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Authors

Lina Arvidsson, Joana Domingos Baptista, Benjamin Bienert, Francesco Bortoletto, Ergys Broca, Fermín Lecanda Caro, Olga Devic, Yordanka Dimcheva, Philippine Dutailly, Yara Eid, András Ferenczy, Franklin Hysneli, Areti Karasmani, Johannes Kuhlmann, Valeria Lavrentyeva, Marina Ioana Marcu, Lisa Mastiaux, Ioannis Melandinos, Fiona Melzer, Eman Mowatt, Joshua Olasehinde, Laura Orleane, Magdalena Piekarska, Anna Pietri, Erin Porter, Petter Rodebjer, Alexander Shirreff, Minas Stravodopis, Lisa Steinwandel, Albin Touma, Szymon Turcza-Jurczynski, Daniel Hakan Urquijo

Introduction

30 years have elapsed since the Berlin Wall was torn down. A singular point in a poignant and powerful story of human sacrifice, thought and action in pursuit of that elusive goal: a better world. From the classical civilisations to the ideas of Popper to our modern world we have idolised this idea of the Open Society, in which individual rights and liberty are seen as inalienable, diversity is valued and institutions function to serve the people.

The "International Youth Think Tank" sees that we are moving away from this vision. We are a forum that aims to connect young people from all over the World, with powerful decision-makers to create a platform where innovative ideas can grow. By inviting decision makers with various backgrounds the "IYTT" can create practical solutions to the problems Europe and the World are facing.

Looking at our confederation, the ideals of an engaged and open society are under attack! Human rights are getting violated, data is getting exploited and the list goes on. We face a representation crisis, social inequality, a climate emergency and many other alarming situations. The urgency and the extent of those issues question the political framework and its efficiency. As we as youth will experience the drastic effects of the ongoing inaction, it is us that call for action.

These demands are, 30 years after that critical point in human history, the next step in history. Those who implement these will be celebrated as those pioneers, who refused to allow the comfort of the status quo to limit the dynamism and potential of humanity to thrive in holistic terms. That potential is our potential.
We do not propose, we demand.
The time to act is now!

Demand 1: Expand Access to Education

The increasing difference in educational attainment stratified by socioeconomic backgrounds between individuals is threatening for the development of a democratic society. An education failing to include individuals of all groups, socioeconomic backgrounds and stages of life is failing its purpose to create critical thinking engaged individuals, able to actively take part in the Open Society. Accessibility and efficiency of education is often decreased by the use of only traditional academic methods of education. Therefore we have developed proposals widening access to education to individuals of all groups, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and stages of life.

Solution: Recognition of vocational training

As our society evolves rapidly under the influence of changing cultural and economic structures and the influence of technology and media, labour market requirements change as well. Employers feel that in many areas a traditional academic degree does not effectively prepare individuals for the reality of a job, such as the increasing need for soft skills, while at the same time requirements of academic certificates rise in many areas of employment.

Therefore, we demand vocational training and practical experience to be acknowledged as qualifications to enter higher education institutions as well as being alternative qualifications to traditional formal learning, when entering the labour market. An effective de-stigmatisation and promotion of vocational learning will provide access to those coming from a non-traditional or non-academic background to access higher income jobs at later stages in life and through non-traditional routes acquire academic degrees reflecting their level of expertise.

In line with this, we also urge the corporate sector to consider people from non-academic backgrounds in graduate recruitment schemes and in job-hiring processes. We believe that businesses can greatly benefit from the recognition of practical skills as this will allow them

to employ experienced and trained individuals bringing a valuable non-academic perspectives into many fields of work.

Solution: Lifelong learning opportunities

While academia, especially in higher education, tries to keep up with and adapt to rapidly changing technology, cultural developments and structures in our societies, many workplaces and employments are often left behind. In order to continuously include individuals of all age groups and stages of employment into our dynamically evolving Open Society, we believe lifelong learning to be crucial. Therefore, we demand a provision of learning opportunities in workplaces of all income brackets, but especially those who do not yet incorporate regular training modules.

Solution: Expansion of Language Learning and intercultural exchange opportunities

As our world becomes increasingly globally interconnected foreign language skills as well as intercultural understanding are important in many workplaces. Therefore, we consider it crucial to reach non-traditional participants of exchange programs such as Erasmus and language learning schemes by providing access to language learning and cultural exchange opportunities. While Erasmus is doing an important part in supporting mainly students of secondary education in their living expenses while studying abroad, many cannot afford to participate in such programs if they cannot contribute from their personal funds, as the Erasmus grands are not sufficient on an individual level. In the light of the recent increases of Erasmus funding, we therefore demand a more effective distribution of funding to low income individuals in need.

Additionally, we demand an increasing effort to be made to provide language classes as well as certificates for free to anyone expanding their language skills at any stage in life. This will need to be promoted not only in traditional academia environments, but by workplaces and non-formal institutions as well in order to be practical.

Solution: Inclusion of Marginalised Groups

To be truly open, we need to ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups such as refugees within the educational system. It is fundamental for the integrational process of refugees to participate within in the educational system and to have access to language classes, local culture classes and a system of democraticy education. These components enable marginalised groups to be a part of society through communication and an overall understanding of the culture and values.

Education expands outside of the school system, that's why we see families and especially parents having an important role within the education of young refugees. Learning the language and civic education of the settling country is of the same importance for everyone independently of their age. The goal is to include everyone into the Open Society through education, which is more effective if it continues in the areas outside of the school education as well.

Opening the doors to immigrants or refugees with an employment background in education, but without nationally recognized certificate, to become assistants in schools, to support the regular teachers in teaching a class of mixed backgrounds. The goal here is not to separate students at any point, but rather to integrate them better by providing additional support, while at the same time making it possible for migrant teachers to find a way back into their old profession.

Open Questions:

To implement our proposals for broadening and extending access to learning it will be very important to determine the role of the individual, businesses and workplaces, non-formal organizations, as well as the government and how they can complement each other in providing access to education and supporting vocational and life-long learning opportunities to everyone.

Demand 2: Reform the Educational System

With cultural, political and scientific development changes in all areas of life, current methods of education have remained disappointingly rigid. Ineffective generalised education attempting to teach a very diverse group of individuals with the limited methods of traditional academics is failing to adapt to the challenges of an Open Society and leaves individuals left out and unprepared. Therefore, we demand a reform of education through the remodelling of teaching methods and broadening of non-traditional learning methods to dynamically reach the diverse individuals wanting and needing to take part in an Open Society.

Solution 1: Democracy in Education

Many individuals, especially young people do not participate in democratic procedures, not because of lacking engagement, but because they feel that their engagement is not being considered and feel that their decisions and voices cannot make a difference. We believe that, to foster the democratic mentality and increase engagement in political happenings, students should not only learn about but perform democracy at every level of education.

Practical democratic workshops

In order to actively engage in it we propose practical workshops on democratic topics to be part of the educational curriculum. Practical participation and experience of democracy will complement traditional teaching methods to support the understanding of content by students with a wide range of learning preferences. We argue that such practical democratic workshops can be realised within an hour of consistent lecture time per week. The content can range between, for example: history lessons with the purpose of understanding the role of democracy in our societies; democratic games were students represent a country, and for a given topic

have to negotiate to arrive at a common solution, following the examples of eg. MUN or MEP. General guidelines should be to center the current, theoretical approaches, into practical measures, so that the content can be related to the values of an open society and to provide students with positive experience of democratic processes.

This proposal is about transforming open society values into something relatable and to enable students to see the functioning of democracy through their own eyes. We believe that the practical democratic workshops will be best developed in cooperation with NGOs and possibly the private sector.

Mandatory Student Government Body

While in many school systems there are student governments created on a voluntary basis, they are often excluded from actual decision making processes of administration and student life, especially in primary education.

Therefore, we propose a mandatory inclusion of a student government body in all areas of primary and secondary education. This would entail including student representatives on school boards, not only as an observer, but as a voting member. Additionally, participation in the student government body should be mandated, to encourage even non-typical students to participate in democratic processes within the school. This means mandatory voting on student representatives, as well as allowing time within the curriculum, such as hours of general assembly in regular time frames (eg. once a semester) to allow for a full assembly of students to discuss and vote and issues regarding the entire student body, in addition to more frequent meetings of a smaller, voluntarily, more engaged group.

We believe this to be especially important to provide early positive experiences with democracy, which of course entails understanding the often long-winded processes

of democracy, but also seeing but these efforts can have an impact, and are not determined to fail because administration ultimately disregards their conclusions.

Thematisation of political happenings

Currently, democracy, political systems, agenda of national parties and potentially country-specific voting processes are only included in school curricula as graded, academic content. As it is right now, this does not differentiate learning about democratic issues from learning contents of other curriculum subjects such as history or science.

In order to connect this theory to actual life and point out the relevance of democratic processes to everyday life and decisions concerning each individual, we propose in-depth thematization of political happenings in school. This would mean, not only discussing elections or controversies around certain topics which are taking place, but also inviting politician panels to schools to discuss and present contents in front of and with students. Such panels should be happening in relevant time distance surrounding elections and should be student led, potentially faculty member moderated. This will allow students to question and discuss political contents in light of the different stances of political parties and help form an independent opinion, considering a variety of arguments.

Democratic determination of subparts of the curriculum

Students are often paralyzed in passive reception of educational contents, since currently these are prescribed from above, without necessarily making connections clear to students. This leads to disengagement and indifference toward education. Genuine interests and curiosities about a subject that fall outside of the curriculum are generally brushed aside and labelled as irrelevant or not within the time/curriculum constraints. If one is continuously told that all the interesting questions coming up, which might connect a topic in class to the outside world and own interests, are not prioritized and not important, this quickly leads to frustration within the educational school system.

In order to foster and maintain curiosity and engagement with education, contents and issues relevant to students' lives, we demand an option for students to take agency in their education.

Inspired by the democratic school system, we therefore propose to include options within curricula that students can vote on. This would mean that within a certain subject, for example Biology and potentially a subtopic, eg. an ecosystem there will be different options (Marine ecosystem, desert ecosystem, tropic ecosystem etc.) which students within a class or potentially within a school can vote upon.
It will be important to determine for which subjects of a curriculum such options will be possible and to determine varied options as well as potential options for students to give spontaneous input.

Solution 2: Adapting dynamically to the changing media and technology

In order for Education to be critical and relevant in a dynamically changing Open Society it needs to face the evolving challenges to an Open Society as they emerge. Therefore, dynamic and flexible education is especially important.

Education about Artificial Intelligence and Media Literacy

As technology and applications of artificial intelligence are continuously changing and increasing, we find that there is a considerable knowledge gap in the general public. It is very important for citizens to have a general understanding about the automated decision processes that are operating within the technological devices they own, social media platforms and many other applications of daily life.

Additionally, with the increasing presence of journalistic media online, on social media platforms and on poorly or not moderated platforms, judging whether a content, or a profile is fake, is a crucial skill to be trained throughout the educational system in order to have conscious and active users of the internet. Therefore, we propose a more thorough coverage of the theories of AI, automated decision processes and its applications, as well as theories of media literacy, visual literacy,

and conscious internet usage in primary and further education. Additionally, to also reach those outside of the classical educational sphere we think it is important to provide teaching through workplaces of all income brackets as well as publicly organised sessions available for the general public.

Mandatory training in software and hardware skills for teachers

As it is right now, many teachers or staff working in administration of educational institutions do not have the necessary knowledge, neither about available software (such as dynamic online teaching tools, mindmap drawing, interactive learning platforms), nor of facilitating hardware (eg. smart whiteboards) that is available for teaching. Often students have greater knowledge about technologies in general, but not teaching technology specifically, than teachers, which additionally intimidates them to incorporate technologies over traditional pen-and-paper teaching methods. Therefore we propose a mandatory regular training for teachers and administrative staff in educational institutions of all levels to make them aware of available technologies and give them confidence in using them. Incorporating teaching-supporting technologies into academic institutions should not mean to use them wherever possible, but rather wherever necessary and where their use can provide an advantage over traditional teaching methods. Being able to recognise where such application is appropriate is another important point of training for teaching staff.

Solution 3: Broaden internationally oriented learning

Since an Open Society naturally reaches further than national borders and requires increased international understanding and awareness, we see it as a crucial point to actively incorporate intercultural and internationally oriented learning into Education.
Therefore, all learning processes should focus on internationalism through specific practices, cultivating an international mindset from a young age. One example can be the creation of an international platform among schools. On this platform, students from different countries can log-in and communicate, play games or even assist each other on

different topics, whenever possible. Thus, all students will have the opportunity not only to get exposed to different cultures and mindsets, but also to improve their language skills, as the working language can be another one apart from English.

Moreover, to improve on orienting education on a more international level we need a more international and universal point of view when it comes to subjects such as history, economics and politics and not solely focus on national or european topics. Pupils should acquire international knowledge, even from an early age, in order to burst out from their national bubble and realities and start developing a unified and all-embracing mentality, both of which are crucial aspects of our Open Society.

Open Questions:

In order to implement the proposed changes to Education, there will need to be detailed assessment on a case by case basis how they can be integrated into the specific curricula of different countries. How much leeway can we give to allow for this and where do we need to define rigid guidelines to ensure an actual impact?

# Demand 3: Empower Local Assemblies

Liberal democracies face a crisis of representation and democratic fatigue. The emergence of anti-establishment rhetoric reflects a decline of trust in political institutions. This rhetoric is predicated on the perception of the political elite as out of touch with the reality of ordinary people. The "political machine" is believed to have become too centralised, serving the interests of big cosmopolitan urban centres to the detriment of regions. In England, the Anglo-Saxon in Northumbria is cast as the heroic fighter against the Norman in London while in France, the rural Gaul resists the cosmopolitan Frank. At the foundation of this schism are the big issues of our time, from immigration and identity to economic distribution.

Coupled with the sense of a lack of representation is the concept of democratic fatigue, the feeling that people vote for change but that the traditional options of democracy, referenda and general elections, fail to deliver, leading to a sharp downturn in voter turnout.

What we propose is Local Assemblies, a third democratic option to provide space for citizens to voice their concerns on the big challenges that political institutions cannot solely provide the solutions to.

How would Local Assemblies solve this?

Local assemblies would be set up as an informal institution at a community level. They would involve regular members of the wider local community, encouraging active discussion of issues facing their community and subsequently the organisation and implementation of initiatives to combat these issues, not dissimilar to a citizens assembly. These local assemblies differ from citizens assemblies in 2 main ways- firstly in that

they would operate on an online platform so as to ensure greater accessibility, particularly
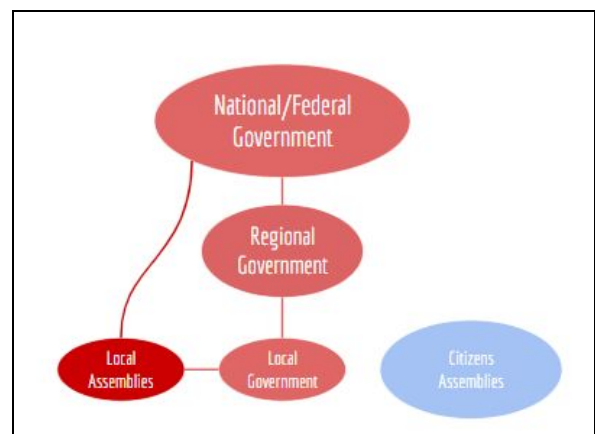
for those in rural regions and ensure an ongoing discussion that can be added to at all times, and secondly in that this online platform could submit a community consensus, issues and suggestions to the government for discussion, creating a more explicit and direct dialogue between people and state, rekindling a feeling of a 'culture of politics' in these communities. Success has already been witnessed on a limited scale, in the case of Iceland who chose to involve citizens assemblies in the drafting on its new constitution, and in turn it is 2nd on the democracy index and witnessed an exceptional voter turnout of 81% at the most recent parliamentary election.

We believe that the success of citizens assemblies should be built upon by institutionalising and empowering community based assemblies. Firstly, by extending the opportunity to discuss and resolve community based issues to all members of the community, we believe more people will not only become engaged in politics but will also come to feel as if their voice and their vote has meaning again whilst avoiding the divisiveness created by referenda and other negative elements of direct democracy. Secondly by creating an online platform to facilitate the discussion and voting of these community based issues we may be able to tackle the issue of young people being the demographic with the lowest turnout, aiding in creating a truly open society, furthermore an online platform would help to reduce an element of bureaucracy, discussion both within the community and with the government could be ongoing and proactive without having to complicate the matter with delegates or other practical issues.

Options and considerations

- Anonymity as a choice (a personal account would be needed to avoid trolls and heinous drifts but people could choose whether to ask questions anonymously or not. This would allow people who do not feel legitimate to have a say in politics to actually be part in the political process)
- How digitised should these local assemblies be? Should a physical assembly continue to exist with only the local-national dialogue being digitised, or should the assembly be hosted online in its entirety?

- What defines a community? Should there be population, or size limits? Can we expand the definition of community to minority groups or even industries and professions?

- How should we motivate people to join? The ultimate goal is in fostering a culture of politics in which people will join on their own volition, but until that's been reached should we provide financial incentives?

- How and by which bodies will the assemblies be organized?

- Who decides what should be submitted to government? Should we set up an independent commission?

- What (legislative) powers does the assembly have? Will they have any kind of power to bring this into force?

- Could NGO's be encouraged to create discussion rather than government institutions?

- How does one ensure inclusion in the assemblies, particularly in areas that lack cultural or religious diversity?

To ensure that we have demographic representation of these areas we would suggest introducing an Inclusive Leadership Pledge for EU, starting with Sweden. This Pledge would warrant national and European businesses, governing bodies and other institutions to make sure that they are inclusive, for example having a culturally diverse board of leaders. Arguably, this would be an effective way of narrowing the representation crisis because it means that there should be a balanced board of individuals that differ in relation to their race, gender, sexuality, religion and social background and perspective. In addition, it will also help with the problem of democratic fatigue as residents will feel that their voices are being heard and therefore their votes matter. The way that the Inclusive Leadership Pledge would work is that a declaration would be written and leaders of the local and national government, businesses and other institutions would sign their signatures pledging to make their organisations more inclusive. The declaration would include promises such as *"We pledge to make businesses more inclusive and representative of our diverse population by including more women of colour in our leadership team".*

However, though an Inclusive Leadership Pledge as a potential solution would be successful there are various setbacks that we need to consider. If the Pledge is introduced as a policy to begin with, it means that businesses and governments can choose whether to enforce inclusivity or not, meaning that without it being a law it is very likely that many organisations will not sign the pledge as there no legal consequences. Furthermore, the Inclusive Leadership Pledge can also be misused to reflect the organisations in a better light, so they can be more favourable to the people. For instance, some may sign the pledge as a way to appeal to people of a lower social background to illustrate they are 'inclusive', in the run to elections some parties could misuse the pledge in an attempt to get more votes. This is a major setback because it means that the seriousness of the pledge is being taken for granted and may only be used for 'token' reasons, so to overcome this we would to legalise the pledge so that those who misuse it will face the necessary consequences, as the representation crisis and democratic fatigue can only be reduced when solutions such as the Inclusive Leadership Pledge are used and acted upon effectively.

Demand 4: Create National Civic Committees

Problem: The representation crisis and the democratic fatigue

What we called the representation crisis has yet another side to be investigated. This is generally referred to as the accountability question: how can we ensure that elected representatives actually act in the interest of the people they are meant to represent and not according to their own? How can we hold the former accountable to the latter?

Why is this relevant?

The problem is as urgent as it is fundamental. This is the source of the crisis representative democracies are currently facing in terms of legitimacy: ordinary citizens feel as if they had been left behind, with politicians not acting as their electorates demand them to. This in turn leads to growing disaffection on the part of citizens towards politics: the more they feel their voice is not being heard (let alone listened to), the less will they be likely to engage in the public debate and their country's political life.

It is a vicious circle that definitely needs to be broken: we feel that a more genuine trust in the political process has to be restored among citizens in order to make that very process both efficient and effective.

Our solution

In order to break this cycle, we devised a new institutional body with specific objectives. We have called it a National Civic Committee, its primary task being that of providing reports, opinions and recommendations to the national Parliament.

With regard to its composition, its members should be chosen out of a lottery mechanism (in jury style) within the basin of national residents, so that no discrimination whatsoever takes place.
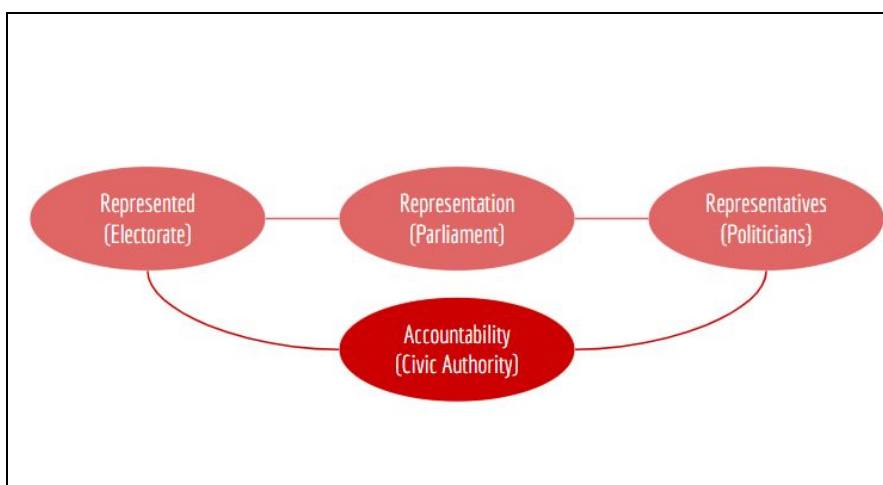
With regard to the recommendations it should provide, they will clearly be non–binding from a strictly legal standpoint, as who make them did not get elected democratically and therefore could not retain any legislative power.

Nonetheless, ignoring them will likely prove politically unbearable for elected representatives. This should be true due to the high visibility these recommendations should be given by the press – and the media more generally. We thought about heavily involving the media sector so to add transparency and openness to the whole process: not only what is produced by the committee will be made available online for everyone to see, but also its meetings and activities will be live-streamed, like it is currently done by the European Parliament, and Q&As sessions will be held via web (possibly through the same digital platform that we talked about while dealing with local assemblies).

This process has been thought of in order to strengthen the bond that ties civil society to the political class and to fill the gaps that have been opening in between the two. We tried

to envision a mechanism (the civic committee and local assemblies are part of the same overarching system) we may label as a 'third democratic option' right halfway regular elections and direct consultations like referendums. We feel with a similarly conceived system the whole political process would gain in accountability, openness, inclusiveness and transparency.

Open questions

Nevertheless, some questions remain open – namely the membership of the committee and the duration of its members' term in office.

With reference to the first issue, problems arise when trying to have members of the committee mirroring the entire society. Let us suppose the committee is made up of 100 individuals randomly selected: what if, for instance, 40 out of 100 members end up to be playing the same role in society (e.g. they are all doctors, or businesspersons, or farmers etc)? One easy solution might be that of introducing quotas in order to assure that representation is as close to reality as possible. But other technical problems come through: how to define these quotas? How to divide society (economically, socially, on the basis of age, sex, status etc)?

But there is something more. Let us now suppose that we had these members chosen, whomever they be. How long would we want them to serve in office? How long should their term last? Once again, it is all a matter of perspectives. If we want the committee to be efficient in its activity and to have some kind of stability we might prefer to have a longer term (a couple of years or more), as this would allow its members to be trained and give their work some continuity. On the other hand, if we consider the individual situation of the members themselves, we might be thinking that taking them away from their ordinary lives (family, work, duties, etc) will be unfair at least. Who would actually want to be (although temporarily) 'hijacked' for such a demanding task? Moreover, were the committee members to be dependent workers, what kind of assurances should them be granted in order to ensure that their employers or bosses do not fire them? And what if those members were the bosses themselves? Would they accept to stop running their businesses

(let us think to SMEs)? Yet, a shorter term in office would prevent any professionalisation, which is a major criticism towards politicians.

Of course this kind of participation would need to be voluntary. But would some sectors of the population need incentives to take part in this process? Should governmental subsidies or special 'shield legislation' be thought of? And should these incentives be tailored on the basis of the social sector? Would we need different incentives for different social sectors?

Answering these and other questions is far from easy but it is what we need to do in order to make this mechanism workable. We wanted to include this paragraph to acknowledge that concrete situations are far more complex than ideas and that good solutions take labour and boldness to be implemented.

Demand 5: Enforce Human Rights for Real!

We aspire to place human rights at the heart of our open society. We see the respect of human rights of every individual regardless of their nationality, race, gender or sexual orientation as indispensable in the structure of any society.

Human rights violations have taken place all around the world regardless of commitments to the principles and values expressed in innumerable human rights declarations and treaties. International Organisations are weakening everyday and it is time that we unite the international responsibility of governments and whose in power together and act urgently to enforce Human Rights all over the world.

How can we do that?

We demand that governments and the international community act upon the universality of human rights but **for real** now!

We strongly believe and recognise the power and responsibility of the international community. We want to build an understanding on the international level of the **indispensability** and **universality** of Human Rights as a powerful tool to assert that the rights and dignity of every individual is what lays the foundations of any open society.

We aim to achieve that through insistence on reforming the national judicial systems, bringing transparency at the core of any judicial process as well as guaranteeing the impartiality of the judicial judgements. We also demand that every individual should have free access to justice systems and courts.

It is also important to emphasize that governments can hold each other accountable for their actions. Governments have to **comply** with Human Rights declarations and treaties. They have to respect International Law and comply with it. Failing in doing so, measures will be taken from other governments to pressure violators of Human Rights such as economic sanctions among other consequences.

On an international level we stress on the importance of strong civil society which exercises pressure through mobilisation, economic sanctions and genuine commitment to the values of an open society. We insist on stating that **Human Rights are not a matter of a question but of a matter of fact.** We have been talking about Human Rights for hundreds of years, but now it is time to take concrete action.

Demand 6: Put Youth in Charge!

We demand a 50 % youth quota in our democratic parliaments. Our open society depends on inclusivity and the democratic representation of all groups in our communities, regions and the state as a whole. Therefore the opinions of the youth must be reflected in the legislative and executive bodies of the state and the policies which they initiate. The implementation of a proportional youth quota for young people to stand as members of parliament would encourage the youth to have a guaranteed say and to be listened to when it comes to decision-making.

Our insistence on implementing the youth quota is about bringing a new perspective. It is about the right of **democratic representation**. It is about taking young people seriously and bringing them and their valuable opinions on the table.

Our demand aims at encouraging and promoting the intergenerational dialogue in society. Through this measure we could truly thrive for an open society which listens and takes into account the rights and duties of every individual and works towards inclusion and real democracy.

We recognize the importance of a better and more democratic access to the decision-making process. This is why we propose placing the focus on youth empowerment through adequate civil education as well as on increasing the opportunities for formal and non-formal engagement of young people. Skills and confidence will facilitate bringing the burning issues identified by the youth population of any country to come on the political agenda and be addressed through an inclusive and open process of intergenerational dialogue and concrete policy decisions.

Demand 7: Empower through Legal Knowledge

The society and action requires knowledge of the system we work with. The way to empower people to create change is to give them proper tools and opportunities to do so. Therefore, we propose including legal training and access to legal resources as a mandatory part of our society.

Mandatory Legal Training for Policy Makers

The laws are passed without respect for human rights and the general legal rules - their place in the legal system, existing legislation and boundaries that the system sets.

The lack of awareness of human rights and no actual knowledge of law among the policymakers is a big issue. Not only as it provokes legislative initiatives that are not beneficial, but also it impedes policymakers from acting and being efficient in implementation of their ideas. When you start a new job, you are obliged to go through mandatory training, whether you work in an office, or as a waiter. However, when new policymakers are elected, mostly on the basis of their ideas, in many places they are not required to undergo training for their law-making tasks, which affect so many people.

If any other job requires training, policymakers should be trained too - to acquire the tools to implement their ideas and to make conscious policies. Therefore, we set forward a demand for a mandatory legal and human rights training for the policymakers.

Make it mandatory to train policy-makers. After election policy-makers should be trained on :

- Legal systems
- Human Rights
- Decision making process
- Representation duties
- Diplomacy

The legal training would be also important in making policy-making accessible for people of different backgrounds, not only those who had the chance of getting an education or a lot of experience. The marginalized groups, the youth, working class, those less privileged, who have less resources and possibilities would be given the tools to make themselves heard and not be disregarded, in election process, on the basis of their lack of knowledge and experience.

Election
of Policy makers → Legal Training* → Conscious policies
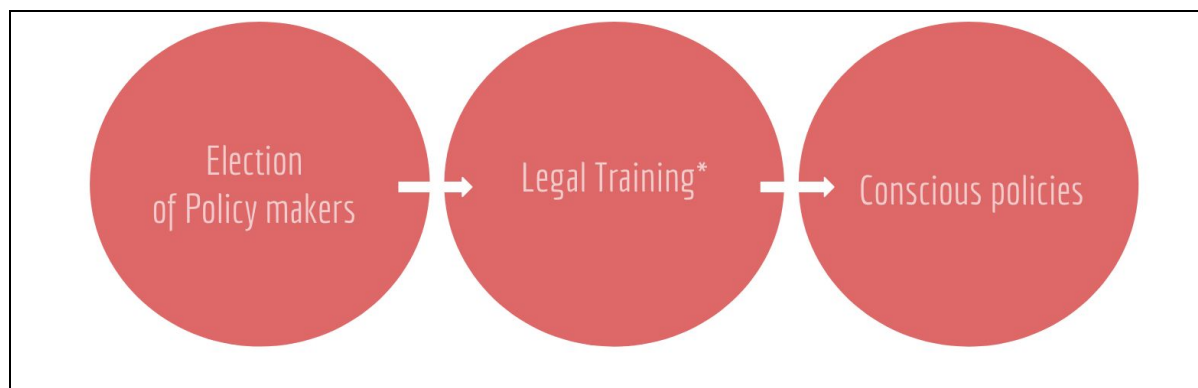
Accessibility of legal resources

The engagement of people in the society is low. Civic action is often taken only by the more privileged: well-off, educated, not a part of a minority. People do not feel that they can influence political decisions and thus do not engage,

People are not aware enough about the way in which the public work - what are their rights and responsibilities, but also what are the responsibilities of the policymakers towards them and in what way they can influence them. They do not advocate for themselves.

An accessible legal resources that everyone is free to use will empower people to advocate for themselves. They would now the context in which the policymakers work and gain the tools to discuss and decide, It will give them incentive to engage, as they would feel more effective, see results, it would be harder to make them feel small. Whether it is through legal trainings, consultations, publications, or starting an online platform that is easy to use and provides easy to understand explanations on law, that not only lawyers are able to understand.

Demand 8: Rethink Economics

The way that economics has been conducted and taught up until now has focused extensively on a set of ideologies completely removed from reality. As a result, people are overworked, our planet is overworked, and our values seem to be so. In the Open Society we believe that open values should too be implemented into the economic system, for it is worthless talking about liberty when the individual cannot make a choice or does not have the opportunities. Similarly, respecting our planet has to be included in the equation as we simply cannot disregard the setting where all social relations take place and is the basis of our life. Lastly, we believe that humanity should be brought back into economics, as the key driver for policy. The aseptic and technical approach found in current mainstream economics has created deep social unrest around the world, and it is now that we begin to see all the issues coming to the front.

Well-being as the starting point

We demand that GDP is re-conceptualised as a tool for well-being as opposed to well-being forgone for the sake of GDP. Time after time politicians take measures that put misleading aggregated statistics before people, and this always ultimately leads to the detriment of those most vulnerable.

We call for a shift in values and the way we treat economics, as to acknowledge its limitations and avoid zealot-like, long-sighted behaviour from economists. All of this should too take into consideration planetary boundaries and respect them, for we have no planet B.
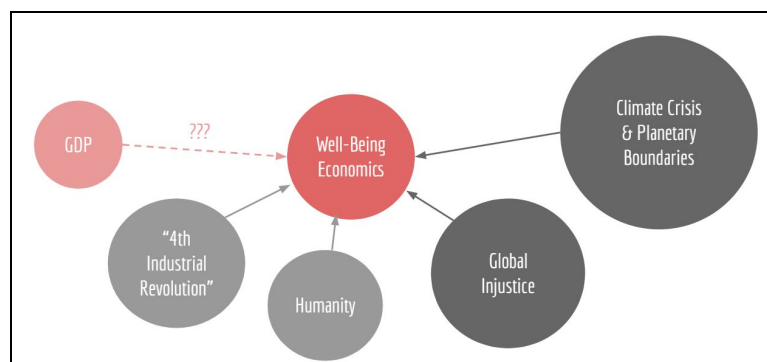
Demand 9: Reveal Product Supply Chains

The process through which raw materials are transformed into a finished product is still widely unknown to consumers. Quality of the products, as well as workers rights, business ethics and environment occupation are issues that consumers, institutions and civic society organizations require to come under scrutiny. Some years ago, true revelation of supply chain was technologically impossible. However, with the advent of AI and blockchain this is the period that is realistic to demand from companies to disclose their true length of their supply chain. We need to address the current exploitation of humans and nature and we need to work towards tackling it. That is where our suggestions come into action.
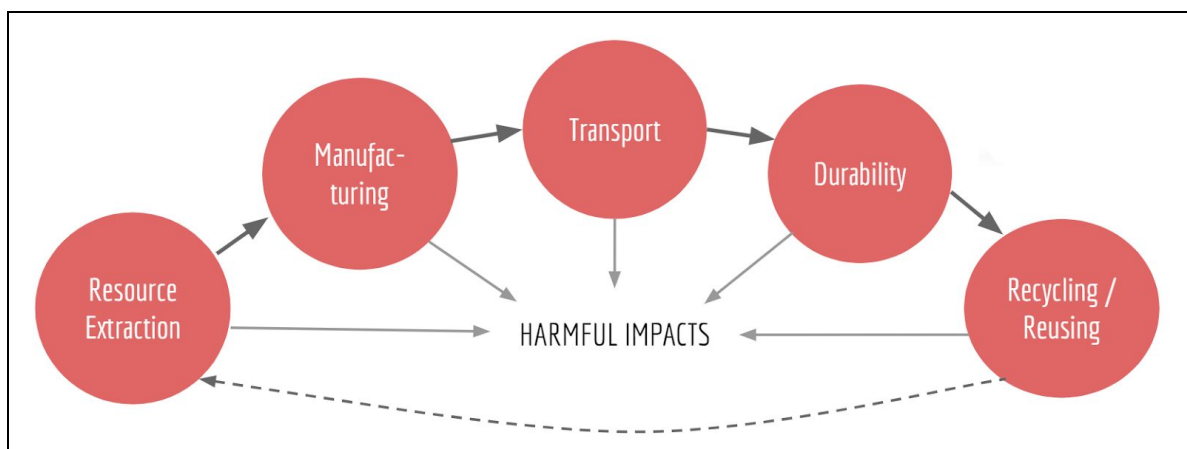
In order to allow citizens to make informed choices about the products they buy, it is necessary to make product supply chains fully transparent to the consumer. This means including origin of resources, methods and conditions of manufacturing, especially for involved workers, as well as environmental impact of the entire production process and supply chain. Wherever possible, we need to enforce a circular approach to economy. Including durability of a product and encouraging recycling when feasible is tremendously important to reduce the environmental impact of current methods of consumption and production.

Companies need to be held accountable for their methods of production, the environmental impact behind their products is a primary issue where transparency and

green actions are highly required. Moreover, there needs to be a legal enforcement of labelling products through certificates, such as ISO 14000 family of standards. As it currently stands, CO_2 emission labelling is only realised on a voluntary basis by producers looking to appeal through their environmentally friendly production. However, this method does not guarantee any standards or coherent labelling, which can be compared across products. There need to be explicit regulations on how environmental impact is measured and reported.

Additionally, we demand greater access to that information on companies' production processes, facilitated through digital platforms. Stakeholders should provide those details for everyone to see through the usage of universal digital platforms. Consequently, everyone will have the opportunity to learn and act upon any violation of the society or its environment.

Demand 10: Democratise Tax

There are a few problems with the current system of taxation and government spending, particularly in European countries.

First and foremost is the nature of government. At times, parliamentary procedure and the democratic process can be slow, particularly at allocating funding to solve crucial and current issues, such as the climate crisis. To alleviate this, a new conduit must be considered; a conduit that is pointed, goal-oriented and cohesive in the interest of solving some societal issues. This conduit, in Europe, would be NGOs functioning within a civil society. This would be more efficient than the government, which has to vote, has a wider perspective and as a result is less motivated to solve a particular goal.

The core aspect of this first problem is that while NGOs exist and achieve reasonably good things, they are limited by funding. So, it would then follow that to improve the scope, reach and achievement of these enterprises, we would need to remove or expand the limits of funding, by providing more funding.

Second, the spirit of liberty, a core aspect of an open society, is in direct contradiction with the high levels of taxation needed to fund the expansion of the social programme proposed in this report, something that will limit the agency of the individual to choose how to spend their income.

This contradiction poses an interesting theoretical question; at what point liberty in the classical sense of laissez-faire small government starts to impose on the Amartya Sen idea there being a financial barrier to liberty. This is predicated on the assumption that by raising taxes, a government develops a considerable social programme to allow people to access freedom in financial terms. As presented, freedom with respect to taxes falls under a certain level of dichotomy. We solve this in Europe currently by setting taxes at a bound, where tax is collected to both allow people agency of some of their income, while taking a level of tax above the essential level to run a basic state, in order to spend the non-essential tax revenue on social programmes at various levels. In theory, there would

be no issue with a state-driven social programme, but we find ourselves returning to the first problem – that of the rigidity of government fund allocation to societal issues.

Inefficiencies in distributing funding and the paradoxes of liberty show us that a full change in how we think of tax is needed. There is one key element of this solution that is of paramount importance – that NGOs are entirely and cohesively driven towards one specific goal, and as such are more efficient than governments. To harness this and considering the guiding principles of the International Youth Think Tank (that of democracy and openness), the idea of democratising taxation worked well. This is better described in Figure 10.1, below.
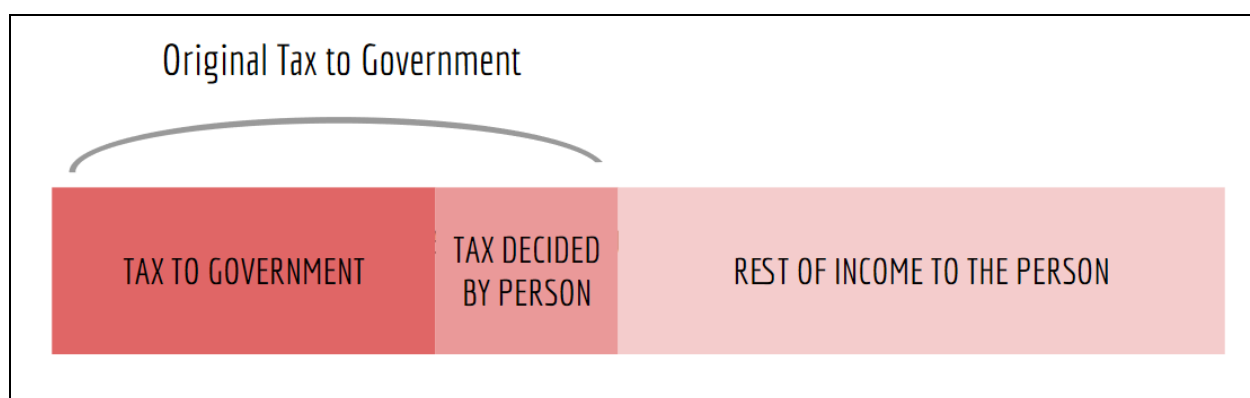
Free Market Principles and their Issues

At the very core of the argument is the free market. The free market is both liberal and efficient, fixing the two problems we posed above. By allowing agency over a proportion of taxation we create a self-regulating system of taxation and redistribution. If there is a demand for the solving of a particular issue, then market forces will distribute the income. While this achieves liberty and efficiency, there is another non-economic element to this. As in the market, agents have direct control of their actions, the people will also be forced to be at some level directly involved in society. This means citizens will be far more engaged in our political systems, social issues and have direct control over what society they would endeavour to see.

Unfortunately, as with the free market, there are some tangible dangers. First is the idea that by freeing a proportion of taxes, there could be some level of immorality and exploitation in the system. As a measure to stop this, while maintaining efficiency, is by digitising this decision-making process. NGOs would apply and be assessed by an independent board, which will consider the ethical nature of the company. For example, a specific danger would be that this system may be corrupted by individuals reinvesting this income into their own business, rather than in the spirit in which it was intended; to solve some social issue. The independent board would stop this.

Another problem with the application of the free market is that there are in cases some NGOs which aren't particularly marketable that may lose out, even if they are achieving some morally and socially good outcome. This is alleviated by the percentage of tax left under government control (see Figure 10.1). As 10.1 shows, there is enough taxation left for the government to fund a basic social programme, but excess used for investment in pertinent social issues prior to the tax reform, will now be democratised such that the individual decides the allocation to an *extended social programme*. So, the government will still pay some income to allow NGOs who will receive less income under the new system, to continue to function and advertise until the issue that they are promoting becomes important to the public, with the democratised portion of tax serving only to supplement and extend the basic governmental social programme.

By implementing these free market principles, we solve the original problems of inefficiency (and rigidity in allocation) and the paradox posed by the question of liberty. With the amendments and regulation of the free market, we solve the subsequent problems that the free market of taxation creates and as such, we consequently have an implementable demand that is durable and superior to the current system.

Conclusion

As the youth of Europe and beyond, those who have grown up with and are personal witnesses to the problems that are rampant in the world today, we have come together to discuss the ways in which we must shape Open Societies to address today's imbalances. We—in the belief that an open society is one in which the best solutions will always prevail—have issued these demands in the genuine belief that they will save society.

The world is currently undergoing an age of radical transformation. This may not seem apparent as it is often brushed off as simply another populistic wave making its way around the world. We could not be any more wrong. A series of challenges to our Open Society-oriented belief system have come about, and an alternative to our system has too - namely the technocratic authoritarianism that we see in countries such as China. We could then think of this as a 'survival of the fittest' situation; whichever system provides the most dynamic answer to such challenges will become the new global standard. These challenges, such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, political disenfranchisement, or the imminent environmental catastrophe, pose a threat to society as we know, whilst also offering an opportunity for change. We need new measures and updated frameworks in order to accommodate to changing circumstances - and this is precisely what ought to be done as we dive into an increasingly mechanic, digital, and global 21st century in an unsustainably exploited planet Earth. The youth is not demanding change because we want it, we demand it because we need it. We stand at the doorstep of a new era and we are the ones that will live in it, so we must now re-shape the rules of the game if we are to keep playing. Previous generations should have done this, but they did not. It is now that the youth has to come to the forefront and demand change.

Thank you to the sponsors

of the International Youth Conference 2019

European
Commission
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VÄSTRA GÖTALAND

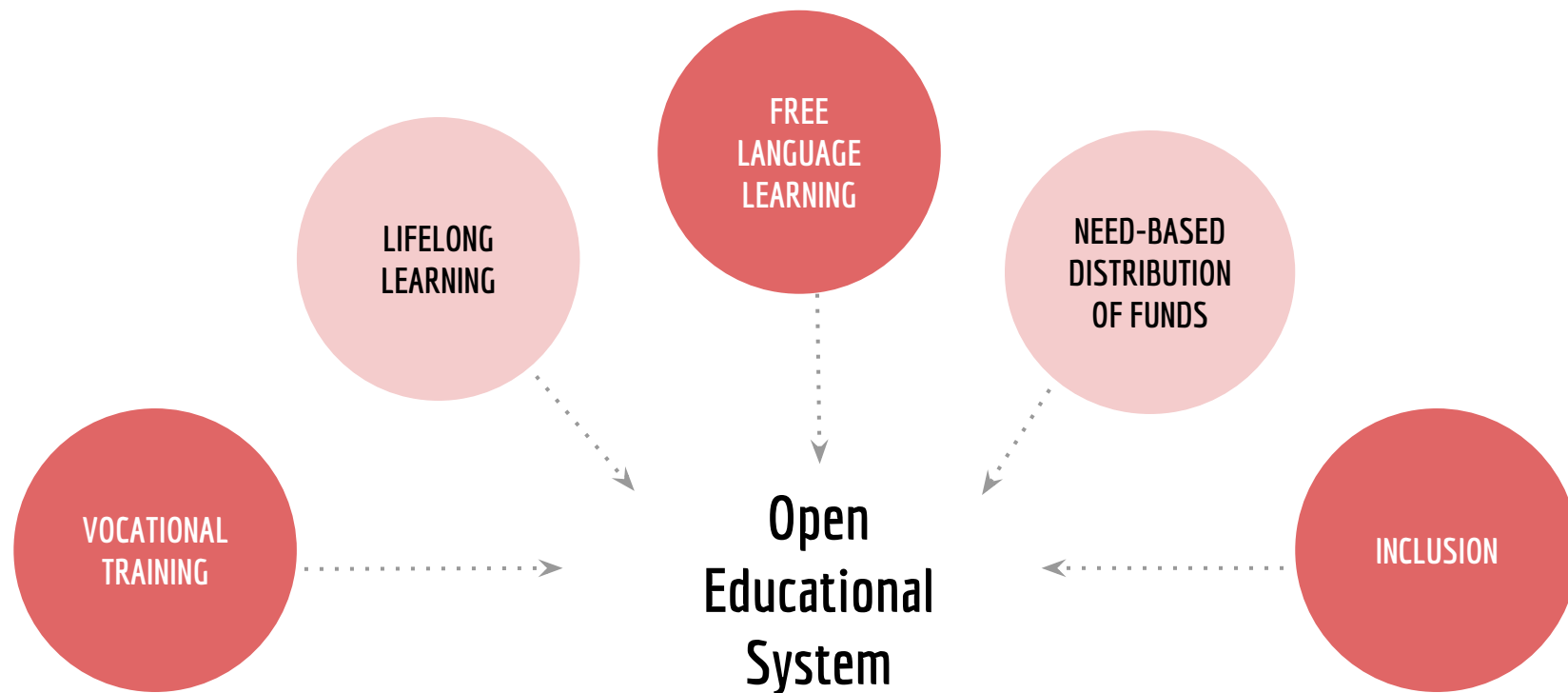# Appendix: Slides from Final Presentation, Nov 14, 2019

International Youth Think Tank (IYTT)

31 participants, 18 countries, 18-24 year-olds

International Youth Conference Report

Preview by Five Presenters

Demand 1 : Expand Access to Education

FREE LANGUAGE LEARNING

LIFELONG LEARNING

NEED-BASED DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Open Educational System

INCLUSION

3

Demand 2: Reform Education

Practical Workshops

Media Literacy
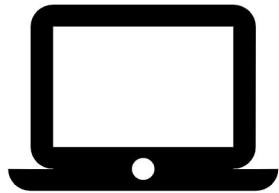
Critical Engagement

Democratic Mentality

Digitalised Education

4

Demand 3 : Enable Local Assemblies

Combat the representation crisis at a **local level** and promote accessibility of political dialogue

Digitised Democracy
Create an online platform to promote access to assemblies

Legitimised Assemblies
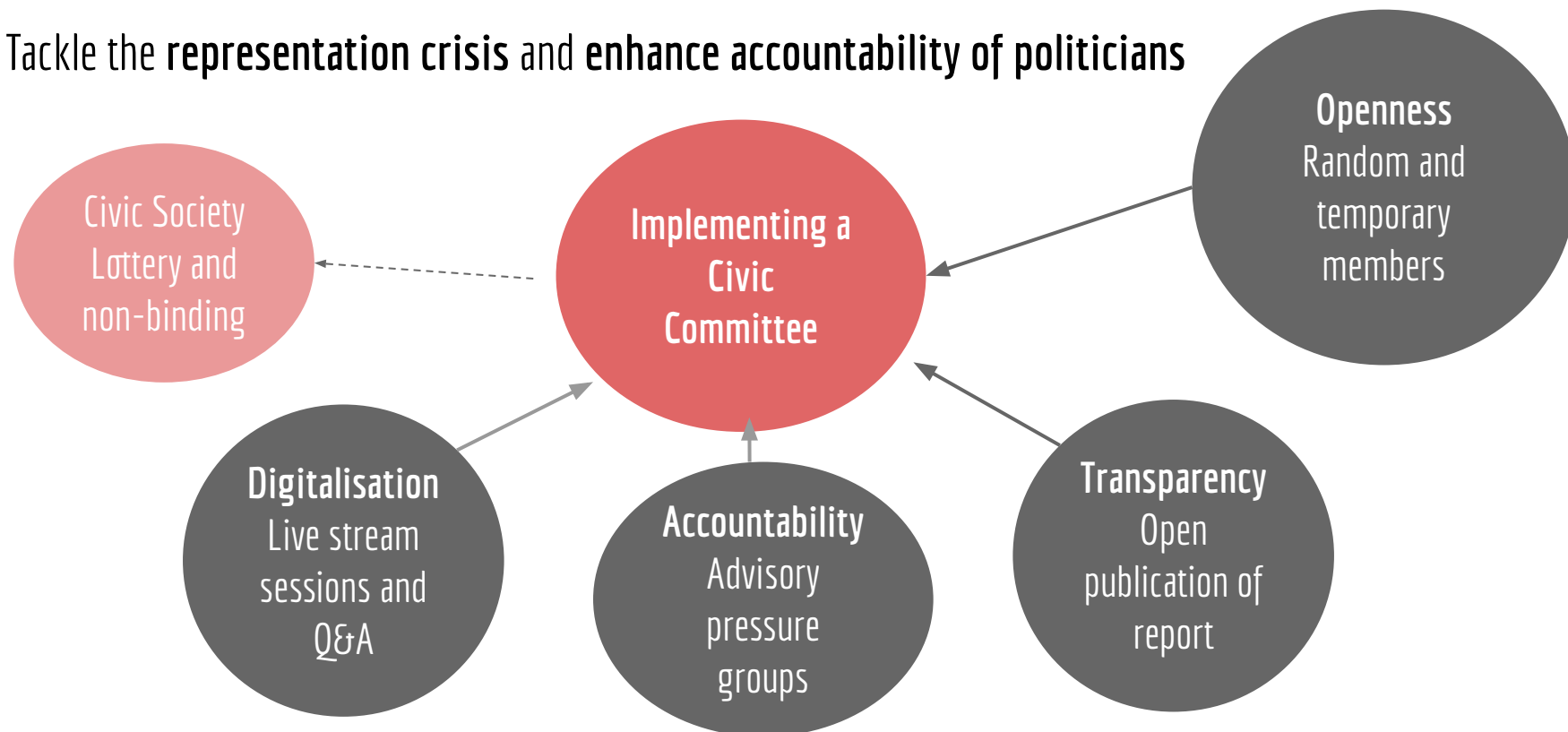Establish credible local assemblies recognised nationally

Inclusivity Framework
Ensure assemblies are representative and relevant to local views

5

Demand 4 : Create Civic Committees

Tackle the **representation crisis** and **enhance accountability of politicians**

Implementing a Civic Committee

Civic Society
Lottery and non-binding

Openness
Random and temporary members

Digitalisation
Live stream sessions and Q&A

Accountability
Advisory pressure groups

Transparency
Open publication of report

INTERNATIONAL
YOUTH
THINK TANK

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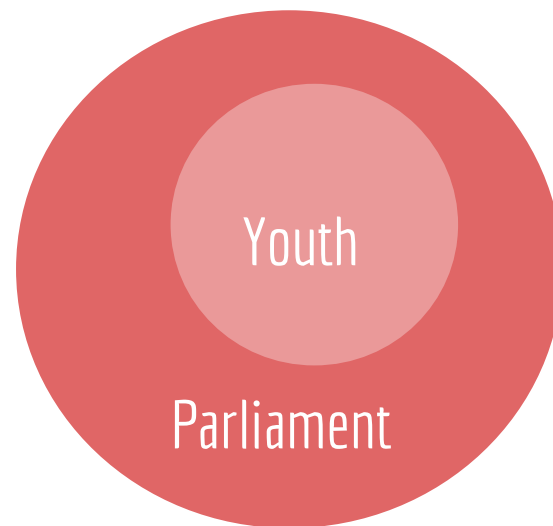# Demand 5 : Enforce Human Rights *for Real*

- Act upon the universality of Human Rights
- Hold the international community responsible
- Improve judiciary systems

HUMAN RIGHTS are not a matter of question, but a matter of FACT!

Demand 6 : Put **Youth** in Charge!

- Mandatory inclusion of Youth in the policy making process
  - Consultations are not enough
  - Youth Quotas in **Parliaments** (50%)

- Including youth in the official representative delegations of all countries to international meetings
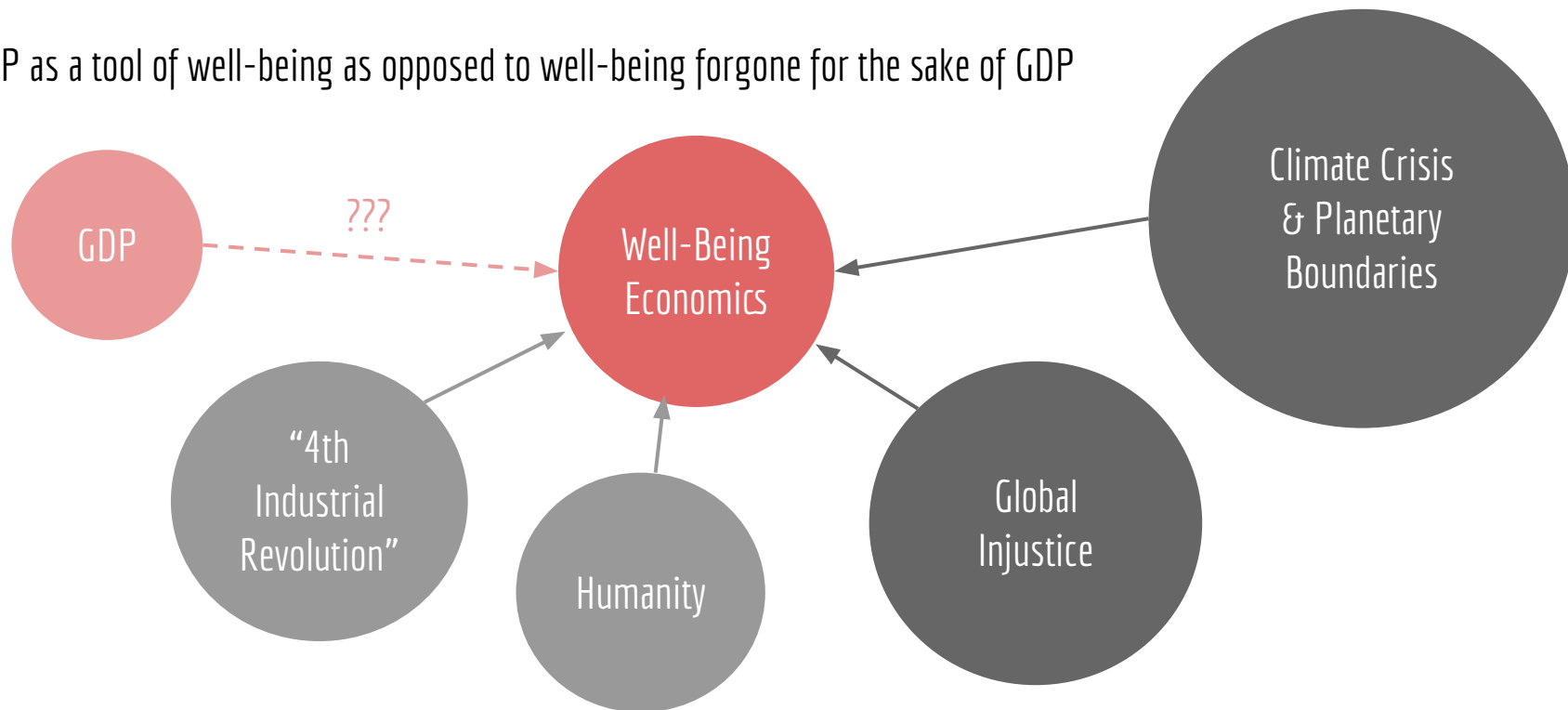
Youth

Parliament

Demand 7: Empower through Legal Knowledge

Election
of Policy Makers

→

Legal Training*

→

Conscious Policies

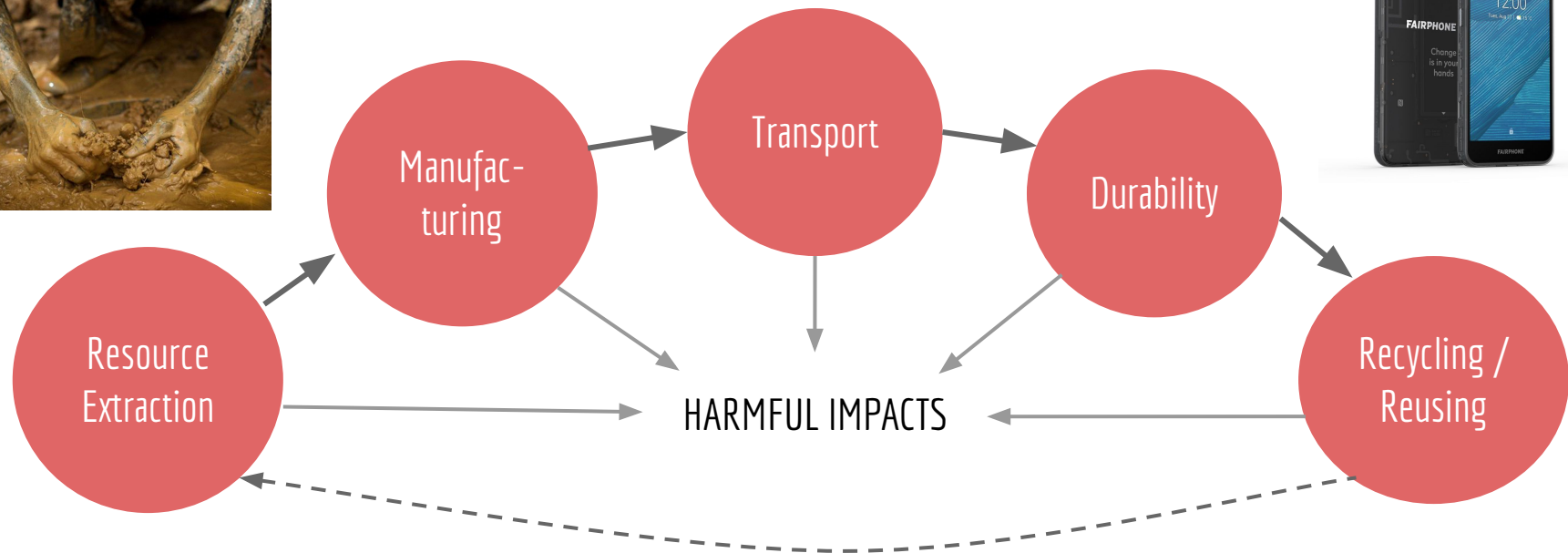*Human Rights; Legal system; Decision-Making Process; Representation Duties; Diplomacy

9

Demand 8 : Economize Well-Being

GDP as a tool of well-being as opposed to well-being forgone for the sake of GDP
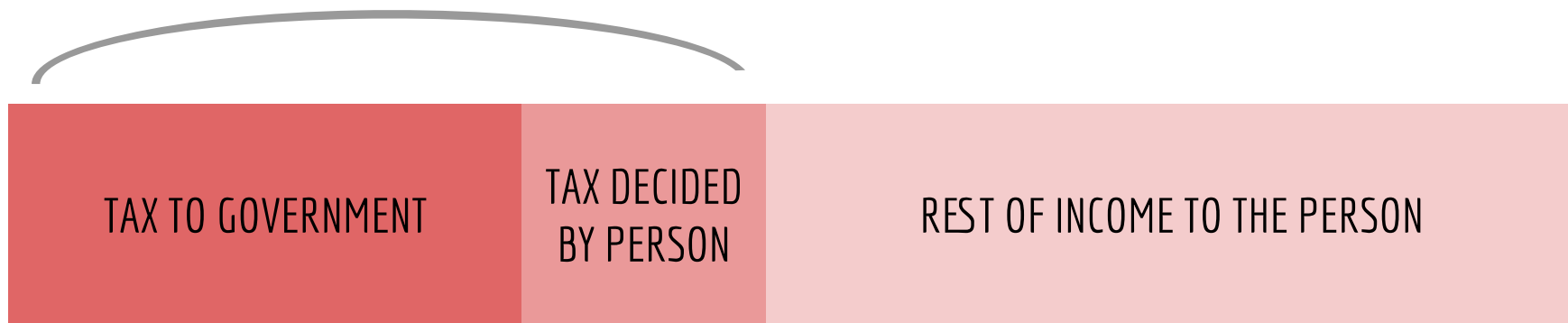

GDP

???

Well-Being Economics

Climate Crisis & Planetary Boundaries

"4th Industrial Revolution"

Humanity

Global Injustice

Demand 9 : Reveal Product Supply Chains

AIM: To address the current exploitation of humans and nature

Manufac-turing

Transport

Durability

Resource Extraction

HARMFUL IMPACTS

Recycling / Reusing

11

Demand 10 : Democratise Tax

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Original Tax to Government

| TAX TO GOVERNMENT | TAX DECIDED BY PERSON | REST OF INCOME TO THE PERSON |

Read our Complete Report for more details!

It will be available tomorrow at
iythinktank.com

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