respect to democracy had been fulfilled. However, new fights and problems emerged soon, as democracy is limited by poverty, social exclusion and stereotypes.

*"We need to move from confrontation to discussion."*

Even in EU countries society is struggling with barriers and borders. There are, for example, still segregated schools. Half of the people with disabilities in Austria, for instance, go to special schools. Therefore, it is very important that Project Unify provides participants with leadership opportunities. People should be able to decide where to live and how to handle their lives. At the same time, gaps between law and policy have to be closed.

*"We need to focus on abilities, rather than disabilities."*

With respect to their access to political decision-making, young people are in a similar situation as people with disabilities, as youth depends on adults who make decisions on their behalf. It would be an asset to mix people with different abilities in society, in order to facilitate exchange without borders and limits. At the same time, sports can sometimes create inequality and competition. In this context, fear and threat as obstacles for inclusion need to be recognised. We do not only need new understandings, but also new strategies and rules invented by those who play the games. Society should focus on abilities, rather than on disabilities. There should be common action and interaction, as well as inclusive and equal systems, rather than segregations.

## LAB 5 - NO TO NEO-NAZIS, NO TO HATE SPEECH

*Right-wing extremism is on the rise in several states, and high rates of unemployment have further stoked anger against racial minorities and recent immigrants, often expressed in hate speech in new media and social networks. What are innovative ways for young people to fight against extremism online and offline?*

Moderator: Ms Marietta DE POURBAIX-LUNDIN, Rapporteur on Counteraction to Manifestations of Neo-Nazism, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  
Cartoonist: Laurent SALLES

Initiative 1: Stork Heinar, Endstation Rechts, Germany

### Presenters

Mr Julian BARLEN, Germany, Project Manager and Co-founder of „Stork Heinar“, Member of the Parliament of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania  
Mr Robert PATEJDL, Germany, Co-founder of “Stork Heinar”

Initiative 2: No-nazi.net, Amadeu-Antonio-Foundation, Germany

### Presenter

Mr Malte SWITKES VEL WITTELS, Germany, Amadeu Antonio Foundation

### Discussants

Mr Simon BURKATZKI, France, Lawyer, International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA)  
Mr Nils MUIŻNIEKS, Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe  
Mr Konstantinos TRIANTAFYLLOS, Greece, Lawyer, Member of Parliament, and Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

### *Executive summary*

This lab discussed measures to fight against racism and hate speech by presenting two initiatives: “Stork Heinar” and “No-Nazi.net”. Stork Heinar is a full-size stork, accompanied by pseudo-military brass band members, making fun of neo-Nazis and spreading peaceful and positive messages. No-nazi.net is a model project based on monitoring, evaluating and combating hate speech and right-wing extremism in social networks and other parts of the digital world.

Social media are a possible way to spread democratic values and to combat extremist ideas. For this purpose, it is important to collaborate with main internet operators (Facebook, Twitter, and Google) to fight against hate speech. As many young people are not engaged in formal educational activities and take their ideas from social media, there is the need to invest more in “non-formal” educational networks and activities. Above all, politics must be reinvented with no space for neo-Nazism, which is a big challenge. While it can be a good idea to fight against neo-Nazis in a humouristic manner, it is questionable whether the Neo-Nazi’s “target groups” can also be touched by humour. Educators, police officers, judges, and other stakeholders should therefore be trained to combat the phenomenon of neo-Nazism and should be given adequate tools to react to it.



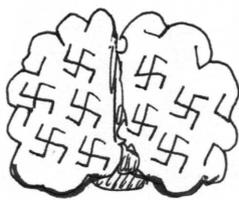
### *About the initiatives*

“Stork Heinar” aims at attracting young people to the values of democracy. Far right extremists promote their ideology via music and political propaganda. The name “Stork Heinar” stems from “Thor Steinar”, a popular clothes brand among neo-Nazis mixing the ‘Thor’ symbol and urban styles. “Stork Heinar” is a privately funded project. For the stork, it is important to always act peacefully, and to promote democratic values. In this sense, the stork is a democratic role model, presented in school projects, sports events, or cultural performances. „Stork Heinar“ works in

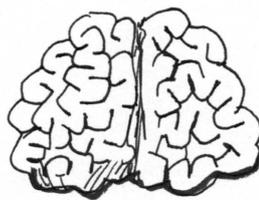
partnership with several schools, registered foundations, societies, political parties, the German Federal Agency for Political Education and many more. The stork's activities should lead to increased diversity in all fields of society.

No-nazi.net is a project under the roof of the Amadeu Antonio Foundation in Berlin. A couple of years ago, civil society organizations started to realise the importance of social networks for sharing political beliefs and tried to react to neo-Nazi campaigns online. The three pillars of action of No-nazi.net are education, monitoring and policy change. For the project a team of educators develops online campaigns, publications, and brochures against xenophobia and for the de-radicalization of cultural claims. When racist comments are posted on websites, the team tries to get in touch with the authors and shows them a different perspective on political issues. The team monitors right-wing extremists conducting online campaigns against refugees. In this way, the activists try to understand right-wing extremism, identify and evaluate threats, build expertise, and consult with other organizations about their findings. The organisation does research, raises awareness and prevents radicalization. Moreover, it created a network of politicians and other organizations in order to facilitate policy change.

## DERADICALISATION



Brain  
before



Brain  
after

### *Summary of the discussion*

In the context of combatting racism, the lab participants discussed the proposal to make the 22 July, the anniversary of the Utøya attacks in Norway, a European Day for Victims of Hate Crime. It was mentioned that states should make fuller use of existing laws against hate-speech and hate-crime. The usefulness of "exit programmes" to help people escape neo-Nazi groups – often with the help of former neo-Nazis who have themselves been through this process – was emphasized.

*"Neo-Nazis should not be ignored, nor should they be turned into martyrs."*

During the discussion, the question was raised whether the target groups of Stork Heinar are intelligent enough in order to be touched by humour. People who join racist movements usually like violence and having an enemy. Internet and social media are crucial for fighting racism and there should be a stronger focus on combatting hate speech in online media. As the causes for prejudices are known, it is the political will and lead that are currently lacking for a genuine policy change to compete with and punish neo-Nazis. Politicians should have the courage and leadership to address tough questions brought into the political arena by neo-Nazis.

*"It is important to collaborate with big internet operators to fight against hate speech."*

The project no-nazi.net provides evidence that the internet enables the development of effective tools to fight against racism. The counter-speech of no-nazi.net allows for combatting hate speech effectively. Also humor as a measure against hate speech can be powerful. However, the two initiatives remain empty if there is no prosecution of those who practice hate speech. Fighting neo-Nazism is also a matter of awareness, campaign, and education. One of the core problems is to admit that democratic institutions need to live and act in accordance with what they proclaim. The internet gives neo-Nazis the opportunity to share their opinions with thousands, and spread hate speech and conspiracy claims easily.

Participants in the audience voiced the concern that humour might not be strong enough to substantively tackle stereotypes, particularly in countries in which history has not yet been deconstructed. At the same time, it was recognized that humour is the first point of entry when trying to get people engaged and it can be the starting point for substantive discussions. It is clear that no strategy can work in all countries, but the value of humour is valid for many campaigns, as humour always makes young people's access to civic education more easy. It is crucial to start educational programmes as soon as possible and also to teach trainers to make use of humouristic techniques.

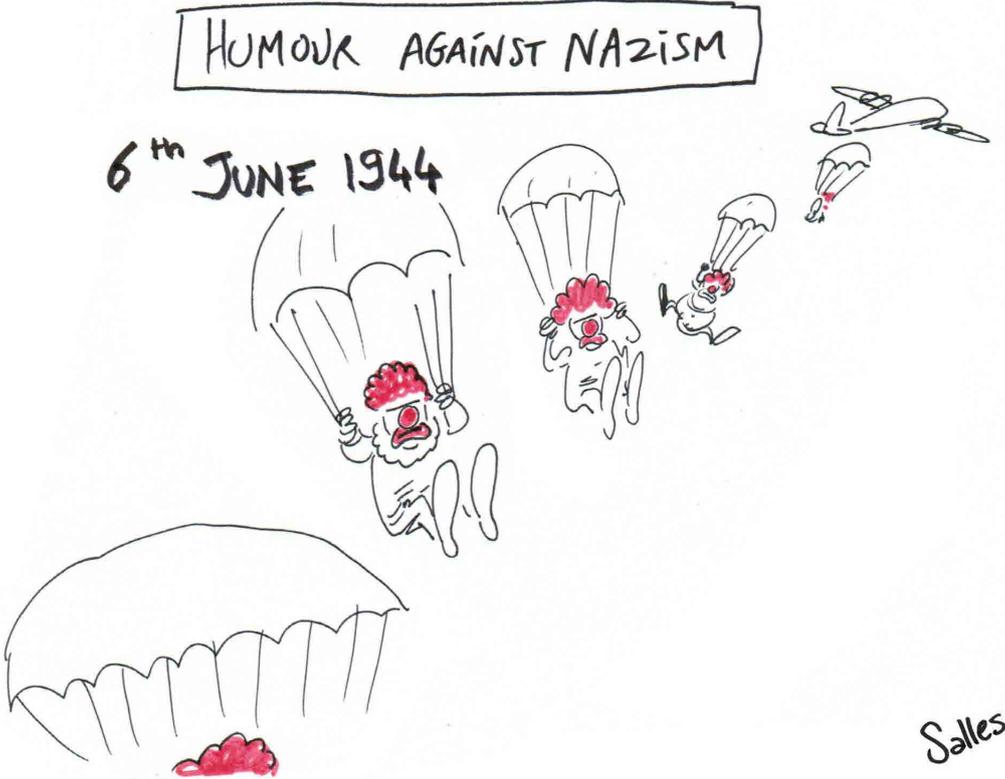
*"Above all we should reinvent politics with no space for neo-Nazis."*

Other participants addressed the importance of finding the right balance between freedom of expression and combating hate speech. Until recently hate speech was not publicly banned. Although this has been changed by the courts, hate speech still occurs.

Many extremist parties make use of the anonymity of the internet. People need to be encouraged to stand up and point the finger at hate speech publicly. For this purpose, it is important to find new initiatives in order to address people who are currently not willing to speak up. In this context, pluralistic media need to be included in the fight against racism. Both offline and online media should not be controlled by the state, but remain independent.

It is highly worrying that the problems of hate speech and racism have found their way into the

middle of society and that Facebook posts containing hate speech can generate thousands of likes. In fact, not only far-right, but also other groups are using hate speech frequently, such as for example extreme-left anti-semites. Stereotypes and prejudices build a mental map of the social acceptance and the treatment of minorities. To fight prejudice, there is the need to make it societally unacceptable and punish the people engaged. This can be done by each individual, as freeing the world from racism, hate speech and xenophobia is the responsibility of all citizens.



## LAB 21 - YOUNG DEMOCRACY CREATORS

*Neighborhood level democracy has great potential for the political socialisation and influence of young people. However, youth are not really attracted to neighborhood committees and meetings, and when there, often not trusted with decision-making roles. Can a participatory process be designed as a model for making real space for youth in neighborhood democracy?*

Moderator: Ms Françoise SCHÖLLER, France, President of Club de la Presse  
Cartoonist: Mr Daniel DEPOUTOT

Initiative: Young Democracy Creators, France, Apollonia, Local Mission Haut-Rhin North, Association Meinau Neuhof

### Presenter

Mr Dimitri KONSTANTINIDIS, Greece, Founder and Director of Apollonia

### Discussants

Ms Elisabeth BERNARDINIS, France, Director of the Local Mission Haut-Rhin Colmar Nord/Guebwiller  
Mr Alexandre FOUTI, Angola/France, 'Young Democracy Creators' Project Participant in Colmar  
Ms Cristita Marie L. GIANGAN, Philippines, Chairperson, Centrist Democratic Youth Association of the Philippines

### Executive summary

In a climate where youth is simply not attracted to neighbourhood committees and not trusting of decision-makers, what can be done to motivate young people? Lab 21 attempted to demonstrate how art can be an important catalyst in the mobilisation of youth within civil society. Specifically, this lab focused on the awakening of disaffected youth in less favourable neighbourhoods through art. Two separate examples were used to illustrate young democracy creators: one based in Colmar where through training, integration and creating a public space for art, youth have successfully been mobilized; the second, in the less favourable Strasbourg neighbourhoods of Meinau-Neuhof, where youth co-decide the form of the work but also its urban location and its social integration in the neighbourhoods. The success of these projects was due to the collaboration between artists, operators, trainers, companies and local elected officials.



### About the initiative

The goal of the project was to teach young people how to shape and reshape the democracy of the future. The projects involve youth directly in the building and designing of a work of art. Ultimately, with this training in hand, they are empowered to find work and become active members of society.

*"Young people have the capacity to express themselves through art."*

One significant story is that of Alexandre Fouti, an Angolan refugee. He discovered art – a new interest for him – through the training program. Over the next six months, Alexandre and other disaffected youth were able to meet a local artist and be directly involved in the concept, location and design of art in public places. Following the six-month program, Alexandre found a job and to this day remains employed and active in the community. Out of 19 youth involved in the program, 14 found jobs and remained employed. The idea was to conduct these projects in regions where unemployment was higher and where the need for beauty in the neighbourhood was significant. Therefore, the project's outcome is two-fold – a motivated and integrated young population and a beautified neighbourhood for all to enjoy.

### Summary of the discussion

Although the initiative clearly had a significant impact on the lives of its participants, it remains questionable whether art can really affect politics. One might say that art is complementary to politics, as one feeds the other. It is one way of expressing oneself and in this

respect the individual's (political) voice. We need to look at art as one of many possible ways of involving youth in society.



However, is gaining employment a sufficient measure to activate democracy creators? Youth needs to get involved in politics and in the functioning of public life in order to become active citizens. When asked directly whether Alexandre has gotten involved in politics, his response was "I am not political. What

is interesting for me is a way to help refugees find work. I am talking about work through art; politics is something I know nothing about." His statement raises two key issues: does one need to be involved in public life in order to participate in democracy? Is youth employment through art a sufficient proof of democratic involvement?

*"We can't separate politics and art."*

Whereas the presented projects had government backing in France, there is no such support in developing countries, raising the question of the project's transferability. While these projects gave youth a voice through artistic expression, they do not feed the hungry. While these projects help beautify public spaces, they only affect the lives of few without impacting the many. In order to achieve a substantive impact, politicians need to learn not to insert youth within the system, but rather create conditions for youth so that they can participate in the economy, and have social and political roles within our society. Youth today are not the youth of yesterday. They are informed, enthusiastic, and motivated. Leaders of today need to recognize this.

Art is one way of motivating youth, but it is also necessary to address the business community directly, as corporations have an ethical responsibility to help youth thrive. For example, politicians could reduce industry taxes in exchange for the creation of jobs for youth. In conclusion, there are clearly numerous ways of trying to involve youth in democracy. Art can be an effective way to empower youth and give them a space for creativity in order to find their voice in society. It can be used to integrate disaffected youth within society, but not necessarily within the political landscape.

## **Theme 2: Influencing Decision-Making**

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There is potential for youth influence on democratic decision-making. Many young people are engaged at community and grassroots levels and express strong civic ideals and commitment. A wide range of formal participation opportunities for youth exists but their impact is relatively weak. Consequently, alternative models for influencing decision-making are emerging, going beyond the system of representation while demanding participatory and deliberative approaches to democracy in order to give youth real decision-making power. New ways of socialising and organising are being forged and pioneered by the young via online media and social networks, from a perspective which may challenge established models of democratic governance.

## LAB 6 - DEMOCRACY WATCHDOGS

*Young people often do not feel adequately represented by their elected officials. In Junior Councils, youth works to build a culture of accountability through meaningful participation. Will Junior Councils be able to build trust between decision-makers and young citizens and ensure that institutions are really responsive and accountable to all, including the young?*

Moderator: Ms Andrée BUCHMANN, France, Regional Councillor of Alsace, Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Cartoonist: Mr Guillaume DELOIZON

Initiative 1: Junior Councils, Mwanza Youth and Children Network – MYCN, Tanzania

### Presenters

Mr Shaban RAMADHANI, Tanzania, Founder and Executive Chairperson of Mwanza Youth and Children Network (MYCN)

Ms Halleluyah BENJAMIN, Tanzania, Regional Accountant of the Junior Council

Initiative 2: Action Aid, Bangladesh

### Presenters

Mr Samiuddin AHMED, Bangladesh, Head of Research and Development at ActionAid Bangladesh

Ms Sarah HUXLEY, United Kingdom, Global Child and Youth Rights Coordinator for ActionAid International

### Discussants

Mr Bernard DEVOS, Belgium, General Delegate of the French Community for the Rights of the Child

Ms Rokhaya DIALLO, France, Writer and Film Director

Ms Joëlle GERBER, France, Head of Programmes at the House of Young Citizens, Coordinator of the Children's Council of 1996-2014, City of Schiltigheim

Mr Kirill KOROTEEV, Russian Federation, Senior Lawyer at the Human Rights Centre "Memorial", 2009 Sakharov Prize Laureate

### *Executive summary*

Two initiatives have been presented in Lab 6: Junior Councils, organized by the Mwanza Youth and Children Network in Tanzania, and Action Aid Bangladesh. The Junior Councils initiative launched in 2003 grew out of civil society. The Junior Councils – participatory councils – were set up on a regional and national level to enable young people to defend their civic rights through political engagement. Mwanza Youth and Children Network (MYCN) was established in 2009 and is a youth led organisation which started to supervise the Mwanza Junior Council (branch of the Tanzania Junior Council). Today, 24 active members elected by their peers make up the platform of Mwanza Junior Council in which young leaders defend their rights and the rights of fellow children through various activities.

The objective of Action Aid is to raise awareness on human rights issues and to combat social injustices. Action Aid highly esteems the role of youth and seeks to internalise youth in its own governance structures. This is expressed in the youth partnered/led approach adopted by the organisation, aiming at reviewing and reflecting on public service delivery in the fields

of health and education. Youth networks and local groups are established to hold duty bearers accountable via local planning and budget allocation and usage, disaggregated data collection, reporting and analysis as well as through social monitoring tools.



### *About the initiatives*

Young people aged 14 to 17 participate in the Junior Councils, aiming at increasing young people's

engagement in advocating their rights. This involves capacity building training to allow for young people to engage in politics, promoting democracy among young people, as well as increasing the responsiveness of the government with respect to problems young people face. The overall goal is to build a culture of accountability, enabling young people to actively engage in matters that affect their wellbeing and contribute to the society's development. Junior Councils were able to increase the awareness of young people on political issues and to increase participation of young people in the media. In radio and television programmes, youth now discusses issues of their concern. Young people have interviews with politicians and authorities on political problems. In addition, the project has increased awareness among young people of the government's annual youth budget and the importance of the participation of young people in suggesting ways and providing ideas on how the budget ought to be used.



Although the Mwanza Youth Council increases participation of young people by allowing them to vote for Junior Council members and engage in dialogue and debate with politicians, it needs to become more representative and inclusive by involving youth from all seven districts of the Mwanza region, instead of only the two districts which are currently being represented in the Council. There is a need to move from exercising the right of voting to enabling and allowing young people to become leaders themselves. In this respect, young people will soon be campaigning in public for becoming members of the Council and assuming leading positions within the Council, enhancing youth's understanding of democratic processes and how to hold their leaders accountable. Other limitations and difficulties which, if overcome, would significantly increase the sustainability of the Junior Councils include the lack of funds (mostly for IT infrastructure and transport costs) and the lack of exchanging ideas with peers on an international level in order to make the Junior Council initiative known outside Tanzania but also to gain from exchanging ideas with similar initiatives around the world.

*"We work with the world as it exists in all settings and people of all ages."*

Action Aid Bangladesh has since 2006 increased resources for education by monitoring resources and service delivery. Headmasters and journalists at the local level in more than 200 schools make up the core audit group. It was proven that young people are capable of conducting budget work, which significantly built their confidence while supporting and building youth-adult partnerships. Linkages have been created between the local and national level in order to lobby the government with respect to its policy and budget for primary education. The impact is measurable and significant and increased the ability of community people to track district-level budget allocation. As a result, the first ever parliamentary caucus on education in Bangladesh was established. Finally, national education expenditure increased by 2.7 % of GDP due to national-level advocacy efforts. The initiative had a spillover effect and has led to the creation of a democratic budget movement, asking for a district and sub-district/decentralised budget which would be new for the state of Bangladesh. Future plans include the extension of such activities to additional sectors, like for example health services.

#### *Summary of the discussion*

Youth participation is not optional, but a right and is found at the heart of the International Convention of the Rights of the Child. At the same time, it is rather difficult to provide a definition for the word 'youth' which is not in itself a homogenous term, due to the fact that there are different realities faced by privileged and less privileged young people. The main challenge therefore is to ensure that all young people participate in democracy.

*"Youth is not a homogenous group, as there are differences between the privileged and unprivileged and the realities they face."*

Action Aid focuses on marginalized young people according to their socio-political identity in order to increase the inclusion of young people. The main and real issues are the aspirations of people to enjoy social security. Action Aid makes an effort to engage with young people on a large variety of issues and subject areas. They, for example, successfully supported young farmers from Gambia, attaining an increase in the 2012 agricultural budget. Regarding activities on education and governance, 32% of participants were young people and 37% of activities did not concern "youth issues" but various aspects of Action Aid programmes. It is hence of the utmost importance to engage young people in fields such as healthcare or agriculture and not only on issues confined to the interest of young people. In this way, young people will become full-fledged citizens. To

support youth's positive development, it is crucial to create an inter-generational dialogue and exchange opinions in media and social media.

*"Youth is full of hope and a source of hope for the future."*

There is need for a specific strategy for the inclusion of less privileged young people around the world. It would be very important to foster access to international initiatives for all young people regardless of their social origin and background, as it seems that such initiatives are currently limited and accessible to a minority of youth who speak English. Moreover, governments should accredit Junior Councils and develop more political will to provide resources in order for the Councils to achieve their goals. It is up to the "adults" to work hand in hand with young people and allow them to express themselves.

There is a paradox inherent to both initiatives which work, on the one hand, on increasing government accountability and responsiveness on certain issues, and, on the other hand, seek government's funds and money. Such conflict of interest should be eliminated before receiving funds. However, the Youth Council, for example, is a bottom-up initiative and it needs to reach the whole of Tanzania. The added value of the Junior Councils will be more clearly visible in the future, given the expansion of the Junior Council's activities in other regions of Tanzania for which government support is necessary. It would hence be desirable for the project's initiators to continue receiving government funding and support.

*"It is important to distinguish between education and indoctrination of young people."*

Instead of lobbying the government and having public officials believing youth is incapable of action, it would clearly be more advantageous for young people to prove officials wrong and uncover corruption as well as convince the majority of voters of their policy proposals. There is a need to make future African leaders deliver what they have promised. For the time being, holding the government accountable is still an overambitious objective, but young people's political participation can and should increase by questioning certain government activities. Regarding youth education, one needs to make a distinction between education and indoctrination and review the content and aims of education. Additional work should be done in the fields of making young people and the public in general aware of youth and children rights, enabling youth to express themselves, practicing citizen's rights and becoming good leaders.

Democracy is evolving through generations and existing institutions should adapt to meet the expectations and hopes of young people whose impact should be augmented in order to help build a sustainable democracy. There is need for an all-inclusive participation on the part of young people, not least in Youth Councils, which are worth creating and expanding, as well as a necessity for bringing about political conditions for an all-encompassing participation of young people from all different socio-economic and political party backgrounds.



## LAB 7 - ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR DEMOCRACY

*As 'digital natives' young people privilege the internet as a source of information and space for exchange. Is it possible to take citizen participation to the next level by using artificial intelligence as a means for empowerment? Can we make political engagement more attractive and meaningful through gaming elements?*

Moderator: Mr Josef HUBER, Head of the Pestalozzi Programme, Council of Europe

Cartoonist: Ms Violette BERGER

Initiative: Your Priorities 3D, The Citizens Foundation, Iceland

### Presenters

Mr Róbert Viðar BJARNASON, Iceland, President of the Citizens Foundation

Mr Gunnar GRIMSSON, Iceland, CEO and Co-Founder of the Citizens Foundation

### Discussants

Ms Simone BERNSTEIN, USA, Co-Founder and President of volunTEENnation.org

Ms Ons BEN ABDELKARIM, Tunisia, Secretary General of AI Bawsala

Mr MENG Qingtao, the People's Republic of China, Associate Professor of SWUPL (Southwest University of Political Science & Law)

### *Executive summary*

The lab's main topic was the role of artificial intelligence for enhancing young people's involvement in democracy. "Your Priorities" is an open source e-democracy platform whose main idea is to engage young people in democratic activities, as they spent more and more time on the internet. The platform operates by enabling citizens to publish their policy ideas on the platform, so that everyone can discuss and vote for them. The platform allows users to see best (prioritized) ideas and best comments on each idea. This approach encourages rational debate and gives opportunities for each citizen's voice to be heard. The most recent development of the Citizens Foundation was Your Priorities 3D, which provides users with the opportunity to place their ideas directly into a 3D picture of their city. By involving 3D displays and more images, the democratic process becomes more fun and engaging. At the same time, critical thinking could be discouraged by such visual media "dumbing down" the message, or it could be interpreted as a lack of critical thinking. In order to respond to this problem a compromise between traditional and new media could be found by mixing media, having a text-based system behind the scenes, using algorithms to create clusters of data from larger indigestible sources, and tailoring platforms to different devices and display types.

There continues to be a need for traditional media alongside newer, ever-evolving media. Creating new tools for democracy does not need to replace older ones, but complement them and bring in more participation. Overall, democracy's true goal and identity rely on improving the lives of people. The most successful actions of the "Your Priorities 3D"

team are those that directly impacted people's lives: creating and improving neighbourhood playgrounds, defining the budget priorities of a city council, making political processes more transparent. In this context, data protection and transparency are issues to be dealt with.

### *About the initiative*

The creation of the initiative was a response to low voter turnout, loss of faith in democracy and the over-influence of both media and money in politics. "Your Priorities" includes a completely open idea submission structure, a point system for making popular ideas more visible and a 'positive versus negative' split screen layout in place of traditional comment sections. The initiative is considered a success in Iceland, where over 500 ideas have been approved and put into action in collaboration with the city of Reykjavik, and in Estonia where 7 ideas have become part of Estonian law. It is also used to consult with the United Kingdom's National Health Service, for e-democracy start-ups in Serbia and defining school priorities in Australia.

*"Democracy without participation is no democracy."*

"Your Priorities 3D" is a scalable initiative that translates well and can be used in other countries and, with the advance of modern computing power, can reinvent how ideas are displayed. The 3D interface provides a virtual environment and relies on artificial intelligence algorithms to digest large amounts of data and present them in fun, engaging ways. Gaming elements provide enhanced connectivity and live-streamed dialogue which could notably be used for participatory budgeting.

### Summary of the discussion

In order to further develop, Your Priorities should involve the use of mobile phones and take advantage of texting. Low-income and underrepresented members of society need to be engaged by, for example, increasing internet connectivity in schools as a means of involving those that do not have access at home.

*"Digital tools will not solve all challenges, but as citizens we have a strong voice."*

In China, for example, 332 million internet users (which tend to be younger than the population as a whole) experience advantages and disadvantages of increasing connectivity. As the internet facilitates a development towards minorities making decisions for a majority, rule of law and a sense of responsibility in e-democracy need to be observed. In this respect, civic actions need to be connected to and framed by laws. Besides, it is crucial that people without access to the internet can participate in the democratic process. Therefore, traditional forms of media (TV, radio, print) are still relevant and even dominant in some countries and should be maintained.

*"Young people are not just the future of democracy, they are the present of democracy."*



Your Priorities should involve youth throughout the whole online process and even in the creation of e-democracy tools. In terms of inter-generational dialogue, youth could be trained to present ideas of older, less connected citizens and put them online.

*"Youth have a voice. They need to be heard and listened to. And that's what's so important for everyone to realise: that youth need to be given the opportunity to speak."*

Moreover, mechanisms need to be put in place to address hate speech in a sea of dialogue and to protect the user's data. At the same time, the platform's scale needs to be discussed: how many people are needed and how many are optimal for political involvement? Does it boil down to minorities representing majorities or active people representing inactive people? Overall, the correlation between participation (in numbers) and meaningful results appears to be strong, as politicians respond more to initiatives that are backed by larger numbers of people. There is no "magic number" for participation, but reaching out to everyone and hoping for the most input possible are vital. Since all content is publicly visible and transparency is key to the success, there is the problem of minors and protecting both data and identity. An administrator notification system might be able to protect user data and prevent hate speech and offensive comments.

*"Participation in itself is not enough, it needs to lead to action and to change, otherwise people lose faith in the system."*

In order to mainstream the initiative, international cooperation is important, looking for more digitally connected countries for guidance in helping less-connected countries get online. In this context, Euro-centric approaches should be avoided, while including other regions in the world, particularly the African continent.

## LAB 8 - PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN SCHOOL

*How useful is participatory budgeting for fostering dialogue and trust between youth and the authorities? Are young people ready to make decisions on their own or do they lack political experience? Is school the right place to start practicing participatory democracy?*

Moderator: Mr Julius Georg LUY, Germany, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Germany to the Council of Europe

Cartoonist: Ms Maria LUCHANKINA

Initiative 1: Learning to Count (Youth Participatory Budgeting), In Loco, France, United Kingdom, Portugal

### Presenters

Ms Mathilde PERRIN, France, Participatory Budgeting Participant

Mr Gilles PRADEAU, France, Filmmaker and Consultant

Initiative 2: Generation Democracy, European Union, Council of Europe, in partnership with the Turkish Ministry of National Education and the Board of Education

### Presenters

Ms Seda ARICAN MASLEN, Turkey, Senior Project Officer, Council of Europe Ankara Programme Office  
Discussants

### Discussants

Ms Laurence MONNOYER-SMITH, France, Vice-president of the National Public Debate Commission  
Ms Priya SITAL, Suriname, Chairperson of the Youth Parliament Suriname

### *Executive summary*

Participatory democracy in schools goes beyond learning about formal political democratic practices. While it is important to learn about democratic processes, the school environment also needs to promote the ability to participate and to internalize democratic values. Such an approach has to be comprehensive and to involve all members of the school community, especially vulnerable groups and students who may not necessarily have the confidence to engage in a public debate.

The two projects presented in Lab 8, Learning to Count and Generation Democracy, demonstrated how to put into practice such an approach. The youth participatory budgeting initiative takes place in three cities – Lille, Brighton and Porto. Students prepare projects to spend allocated budgets. What is interesting is the way these projects are prepared and decided upon. The cycle of project preparations and implementation attempts to involve all students at every stage of the process. In order to foster participation by all, including less vocal students, videos are used to present project ideas. The result has been a deeper understanding of the democratic process in deciding on how to allocate resources, including understanding restraints such as administrative rules, etc. Students learn how to run a project and feel they are involved at each stage of the cycle.

The Democratic School Culture framework is one component of a joint EU/CoE project in Turkey implemented by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Turkish Ministry of National Education and the Board of Education. As with the first initiative, it also seeks an inclusive approach for fostering a democratic school culture. For this purpose, it piloted a democratic school culture framework in 22 pilot schools in Turkey in different geographical areas. Activities include a democracy desk, effective school councils and classroom conciliation, with a focus on the quality of discussions, compromise and solutions. Results of this work include less violence and bullying in schools, as well as higher academic achievements. The project will now be scaled up to 102 schools in Turkey.



### *About the initiatives*

Both projects draw upon the work of the Council of Europe's Charter for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education and in particular the democratic school governance manual. They are also inspired by the educationalist John Dewey and his belief that democracy is learned by public inquiry, in other words 'learning by doing'.

Two different methodologies are used for Learning to Count: A consultative type during which people and the City Council decide which projects they choose and a deliberative type when the City Council directly implements the results of citizens' deliberation. For the project, teenagers were taught how to film, so they could show concrete stories about one of their first political experiences by documenting, debating and sharing ideas and tools. Afterwards, all participants met in Faro (Portugal) to share experiences. Participatory budgeting is powerful when it targets both schools and bigger communities, when project leaders can evaluate and negotiate the costs of their own project, and when projects are publicized with videos and public presentations. It is less powerful when there is no trust in the rules or the results, when projects are implemented late or when there is no deliberation before voting. The projects were presented in different ways in each country. In the UK, for example, there were tables for each project like at a market fair. In Trofa (Portugal), there was a public debate during which the projects were discussed. After the project's completion, the students had learned how to run a project, how to ask for feedback and how to pitch a project in front of 100 people. The main criticism was how to ensure equality between participants when they discuss and present projects.

Generation Democracy is a democratic citizenship and human rights education project ran in Turkey by the European Union and the Council of Europe in partnership with the Turkish Ministry of National Education and the Board of Education. The overall objective of this project is to foster a more democratic society by strengthening democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) that corresponds with European core values. In this context, a Democratic School Culture Competencies Framework Manual was developed and piloted in 2014 with the aid of experts which are currently working on an English translation of the manual. It prioritizes an inclusive approach of all school stakeholders: students, teachers, school management, school personnel, parents and local residents. Through extra-curricular school activities a democratic approach and practice has evolved in 22 pilot schools in 10 provinces in different regions of the country. Six dimensions have been identified in the project's piloting phase: decision making, communication, teaching and learning environment, behavior

management, identity and belonging, and value based education. In this framework, different activities were developed, such as 'democracy desk', the 'classroom conciliation committee', and 'energizing school councils'. The democracy desk promotes student's active involvement in the school environment and establishes a communication channel between students, parents, school staff and school management. The desk is similar to an information point at which students can voice their needs and concerns. Every two weeks, the demands are taken by students to the school council. The experience resulted in a multidimensional interaction among the school community, increased transparency and accountability of the school management, active participation and an increased sense of responsibility of the students with respect to issues that affect their school life. The classroom conciliation committee is an opportunity to debate issues that need to be reconciled. Students freely express problems encountered at classroom level. It teaches students how to present problems and how to debate without hurting each other, while giving them the opportunity to improve their communication skills.

*"Recognition of problems raised by youth and taking them seriously are crucial"*

As in Turkey the concept of school councils works in a rather limited sense, the team aimed at stimulating them with 'energizing school councils': Every month, the school principal gathers around classroom representatives in order to take decisions together with them. The result was increased awareness on active participation and engagement in democratic decision-making in the school, an improved sense of belonging to the school, higher motivation of the pupils, as well as increased self-esteem and responsibility among the students who are part of the school council.

### *Summary of the discussion*

There is a general difficulty of getting young people to engage in public debates. It is essential that important issues, for instance nuclear waste – which of course affects future generations to come – need to be discussed by and with youth. One reason youth does not engage is that they do not like the way they are proposed to debate. Students emphasised the need to be listened to and taken seriously. A different kind of language needs to be adopted, not traditional debates.

*"Talk the language youth talks."*

However, there are alternative, innovative ways of engaging youth in political participation. The National Youth Council of Suriname, for example, acts as a bridge between government and youth, meeting on a regular basis. It is crucial that youth is not being

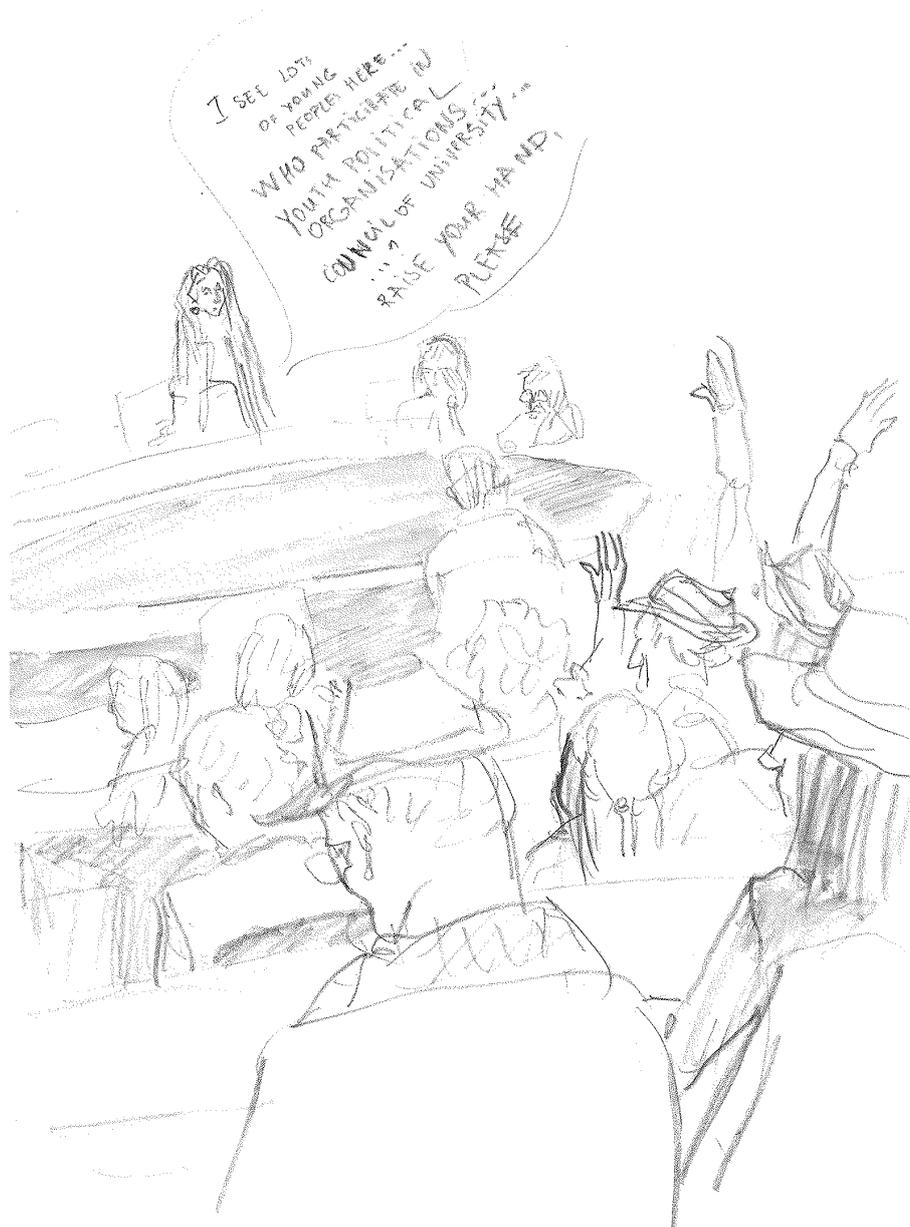
manipulated by politics or corruption in the education system. Also, while immediate solutions to problems are not necessarily possible due to various reasons, there is the need to explain the process and reasons for decisions.

School directors should promote a democratic school culture and introduce a specific course in primary school on human rights and democracy. In respect of the latter, the Turkish project is supporting the development of a course and activity book on Human Rights and Democracy which will be compulsory for all 10 year olds in Turkey in 2015. Although fraught with problems, the Turkish project has successfully promoted participatory democracy in conflict areas, such as for example in a school in southeast Turkey (Mardin), where schools organised charity events for

Syrian refugee children, and another school near the Bulgarian border, where football events were organised with Roma children.

*"Marginalized groups are often forgotten in the democratic process".*

Concluding, the process of decision-making needs to be ensured among the whole local community at all levels and should start at a young age. In particular, marginalised groups as well as students who may not necessarily have the confidence to engage in a public debate need to be supported. Projects such as the two presented and discussed in this lab illustrate how abstract ideas can be brought to a concrete level to promote participatory democracy in schools. The next step will be to scale up such initiatives.



## LAB 9 - POLITICALLY ATTRACTIVE REFORMS FOR INCREASING YOUTH INFLUENCE

*In a Citizens Jury, a randomly selected panel mirroring the composition of the general public meets to deliberate on a public policy issue and to develop common-ground solutions. Is this model of deliberative democracy a solid opportunity for youth to co-decide and does it offer an alternative to traditional representation? How must governments change in order to open up for youth?*

Moderator: Ms Jocelyne CABALLERO, France, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe  
Cartoonist: Ms Aurélien CANTOU

Initiative 1: Citizen's Jury, New Democracy Foundation, Australia

### Presenters

Ms Amelia LOYE, Australia, Managing Director, Engage2  
Mr Iain WALKER, Australia, Executive Director of the newDemocracy Foundation

Initiative 2: The 2014 Governmental Commission on Democracy – Participation and equal influence, Sweden

### Presenters

Ms Adiam TEDROS, Sweden, Secretary of the Governmental Commission on Democracy

### Discussants

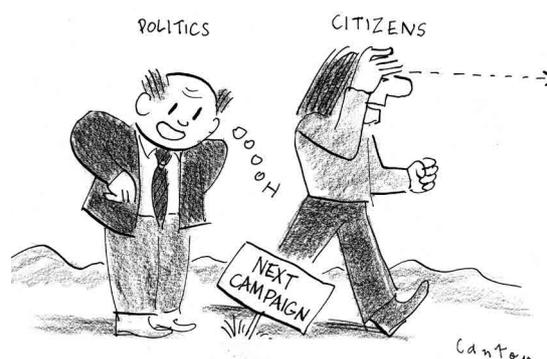
Mr Ulrich NITSCHKE, Germany, Head of Programme for the Local Governance and Civil Society Development Programme (LGP) and Future for Palestine (FFP) at GIZ in Palestine; Chairperson of the GLZ's Sector Network Governance for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region  
Mr Beat ROHNER, Switzerland, President of the Assembly of European Regions Youth Regional Network

### *Executive summary*

Lab 9 discussed two innovative approaches on how to facilitate the participation of young people in the political process. The most effective way of engaging youth in democracy is to let them participate in the drafting of legislation that actually contributes to change. The citizens' jury is an Australian initiative that seeks to engage citizens from different generations and backgrounds in the legislative process. The new-Democracy Foundation launched in 2013 together with the South Australian Premier a Citizens' Jury on alcohol related violence. The idea was to collect opinions on alcohol consumption regulation from ordinary Australian citizens that are not linked to a party or to lobbyists in order to improve legislation in this field.

The second initiative aimed at raising participation among youth and minority groups in democracy, such as disabled people or migrants. The aim of the Governmental Commission on Democracy, which was initiated in July 2014, is to determine why youth and minority groups do not participate in the democratic process and to determine solutions on how to deepen their interest in and engagement with politics. The lab discussion came to the conclusion that there is indeed a democratic deficit when it comes to youth influence which has to be overcome.

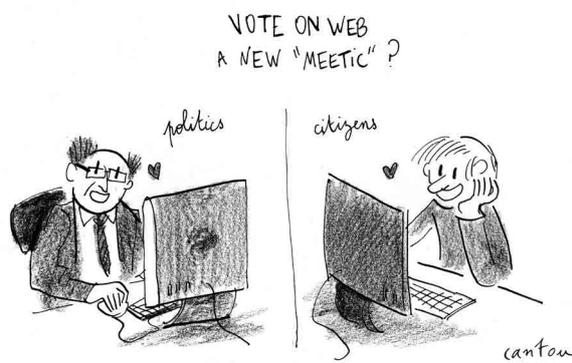
Moreover, participation of youth should not only concern youth policy but all political issues.



### *About the initiatives*

A citizens' jury is composed of citizens, who are randomly selected according to the stratification of society, in order to have each group of society represented corresponding to its proportion. The selected group gets together to discuss a certain issue the government would like to make subject of further legislative measures. All participants of the citizens' jury are paid in order to enable everyone to participate regardless

of their own financial resources. Besides an adequate reward for their efforts, participants are equipped with the information they need to decide upon the subject in contention. They can choose for instance which stakeholders of the respective subject they would like to meet. Another important aspect of the process is that participants are allocated enough time to become familiar with the subject and to deliberately think and discuss about it. The outcome of the citizens' jury's discussion, their proposals concerning further legislative steps, is submitted to parliament. There, the proposals of the citizens' jury are taken into serious consideration. So far, where several citizens' juries have been conducted, parliamentarians in Australia implemented the suggestions of the citizens' jury with large consent.



Overall, the experiences in Australia have shown that the citizens' juries are an active way to get people from different social classes involved. Making the political process more accessible for everyone, the citizens' juries foster democratic participation. Furthermore they create ownership of the outcome among the people that have been involved in the process. Last but not least, the citizens' jury is a very transparent model of democratic participation; not only people selected for the citizens' jury can get involved, but also persons from outside through online commenting on social media. The feedback collected in this way is discussed in the citizens' jury as well. The overall goal is to establish more deliberative online methods through which people are encouraged to read information carefully and to think about it before commenting. Another benefit of online methods is that the data can be used for social surveys.

*"We need online methods that facilitate deliberative debate"*

In Sweden, while a large amount of young people claim to be interested in politics (40%), only few get involved and are actively taking part. Nevertheless, the political optimism is exceptionally high in Sweden. There is the widespread belief and

self-confidence among young citizens that they can really change something, if they like. However, real figures show that youth lacks influence at all levels. The rate of participation of youth is significantly lower than in the general population. Another worrying fact is that in most cases, politicians under 25 leave office prior to the termination of their service. Also the membership in political parties is lower. As a result, the average age of parliamentarians is with 45,7 rather high.

*"How can young people be included in the narrative adults created?"*

The Commission on democracy has been created by the Swedish government to monitor and review the engagement of youth and to suggest measures on the basis of these observations. The main questions the Commission wants to look at are how young people can be included in the narrative adults created, how other arenas of political discourse can be established and whether activities targeting youth are useful or whether there is a risk of institutionalizing parallel systems. The report of the Commission on these issues is due in December 2015. Throughout the process the Commission will stay connected with the public through social media.

#### *Summary of the discussion*

The lab participants expressed their concern that important people of society would not participate in the citizens' jury because of lack of time or interest. When appointed in jury trials, people often try to get out, and general politics usually attracts mainly well-educated middle class men. People who do not speak English and/or have a poor education or a migrant background will be particularly reluctant to participate in the citizens' jury or will not be able to do so at all. Taking this problem into account, the organisers of the citizens' jury usually make sure that all parts of society are represented. Experience has shown that, when people realize that their voice will be heard, they are very keen to participate. Migrants usually have their children to help them with English, so that even if they are not themselves fluent in the language they have the chance to understand the topic of the jury and to participate. Also, there are plenty of digital tools helping with translation. Nevertheless, the issue remains that illiterate people would not be able to participate in the dialogue on an equal footing with better educated citizens.

Substantive and rational deliberation among citizens before taking a decision is the main advantage of the citizens' jury. Merely liking something on Facebook is not actually participating in society. Instead of enthusiastically embracing the digital euphoria one should turn the attention to trust being the essential

element of participation. Only when people and their views are entrusted, participation in democracy will rise. However, peer-to-peer relations on social platforms can also create trust. It is crucial that after discussion in the citizens jury and in the Swedish commission, the follow-up does not simply involve issuing a report, but that there is a long-term strategy able to facilitate real change. The recommendations drafted by the jury and the commission should lead to actual legislation.

*"Direct democracy is an awful idea."*

Direct democracy was discussed as a means to increase citizen participation, with some participants speaking in favour of it and arguing that it is an effective way to ensure that the voice of citizens in politics is heard, whereas other participants criticised direct democracy as an "awful idea", since it would make politicians change their opinion according to polls. Direct democracy should be supplemented by genuine deliberation, possibly facilitated by digital means to ensure meaningful ways of interaction between institutions and young citizens. Moreover, social media platforms are a great resource of data for socio-political analysis as they display what people think, helping to define problems better.

*"Democracy is all about trust."*

There is a strong need to involve young people in the selection process of political candidates, as especially women and youth tend to not participate in the decision-making process. When youth or women are elected, their expectations often do not meet reality and consequently they often resign. This is why the new Democracy Foundation has offered to different Australian parties pre-selection models to improve party participation. A proper representation of young people in politics is particularly important since in Europe young people are currently not a top priority. As the population is aging, especially in Western Europe, politicians pay a lot of attention to the concerns of older people. Ultimately one has to bear in mind that politics is a very competitive environment and that is not a moral principle to give more power and influence to young people.

*"Youth needs to have a say in the selection of candidates for elections."*

The major success factor for the Swedish commission was "institutional innovations", as the Commission aimed at finding ways to change institutional behaviour in order to allow the larger inclusion and participation of youth in democracy. For the citizens' jury, the major success factor was that it can actually lead to the changing of law, which is the most constructive way to influence politics.

## LAB 10 - STRUCTURES FOR YOUTH ADVOCACY

*An unfavourable environment can further diminish the opportunities for young people to make their voices heard. How can young people create structures for advocacy to express their need and influence policies? Which mechanisms work and what are the challenges to mainstreaming such approaches?*

Moderator: Mr Zoltán TAUBNER, Director of External Relations, Council of Europe

Cartoonist: Mr Jérôme RICH

Initiative: Youth Create Change, GIZ – German Development Cooperation, Palestinian Territories

### Presenters

Mr Mohammed FADEL ZAQOUT, Youth Promoter of the YCC intervention in Al Zahara Municipality in the Gaza Strip

Ms Alice PRIORI, Italy, Development Advisor with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ)

### Discussants

Ms Samia HATHROUBI, France/Tunisia, Activist and European Director of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding

Ms Tracey SIMPSON-LAING, United Kingdom, Councillor, City of York, Member of the Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

### *Executive summary*

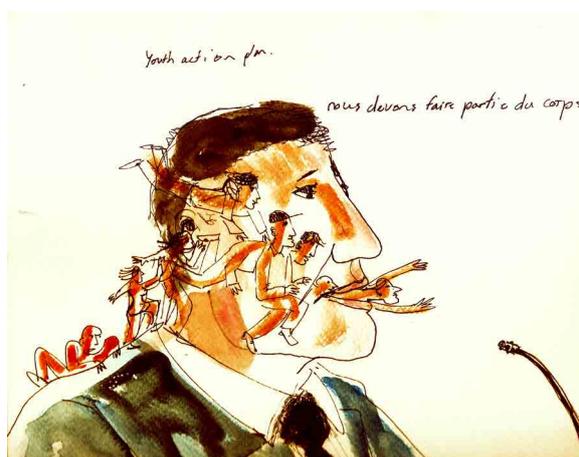
The Youth Create Change project seeks to promote youth participation, especially through its institutionalization in decision-making processes. The project, which involves five civil society organisations, the Ministry of Local Government Policy Unit and the Municipal Development and Lending Funds, has been implemented in 11 Palestinian municipalities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The project is being carried out by GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) between March 2013 and March 2015.

The lab concluded that as the problems connected to youth participation are of a general nature, the YCC Project is theoretically transferrable to other countries and social environments. However, the cultural and social differences of the different context should be taken into account. It is important that politicians acknowledge that young people are not only the future of society, but its present. As such, they should be able to assume leadership positions while they are young. Unfortunately, there is currently a general mistrust of young people in institutions that needs to be overcome, in order to achieve more youth participation in decision-making bodies. In this context, it is of fundamental importance to have inspiring models and experiences. Especially young women are increasingly seen as a special group that needs further protection and valorization.

### *About the initiative*

The substance of the project consists in the increase of participation of young people at the local level, through the creation of different structures and actors.

In particular, these entities comprise a trained Youth Officer for each municipality, which works within the local administration, a Youth Action Plan (YAP), which identifies youth needs and sets out activities to carry out, 15 trained Youth Promoters for each municipality, which implement the Youth Action Plan, a Municipal Budget Line especially dedicated to youth activities, a Youth Centre, a common space where the majority of the communal activities take place. In substance, youth are implementing activities according to the YAP and influence the Local Council's decision-making processes. The outcomes of the project are relevant both at the local and the national level. At the latter level, a Youth Policy Paper was sent to signature to the Ministry of Local Development, and a Ministerial Budget Line dedicated to youth projects was created. The main hindrances concerning the completion of the project were the lack of trust by the local government and the difficulties in getting young people actively engaged, especially young women.



### Summary of the discussion

The lab participants discussed whether there is a general decline of political interest among young people. The disappointment of youth with respect to the political system is worrying, as from youth's point of view politicians act generally only in their own interests and the true concerns of the people are not reflected in their agendas. The consequences of the lack of interest of young people in elections and, more in general, in political participation, are that they become more vocal in social media and raise their concerns through other means. The reason for their disinterest is their mistrust in the system, as they feel that they cannot make any significant impact on policy matters which will affect their future. At the same time, young people have shown active interest in particular political issues, such as the Scottish referendum on the state's independence. According to Article 12 of the UNCRC, a child has the right to be heard. Such right should be implemented through the action of NGOs, which, if they truly play their role, can help achieve this.

*"Young people are not only the leaders of the future, but also the leaders of today."*



Overall, young people's political participation today remains a paradox: on the one hand, they are deeply concerned about what is happening in the world, and, consequently, engaged to make their voices heard through various platforms, such as social media. On the other hand, they are pulling away from decision-makers, and decision-making processes. There still exists a certain traditional belief that power and decision-making processes are to be vested with the older generation, while the young people are to remain passive recipients of the system. In order to increase their influence, young people should not limit their interests to matters of "youth issues", but also deal with general policy issues and get to leading roles in the present world. Hence, a further role of YCC should be that of empowering young people to

get leading positions. Young people are not only the leaders of the future but also, and more importantly, the leaders of today, and should be therefore given the opportunity to make their voices heard as of now. The YCC needs to look into this aspect when structuring their future activities.

*"We need to get governments involved."*



The level of the project's transferability is high, as it has already been implemented in other countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, which have some similarities with Palestine (presence of rural areas and problems related to women's participation). The project's implementation in other countries has shown that there is a need for specific adaptation to the social and political background. One of the main problems of the project is to get governments involved, especially in the Palestinian context. At the beginning of the project, the government was not interested in the activities, while now the same institution has signed the Youth Policy Paper, a programmatic document for youth initiatives. Moreover, triggering youth engagement is a challenge. For most young people, this was the first political project ever implemented and, at the beginning, the majority of the young people were not interested. They were distrusting the project and the action of local structures, also because of their perception of the municipality only as a basic service provider. However, although the war was highly affecting the project, young people were able to engage properly. In order to strengthen youth engagement, one should highlight the cases of young politicians in the world as these experiences can be inspiring models for young people. Lastly, one should not forget the strong relationships between youth and social structures, such as family. These structures need to be considered when dealing with youth participation because they can instruct young people about important aspects of everyday life.

### **Theme 3 – Influencing Decision-making**

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There is a disparity between the policy ideals of young people and the priorities of democratic decision-making. Young people feel particularly strongly about the long-term challenges and strategic orientations for their societies such as environmental sustainability, social justice, corruption and equal opportunities. However, they have relatively little influence on these strategic choices. The challenge is to distil a clear agenda from a multitude of specific concerns; an action plan to communicate to political leaders in order to influence public policy. Without this, youth protests may remain just this – protests, and not a constructive action for change.

## LAB 11 - YOUNG CITY CHANGERS

*Political change often begins on the local level. What are the possibilities for young people to take the initiative and influence the policies and the developments of their cities? Will they reinvent traditional models of democracy or become part of them?*

Moderator: Mr Israël MENSAH, Benin, Member of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, Catholic International Education Office  
Cartoonist: Mr Guillaume DELOIZON

Initiative 1: Youth for Catania 2.0, Italy

### Presenters

Mr Diego A. CIMINO, Italy, Founder of "Youth for Catania 2.0"  
Mr Emanuele STANCANELLI, Italy, Adviser of "Youth for Catania 2.0"

Initiative 2: Youth@Cluj-Napoca 2015 (European Youth Capital), SHARE Cluj-Napoca Federation, Romania

### Presenters

Mr Andras FARKAS, Romania, Executive Director of the Network of European Youth Capitals  
Ms Hanna UGRON, Romania, Expert of the PONT Group, Cluj-Napoca based youth group

### Discussants

Mr Misraim HERNÁNDEZ FERNÁNDEZ, Mexico, Deputy Director of Herfer Political Consulting and Director of Citizen Participation A. C.  
Mr Dragan ŠLJIVIĆ, Serbia, PhD student at the University of Erfurt, Germany

### *Executive summary*

As political change often starts at the local level, lab 11 discussed two initiatives by young grass-roots city changers. The lab analysed the possibilities for young people to take initiative and influence the policies and development of their cities. The two initiatives presented in lab 11 were Youth for Catania 2.0 and Youth@Cluj-Napoca 2015 (European Youth Capital). Youth for Catania 2.0 was founded in 2012 and advocates the role of youth in policy, civil society, and local development, while fostering youth influence in the decision-making process. Youth@Cluj-Napoca 2015 – the European Youth Capital – was created to strengthen the active participation of young people and youth organizations in creating a change in society.

Among other issues, the lab discussion addressed the role of civil society in politics and the role of lobbyists for the functioning of a government. The present democratic system allows youth to cast their votes, but does not give youth the right to participate or the right to raise their voice. Democracy should be promoted in formal and non-formal areas, such as for example sports. As youth is dynamic and has the capacity to introduce societal change, the participation of youth in democracy will be able to significantly influence political decisions. Thus, there should be concrete proposals by youth activists which need to be implemented within a proper legal framework to

facilitate youth participation in democracy and to promote civic education.



### *About the initiatives*

The conception of youth is changing. Whereas in recent years, youth has been perceived mostly as a victim, youth now plays the role of an important actor in present day democracy. The City of Catania is the capital of the Province of Catania and the second-largest city in Sicily. Passivity, frustration, a lack of interest, the feeling of a lack of legitimacy, and a feeling of underestimation affects youth participation in democracy and society in Catania, but also in other

places around the world, negatively. The causes of the above-mentioned problems are youth unemployment, lack of civic education, lack of access to opportunities, and a low quality of politicians. Youth is not disaffected from politics, but they do not agree with the ways and means with which current politics is conducted. In this context, democratic participation at the grassroots level and enhancing the accountability of elected leaders are most crucial. In order to achieve this, youth should participate in democratic politics in the city to influence the decision-making process.

*"Youth is not disaffected with politics, but they do not agree with the means with which politics is currently conducted."*

A group of 21 local youth NGOs participated in the campaign to make Cluj-Napoca, the second biggest city of Romania, the European Youth Capital. The youth capital title involves increasing the budget for local youth projects, as well as creating sustainable mechanisms for involving youth in policy making. The concept of participatory democracy had an impact on the participation of young people, inspiring them to remodel and reorganize democracy. The initiative involved participatory budgeting projects, exercised by youth in the city. In order to be able to play a key role in modern democracy, youth need to act professionally.

#### *Summary of the discussion*

Youth needs to be mobilized and motivated to become part of civil society and municipalities in order to carry out change. Both initiatives have led to higher levels

of youth participation in local projects. At the same time, the participation of minorities in both initiatives needs to be increased, persons with disabilities included, and elderly people need to be convinced to work together with youth. In order to support the project's long term sustainability, local and social media need to be employed.

*"Youth is an important actor in democracy."*

Youth for Catania 2.0 makes an effort to include marginalized groups by cooperation with local schools. Elderly people are convinced to participate by discussing young people's problems with them and looking for possible solutions. Older people usually empathize with youth and support them in carrying out a positive change in society. The project's sustainability will be increased once functioning fundamentals are created. This can be done by motivating as many people as possible to contribute to society. For example, a network of youth capitals in Europe could be created and other cities in Romania or South East Europe could be motivated to become candidates for the European Youth Capital initiative. In order to further young people's skills, the project provides practical and theoretical training in a volunteer academy where the events in the Youth Capital are also being monitored and evaluated. Civic education is currently very theoretical and there are problems in communication among different societal groups. Overall, there are not enough examples in the present civic education system to motivate youth, but both initiatives presented in the lab have been a good illustration in this regard.



## LAB 12 - PROJECT CITIZEN

*Young people need to learn how to influence public policy by examining problems and finding potential solutions. However, they usually lack the power to implement their ideas. What are the challenges to develop and implement an action plan, what are the dos and don'ts? Will governments open up for youth and consider their suggestions?*

Moderator: Mr Dirk VAN EECKHOUT, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the Council of Europe, Consul General of Belgium  
Cartoonist: Mr Jean-Charles ANDRIEU DE LEVIS

Initiative 1: Project Citizen, Center for Civic Education, USA

### Presenters

Mr John HALE, USA, Associate Director, Center for Civic Education  
Mr Charles QUIGLEY, USA, Executive Director, Center for Civic Education

Initiative 2: Project Citizen, Moroccan Center for Civic Education, Morocco

### Presenters

Mr Elarbi IMAD, Morocco, President and Executive Director of the Moroccan Center for Civic Education  
Ms Zineb MOUSSAFIR, Morocco, Teacher of Family Education and Volunteer at Moroccan Center for Civic Education

### Discussants

Mr Moussa LARABA, Algeria, Deputy Secretary General of the Conference of African Constitutional Courts  
Mr ZHANG Wanhong, the People's Republic of China, Associate Professor of Law at Wuhan University School of Law

### *Executive summary*

The United States based Center for Civic Education is a non-profit organization which, over its 49 year history, has aimed at creating democratic citizens by means of the spread of civic literacy. Through its 84 affiliated countries, the centre and its network of teachers and trainers, reaches 3 million students per year. The Moroccan Centre for Civic Education has taken as its model its US counterpart while adapting itself to the specific cultural environment in a country where literacy and education levels are less well developed and which is a much younger democracy. Like its American counterpart, it provides materials, training and support for local projects which engage young people in issues of public life and supports them in participating and interacting with society. The lab participants analysed that while both initiatives efficiently prepare young people to increase their influence in political decision-making, the challenge remains to convince decision-makers that an investment in civic education projects is a sustainable investment in the development of a responsible citizenry.

### *About the initiatives*

The objectives of the US Center for Civic Education have always been to empower young people to contribute in a meaningful way to highlighting and resolving the problems which most affect their daily

lives. Young people are encouraged to raise the issues which most affect them – these can range from discipline or nutritional issues in their schools, traffic problems around their schools or neighbourhoods or drug problems. Young people use whatever means or combination of means best suit to highlight the issues and to bring this information to the attention of decision-makers (school boards, local or regional administrations, companies, etc.) and to themselves suggest means or actions to counteract the problem or ease its affects. Through the process, young people acquire a range of skills which contribute to life-long learning: analysis of problems, consultation and presentation skills, public speaking, organizing public hearings and interpreting the outcome and synthesizing the resulting data. Young people learn how to contact and convince those in a position to change and, perhaps for the first time in their lives, work in a concerted and organised fashion.

*“Teaching these skills teaches young people how to serve the 99% - and not the 1%.”*

Given the aforementioned specificities, the Moroccan Centre for Civic Education started its work by educating first and foremost, student teachers and youth group leaders. Like their US counterparts, they use their skills to assist young people in identifying and vocalizing

the issues which affect them and their communities, selecting the problems to be addressed and developing the means of addressing these issues. The overall goal is to create a democratic dialogue between citizens and policy makers. It is believed that this process will lead to good governance based on democratic principles of dialogue, tolerance and understanding. The Centre has impacted some 50,000 students, 1500 teachers 600 schools and more than 250 NGOs in the emerging Moroccan democracy. The Centre has an ambitious future programme including translating its tools into at least one other language.

*"We are in the business of helping young people to become responsible citizens."*

**"EACH PROJECT LIVE DURING A YEAR "**



The scope of reference of the Centre is limited to issues affecting only school children. In one example cited, the lab participants were told about an initiative taken by students of an inner school in Marrakesh which researched the effects on students of living in poverty. Having learned of the detrimental effects of poor nutrition on the eyesight of rural children, they organized a programme to provide free eye exams to 300 rural students and received commitments from local opticians to provide 100 pairs of glasses. In addition to the beneficial effects for the students concerned, the positive outcome brought new pride to the school body, vandalism declined and it is hoped to circulate the project in further regions.

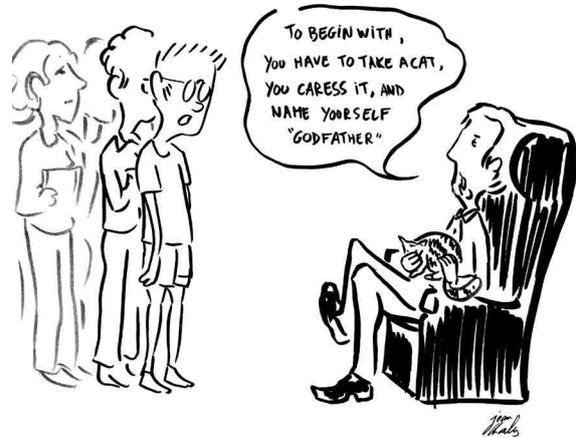
*Summary of the discussion*

While the projects can in large part be transposed from one country, even one continent, to another, the Moroccan project is "home-grown" and adapted to the national context, taking into consideration the

culture and the local legal or constitutional norms. This work is not the creation of a revolution, but rather a continuation of the waves of the Arab Spring. The new Moroccan Constitution has accorded civil society and NGO's the right to submit initiatives. The Moroccan Center for Civic Education has now signed formal agreements with a number of government departments in order to introduce a multi-departmental approach to its work.

*"Civic education should not just be extra-curricular; it should be integrated in the formal education system."*

**WE DEVELOP YOUNG LEADERS  
TO SOLVE LOCAL PROBLEMS**



Young people need to learn "to serve the 99% and not the 1%", to quote Professor Zhang. Youth also needs to be taught to work with the three Hs - the head, the hands and the heart - for democracy and to become responsible citizens. The fear expressed by some lab participants that encouraging young people to take part in civic associations risked reducing or even undermining involvement in democratically elected institutions was rejected because it was felt that facilitating the training and participation of today's young people was an efficient investment in the citizens of tomorrow. Some participants argued that the initiatives outlined by the organisations should be mainstreamed into the official school curriculum. The challenge for the next generation may be how to motivate families and other actors in society to take part in such projects. New technologies, web based training and education, will facilitate the expansion of the message to regions further and further from the centre. The challenge of tomorrow will be to continue to convince decision-makers that an investment in these types of projects is an investment in the active and responsible citizenship of today and of tomorrow.

## LAB 13 - HAVE YOUR SAY

*Does dialogue between young people and elected officials lead to political change or does it produce empty words without any effect? What are the challenges and possibilities to move from discussion to action?*

MODERATOR: Mr André-Jacques DODIN, Head of Youth Policy Division, Council of Europe  
Cartoonist: Mr Jérôme RICH

Initiative 1: Have Your Say – The Structured Dialogue of Youth, Czech Council of Children and Youth (ČRDM), Czech Republic

### Presenters

Ms Michaela CVACHOVÁ, Czech Republic, Participant of The Structured Dialogue of Youth  
Mr Jan HUSÁK, Czech Republic, Board member of the Czech Council of Children and Youth

Initiative 2: The actions of the Alsatian Youth Parliament, France

### Presenters

Ms Lilla MERABET, France, Vice-President of the Alsace Region, Vice-President of the “Youth, Social Economy and Solidarity” Commission  
Mr Nicolas MUNCK, France, Member of the Alsatian Youth Parliament

### Discussants

Ms Olga FILIPPOVA, Russian Federation, Principal Manager at the Civil Society Engagement Unit of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
Mr Francis LALOUPO, Benin/France, Journalist and Author  
Mr Howard WILLIAMSON, United Kingdom, Professor of European Youth Policy at University of South Wales

### *Executive summary*

“Have your say – the structured dialogue of youth” is a project for and by youth which started in 2010. Before the start of the project, there was no incorporation of Czech youth in institutionalized political decision-making. The project was supported by the Czech Ministry of Youth and was introduced under the authority of the Czech Children and Youth Council, playing the role of an intermediary organisation in relation to the authorities. The structured dialogue is a movement that involves youth during one school year via festive events.

In 2010, the Alsace region has decided to create the Alsatian Youth Parliament, a space for youth to decide about and implement local projects they care about. The youth parliament is a consultative and deliberative assembly that can take decisions on the local level and arrange a budget to support projects by young people in the Alsace region (2000€/per project). The Alsatian Youth Parliament is in charge of informing local officials about youth’s wishes and ideas in order to make sure that the voice of young people is heard in local governance.

The lab participants agreed that it is crucial that politicians have trust in young people being able to express their opinions. They should install a genuine

dialogue with youth and systematically give them feedback on their initiatives and propositions. Young people, on the other hand, should also be willing to enter a dialogue with politicians in order to influence democracy.

COMMENT MOBILISER  
LES IMMOBILES?  
DANS UN MONDE IMMOBILE ?



### About the initiatives

The aim of 'Have your say' is to include large numbers of young people and particularly those which are located in geographically isolated zones or who belong to a disadvantaged social environment. In September, a big welcome evening launched the project, allowing for the participants to choose the themes that would be discussed all year. Different manifestations (evening events, activities, workshop etc.) have been organized, especially in small countryside towns, in order to involve the largest possible population. The structured dialogue also takes place on an online platform, as well as on Facebook and Twitter. The project's festive spirit allows to attract youth that are usually not interested in becoming part of structured institutions and to involve increasing numbers of young people by encouraging them to present at conferences or to launch projects.



The Alsatian Parliament consists of 40 members, 15 to 28 years old, selected by a lottery draw after an open call for applications among associated institutions, such as youth associations, high schools, or socio-cultural centers. The organisers try to respect a gender balance, a balance between people from Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin, and a balance between young people from the countryside and the city, but also between different political directions and social backgrounds. The Alsatian Youth parliament is integrated in an international network and organizes seminars with other assemblies on political or economic topics. On a regional level, it has participated in the drafting of a report on youth and democratic life in the framework of the projects "Prospective Alsace 2030" (an event for debate among young Alsatians) and "Get Ready" whose aim was to stimulate young people to vote in the European elections. Recently, they have created a website listing employment sectors to help to orientate young people.

### Summary of the discussion

At the end of the structural dialogue, a finale resolution is adopted and then presented to relevant democratic institutions. During the project, young people have been working on different themes, as for example cyber-harassment, child labor or university fees. In certain precise fields, the work of the structured dialogue has come to very concrete results. For instance, the work of young people has contributed to improving the rules of national exams in secondary education. Moreover, a resolution of the Ministry of Education has modified the sexual education programme in high schools in accordance with suggestions emerging from the structural dialogue. Finally, during the last national and European elections, youth has contacted the candidates and asked questions about their youth programmes. The structured dialogue at the same time informs politicians about the needs and wishes of young people and offers a space for political education, enabling young people to learn how to argue and present in public, to defend their point of view and to become responsible citizens.

There is no reason to limit youth participation to youth policies, as usually the themes young people are interested in are trans-generational. We live in a world where, on the one hand, politicians are not highly interested in youth and, on the other hand, many young people have a rather limited comprehension of politics. Therefore, the convivial spirit developed by 'Have your Say' allows for involving youth in "political activities" in an enjoyable manner.

*"We do a lot of things without realizing that it's actually politics we are engaging in."*

For the Alsace region, the aim is not necessarily to involve all young people in politics, but to answer to the needs of an engaged group of young people. The quality of youth inclusion must be high in order to ensure the best possible offering as real opportunities to young people who wish to participate in democracy. As the democratic process is complex, one has to accept that youth cannot necessarily have influence on all policy fields. In every participative process involving youth, one has to be honest with them and inform them why not all their proposals can be accepted at any point of time.

*"To act for young people is to act with young people."*

Democracy should steadily be renewed by dialogue and debate. To this aim, the number and length of political mandates should be limited in order to make sure that there is a democratic renewal of the political class. One needs to have an optimistic outlook on youth organizations and stay attentive to new experiences with respect to youth participation.

## LAB 14 - CITIZENS VOTING FOR BILLS

*What is the prospect and added value of e-democracy? Can the participation of young people be increased if they are given the chance to express their opinions about bills and policies online?*

Moderator: Mr Oli HENMAN, United Kingdom, European Representative of CIVICUS  
Cartoonist: Ms Aurélien CANTOU

Initiative: Vote on the Web, Brazil

### Presenters

Ms Daniele AMARAL, Brazil, Journalist and Coordinator of Vote on the Web  
Mr Diego ÁVILA DA SILVA, Brazil, Lawyer of Vote on the Web

### Discussants

Ms Tiffiniy CHENG, USA, Co-founder and Co-director of Fight for the Future  
Ms Adele GAMBARO, Italy, Member of Parliament and Member of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media of the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe

### *Executive summary*

Lab 14 discussed the access of citizens, especially young people, to e-democracy. "Vote on web" is an online platform that allows Brazilian web users to give their opinion on political matters and the work of politicians. It is, for the moment, the only website offering these services in Brazil. Brazil is a young democracy in which one can witness a lack of trust of citizens in institutions. In this context, the gap between elected officials and citizens has increased throughout the last years. The football world cup signified a change in Brazilian political culture, as people protested in masses when they recognized the amount of public money used for the games which could have been instead used for different projects benefitting the population.

The lab concluded that the internet can indeed help citizens to become involved. The web platform 'Vote on Web', launched by webcitizen.com.br, is a new and successful tool for citizens to access politics and have direct contact with politicians. Consequently, the initiative helps revitalising democracy, targeting especially youth. More than 70% of the website users are young people (aged between 17 and 35) and 17% of users are between 16 and 18 years old. The number of women is low, but the organizers are trying to find initiatives that further foster women's participation.

### *About the initiative*

Through the online platform 'Vote on the Web', web users can follow the work of congressmen and increase politicians' awareness of what citizens want for the country. Citizens can find bills and laws discussed in Parliament in a simplified version, in order to have people not pushed away from politics because of the technical language used. Users can agree or not with the proposals with a vote and classify bills as urgent or

redundant. Citizens also have the possibility to engage in an online discussion about policy proposals. All deputies have their own profile on which web users can see their activities in Parliament. Every month, a report on the results of these activities is published on the platform.

*"Brazil faces a serious crisis of confidence between citizens and the government. We want to re-establish trust."*

It is important to spread information in order to facilitate civic action. Vote on the Web gives citizens, especially the young, information, on the one hand, and the possibility for action, on the other hand, in the sense of the user having the ability to affect the political process. An increasingly large number of Brazilians is using the tool, strengthening its power to impact Brazilian politics. One Senator, for example, decided to cancel a bill because it was contested by web users. Another senator used the results of the online vote to convince colleagues to approve a bill.

### *Summary of the discussion*

Vote on the Web employs transferrable technology that people can use all over the world in different national realities whenever there is a problem of distance between citizens and elected leaders. The platform was developed by a private company, aiming at using its knowledge to stimulate societal change. The profits of the company 'Webcitizen' are used to maintain the projects and the organisation does not generate profits.

*"Our principal goal is to stimulate people to talk about politics."*

While Vote on Web is the first platform of its kind in Brazil, similar initiatives already exist in the United

States. Since the beginning of Open Congress in the US, many new projects on transparency and voting and more and more open government platforms have been created. Despite the enthusiasm about open government initiatives, one needs to question, however, the extent to which these projects are indeed useful to increase the impact of citizens in political decision-making. What makes these platforms successful and when do they fail to have an impact on democracy?

An open online platform like Vote on the Web can remove barriers among citizens and elected officials and give young people the opportunity to inject their ideas into the political system. However, there is a problem with transparency in the context of handling big data. It is crucial to publish the way in which user data is used on the website in order to prevent external manipulation. Moreover, it needs to be ensured that democratic rules are respected online. Young people should be the protagonists of political decision-making, but should also be able to influence policies under safe conditions. The web often hides pitfalls and problems which must be addressed. According to the organizers, however, security is currently not an issue on Vote on web, as a number of tools have been put in place in order to prevent misuse.

*"The internet is a tool to help citizens to participate more."*

A potential problem for the initiative is the fact that many people do not have access to the internet, most

notably in Latin America and in Africa. Even in Europe not every citizen is able to connect online. However, in order to be considered democratic, tools aiming at increasing citizen's influence on political decisions need to be useful for the whole population of a state. The presenters of the initiative responded that in Brazil, the internet is growing, especially on mobiles. Vote on Web is thus trying to transform and develop in order to be used more on mobile devices. They, for example, created the app "Politics in bars" that can be used on mobiles.

Some participants underlined that the internet should be used in parallel to personal relations in order to be able to bring citizens and elected politicians closer together. In this respect, the internet should be seen as a means, not as a goal in itself, to re-connect citizens with institutions. In order to achieve this, education on (online) citizenship is needed. Finally, given that Vote on the Web is a service by a private company in light of a corporate social responsibility vision, it could be advantageous to have such a platform run directly by the government or a non-governmental organisation to make the political decision-making process accessible. Which organizational form would be most sustainable? Would it be dangerous for the privacy of the citizens if the government set up an online platform to influence or make political decisions? The lab concluded with these open questions which remain to be addressed in further discussion on the opportunities and challenges for online platforms aiming at influencing democratic policy making.



## LAB 15 - YOUTH IN GLOBAL SUMMITS

*Globalisation has increased the pressure for young people to connect globally in order to make their voices heard. What is the role of young people in international politics? How can transnational structures be set up to involve youth in international negotiations?*

Moderator: Mr Matthew JOHNSON, United Kingdom, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe  
Cartoonist: Ms Violette BERGER

Initiative 1: Y8/Y20 Summit, Policy Innovation, Germany

### Presenters

Ms Cilia Christina KANELLOPOULOS, Greece, Vice-Chair of Policy Innovation e.V.  
Mr Philip STROTHMANN, Germany, Chair of Policy Innovation e.V.

### Discussants

Mr Dobrica MILOVANOVIC, Serbia, Kragujevac City Council Member, Professor of Kragujevac University and Member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe  
Mr Ali SHAHBAZ, Pakistan, Youth Delegate to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development and Youth Ambassador for Cultural Exchange to the United States  
Mr Alex WIRTH, USA, Cofounder and CEO of Quorum Analytics, Founder of YouthCreatingAction.org

### *Executive summary*

Lab 15 discussed the impact and challenges of young people attending global summits, such as Y8 and Y20. Globalisation, the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas and culture, increased the societal involvement of people from all around the world. While globalisation can be perceived as an advantage, considering its impact on economic growth, bringing people together and presenting necessary tools to become more open minded for different cultures, it also raises the concern of being efficient in the middle of all these interactions. Democracy ideally means taking into account every citizen's opinion. From a globalisation perspective, democracy can be challenging because it is difficult to determine how everybody's opinion should be taken into consideration at a global scale. Global summits usually do not provide sufficient space for youth input. The Y8 and Y20 Summits are the official youth conferences within the Group of Eight (G8) and Group of Twenty (G20) processes. Both Summits provide a platform for youth from G8 and G20 members to communicate with world leaders about issues that are important to them, enabling them to both raise concerns and propose solutions. The Summits are more than just a single event, but a year-long exercise to build the participants' capacity to understand and contribute to the G8 and G20 agendas, and thus offer them an opportunity to shape real world politics. The perception of most people is that democracy is not efficient anymore. However, every individual itself must take action in order to change this.

### *About the initiative*

While global summits can be the theatre of anger and protest regarding the opposition of some people who feel excluded and do not agree with the decision-making process, they are the main places where leaders take the most important decisions on economic, environmental and political issues. How exactly are these decisions taken and is it possible to intervene in this process? What is the impact of youth in global summits? Today, youth are invited to global summits because leaders see their involvement on all fronts. It appears that young people are ready to take their destiny in their own hands, but the recurrent concern is whether their presence at these summits really impacts public policy decisions that are taken. The main point is to determine whether or not the follow up of these summits actually includes youth's opinion.



*"An international summit is not about individual skills. The position must be agreed by all, it's a consensus."*

The outcomes of the Y8 and Y20 summits are presented to the Heads of State of the G20 and G8 countries as well as to relevant global policy makers to make the visions and innovative solutions of youth heard. The summits themselves are hosted in the real host country of the G8 and G20 and the first summit has been organized in 2006 alongside the G8 Summit in St Petersburg, Russia. While there are a number of civil society efforts to influence the G8 and G20 respectively, the voice of youth requires to be heard separately as young people are the ones who will live with the consequences of decisions taken.



The project involves youth between the age of 18-29. Once selected, the delegates go through an intensive training programme but are also asked to engage with other youth to discuss about their ideas. To this end, the initiative uses online platforms such as the Atlantic community to foster dialogue and enable a broad participation of youth in the process. A number of governments have taken up suggestions from the communiqués and used language drafted by our delegates to make their points. Last year, President Putin spent two hours with delegates to discuss their

proposals and used the final communiqué within negotiations. Also, the Italian delegation to the G20 copied text from our Y20 communiqué into their official position.

#### *Summary of the discussion*

During the lab discussion, it was emphasized that in order for the initiative to be efficient, more representatives from governments need to be involved as they are the ones to impact young people's lives directly through legislation and public policies. Government's representatives do not need to be afraid of youth. The main problem in democracies today is that civil society deliberation is detached from institutional decision-making. Hence, a discussion is necessary between youth and governments and leaders must not be afraid to cooperate.

*"Don't be afraid of us!"*

Moreover, it was critically discussed whether youth is merely invited to global summits in order to be the poster child and for decision-makers to take nice pictures with them. Most of the time, young people are not substantively allowed to assist in the meeting or to make concrete propositions in order to take action. Thus, the involvement of youth in global decision-making procedures seems to be a means of publicity rather than symbolising an effective change. On the other hand, only a constant and close collaboration of youth, NGO's and states can be a solution for considering young people as civil society stakeholders whose ideas matter.

Summarising, it is most crucial to break out of the circle of organizing conferences without initiating any meaningful changes in reality. Concrete measures need to be taken in order to include youth in global summits' decision processes and to measure a significant improvement in terms of young people's political impact. In order to achieve this, more leaders should interact directly with youth, listen to their concerns and take decisions with them through a consensus.

## **Theme 4 – Influencing Institutions**

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The distance between young people and democratic institutions is a matter of concern. Not only young people's exclusion from political party leadership and electoral participation leads to distortions in political arbitrations but they also set a trend towards an ever greater democratic deficit and de-legitimation of democratic institutions. In some cases, political institutions adapt and create structures to include young people, in form of, for example, the Young Mayor Programme or Youth Parliaments. In other cases, young people try to reform institutions from outside, assembling on the streets or using the internet and social networks to express their demands

## LAB 16 - YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

*Among young people, there is a rising abstention from electoral politics. How can trust in elected officials be re-built? Is election training enough to revive youth's interest to vote or is the model of representative democracy outdated and needs to be reformed?*

Moderator: Mr Andreas KIEFER, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Cartoonist: Ms Maria LUCHANKINA

Initiative 1: Youth Election Training: My Choice, Democratic Youth Movement, Bosnia and Herzegovina

### Presenters

Mr Ernad Deni ČOMAGA, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Founder and President of the Democratic Youth Movement

Ms Amila SELIMADŽOVIĆ, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vice President of the Democratic Youth Movement

Initiative 2: Chabab 2012, The Circle of Young Democrats of Morocco

### Presenters

Ms Hafsa EL BEKRI, Morocco, The Circle of Young Democrats of Morocco

Mr Hamza SHAWY, Morocco/France, The Circle of Young Democrats of Morocco

### Discussants

Mr Eyal HALAMISH, Australia, CEO of 'OurSay'

Mr Kensuke HARADA, Japan, President, Non-profit Corporation YouthCreate

### Executive summary

Lab 16 addressed the rising abstention from electoral politics among young people and, with the help of the presented initiatives and invited discussants, was searching for proper answers to questions often raised in this context, such as how can trust in elected officials be re-built and how can youth's interest to vote be revived? The discussion was based on two youth participation initiatives, which were developed to increase the influence of committed youth on the functioning and evolution of democracy: the youth election training „My Choice” created by the Democratic Youth Movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and “Chabab 2012” launched by the Circle of Young Democrats of Morocco. The presented projects were tested by the participants of the Lab, in particular, with respect to their potential and challenges for transforming youth participation into political influence, their real impact on policy-making and added value to the development of democratic institutions.

### About the initiatives

The “Chabab 2012” initiative was launched under the banner of “Le Maroc de demain aux couleurs de la jeunesse” to defend the right of young Moroccans' access to electoral mandates in the last parliamentary elections in Morocco. The initiative's aim is to give young politicians access to parliamentary institutions through the establishment of an independent list dedicated to youth during elections. The initiative was

launched in the wake of the International Year of Youth. The Preparatory Commission for the Chabab 2012 initiative consists of the circle of young Democrats of Morocco, several political parties and young political activists.



“My Choice” is based on the idea of national youth election training and campaigning as well as the experience of how to mobilize several thousand young voters to go out and vote during the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through the combination of an interdisciplinary approach the Democratic Youth Movement manages to reach more than 13000 young voters (youth aged from 18 to 20) directly and “in flash”, as well as 100,000 young people indirectly

via social media and other media. The main goal is to promote elections at a non-formal level, and to create an atmosphere that voting is something cool and integrative.

#### *The panel discussion*

The discussion started with concrete illustrations of empowering youth in democratic policy-making, like lowering the voting age to 16 and, for example, the youngest ever Foreign Minister appointed in Austria. Politicians need to talk with young people and not about young people, in order to involve them in the decision-making processes, while they have to insist not to be put in the „usual role“ and limited to the „usual themes“ traditionally upheld for citizens of their age. Young people, just like every other citizen, want to be valued, understood and heard. In this sense, the key of developing a participatory process, where youth has a real political influence, is to create a change in political culture, which ensures the involvement of young people by offering new options for effective democratic policy-making – and make sure this will work long term. As one of those options, the need for a set number of young delegates in decision-making bodies was mentioned.

*“Practicing democracy is not only a right but also an obligation.”*

Both initiatives have an impact on recognising young people’s influence in political decision-making. In this context, direct communication to youth by committed young activists, illustrated by the „Your Choice“ project is crucial. The project’s results also show the involvement of a large number of participants from the targeted group. Focusing on the inclusiveness of the examined initiatives on election participation, the question was raised how to deal with young people who want to have access to electoral mandates in parliamentary institutions, but do not have the necessary abilities to take an active part in politics. Potential solutions, are, for example, introducing quota for youth, ensuring parity and equality of elected representatives of different groups in society and creating inter-groups of young people in parliaments. On the other hand, ‘GO2VOTE’ activities may be needed more than ever, because younger generations seem to have lost the understanding that practicing democracy is not only a right, but also an obligation.

In Tunisia, for example, thanks to the provision of the new electoral code considering the mandatory nomination of at least one young person on each list, about 40 % of the representatives is aged less than 30 years old – compared to 4 % before. However, young people in Tunisia were not mobilised before the October election to cast their ballots for these

candidates. Hence, there is a need for the “activation” of youth to vote by young elected representatives who have the same vocabulary and a similar way of thinking.

*“Young citizens are still not aware of the potential power for change they hold in their hands.”*

As regards the impact of the presented initiatives on policy-making, there is a necessity to conduct analyses of the performance of young elected people in representative institutions, as well as the outcome of elections where go-to-vote campaigns among youth were organised to see whether young people really had and used the chance to create a bigger impact on democratic processes. In this context, the opinion of rather conservative politicians who do not want to take young people seriously should shift when it comes to decision-making. At the same time, most young citizens are still not aware of the potential power for change they hold in their hands when they decide to go to the ballot box. In countries in democratic transition, such as Morocco, youth may be the carriers of change, and therefore, a whole range of legal instruments and measures of so-called positive discrimination are needed, in order to ensure that young people gain more space in policy-making.

It is the state in the first place which has to ensure the necessary legal and institutional framework for and the general education on election participation. Direct exchanges with young politicians and youth activists are also crucial in the process of awareness-raising; similarly the contribution of the media, which can extend or even limit the impact of efforts for empowering youth. Moreover, apart from voting and running in elections, a third approach for youth participation can be to get involved in youth associations.

*“We have to build an inclusive, cohesive and truly representative democracy that involves all groups of society equally, including youth, women and disadvantaged people”*

Lastly, the accessibility to democratic processes is conditioned by a high level of trust in representative institutions. In some countries, citizens can vote from their mobile at home, while elsewhere this trust has to be built up bit by bit or completely re-built. Encouraging people to vote and participate in elections can only be successful if they have the conviction that their vote counts and can generate changes. This conviction can only be reached with electoral bodies which have real power and competences. “We have to build an inclusive, cohesive and truly representative democracy that involves all groups of society equally, including youth, women and disadvantaged people”.

## LAB 17 - HACKING DEMOCRACY

For the generation of 'digital natives', the internet has become the most important space for political debate. However, the transformative potential of an online public sphere is not yet transformed into action by traditional offline democracy. Can youth build a bridge between the two spheres by 'hacking' democracy?

Moderator: Ms Nicole GAUTHIER, France, Director, School of Journalism at University of Strasbourg  
Cartoonist: Ms Aline ROLLIN

Initiative: DemocracyOS and The Net Party, Argentina

### Presenters

Ms Pia MANCINI, Argentina, Director of Net Democracy  
Mr Santiago SIRI, Argentina, Founder of The Net Party

### Discussants

Ms Andrea CHALUPA, United States, Journalist, Author and Digital Activist  
Mr Gcobani QAMBELA, South Africa, Blogger, Social commentator and Writer  
Mr Halldór Auðar SVANSSON, Iceland, City councilor in Reykjavík, Pirate Party

### Executive Summary

Lab 17 was dedicated to digital democracy and discussed the extent to which the internet can be useful to the political debate. The past decades have witnessed radical societal changes, especially due to the rise of new computing and communication technologies (ICT). In parallel, political disengagement, particularly amongst young people, has become one of current public life's characteristic features. The question is whether digital tools can become part of the common democratic space, helping to revitalize democratic institutions and if young people have a specific role to play to develop inter-relations between the offline and online world. The lab participants agreed that what makes the Internet unique and so powerful is that it is a "permission-less" innovation network. If we were to consider the internet a state, nothing would stop citizens at the border and everyone could migrate to this new political body. However, as the internet matures, its culture will change. We are currently in the midst of these changes.

### About the initiative

Modern democratic governments are not able to answer the citizens' needs. The main reason is that society feels cut off from its representatives, both spatially/physically and intellectually. Spatially because the cost of participating to the system is high, as you have to dedicate your life to a political party if you really want to be engaged. It is time- and money-consuming and leaves insufficient room for private life. Furthermore, elections, one of the ways to influence the decision-making process, only happen every two or four years, creating very few interactions with politics and having in practice "infinitesimal effect". The second way to changing laws would be migration, in the sense of changing a country and the laws associated with it. In any case,

you are either completely in or completely out of the system - there is no grey area. Secondly, the language of the system is very cryptic. It is done by lawyers and for lawyers forcing the society to silence and apathy. The current political system expects its citizens to be recipient of one model and to be passive for the rest. This feeling is not specific to the Argentinian society; it is experienced all over the world. Hence, there is an increasing number of strikes and street protests in order for the citizens to have their voice heard. As the British colonists used to say "No taxation without representation", we could say today "no representation without conversation". Citizens want to be part of the democratic process and they have the right to be part of political conversations.

*"No representation without conversation."*



Liveleaching: Aline Rollin, at World Forum for Democracy - 5/11/2014 - Lab17

On the basis of these reflections, DemocracyOS and the Net Party have been created. DemocracyOS is an open source software online platform where citizens, once registered, can vote or delegate their vote and

post remarks about a proposed bill. Democracy is about persuading and being persuaded. But technology by itself is not enough, it has to be used and connected to the current political system to change and improve the decision making process.

*"Re-wire the political system."*

The Net Party, created in July 2013 ("Partido de la Red"), impacts the political system, but does not pressure it, and makes Democracy OS compatible with it. The party manifesto is to vote according to what the citizens have decided on Democracy OS. It was a very disruptive and radical idea to bring about in Argentina, but they still managed to arrive second at the local elections. Even though it was not enough for the local congress, it was enough to become part of the conversation. The political system understood that they are not anti-system. They want to hack it in the sense of radical change and not destroy the way political parties make their decisions. They succeeded in creating a co-operation with the current government and currently three bills are being discussed via Democracy OS. The idea is to re-wire the political system, using technology to understand it and hack it and empower those who are able to make decisions and bring democracy to the 21st century.

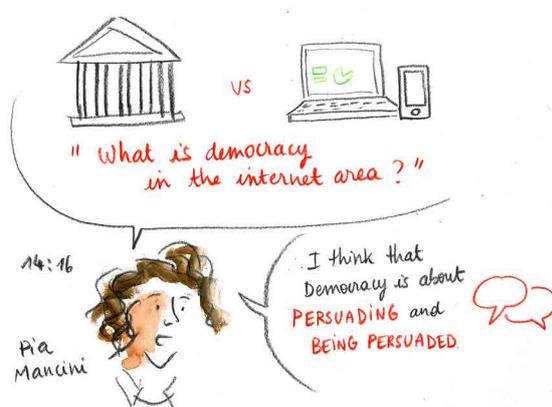
#### Summary of the discussion

The disaffection of youth with traditional political parties, is not only visible in Argentina, but also in Europe, as for example demonstrated by the low voter turnout of the last municipal election in Iceland. The turnout was low for most large cities where it is usually quite high. The government conducted a survey to find the reasons. The study showed that mainly young people did not vote: overall less than 15%. When asked whether they would be more likely to vote if they could vote online, young people confirmed. In Reykjavik, a website where people can post ideas and vote for them has hence been created and the city is committed to take the input into consideration. This change of democratic participation is tightly related to the change of repartition of power between public authorities and citizens induced by the Internet.

*"Nowadays, the state is no longer the one having all information about its citizens, Facebook is."*

There is a correlation between the nature of the Internet and the state of democracy. In terms of organisation and repartition of power, it is possible to identify three types of networks. The first is the centralized network with one king and the rest of the people. Then there is a decentralized network which is the industrialized world's typical organisation. It is the "few to many" approach: few people

are manufacturing goods, but many people are buying them; few people are emitting information and many people receive it; few people are making laws for many citizens. Nowadays, the state is no longer the one having all information about its citizens, Facebook is. Thanks to the internet, we are now in a configuration called 'distributed authorities' of which Bitcoin remains the best illustration. Its implications are powerful, as it changes completely the nature of the Leviathan. The underlying technology of Bitcoin is the Block Chain. Indeed, Bitcoin is not just about replacing money. On the contrary, the premise is to create a universal bureaucracy, capable of certifying any kind of contract through a digital way backed by cryptography. Cryptography is a concept tied to the concept of intelligence, which makes the Bitcoin computer the strongest and the most sophisticated computer in the world.



Livesketching: Alina Bellin, at World Forum for Democracy - SFH/2014 - Lab 17

One of online democracy's main problems is that the majority of the population does not have access to the internet and one needs to be wary of not creating another gap and source of exclusion. At the same time, rights and citizenship are an expanding and growing problem and talking about digital democracy helps putting light on the fact that not everyone has access to the internet. The objective should be to fill the gap, as access to the internet should be a right in the context of ensuring access to knowledge. The Net Party therefore aims at implementing mandatory internet access in schools.

Another topical issue raised is the need for transparency. Open data and transparency are paramount to be able to hack the system and people must be able to see easily what is going on online. There is an attitude of distrust towards e-voting as many elections using online devices have been questioned for their integrity and regularity. This concern goes along with security, and more specifically the "trolling" phenomenon. There have been criticisms that a "trolling factory" has been widely used by Russia to counter Ukrainian activists. Some people claimed

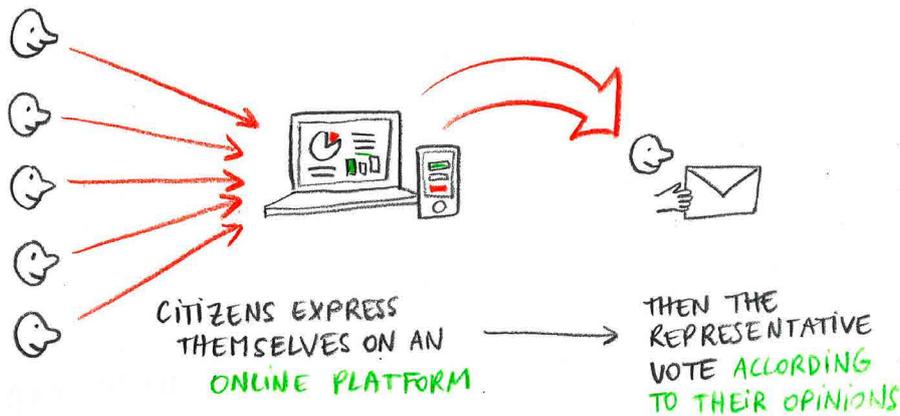
that children have been hired to press a button 12 hours a day to drown activists' Tweeter, Facebook or YouTube's accounts with comments so that big companies shut them down. This must not be considered as an isolated phenomenon and mechanisms need to be put in place that stop leading candidates from hiring troll factories.

Moreover, the fight against hate speech and respect for freedom of expression should be of paramount importance as the internet facilitates harassment. There is a "volatility" of online information, questioning the efficiency and sustainability of the idea behind. An example is the "Bring back our girls" campaign which did not work as well as expected. People can grow tired of the hashtag and transfer their interest to

other areas. However, it is also possible to raise media awareness for issues with a simple hashtag.

*"The biggest enemy of our democracy is apathy"*

Overall, the Net Party and Democracy OS are about moving from agitation to construction. The goal is not to replace the whole political system, as it would be a potentially dangerous utopia, but rather to work with it and improve it. The biggest enemy of democracy is apathy and having highly trained politicians expressing extreme opinions, leading to polarization. Democracy is a working process and there are many ways to develop democratic systems. Most importantly democracy is about the participation of people: the more participation, the healthier the democracy.



Pia Mahani presenting Net Democracy.

Livesketching: Aline Rollin at World Forum for Democracy - 5/11/2014 - Lab 17

## LAB 18 - YOUTH SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: CHALLENGING THE SYSTEM ON THE STREET?

*When young people have the feeling to be excluded from decision-making, they take their demands to the streets. Social movements are said to be the drivers for system change but how can we sustain their impact? What are the challenges and prospects for social movements to influence democratic structures?*

Moderator: Mr Cristian URSE, Romania, Deputy Permanent Representative of Romania to the Council of Europe

Cartoonist: Ms Nelly MASSERA

Initiative: #YoSoy132, Mexico

### Presenter

Mr César Alan RUIZ GALICIA, Mexico, Activist, Journalist, Initiative for Democratization of Media and Transmedia Education

### Discussants

Ms Ntshadi MOFOKENG, South Africa, Head of Youth Department at Equal Education

Mr Andrij SHEVCHENKO, Ukraine, Member of Parliament

Ms Mary WANGARE MAINA, Kenya, Social Auditor at ActionAid

### Executive summary

There has been lack of participation of youth in Europe in elections and also around the world. An in-depth analysis is needed in order to identify the problems. One of the main inconveniences of the actual system is the so called 'adultocracy' that we are living in, in which young people are not given decision-making positions. Naturally, there is no universal recipe to mobilize youths. One needs to look at successful examples of youth mobilisation and learn from them. The Mexican social movement #YoSoy132 is such a successful example of youth mobilization for a political cause. The movement aims at diversifying the media landscape in Mexico. However, young people on the streets cannot cause change on their own by protesting. It is those who are part of the political system who need to be involved.

### About the initiative

Violence in Mexico is steadily increasing. In the context of raising awareness for the worrying developments in the country, youth are the most active but most counter-cultural movement within society. In order to achieve change, there needs to be a heterogeneous movement of ideas encouraging diversity, for instance by bringing together private and public universities. YoSoy 132 approaches this problem by aiming at democratising media. Three assumptions form the project's basis: Firstly, media forms opinions which are expressed through a vote in elections. Parties are no longer the ones who shape opinions and help people define themselves. Secondly, crucial parts of the means of broadcasting belong to states, which control them. In Mexico, the media is dominated by two monopolies, which control 90% of frequencies.

As media control has to be shared in order to be democratized, the aim of Yo Soy 132 is to diversify ownership in media. Thirdly, it is important to bear in mind that without media democracy, one cannot aspire to achieve political democracy.

The movement drafted a constitutional amendment which, however, did not achieve change. There should be legal protection for community radio in order to give local communities a greater voice. Rights exist only if they are exercised and digital literacy is vital, considering that in the modern era a person can consume more information in a single day than a person several centuries ago was able to consume in an entire lifetime. To this end, online coverage of news should be widened. In this respect, it is important to think global, aiming to have universal, themed organisations for democratisation. The exercise of ideas and widening of access to communication through education and law are vital in this regard.

### Summary of the discussion

It is crucial to talk about media and the internet in the context of human rights. The internet has not been thought of when the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was first drafted, but is now vital for social reform.

*"It is insanity to repeat the same thing over and over again and expect different results."*

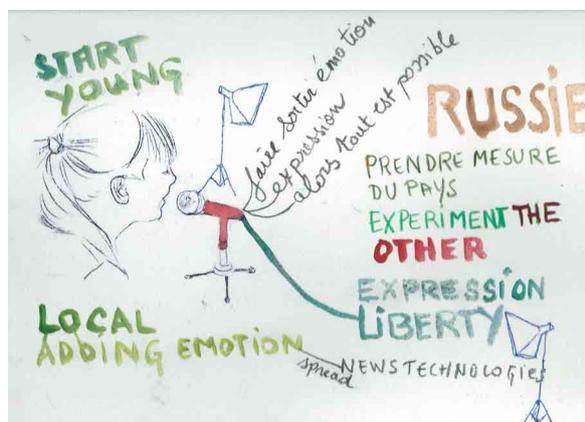
In Ukraine, a journalist sparked off the country's revolution on Facebook with students. The regime's violent reaction then triggered greater support from other groups. The average age of protestors was 38, which

was older than in the Arab Spring, but young people clearly energised the movement. In Ukraine, older people were dying for a better life for the young. People do not go to the streets if they have nothing to lose. They go if something has been stolen from them and in this case, the European dream was stolen from Ukrainians. One needs to energise youth for fighting for a cause. At the same time, large parts of the Ukrainian elderly population do not have access to the internet. As traditional media does not necessarily always spread true information, there is the need to make sure that objective, reliable information is spread.

*"People don't go to the streets when they have nothing to lose - they go when they have something stolen from them"*

Media is vital in making leaders change their policy, exposing problems and protecting human rights. In Kenya, for example, the main media is owned by big groups that are violating human rights. Thus, media ownership is a key issue for the state. As the societal situation in Kenya is changing, space is increasingly provided for social movements to arise and assume ownership.

*"The struggle might be long and hard, but we need some small victories along the way to make the greater goal seem possible"*



Movements have to be kept within a social space, but Facebook and Twitter are not sufficient to trigger action. There is the need for politicians to read what youth wants and to be guided by young people's ideas. In South Africa, for instance, societal openness is different depending on the citizen you ask. There is hence the need for a tool to harness the support of the wider public. One has to achieve small victories along the path to a greater goal, in order to keep grassroots activists motivated.

In this context, democratisation of media is the first step to make, but information needs to be translated into action in order to make changes. The question is

how to manage movements that come in waves, and avoid a fade in enthusiasm. In order to think about the future, one should look back and learn from past movements. Movements have to get together and then decide what to do, rather than rallying around an established manifesto. Consensus is then built as the movement goes along.

*"Young people are moving from protests to proposals."*

The Arab Spring has shown that street protests do not necessarily create democracy, but must be translated into democracy by their members entering the governmental system and effecting change from within. Exclusively from the streets it is impossible to achieve truly democratic goals. It is thus important to make change sustainable and enter politics. Civil society is a watchdog, but it cannot continue to sustain change on its own. At the same time, civil society is a very important space for democratisation, and one should not have to make a choice between either institutions or civil society. Young people need space to develop their own ideas, test and develop them.

*"We have to create new parties with new ideas."*

The Arab Spring has proven that people can gather in a square and effect political change, regardless of the outcome. 132 wants to manifest opposition to violence and thrive towards individual autonomy in Mexico. Public territory, public radio in particular, has to be democratised since even a small village with no electricity is able to access a radio. At the same time, the internet is today more important for disseminating news than television. Thus, the right of each citizen to new technology should be enshrined in a constitution. The internet does not resolve all problems alone, however. One has to be involved bodily, not just by clicking a link on a website. Moreover, people needed to be taught to use information technology in order for it to be effective.

*"Is it easier to enter politics than to continue fighting from outside?"*

It is problematic that people conceptualise political parties by reference to those that already exist and often forget that there is also the possibility to create new, different parties. Citizens need this hope because it gives them a feeling of enthusiasm and involvement. The difficulty of changing society is in creating solidarity and recognising where the system is broken. It is necessary to engage on the basis of facts, statistics and law, and not just feelings. Young people all over the world feel that they can create change, but that the system waters down their achievements. It remains a challenge to find ways to resolve this.

## LAB 19 - YOUTH PARLIAMENT

*Are youth parliaments an effective tool to increase the participation and impact of young people in decision-making or do they only create an appearance of inclusiveness while politicians fail to act upon young people's ideas?*

Moderator: Ms Verena TAYLOR, Director of the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes, Council of Europe

Cartoonist: Mr Laurent SALLES

Initiative 1: UK Youth Parliament, House of Commons, United Kingdom

### Presenters

Mr Michael HOPE, United Kingdom, Chair, British Youth Council/UK Youth Parliament, Youth Select Committee

Ms Aileen WALKER, United Kingdom, Director of Public Engagement at the House of Commons

Initiative 2: Youth Parliament Indonesia, Indonesian Future Leaders

### Presenters

Mr Niwa DWITAMA, Indonesia, Associate Director of Youth Parliament of Indonesia

Ms Andhyta Firselly UTAMI, Indonesia, Program Director of Youth Parliament Indonesia

### Discussants

Mr João Bosco MOTA AMARAL, Portugal, Member of Parliament and Member of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Mr Robin REDA, France, Mayor of Juvisy-sur-Orge

### *Executive summary*

Lab 19 discussed whether youth parliaments are an effective tool to increase the participation and impact of young people in decision-making. Youth Parliaments (YPs) differ in their forms depending on the country of origin, but may generally be defined as youth organisations that consist of elected young member representatives of the national territory. Usually they hold an annual meeting, which is the case of the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP), and propose a year-round series of activities. This process builds a strong commitment among the young people involved. The YPs do not only address topics directly linked to youth, but they also bring their own perspective on broader topics such as environment, sustainable development, transport, standard of living etc. In the UK, the system to determine the areas of work is the following: the members vote on five individual topics which then become their campaign for the forthcoming year. Through on-going activities, YPs equip young people with knowledge and skills, develop their critical thinking, and increase their awareness and participation in politics. This may have a multiplying effect and may increase the knowledge and participation of the entire family. YPs are an innovative solution to address the youth confidence crisis, mainly caused by the feeling of exclusion and ignorance of how decision-making mechanisms work. While youth parliaments are undoubtedly an effective way to strengthen the participation in and awareness of politics in young people, they

nevertheless require finding a complex balance between political recognition and independence.

### *About the initiatives*

The YPs in Indonesia and UK succeeded in involving a heterogeneous group of young people and representing all kinds of minority group (women, LGBTI, disabled people, national minorities etc.). Members of Youth Parliaments are generally more diverse and representative of the UK population than the actual members of the Parliament. Nevertheless, in Indonesia the unequal distribution of technology continues to make it difficult to reach young people from remote areas.



*"Members of Youth Parliament are far more diverse and representative of the UK population than the actual members of the Parliament."*

One of the main added values of YPs is their impact on increasing the legitimacy of the institutions. YPs' experiences prove the necessity of a public framework and the respect for institutions. It increases the knowledge of young people on the functioning of institutions and democracy, which involves learning the skills of compromise and patience. Indeed, the democratic processes are binding and complex, contrasting with the immediacy of the internet, more used by young people.



The presentation of the two initiatives has shown that Youth Parliaments can function in different political and demographic contexts. Indonesia is a young democracy in both meanings - it has existed since 1999 and has a young population - whereas the United Kingdom is an "old" democracy, which means it is important that young people have an interest in politics and democratic values, which are sometimes perceived as granted.

#### *Summary of the discussion*

To be recognized by the government and to make sure that the YP's recommendations and reports will be followed-up by the government, is indeed a crucial

question. Otherwise, the YPs only create an appearance of inclusiveness, while politicians fail to act upon young people's ideas. The inclusion of YP ideas into official decisions would moreover be evidence of the real impact of these initiatives.

*"How to be heard by the government? We have to be too big and too important to be ignored"*

The YP political recognition differs between the countries. Whereas UKYP was born in 2000 following an initiative of the UK Parliament, the Indonesian initiative is trying hard to establish contacts with political leaders. There is a necessity for the Indonesian YP to increase the dialogue and involvement of the Parliament. Besides, youth groups need to grow in size and importance in order not to be ignored.

The Indonesian YP aims at serving young people's interests and not political parties' interests. The young people want to be seen as key partners of the government, not only as beneficiaries of the government programmes. Independence also has to be financial. The Indonesian YP representatives are working on a voluntary basis and on their free time. Thus, they are currently looking for possibilities to ensure a sustainable and independent source of funding to carry out successfully the YP project. In order to progress in finding acceptable political models of youth impact, social networks and digital space need to be utilized.

*"We, the young people, want to be seen as key partners of the government, not only as beneficiaries of the government programmes."*

Several members of Youth Parliaments in different countries (Russia, Surinam, Serbia...) were present in Lab 19 and exchanged view-points based on their respective experiences. In particular, they identified a gap in the co-operation, dialogue and exchange of best practices between the different YPs on an international level. The lab was a first step in the exchange of contacts, which will surely be followed-up by the creation of an online network.

## LAB 20 - YOUNG MAYOR PROGRAMME

*The Young Mayor is an institutionalized part of local decision-making. How can his/her impact be increased and what are the challenges to mainstreaming this approach?*

Moderator: Mr Jean-Philippe BOZOULS, Executive Secretary of the Chamber of Local Authorities, Council of Europe

Cartoonist: Mr Matthieu CHIARA

Initiative: Lewisham Young Mayor Programme, London Borough of Lewisham, United Kingdom

### Presenters

Mr Jacob SAKIL, United Kingdom, Former Young Mayor of Lewisham

Ms Alice SCHWEIGERT, United Kingdom, Campaigner and Member of the Young Mayor Team

### Discussants

Mr Mohammed ALSAUD, Syria, Civil Society Activist

Ms Nataliia PILIUS, Russian Federation, Rapporteur on Youth Participation at the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Mr Michael SALOMO, Germany, Mayor of Hassmersheim

### *Executive summary*

Lab 20 discussed the Young Mayor Programme in the Borough of Lewisham in the United Kingdom. As a response to the distance between young people and democratic institutions, political institutions create structures to include young people in their processes. Lewisham's Young Mayor is part of the constitution of the London Borough of Lewisham in London, UK. The initiative was set up in 2004 to encourage young people in the borough to be involved in decision-making and local politics. A young person is elected every year to represent his peers. With a budget of £30,000 he/she takes part in civic duties, such as school visits, projects, consultations, as well as supporting community groups and campaigns. The elected young mayor and deputy work with a group of young advisors and with politicians, officers and others in the community to address the needs and interests of young people in the borough. After having analysed the programme in the lab discussion, the participants came to the conclusion that the Young Mayor Programme constitutes a first necessary step to open up youth participation to all issues and sectors. It was deemed crucial that young people are not only active in terms of youth policy, but with respect to the full range of political issues.

### *About the initiative*

The Young Mayor's Programme is addressed, in an inclusive and all-encompassing manner, to any interested young person of the Borough of Lewisham with the objective of engaging young people in community life, making them contribute to the latter while socializing young people in the real day-to-day functioning of politics at the local and municipal level. To become eligible for running for the position

of the Young Mayor, young candidates need to gather 50 signatures. Eligible individuals then receive training on how to present themselves and promotion material to support their candidacy. A campaign takes place during which individuals present their ideas and are judged on the basis of the quality of their proposals. Young people as a whole are brought to the forefront either as young "politicians" – in competitive and realistic conditions – or "voters" who are given true power to determine and decide who will be the next young mayor to represent them in issues of their immediate interest. In this way, young people get involved in what happens around them at the municipal level.

*"We are politics – everything we do is politics"*

The project's impact on politics, on issues strictly concerning young people, is real and enhances the credibility of local and municipal institutions as young people are given a say, in order to implement and materialize their most popular ideas. Young people are given the chance to understand how politics operates, under which limitations one has to work and deal with, as well as the role of bureaucracy. In essence, the programme simultaneously institutionalizes the possibility for young people to be educated, to understand how politics works, and to contribute to policy formation and implementation on different levels depending on the engagement in the process.

*"Youth participation means getting involved in and influencing all policy areas."*

The Young Mayor discusses with his advisors for initial ideas. Afterwards, consultations take place in schools,

school councils, and youth clubs and ideas and feedback are included in a newsletter sent to all schools and posted online. The most popular ideas are compiled to final proposals, agreed at a young advisors meeting, and then presented to the Mayor and the Cabinet. The Mayor and Cabinet give the Young Mayor and the advisors the final approval in order for the latter to precede and materialise activities, such as a safe skate event and film, healthy eating promotion, fundraising, young career events, discussions and debates on voting at 16 etc. Participants are able to see the steps from the shaping of the idea/propositions to the idea becoming reality.

## IS IT GOOD TO STAND FOR A SPECIAL PART OF THE POPULATION?



The Programme has proven its resilience and sustainability and since its inauguration in 2004 every year a young mayor is elected. In addition, steps are being made, on the basis of the Lewisham experience, to export the Young Mayor Programme to municipalities in other European countries. Representatives from Lewisham have visited municipalities in Scotland and Norway in order to assist the development of the Young Mayor Programme there for 2014/15. Likewise, Lewisham has received visits from representatives from Norway, Sweden, Portugal and Italy with the objective of observing Lewisham's election process in order for them to develop their own systems.

## Summary of the discussion

Whereas the Young Mayor Programme in London offers a genuine participation opportunity for young people, participants discussed that in most Middle Eastern countries young people are invited only to limited and regulated participation by the respective institutions in order for the latter to gain legitimacy. A lab participant stated that governments in Middle East and North Africa fear the youth and its potential to bring about and materialize change or even revolution. Young people need to create their own space because even though youth is in the majority, it is nonetheless not at all represented on a political level. It is important that both in Europe and the Middle East, independent fundraising for youth activities takes place in order to assure funds, reduce financial dependency from fund providers and increase the sustainability of projects envisaged.

*"When a country is in crisis, it is the young people who mobilise first."*

Moreover, with adequate funds, the initiators of a project can keep control over it during its implementation. In this respect, the Young Mayor Programme might be too dependent on funds provided by the municipality and the abilities of respective Young Mayors and their advisors to proceed with fundraising. Overall, it was stated that in the Young Mayor Programme, youth does not create its own space, but remains too dependent on existing structures and the acceptance of respective municipal authorities. The project was the idea of the progressive mayor Steve Bullock, not a young person, who took the decision to inaugurate the Young Mayor. It is still a developing project and up to this point real influence apart from that on young people's issues was limited.

In modern society competition among young people is high and the quality of youth participation in politics has significantly increased, also in light of the Young Mayors Programme during which candidates have to convince their audience. In this context, best practices for youth participation should be looked at and further emulated. There is clearly an enormous potential brought by the development of IT and the internet which needs to and should be used by young people if they are to increase their impact and become more active. Besides, as possible practical solutions for increased youth participation, there should be quotas for participation of young people within political institutions.

*"The role of young people should not be confined to youth issues."*

The Young Mayor Programme might be limited due to the fact that the Young Mayor only deals with issues related to young people. Young people should from

the age they acquire the right to vote assume real responsibilities and stand for elections. Youth should take part in decision-making, such as what kind of infrastructure should be put in place, how to allocate municipal, or how to construct a municipal library or a swimming pool. They should shoulder real responsibilities, not to have a role confined to addressing the needs and interests of exclusively young people. Youth have to stand for real elections, at least at the

municipal level which is as essential as the national level. However, the participation of young people on issues of interest not confined to young people but to day to day municipal problems, is not in fact in contradiction to the Lewisham initiative and experience. The two are rather complementary to each other, as the Young Mayor Programme constitutes the first necessary step to open up youth participation to all issues and sectors.

IS IT GOOD TO HAVE SOMEONE WHO STANDS FOR A SPECIFIC PART OF THE POPULATION ?



## **The Unconferences**

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The World Forum for Democracy 2014 has for the first time involved a number of “unconferences”. These are participant-driven workshops whose agenda is created by the attendees on an online platform before the meeting. Anyone who wanted to initiate a discussion on a topic could claim a time and space. The unconferences have enabled spontaneous discussions, as well as fresh ideas and new alliances to emerge. Unconferences featured open debates rather than having a single speaker at the front of the room giving a talk, although any format was permitted.

## UNCONFERENCE 1 - ILLIBERAL DEMOCRACY: IS THERE ANY PLACE FOR IT?

Organiser: Ms Varvara S. MALEVSKAYA, Russian Federation, St. Petersburg State University School of International Relations

### *Executive summary*

The vast majority of states in the world call themselves a democracy. However, not all of them are equally democratic. Of the countries that lie between confirmed dictatorship and consolidated democracy, some do better on political liberties than on civil ones. These are illiberal democracies. The goal of the unconference was to answer the question whether there can be illiberal democracies with their particular religious and social habits or whether all states should reach a consolidated, "complete" democracy one day.

### *What is an illiberal democracy?*

Illiberal democracies are states that are categorised as lying between a confirmed dictatorship and a consolidated democracy. Citizens in a liberal democracy should have political liberties and civil liberties. However, not all countries describing themselves as liberal democracies are in fact liberal. As the latest research has shown, the majority of states have not yet implemented a genuine liberal democracy. There are many examples of illiberal democracies in the world: for instance, in India the protection of culture is very strong, but the right to freedom of speech cannot always be fully exercised. However, since an example of a perfect democracy does not exist, it is highly difficult to promote one clearly defined model of liberal democracy.

There are three potential ways out of this dilemma. Firstly, if one accepts that all democracies should be liberal, a model of a full liberal democracy should be developed and strictly respected by all states. Secondly, the international community could accept illiberal democracies, for example because in some cases only illiberal democracies can respect the historical, cultural, and religious traditions of a state, as well as its social habits. Thirdly, one creates another "model" of democracy, beyond the traditional definition of liberal and illiberal democracies.

### *Summary of the discussion*

In order to find the best solution for the dilemma, the audience was divided into three groups (liberal

democracy, illiberal democracy, third way), according to their own preference. They were also invited to create a "manifesto" which should explain why the solution they have chosen is the best one.

The supporters of the concept of a liberal democracy stated that exclusively this form of democracy can guarantee peace, freedom, civil rights, and equality. Moreover, only a liberal democracy allows for a complete separation of powers into the traditional division of a legislative, executive, and judicial branch. Liberal democracies are able to defend minorities stronger than other models of democracy and can protect freedom of election, as well as guarantee the participation of citizens in the decision-making process.

Participants in the group that justified the existence of illiberal democracies stated that it was liberal democracies which are responsible for the current world disorder, exemplified by the war Iraq and in Syria, and the violation of human rights in Guantanamo. It is hence impossible to argue that all evil in current world politics stems from illiberal democracy. The group deemed illiberal democracy more suitable in protecting traditional values. Moreover, they noted that many wars in history have been started by countries that we would today classify as liberal democracies.

The third group tried to find another solution going beyond the traditional concept of liberal/illiberal democracy. Starting off with the etymology of the word "democracy" (from the Ancient Greek *demòs*, meaning 'people' and *kratos*, meaning 'power'), they stated that democracy is a process and that states should not be forced to implement a model of liberal democracy if the people of the respective state refuse it. The group added that a completely liberal democracy is an illusion, as it is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve this pure form of democracy. The group concluded that the implementation of a liberal democracy should always take into account the societal context of a country, such as religion, culture, history, and language.

## UNCONFERENCE 2 - INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE, A BASIC PILLAR IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES

Organiser: Mr Antonio PALAZUELOS PRIETO, Spain, International Consultant and Project Coordinator  
“Youths as Promoters of Intercultural Understanding”

### *Executive summary*

The goal of this unconference was to find innovative ways on how young people can promote intercultural dialogue in their communities in order to contribute to the resolution of conflicts in society and consolidate democracies by fostering active citizenship and a culture of peace. States often accommodate several cultures, peoples, nations, religions, ethnicities or communities that need to be included in democratic decision-making processes. This diversity is enriching and positive. If it is well managed, based on values as tolerance, culture of peace, dialogue, civic engagement and cross-cultural understanding, then democracy becomes more representative, and thus stable and consolidated. This process can be led by young generations as promoters of intercultural understanding and change makers for a more equitable and democratic society.

### *Defining ‘Intercultural Dialogue’*

At the beginning of the unconference, every participant was asked to write down their ideas on ‘How Intercultural Dialogue contributes to Democracy’. Among the ideas were, for example, ‘It brings mutual understanding between cultures and open minds to others’, ‘Intercultural dialogue is an exchange of cultures in which listening to each other is essential, it is part of democracy’ and ‘Intercultural dialogue is the recognition of diversity and respect for difference’. After this brainstorming, several case studies taking place in Cabo Verde through which young people stimulated intercultural dialogue were presented. The project “Youth as Promoters of Intercultural Understanding” was awarded with the Youth Solidarity Fund by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and aims at promoting intercultural dialogue in communities, as well as tackling the growing level of inequality, violence, social exclusion and lack of democratic participation, which are affecting young people in particular. The project’s innovativeness is illustrated by the fact that it opened spaces for dialogue among different communities and social groups to promote joint initiatives and projects. It was the first time in Cabo Verde that people from different origins and backgrounds shared a common activity with local residents and established links between their organizations with the aim to foster integration, mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue.

The project fosters through a non-formal educational approach cross-cultural understanding and tolerance

among different communities and rival youth groups. Recent activities of the project include Intercultural Dialogue Workshops and Awareness Campaigns to promote Peace Education and non-violence values in schools, youth centers and community facilities. Moreover, the project has facilitated civic engagement sessions to stimulate active citizenship and young people’s commitment to directly contribute to their communities and participate in democracy. Other approaches include ‘Communication for Development’ trainings. These provide youth leaders with communication instruments to tackle social problems and improve the life conditions in their communities. The trainings are facilitated by peers to develop skills, build capacities and advance social integration through experimental learning. Likewise, community service work camps have been organized to promote youth engagement and participation in decision-making.

Youth can be a driving force for active intercultural dialogue and understanding. This is why the project also focuses on youth leadership and advocacy seminars that contribute to consolidating young people’s space in democratic processes. In this way, youth can move the development agenda forward and become change makers for a culture of peace in society. One of the initial activities was an Intercultural Forum on Democratic Citizenship and the Culture of Peace, with over a hundred participants from several African countries in the diaspora. As a result, the Declaration of S. Vicente on youth as promoters of intercultural understanding was launched. This declaration is divided into three main areas: Intercultural society and dialogue, democratic citizenship, and cultural peace. Another initiative that resulted from the project is the Global Youth Alliance on Democratic Citizenship and Culture of Peace, which is a network of youth organizations to advance world peace and democracy.

### *Summary of the discussion*

During the unconference discussion, the importance of intercultural dialogue and diversity for all societies was emphasized as bringing progress, democracy, and financial advantages. Initiatives targeting media, migrant communities and hate speech are crucial in this respect. Mutual understanding and democracy needs to be promoted through intercultural dialogue, encompassing dissemination of more and better information on cultural diversity that exists in a city as well

as among the newly arrived population. Particularly media can be a strong driver of social inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

After a short discussion, the participants split up into two groups to discuss the question of how intercultural dialogue can foster democracy. Focusing on the role of youth, the two guiding questions for the discussion were:

- ▶ How can young people contribute to intercultural dialogue?
- ▶ What role can youth organizations play to lead this process?

One point put forward was that there is a need for a broader intercultural infrastructure. People from different backgrounds should have spaces to gather in an informal way and promote mutual understanding. For example, during religious holidays, leaders from

different religious groups should come together to celebrate them. The participation of young people in intercultural dialogue is crucial as they are more willing to accept the 'other'. Youth becomes more open minded toward different cultures when young people are more exposed to different cultures since childhood, for example in school. Also, they are more creative in their approach to engaging with different groups. Adults may tend to enter a dialogue of fear, focusing on what is wrong. This negative dialogue needs to be challenged, and young people are ought to lead a positive conversation. Youth organizations have a key role to play here. They can form platforms for integration and become a catalyst for discussion. On a local level, engaging young people in activities of the local community can contribute to promoting dialogue and understanding. On an international level, more opportunities for transnational exchange in formal and non-formal education should be created, such as the Erasmus programme, but including all countries.

## UNCONFERENCE 3 - CAN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION EMPOWER DEMOCRACY?

Organiser: Ms Kalliopi MANOUDI, Greece, Founder of "Hellenic Youth Participation"

### *Executive summary*

The question to be answered in this unconference session was whether non-formal education (NFE) is able to empower democracy. By employing NFE techniques during the unconference itself, the participants were invited to answer how they experienced NFE, how they benefitted from it, whether they think that it is important for their own personal development and how this method can potentially lead to more open minded and more democratic citizens. The session's aim was to find out more about the steps from NFE to democracy. Using special learning tools, the unconference tried to prove that NFE can help young people to learn about democracy and to use it in everyday life.

### *Introducing non-formal education*

During the unconference, participants were invited to experience NFE techniques themselves. For this purpose, they were asked to stand up from their chairs, form a circle, and state where they are from. In this way, they formed a "floor map", changing their places according to the country they belong to. After having people standing in the place where their country is approximately located, they were asked to introduce themselves and the organization they are representing. Afterwards, every participant was asked to say a word which describes him or herself and starts with the first letter of their name. Then each participant should find a person from the group without talking and form a sub-group characterized by common features. After the sub-groups had been formed, the majority as pairs, participants were asked to describe what made them to form this sub-group. Many people referred to the words that they said in the previous step of the activity, but also to different personal features. The activity's goal was to show that we all, regardless of the country we are from, can find many things in common with each other.

For the third activity the participants formed again a circle. A couple of pictures were placed on the floor and participants walked around them in order to understand their message. The participants were invited to pick one picture and stand next to it. In this way, participants formed new groups based on the picture they chose. Groups were asked to take a piece of paper, note their feelings about the picture and to argue why they chose the picture. The first group explained why they chose a picture showing

three eggs with faces of different negative emotions. The presenters said that they related the eggs to social service in Greece. The second group chose a drawing of a puppeteer – a symbol of representing greedy manipulative people. The group related their choice to the influence of the capitalist market on democracy and its risks. The third group picked a picture of a woman whose mouth was covered by a tape on which was written "Freedom" and in this way emphasized the elementary human right of freedom of speech. The next group chose a drawing representing people from different countries. The message was that there is no unique model of democracy, and any country or civilization should be able to adjust it to its own culture, by respecting and promoting the values of it. On another picture, there was a small boy almost drowning in a garbage dump. The conclusion drawn by participants was to be more emphatic with other people, reflect more on behavioral habits, to think about consumerism and also to reflect on limiting personal spending, which can be redirected on helping other people and building a stronger democracy. The last drawing was a poster of "Brokeback Mountain", a movie about a gay couple. The group emphasized the universal nature of human rights and equality, even if people are different from each other.

### *Summary of the discussion*

Before ending the unconference, the floor was opened for questions and comments from the audience on the experienced techniques. One participant spoke about the problem of young politicians who accept corruption, using their position for taking personal advantage and manipulating people, while creating a danger for a democratic way of developing countries in transition. Moreover, participants expressed their concerns whether non-formal education can substantively empower democracy. The main obstacle was perceived as getting young people involved in politics. Participants also reflected on what they would like to do together, collectively in order to make the voice of young people heard in democracy. The role of NFE is not necessarily to make more people vote, but to increase awareness among citizens that they can contribute to building democratic processes. Lastly, participants remarked the relevance of non-formal education in terms of the need to solve problems, such as a lack of funding and measuring the impact of non-formal education.

## UNCONFERENCE 4 – YOUTH WISDOM COUNCILS

Organiser: Ms Andrea GEWESSLER, Austria, Director of 'Change that Matters'

### *Executive summary*

The goal of this session was to create awareness and interest in Youth Wisdom Councils as a powerful tool of democratic engagement in order to contribute to solving local, regional and global issues while creating a sustainable future for young people. The unconferece discussed the advantages and challenges of the Youth Wisdom Council as an example of a response to the crisis of representative democracy which can be described by symptoms such as a lack of participation in elections, a lack of interest in people who are elected and in electoral candidates as well as an ignorance towards the voice of youth in decision-making processes. One potential solution to address these problems is the creation of a Youth Wisdom Council, an example of good practice with respect to the engagement of youth in the democratic decision-making process. The idea started originally in Austria and is now also applied in the United Kingdom by the organisation 'Change that Matters', aiming at creating sustainable change by offering learning opportunities for young people.

### *The Youth Wisdom Council*

Youth Wisdom Councils employ the technique of 'Dynamic Facilitation' with a group of about twelve randomly selected people within a community or an organization. They gather for a day and a half to discuss about issues that matter to them. The debate's topic is not given beforehand, but chosen by the group. The group of citizens usually consists of individuals who do not carry any formal authority within an organization or a community. There is no voting on the best solution and no formal consensus that needs to be achieved. Instead, the group works until every participant feels clear about possible solutions for the addressed problem. Participants bring their knowledge, but also their feelings and experiences into the Wisdom Council. After a day and a half, the randomly selected Wisdom Council reports back its solutions and its thinking to a wider group, where the ideas are discussed once again in the form a World Cafe. The project's success is not based on the Wisdom Council having the power to make changes in an organization or community but on bringing issues on the agenda of a wider forum. Wisdom Councils are convened every 6 months with an open conversation following afterwards.

The advantage of the Wisdom Council is that it works its way through the complexity of an issue and therefore focuses on the systemic dimension of

a problem, rather than its components. Moreover, Wisdom Councils appeal because they aim at working with young people's passion for complex issues. Wisdom Councils want to get people involved in the circle of concerns rather than focusing on control and influence.

### *Summary of the discussion*

The difference between Youth Wisdom Councils and Youth Councils is that Wisdom Councils focus on the process to make people feel responsible for their actions. The council's facilitator needs to take every single comment seriously, as well as the concerns and feelings of participants. The facilitator is not taking anyone's side, but is making sure that everyone feels valued. Participants have to feel they have a voice and that their voice is heard. Most of citizen's competences are rather vocational, as they train certain skills rather than how to solve problems. The Youth Wisdom Council is challenging youth's problem solving capabilities and hence strengthening their ability to influence the political. Usually, the challenging nature of the process does not scare young people away, but, on the contrary, increases their interest in participating.

The project's main outcome is the participant's learning experience. They feel accepted and not judged, as they do not have to behave in a certain pre-determined way. In the Wisdom Council, youth can be creative and work together, cooperate, and feel empowered. Even if the idea of one participant is not supported by anyone, the participant feels happy that their voice is being heard. There is a clear change in mentality from the individual to the community. Young people got a different perspective on policy issues and learned that problems are often more complex than initially assumed. In this way, young people are becoming more responsible citizens.

When looking at fears and doubts of young people, young people argued that they often feel overwhelmed by older people and more qualified or experienced people in political debates. Therefore, there needs to be a space for such youth councils, as they offer a comfortable place for young people to work and engage. All in all, Youth Wisdom Councils seem to be a great opportunity for young people not only to be engaged in traditional youth parliaments or political parties, but to create an alternative space for dynamic learning, and listening to each other. It is a useful tool to engage young people who had not been particularly active in society before.

## UNCONFERENCE 5 - YOUNG CITIZENS: UNLOCKING THE FREEDOM VERSUS SECURITY DEBATE

Organiser: Mr Georgios KOLLIARAKIS, Greece, Researcher at University of Frankfurt

### *Executive summary*

The age-old question of how much freedom we should give up in order to be kept safe has been rekindled by the rise of the internet and other new technologies. Freedom of expression and the right to information are evolving in liberal democracies together with security risks such as the abuse of the private sphere, mass surveillance, and discrimination. Particularly young citizens, socialized in the era of social media, have reflected in this unconference about costs and benefits of online communication, and about how to take responsible action in order to shape open and secure democratic societies of the future. The unconference explored the traditional question of how much freedom we are inclined to give up in order to be secure, in the context of modernity, where information travels through innovative digital technologies. The unconference amounted to a sort of follow-up of the World Forum for Democracy 2013, which was about re-connecting institutions and citizens in the digital age.

### *Freedom versus security – and old debate in new clothes*

The modern public sphere has been transferred to social media: it seems as if young people only exist if they have a Facebook profile. They live through Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and other social networks. The world of social media offers new possibilities to connect and develop innovations, including in terms of political participation. However, information technology entails risks as well, such as for example the unwillingly sharing or theft of private data. After the Snowden and WikiLeaks revelations, public opinion, historically reluctant to find a compromise between freedom and security, drifted toward behaviour of self-censorship defence, which actually risks suppressing diversity and different opinions online. At the same time, hate speech and discrimination online are often not sufficiently persecuted in the name of freedom of speech.

It is not the first time in history that the problem of ensuring at the same time freedom and security arises. Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* explored the topic already in the XVII century, analysing how security in society can be obtained by giving power to somebody by contract, and how this takes away some of the individual's liberty. This subject has now been then shifted to how young people approach the era of digital media, about costs and benefits of online communication, and about how to take responsible action in order to shape and secure democratic societies of the future.

### *Summary of the discussion*

The unconference participants formed three groups to discuss the core challenges, as identified by the participants, of e-democracy in the 21st century.

The first group dealt with the question how young citizens perceive fun, freedom, and new possibilities for socializing, but also constraints and threats to their liberties and rights in social media. Are there limits to online communication in social networks? Who should set them? What effects does self-censoring have on democracy? The group came to the conclusion that social media can be used to connect with people fast and continuously, and to get attention for political and social causes. At the same time young people need to be aware that whatever information they put on the internet is most likely going to stay there forever. Moreover, there is a threat, especially for young people, of being mocked by a potentially wide public. By expressing their preferences online, young people can easily engage in a political way. However, this does not necessarily mean that their words will lead to actual democratic action or a genuine political debate among citizens. When it comes to online security, the group drew the attention to the carelessness of many people in making public what should stay private information. Due to the rapidity of the medium people sometimes do not sufficiently think about what they are posting. The group reflected on the possibility of governments creating guidelines and rules in order to protect people online.

The second group dealt with the question where responsibility for safeguarding freedom and providing security in the internet lies. Potential stakeholders could be states, international organisations, internet companies, technology developers or NGOs and civil society. The participants stated that the most obvious answer would be an International Organisation, considered the global nature of the internet. For the moment, the internet can be seen as a space where only a few basic rules apply. A more substantial framework of rules and obligations could be established in the context of a regulatory framework based on international law and applied by signatory states. However, although 'soft' regulation seems to be achievable, 'hard' regulation is perceived, from a technological point of view, nearly impossible, considering for example the attempts of some countries to limit the internet, which can actually be dodged with some basic informatics expertise. One challenge for future generations could be to create a new organization to deal with these problems, as there is currently none that would fit the task.

The third working group discussed the question where and how young citizens should get sensitized and actively involved in order to increase their influence and leverage at co-shaping the future of online democracies. Potential solutions would be through influencing law-making, by increasing young people's awareness and cyber-literacy, or through online activism. The participants identified the main challenge of balancing governmental power with the bottom-up possibilities of the people and especially youth. In order to make citizens aware of societal development around them, communication is the key. It is most crucial that already young children are included in communication channels. The participants stated that it seems like society is going through a digital revolution, and with the spread of Internet slowly advancing towards global governance, in which ideally people around the world will be able to govern themselves through online channels and tools. This

development naturally scares the leaders of nation states, as they might lose some of their power and do not know how to control the digitalisation of society. In this context, new threats for the democratisation of a globalised world arise from hackers whose technological capabilities exceed those of the regular citizen by far.

The unconference concluded by stating that the online public sphere should become more open by liberalizing Wiki information, open source technology and software, and by making these systems more transparent. The majority of unconference participants valued freedom more than security, while still giving them both a high value. They agreed that it is important to establish systems to make it easier for people to switch off public sharing online, such as Google having recently been forced to implement the controversial right to be forgotten.

## UNCONFERENCE 6 - A UNIQUE EXAMPLE OF ACCESS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO DECISIONS

Organiser: Mr Mihai FLORAN, supported by a team composed by members of the Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth

### *Executive summary*

Decision-makers should understand that young people need to be involved, not only consulted, in all their processes. The co-management system, applied by the youth sector of the Council of Europe, is a concrete example which can be adapted and disseminated at local and regional level, to give the opportunity to young people to decide for themselves.

### *Co-management with youth*

The Council of Europe's commitment to fostering greater youth participation can be demonstrated through its system of co-management. This involves representatives from youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) sitting down in committees with government officials who together then work out the priorities for the youth sector and make recommendations for future budgets and programmes. These proposals are then adopted by the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe's decision-making body.

### *Summary of the discussion*

Participants of this unconference were invited to share which stakeholders in their different countries are normally responsible for making policies and to which extent youth, the government and NGOs are involved in the decision-making process. The majority of participants stated that the government is mainly responsible for policy decisions in their country. Introducing the co-management system of the Council of Europe's youth department,

it was explained that the system allowed young people under the age of 30 to participate in the decision-making process of the Council of Europe. The consultative process was initiated in order to ensure adequate representation of young people's specific issues and concerns.

Groups were formed during the unconference in which participants discussed best practices from their own experiences with co-management at different levels. With respect to sharing best practices, the co-management model was listed as a functional example. Another inclusive example was mentioned by a participant from Uganda where a consultative process is undertaken with youth, women and men, engaging local citizens in the design of district budgets at village, parish and sub county levels. Regarding challenges to the adoption of a co-management system, financial constraints and regional disparities were identified by the participants. A lack of access to information, a lack of political will, insufficient legislative framework in some areas and difficulties in translating participation to influence were noted as well. In order to address these challenges, the groups suggested to increasingly involve academia in the process, to sensitize co-management stakeholders and local governments at the lowest levels, and to streamline youth programming with respect to design and implementation. It was also proposed to do a mapping of what has already been achieved in co-management in order to avoid problems of replication.

## Round Table Discussion: From youth initiatives to system change – 5 November

**Jim Gibbons** from the United Kingdom, Journalist for European politics and media consultant, opened the Forum's last round table discussion. He explained that a survey has shown that if young people in the United Kingdom would have had the right to vote in the European elections, they would not have voted for extremist parties, demanding the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. Older generations are more likely to be afraid of change and therefore vote for those who protect the status quo. Young people are not frightened of change; quite the opposite: they want to achieve it. Besides, research has shown that 16 year old people are as mature in making important decisions as 18 year old or older people. Nevertheless, this scientific evidence is currently largely being ignored by politicians. As Gibbons quoted the Scottish poet Andrew Lang: "The politician uses science, just as a drunken man uses a lamp post – more as a support than an illumination."

**Dmytro Bulatov**, Ukrainian Minister for Youth and Sports, stated that Ukraine will become a responsible and dignified member of the European family due to its people which are in the lead of all processes taking place in the state. Although the state should work for its citizens, and not the citizens for the state, it is the responsibility of each individual to work for its prosperity, the prosperity of its family and the prosperity of the state. Every citizen needs to demonstrate that democracy is a societal priority. Ukraine is presently going through a period of changes during which youth initiatives and organisations are gaining significant strength and influence. Social mass media facilitates the development of new initiatives, volunteer movements and cultural projects. Young people are gaining power and are making their way into the government, including many activists of the Ukrainian revolution. Resulting from the Ukrainian parliamentary elections, the composition of the upper chamber was renewed by 54%, signifying a historical achievement. Moreover, about half of the Members of Parliament are below 40 years of age. These young entrepreneurs, journalists, and activists bring new ideas and approaches into the government. The higher the numbers of young people in the government, the stronger the control over its plans and actions. With strong control mechanisms in place, it becomes more difficult for those in power to hide information and to build corruption schemes. In order to continue Ukraine's positive development, it is vital that everyone who gained power and became a leader will show with his/her own good example that it is possible to make a change. Although it is currently still difficult to fully achieve this goal, as the previous system was highly concentrated and conservative, the objectives ahead, such as freedom of speech, democracy, and human rights, give Ukrainian people strength and motivation.

*"If we don't penetrate the system, how can we change it?"*

**Daniela Chacón** from Ecuador, Vice-Mayor of Quito, emphasized that a sense of political distrust in the political system, the ignorance of political leaders with respect to youth issues, and the inaccessibility of political parties for young people causes youth's feeling of apathy. Ecuador is a very young country in the sense that the average age of its inhabitants is 28. However, in 2013, a survey among young people under the age of 35 found out that only 15% of Ecuadorian youth is interested in politics today. Moreover, there is a lack of understanding of what politics and democracy is. 77% of young Ecuadorian women and 69% of young men stated that they do not want to belong to the political system by becoming a party member. Young people have lost the belief that they can truly change the system. Very few people decide to join a political party today because, firstly, it is not easy to find a party to relate to, and, secondly, there is need for a lot of patience and will to change the system from inside. However, if young people do not penetrate the system in this way, they will not be able to change it. Participation in civil society is meaningful and important as well, but it does not have the same impact as becoming part of political institutions. Young people should not wait for this until they get old. They should find a political party now that will allow them to grow.

*"Democracy is about the capacity to control the child in yourself."*

**Philip Dimitrov**, former Prime Minister of Bulgaria and Member of the Club of Madrid, disagreed with Daniela Chacon, as he does not believe that young people are not interested in politics. Young people are always in a hurry. However, with the age of 40, Philip Dimitrov has already been the *former* Prime Minister, the *former* leader of a party, and the *former* leader of a revolution. He can tell from experience that it is not easy to be only 40 and having already left these important positions. However, politics is about gaining power and losing it. If young people start their political careers early, they will be 'former' sooner. Youth is always tempted to portray themselves as different from the previous generation. Although it is inevitable for each new generation to be

different in many ways, this does not imply that the new generation forms a new type of human beings, for example only focusing on sharing and not on property, as stated by Jeremy Rifkin. The aim to change human nature is not a specific attribute of the current generation of young people, but can be found in 8000 years of human history. Hence, young people need to be careful not to get trapped in this thinking. The young participants at the Forum have shown that democracy is always interlinked with strong emotions, acting out feelings, and freedom of expression. However, democracy is not only about freedom, but also about the capacity to control our inner child and particularly its destructive tendencies. Democracy is about freedom and responsibility at the same time.

**Henryka Mościcka-Dendys**, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland, explained that in Poland and in many other Central European countries, the democratic transformation began 25 years ago, in 1989. The spirit of solidarity and the active engagement of civil society, including youngsters, have led to the peaceful change at that time. As Poland is an excellent example for a successful democratic transformation, the state aims increasingly at turning its capital Warsaw into a hub for democracy. Hence, the Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy, a yearly conference taking place in autumn, has been initiated. Bloggers, civil society activists and democratic leaders from all over the world are participating in a dialogue to share experiences and to exchange best practices. Young people are particularly encouraged to take part in the event, as they are the future of democracy. It is a joint responsibility to build young people's capacities, empower youth and create a culture of participation. Various issues have been discussed at the Warsaw dialogue for democracy, such as a shrinking civic space, women's participation in public life, transitional justice, democracy support, as well as democracy and social media. Recommendations drawn from the conference include, firstly, the full respect for human rights, solidarity and inclusiveness in terms of participation in public affairs, secondly, the full respect for freedom of expression, association and assembly, thirdly, a favour of non-violent struggle for democracy and freedom, and, fourthly, full participation and inclusion of women in democratic processes, the latter being facilitated by social media.

**Matt Leighninger**, USA, Executive Director of the Deliberative Democracy Consortium, explained that the term 'post-representative democracy', introduced by Chantal Mouffe and Helene Landemore the day before, does not necessarily mean that people want to eradicate parliaments or elected representatives, but that rights and structures need to be established that allow the citizen to take part in decision-making, problem-solving and in the community. Elements of post-representative infrastructure that go along with the republican infrastructure existing today have been presented at the Forum, embodied in initiatives such as participatory budgeting, online fora, youth councils, crowdsourcing, citizen juries, federal policy conferences, online and face-to-face deliberation, or participation commissions. All these examples are also listed on an online platform called Participedia.net. Although most mentioned examples are temporary, ad-hoc processes, they are part of a participatory infrastructure within the republican system. Many of these ideas are an illustration of thick participation, taking place in small groups in which people exchange and share ideas, requiring a strong emotional and intellectual commitment. Some other initiatives represent thin forms of participation, as they are fast, often taking place online and usually done by individuals. However, the debate on advantages and disadvantages of thick and thin participation needs to be ended, as both types work best when they are combined. During President Obama's National Dialogue on Mental Health, both forms of participation have been employed, by complementing offline face-to-face deliberation among citizens by the initiative 'Text, talk, and act' during which citizens sent text messages with their mobile phones to a given number which sent back questions for discussion as well as survey questions. Besides entering the discussion, participations could also text specific ideas for action. About 10.000 people have been taking part in the process so far, proving that thick and thin combinations of participation can work. The experiment also showed that young people are particularly keen of participating in these processes, as they are most experienced with information technology.

*"We live in a society, not only in an economy."*

**Natasa Vuckovic**, Member of the Serbian Parliament and Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, explained that she often experiences a disappointment of young people in terms of the functioning of democracy. The feeling shared by many young people that democracy is not truly relevant anymore, is in fact one of the most severe threats to democracy. The digital world is presently being praised a lot, but at the same time one needs to be aware that the digitalization of society encourages rapid responses, leaving less and less time for substantive reflection. With respect to the participation of young people, local initiatives are crucial as they provide youth with a space to learn and to take part in institutions. At the same time, it is

doubtful whether local initiatives are sufficient to significantly impact the system in a time when the most important decisions for the future are taken on a transnational level. For young people, it is still worthwhile to join a political party, but in order to attract youth, political parties need to democratize internally. Youth branches in political parties very often do not fulfill the role that young people are looking for and merely reflect the pattern of the older generation. The generational gap needs to be closed in order to be able to address problems together. Following the example of gender mainstreaming approaches, one should consider youth mainstreaming, incorporating the youth perspective in all policies on the national level. Young people often show solidarity and commitment to society, as recently during the floods in Serbia, when young people organized themselves via social media in order to help the flood's victims. Young people want to be useful for society, but this is not possible in times of high levels of unemployment, as society cannot flourish in poverty. It is crucial to address this problem, as "we live in a society, not in an economy."

An Indian participant in the audience addressed the problematic nature of two-party systems and asked how these systems are able to include the opinion and demands of smaller political groups. In response, Philip Dimitrov drew the attention to potential political instability brought about by multi-party systems, like for example in Belgium where the Parliament includes more than eight parties. In political systems with high numbers of parties, governments are usually formed for shorter time periods and therefore the country is more prone to become unstable. This is a particular threat for transition democracies. Whether parties open up for youth does not necessarily depend on the number of parties in parliament, but on the party's structure, its functioning and tradition. Daniela Chacon added that parties necessarily need to become more open for young people in order not to disappear, as the population in many countries is becoming younger and younger. Hence, even if there are only two parties in the system, a space for youth will open up.

The discussion then focused on the inclusiveness of democracy. A participant from the audience suggested combining the experience of older politicians with the ideas and motivation of the younger generation in order to form a powerful intergenerational coalition for political change. Another participant raised the issue of ensuring that more women take part in politics. Henryka Mościcka-Dendys suggested that quota for women should be introduced, particularly in transition countries, in order to open up the male-dominated political sphere. Matt Leighninger emphasized that in order to achieve a more inclusive and participatory democracy, its infrastructure needs to be changed, creating more flexible spaces for deliberation. For example, government buildings are needed which help people engage directly, instead of being static and projecting hierarchy. Social movements do not only strive for more democracy in the respective state, but are also internally democratic and participatory, giving citizens the possibility to voice their opinion and weigh in on different actions while using both thick and thin participation. However, once the movements gain power, they are confronted with republican structures which should be complemented by the participatory processes within social movements. As long as the structures of political systems do not reflect the approach and aims of protesters, protest cannot be transformed into governance. Daniela Chacon emphasized the importance of not getting corrupted by the system once young people are part of it. However, although this threat exists, becoming part of the political system is the only way to change it permanently.

As a final remark, Dmytro Bulatov underlined that democracy needs to be built in a bottom-up procedure. Democratisation starts with each individual going small steps in order to achieve the big result of living in a peaceful and democratic state. Daniela Chacon emphasized that young people are not apathetic with respect to politics, but regarding political institutions. However, as long as young people continue to participate, they will open up new spaces for involvement in traditional political institutions. Philip Dimitrov stated that democracy is not about abolishing the different levels of people, but about abolishing the privilege of some people to always be on top and the disadvantage of others to always stay below. Henryka Mościcka-Dendys advised the Ukrainian people and politicians to find a consensus on where the country should be heading whereas Ms Vuckovic added there are no guarantees of political change to happen, except the ones we inject ourselves into the political system. Finally, Matt Leighninger said that in order to rethink democracy, one needs to get over three wrong assumptions: Firstly, government is the only institution that can solve public problems, as many other kinds of groups can find solutions for societal problems, secondly, only the government is responsible for creating participation and democracy, as each individual needs to work for a functioning democracy, and, thirdly, democracy is good for us, but it is no fun, as the participants at the Forum have proven different.

## Closing Session: The Voice of Democracy – 5 November

**Timothy Karr**, Senior Director at Free Press, opened the Forum's closing session by introducing three numbers with importance for democracy. The first figure is "1947" which corresponds to the year in which Winston Churchill stated the famous quotation: "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others." Although Churchill was joking, his sentence is linked to a certain cynicism with respect to democracy. The second number is "37" which corresponds to the low percentage of people who have voted in Congress elections in the United States on 4 November. Once again, this number shows a dissatisfaction and cynicism with democracy in an important part of the world. The 3rd figure "7", is, however, a reason for hope and might be a starting point for cynicism to decrease. "7" indicates the number of the finalists' initiatives that have been selected by Forum participants to be presented during the closing session of the World Forum for Democracy. After each lab session, the lab participants had casted a vote on "vote trees" by answering the question whether they were convinced by the initiative's approach of increasing young people's impact in political decision-making. The seven initiatives with the highest positive vote have been invited to present again in plenary in order to be assessed by an expert jury and the Forum participants. The expert jury consisted of

- ▶ Ms Gabriella BATTAINI-DRAGONI, Italy, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- ▶ Ms Andrea CHALUPA, USA, Journalist, Author and Digital Activist
- ▶ Ms Katharina NOCUN, Germany, Civil Liberties Activist and Blogger
- ▶ Mr Matthias STROLZ, Austria, Member of Parliament and Leader of the party NEOS
- ▶ Ms Goretti ZAVUGA AMURIAT, Uganda, Programme Manager for the Gender and ICT Policy Advocacy Program of Women of Uganda Network (Winner of the Council of Europe Democracy Innovation Award 2013)

The purpose of the plenary session was not only to discuss the seven finalists, but also to give Forum participants the possibility to vote for the best initiative and in this way determine the winner of the Council of Europe Democracy Innovation Award, presented by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland. The labs organized during the World Forum for Democracy were designed to create opportunities for meaningful participation in democratic institutions for youth, to engage young people in the decision-making bodies and to give them a real chance to challenge politicians and to shape democracy.

### Presentations of the finalists

Presenters of the seven final initiatives were invited to introduce their work once again to all Forum participants in plenary. The finalists were:

- ▶ Stork Heinar, Endstation Rechts/No-nazi.net, Amadeu-Antonio-Foundation, Germany
- ▶ Chabab 2012, The Circle of Young Democrats of Morocco
- ▶ The Alsatian Youth Parliament, France
- ▶ NSS-Community Connect Fellowship, Blue Ribbon Movement, India
- ▶ Generation Democracy, European Union, Council of Europe, in partnership with the Turkish Ministry of National Education and the Board of Education
- ▶ Youth Create Change, GIZ – German Development Cooperation, Palestinian Territories
- ▶ Young Democracy Creators, France, Apollonia, Local Mission Haut-Rhin North, Association Meinau Neuhof

"Stork Heinar" is a parody on Nazi-ideology, run by unpaid volunteers. The stupidity of right-wing extremist propaganda is used to make fun of neo-Nazis and to discourage their potential supporters. Using irony,

the stork has established itself as a figure in the fight against neo-Nazis and for democratic participation. A giant stork puppet accompanied by a pseudo-military brass-band brings action to the streets and about 25 young people voluntarily commit themselves to support the campaign, for example through project days in schools, on demonstrations and on many other occasions. Katharina Nocun, civil liberties activist and blogger in Germany, commented on the initiative. She explained that as a Polish migrant living in Germany, she perceives the initiative as a very inspiring project that is a strong weapon against the racist movement which is spreading in modern societies like venom. The choice to use humor gathers people to stand against hate speech. It is important not to forget threats such as hate speech and prejudices against Muslims which are currently spreading, especially in Germany. It was discussed that, despite campaigns of humor to ridicule Neo-Nazis, extremists still violate human rights every day. Hence, more substantive measures need to be found that begin with early education of the child. No individual is born with an ideology already implemented in its mind. Stork Heinar is one possible measure to raise awareness for the stupidity of neo-Nazism. However, it is clear that additional action needs to be taken. Strict laws have to be implemented to fight hate speech and violence. However, as one of the Stork Heinar initiators is Member of Parliament in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, a German federal state, Stork Heinar is not only active in civil society, but also on a political level.

The "Chabab 2012" initiative was launched under the banner of "Le Maroc de demain aux couleurs de la jeunesse" to defend the right of young Moroccans to access to electoral mandates in the last parliamentary elections in Morocco. The initiative's aim is to enable young politicians to access parliamentary institutions through the establishment of an independent list dedicated to youth during elections. This initiative was launched in the wake of the International Year of Youth. The Preparatory Commission for the Chabab 2012 initiative consists of the Circle of Young Democrats of Morocco, several political parties and young political activists. Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, said that this initiative is impressive particularly with respect to the well-organized youth structure which was capable to build an electoral list, to gather votes and to win seats in the national parliament, as 30 members of the initiative have been elected. The initiative's impact on the local and national level, as well as its effort to include young people in politics is highly remarkable.

The Alsatian Youth Parliament (AYP) has been working since 2011 on the sharing of experiences in order to better take into account European youth in political decision-making. The AYP was involved in the European report on the democratic participation of young people in Europe, presented to the Association of European Regions. Demanding the active participation of young Alsations in local democracy, the AYP has also contributed to the 2030 Alsace prospective approach to influence the strategic direction of Alsace tomorrow. Andrea Chalupa, journalist, author and digital activist, declared that, as the Alsatian Youth Parliament's members have the possibility to be in Strasbourg, the capital of Europe, they also have the responsibility to develop actions on a national scope, like all other initiatives presented in the event, in order to keep the energy and to spread the momentum of the World Forum for Democracy. The AYP should transform the three Forum days into a one-year process, for example by networking with other activists present at the Forum. A structure like the Alsatian Youth Parliament, in this matter, could be the perfect initiator of such a dynamic.

The NSS CCF (NSS Community Connect Fellowships) by the Blue Ribbon Movement is a year-long leadership development program for the brightest students of NSS (National Service Scheme), India's youth volunteering program. It uses service learning to build civic engagement, leadership and professional skills among youth, takes participants through leadership training and engages them in solving social issues in a constructive and democratic manner. In the years 2013-2014, 29 NSS CCF fellows volunteered for 9,139 hours and mobilized 338 students to reach out to 5000 people and file 2200 complaints to revive the Municipal Complaint Management System. Andrea Chalupa remarked that the actions of the Blue Ribbon Movement are comparable to the recent events in Ukraine where youth decided to put an end to what political parties wanted to impose on them. For Andrea Chalupa, the Blue Ribbon Movement has the same characteristics in sharing ideas, as well as teaching self-defense and monitoring capacities of young people. In this context, the initiative is a perfect example of how youth can shape democracy.

Generation Democracy aims at fostering education for democratic citizenship and human rights throughout the school system in Turkey. The democratic school culture framework asks the question "What makes a school culture more democratic?". Through experimentation in 22 pilot schools in ten provinces of Turkey, project participants have developed a framework to answer this question. There are three themes - rights, responsibilities and freedoms; active participation; and respect for diversity - that intersect with six dimensions identified in the piloting: decision making, communication, teaching and learning environment, behaviour

management, identity and belonging and value-based education. Goretti Zavuga Amuriat from Uganda, Programme Manager for the Gender and ICT Policy at Women of Uganda Network, winner of the Council of Europe Democracy Innovation Award commented the initiative by saying that this project perfectly matches with the topics discussed at the Forum, such as the responsibility of youth, and young people's active participation in democracy. The project raises awareness for these issues and offers learning opportunities for young people what is highly encouraging for the future generation.

Youth Create Change (YCC) is a pilot intervention launched by the Local Governance and Civil Society Development Programme (LGP) implemented by the GIZ (German Development Cooperation) in 11 municipalities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The intervention aims to promote and enhance youth participation in local decision-making and increase youth services within the municipality. In order to increase the acceptance of genuine participation of youth in the social environment, several mechanisms have been put in place: a Municipal Youth Officer, Youth Promoters (15 young activists in each community), a yearly Youth Action Plan (YAP), a municipal budget line for youth activities and a Youth Centre. Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni appreciated the sustainability of the project which is due to a proper structure, the capacity to enter institutions and the local government, and the budget. Moreover, with its focus on local politics and an improvement of the situation in municipalities, the project takes place close to young people's lives. The replicability of this project gave birth to other similar projects in the same region.

Rethinking democracy in favor of youth necessarily involves using new tools for citizen relationships and participatory methods. Apollonia illustrates this with two examples: Firstly, in Colmar the Local Mission Haut-Rhin North with the active partnership of the city of Colmar and the Regional Council of Alsace, has mounted two remarkable actions, reconciling training, integration and creating a public space for art. Secondly, the city of Strasbourg began experimenting with creating participatory techniques, where young people co-decide not only the form of the work but also its urban location and its social integration in the neighborhoods Meinau-Neuhof. This has been achieved through exchanges and dialogues between artists, operators, trainers, companies and local elected officials. Mathias Strolz, Austria, Member of Parliament and Leader of the Party NEOS, emphasized that 'Young Democracy Creators' is addressing unemployment which is one of the main current problems of youth in a time of crisis when traditional politics does not work anymore. Using not only words but artistic expression, is the right path to deal with societal problems in a creative manner.

## The Democracy Innovation Award

After the presentations of the initiatives, Timothy Karr started the voting procedure to elect the best initiative of the World Forum for Democracy 2014. A test question on whether participants are for lowering the voting age to 16 years resulted 54,83% Yes and 45,17% No votes. Following the votes of participants for all seven initiatives, answering the question whether the initiative significantly increases the impact of young people in democratic decision-making, the moderator published the results of the initiatives and announced the winner of the 2014 Council of Europe Democracy Innovation Award: Generation Democracy, by the European Union and the Council of Europe, in partnership with the Turkish Ministry of National Education and the Board of Education, had won the award with 82,37% of positive votes. The ranking of the remaining initiatives was as follows: Blue Ribbon movement (2nd, 74,88%), Youth Create Change, GIZ (3rd, 73,65%), Stork Heinar-No Nazi. net (4th, 62,77%), Chabab 2012 (5th, 56,17%); Young Democracy Creators (6th, 55,82%) and the Alsatian Youth Parliament (7th; 50,73%). The award was presented by Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni.

## Closing speeches

**Thorbjørn Jagland** explained that according to a survey by Eurobarometer among young people, the two most important values for youth are human rights and freedom of speech. Young people, interconnected through information technology, are the strongest force in the world today. New opportunities, brought about by the digital age, allow young people to efficiently protest against corrupted rulers, a lack of democracy and authoritarian politics. As a follow-up to the Forum, the Council of Europe will analyse how the initiatives presented during the Forum can be implemented at different levels of governance in Europe. The World Forum for Democracy 2015 will take place in Strasbourg from the 18 to 20 November. The theme will be determined by considering the suggestions that have been formulated during the 2014 Forum. In this respect, the idea

that the young generation has to be in the forefront to democratize the way in which humanity manages common resources will be the starting point for reflections. For example, the Council of Europe will reflect on how it can contribute to securing common goods, such as the internet or the environment. In this context, the involvement of young people will also be explored.

The internet is a great tool to spread good ideas, but societal changes have to come from people's inner souls. We do not only have to select efficient tools to spread the ideas that we want to defend but also need to determine the common values that a democracy should preserve, such as the protection of human rights and freedom of expression.

**Harlem Désir**, France, Minister of State for European Affairs, added that democracy cannot exist without the presence of guardians. The keepers of democracy were embodied in all initiatives presented during the Forum. A special thought needs to be given to all those who are currently fighting for democracy, such as Burkina Faso's youth that rise in Ouagadougou, as well as young people in Turkey, Ukraine, Syria, Iran and in many other countries. At the same time, young people in 'old' democracies are facing severe challenges. In Europe, where youth makes up 20% of the population, young people are currently struggling with mass-unemployment, insecurity and inequality in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

*"The youth of today embody a new impetus; a new hope for democracy."*

Due to its history, the city of Strasbourg is the European capital, the guardian of human rights, and a symbol of hope for peace. Democracy, since it was created in Athens, has always reinvented itself thanks to new societal battles and developments. Without forgetting the different fights for democracy that are happening on other continents, the countries in Europe also constantly need to re-invent democracy on the old continent which is still not perfect. There needs to be more social justice, less discrimination against minorities, and increased equality between men and women. Each generation has to find its own fight and to defend its values in its own way in order to shape the future and to revitalize ancient and new democracies. The government should not impose the future of democracies but, on the contrary, governments have to listen to activists on the ground in this respect. Consequently, the French government will carefully read the conclusions of the 2014 Forum for Democracy, in order to be inspired and to be able to shape a better future for next generations.

## Democracy Prototyping sessions

Young participants have been asked to develop « prototypes » of an « ideal » democracy. The main idea was to cover a large amount of issues such as: good governance and corruption, transparency and accountability of governments, economy, migration, sustainable peace, education, social justice, environment, civic engagement or even gender equality etc ...

Their work was divided into two parts: first, they shared various ideas and visions thanks to an online platform; they then run prototypes sessions few days before the Forum itself where they were divided into four groups of work. Here follows a brief summary of their main recommendations divided into sub-sections.

### Good Governance

On the issue of good governance, young participants made an appeal for more transparency in the field of government budget and participatory budgeting process. Young participants proposed to have a access to regular updates to have a look at how national and local budgets are allocated and how taxes and grant are collected.

As a matter of fact, some initiatives emanating from the 2013 Forum seem to move already in this direction. Thus, we can therefore refer to the examples of the 49th Ward of Chicago (USA) or the initiative of the Municipality of Amadora (Portugal) where citizens are involved in the decision making process (cf. summary of lab 14, Forum 2013).

All information referring to government's decisions should be made more open, citizens should ideally be able to be present while decision making takes place e.g. physical presence during legislative sessions or through systematic broadcasting on television or on the internet or via daily updated report. In this regard, one can say that the demand for transparency corresponds to a deep and true expectation from the public opinion, especially after the multiplicity of examples of corrupted politicians reported in the media during the last decade. Obviously, this demand is also linked to the development of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) which allow citizens to have a better control over their representatives.

Young participants also recommended the development of citizen decision making and advisory bodies/Council to rule in parallel with governments, including the right to vote and to be elected. Also, they formulated their hopes to make the vote through internet possible in more states, possibly with a power to veto so that there could be better checks and balances on government action and an increased involvement of all citizens. The 2014 Forum illustrated this idea thanks to the Actions of the Alsatian Youth Parliament in France, an advisory organ which give the opportunity to young people to express their opinions about the local policies (cf. summary of Lab 13).

One can add that in the framework of their work, the majority of young participants were in favor of maintaining the right to vote to 18 arguing that, a teenager of 16 years old should stay focus on education. On the contrary, a minority of the young participants stated that lowering the right to vote to 16 could help young people to become more aware of their obligations and more politically involved citizens.

### Economic issues

On top of priorities, young participants designated the fight against corruption and a better redistribution as the two main elements to reform the current economy. Moreover, they also prescribe a return of State intervention mainly because of the of nationalisation's necessary and virtuous effects

Indeed, according to the young participants, state intervention is necessary to reinforce social justice which means to legislate and to intervene for employers to have better social rights and also a greater equality of treatment policy between men and women or even disabled peoples in terms of incomes for example. Eventually, the youth participants also believe that the State is the best actor to defend consumer's rights against the market law and of the financialisation of the economy sphere.

Corruption was also targeted as one of the main priorities in the sense that it is often regarded as a brake to the economic development of a state but also in its quest for a greater social justice. A clear example of this

is that a significant amount of European funds floods and just enrich a small percentage of the population in some countries in South-Eastern Europe. Although, corruption contributes to a shortfall for the State to invest in major public works (e.g. school, roads etc) it also entails the sensation of a greater social injustice due to a disfunctioning in the redistribution system as a whole.

Other ideas were suggested in the field of business policy such as:

Young participants marked their attachment to the idea of common ownership – the principle whereby an organization/enterprise is held indivisibly by all employees rather than by a small number of shareholders. This idea is inspired by the concept of Common-based peer production a term coined by a Harvard School Professor Yochai Benkler which refers to the cultural and natural resources accessible to all members of a society e.g. air, water, habitable earth etc.

The possibility for workers to manage directly or indirectly their organization by electing their managers or CEO was brought up in order to reduce the feelings of alienation-exploitation at the workplace or even slavery among workers in some parts of the globe. It also gives higher responsibilities to workers in a bottom-up process rather than from a top-down perspective, as is often the case in the current system.

They also recommend generalizing “Buen Vivir” worldview. This philosophy conceptualized by Eduardo Gudynas describes a way of doing things that is community-centric, ecologically-balanced and culturally sensitive. This is a new form of public coexistence, in diversity and in harmony with nature, to achieve a good way of living. An economy structured in accordance to the Buen Vivir model would require significant changes to capitalist modes of production too, especially with regards to agriculture. Eventually, the society should not be led by profit and an international currency would be introduced called cryptocurrency which will handle economic power back to the people away from the current financialisation of the economy.

## International Affairs

The perspective of security should be transformed to human security, not state security. It will impact on the way states allocate their budget, build strategies to handle conflicts and their aftermath. Therefore, the militaristic approach could be reduced and become an opportunity to insist on individual security e.g access to tap water for every human being.

The young participants also talked about the example of the Build infrastructure for peace (I4P), an international network working in the field of peace building through personal and cultural transformation with several key examples of success mainly in conflict resolution in Africa -South Africa, Ghana and Kenya ([www.i4pinternational.org](http://www.i4pinternational.org)).

Generally speaking, in an idealistic world, governments should also avoid to succumb to the pretention to be able to export their democratic model by military means in developing countries in the sense that democracy is a system of government that a population needs to reach by itself. Exporting democracy by forces did not give satisfying yield or output as we have already witnessed (Iraq War (2003-??); Afghanistan War (2001-2014)). On the contrary, it is often a source of geopolitical imbalance.

## Environment

To minimize the use of animal products and the waste from sorting trashes (plastic, organic, paper, glass, metal) should be easily accessible everywhere and all rubbish must be recycled in order to reach a more efficient sorting system. There should be a popularization of eco-transport, especially bicycles as the most popular means of transport. Animal experiments for producing goods (e.g. cosmetics, detergents) must also be more supervised by governments. Common usage of renewable sources of energy (solar, wind, water) must be introduced, in addition to a large plan of reforestation.

Young participants also proposed to raise taxes to protect the environment via the user-pay concept in the name of the environmental responsibility that falls to each individual. In Los Angeles for example, people have to pay 1k if someone do not respect the instructions given by the city.

## Technology

The young participants express their wish to reinforce free access to information considering that it is a real world problem as some countries do not have enough sources of information opened to the public opinion due for example to a lack of means (libraries, internet, wifi) and other countries who restrict access through censorship or limitations.

Recognizing internet as a form of education should also be put on the government's agenda.

Similarly, they recommended to implement the good conditions to the access to a free and neutral internet should be provided for everyone who desires it –the latter should be recognized as a right. Net Neutrality and Data Protection should be implemented.

New digital spaces of e-democracy starting from local communities should also be encouraged which reflects here the idea to have more bottom-up decisions processes. In this regard, the 2014 Forum presented the initiative "Vote on the Web", Brasil (cf summary Lab 14). This online platform daily attracts thousands of young Brazilians to post their opinion and thoughts about bills in an easy way showing congressmen the needs of people.

## Education

According to the young participants, school must also and more than ever performs its mission to heighten awareness of their pupils to tolerance, gender equalities, curiosity towards the others and interculturality. In this framework, civic education should be seen as important as other academic courses such as math for example. Introductory modules of promotion of Human Rights should be introduced across all academic levels, including formal and informal education.

In addition to their traditional courses, students also have to learn basic life skills such as self-defense, house-keeping, taxpaying, to know how to code etc. The education system should encourage free-thinking and active participation to ensure young people knows how to use their democratic rights in order to help them to become conscious and active-citizens.

Eventually, schools also have to raise awareness of its students to the problem of sustainable development and to include this issue into the curriculum, rendering the defense of mankind in an ecologically scope a new religion.

Youth participants were then invited to present the results of their reflections during the plenary session on 5 November. The video can be found on the World Forum for Democracy website ([www.world-forum-democracy.org](http://www.world-forum-democracy.org))





[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

