Preliminary Report

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Introduction

The International Youth Conference 2020 (IYC), organized by the International Youth Think Tank, brought together 22 young democracy entrepreneurs from all over Europe in a 4 days online conference.

The seeds of our ideas on democracy were collected under the guidance of 4 moderators. They were then watered with inspiring talks by renowned lectures and a new vision cropped up: justice, responsibility and solidarity are the keys to access a more open and democratic society.

In times where democratic values cannot be taken for granted, we looked for new ways to restore the principles of tolerance. openness and peace that are the foundations of our freedom.



1 Good information - education and media

In today's world, everything revolves around information and advancements. Information is all around us and is included in our daily life, for instance, media news feeds, Youtube algorithms, social media. There are a lot of different sources; however, this makes it even harder to verify its plausibility and accurateness. This era of information overload and unreliable sources requires critical thinking from every individual which still is not part of the educational curriculum. The educational system nowadays does not support the development of relevant soft skills and does not provide opportunities for international exchange between students from different countries. However, this is a fundamental requirement to strengthen the dialogue between individuals in the European society and build their European identity.

Building on that, the level of education influences a lot of democracy-aspects in our life. More specifically, we want to acknowledge the fact that citizens with a higher education are more likely to participate politically, both in national and EU-politics. Results conducted in the Eurobarometer 375 displays the fact that people who left education aged 20 or over are more likely to validate their voting in the European Parliamentary Elections by the claim that democracy is important, compared to people who finished their education earlier. One does also observe a large distinction between these groups in the likelihood of even voting in the European Parliamentary Elections. 67% of those who completed their education aged 20 or over are aiming to vote in the European Parliamentary elections. The same number for people who completed their education at 15 or under is 48%. These statistics clearly show the importance of education. We aim to ensure every European citizen at all different age groups get information and education about their political systems and governing institutions, as well as create incentives for people to engage politically in their society or in the EU¹.

In this part of the report we will come up with several responses regarding the new media landscape and strengthen the European identity.

^{1/}https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/flash/fl 375 en.pdf



1.1 Global Charter for Truth

Key issue

The world is facing an unprecedented crisis of truth. The new, highly unregulated media landscape is permitting the spread of unreliable facts, political influence into independent media, and corporate profits on individual data. When facing the challenges of today - including the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple political disruptions - citizens have a fundamental right to secure information and trustworthy media.

The new digital platforms of information sharing have led to rapid changes in the media landscape. Newspapers and television companies being allowed to distribute content online has led to an unprecedented abundance of information. Yet, with the traditional media undergoing those transitions and social media amassing more power to reach audiences, a lack of regulation of media in general has become visible. This has given ground to unreliable news being spread at a gradually larger scale, without accountability being executed. The phenomenon of each individual being able to have their own version of truth has led to a situation, where truth has lost its meaning and power. This is fertile soil for social conflict and hatred since there is no more solid base to debate on. We therefore believe that there is a need for distinguishing unreliable information and facts-based news.

Furthermore, with the increase in influence of undemocratic political initiatives, the journalistic independence and safety is at risk. Ruling parties have been raising their influence on the narratives published in the press. Alongside the enforcement of specific narratives through the media, multiple cases of attacks on journalists have been carried out. These attacks range from threats, public harassment to physical attacks during political events. Therefore, journalists need further protection to retain freedom of speech and cover stories that may not align with the governmental agenda.

Additionally, with the exponential rise in usage of digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Google and Instagram, there are no international regulations for how data should be handled. Moreover, there are no international regulations for how privacy should be respected. Free apps are not free, we pay with our data and the digital media companies are making profit out of the reckless usage of it. The profit is both in terms of economic gain and political power. The exploitation of our personal data has been used for maneuvering political consensus. That is why we call for the personal ownership of data. We are stakeholders in those companies, and we should be recognized as such.

Response

One charter to combat three key issues: The UN and other international organizations need a new charter. Similarly to the charter of human rights, the charter should be agreed upon globally.



First, the charter would address the issues of unreliable news by holding the companies accountable for the information they distribute. By trademarking each publication with "news", "research-based information" or "opinion", the transparency of the information provided on the platforms would be improved. Technologically it is feasible, since instant algorithms can research each publication in milliseconds. However, there are ethical implications to such a mechanism that would have to be considered, as it remains to be settled who should have the power to decide what is an opinion and what is not. The Charter would not be intended as a means to limit the variety of opinions circulating the public discourse, but rather to eliminate statements that contain clear falsehoods. The Charter would not grant the authority for persons or institutions to give verdict on what opinions can and cannot be widely spread.

Second, this charter would provide frameworks for the prevention of political and governmental influence on independent media. This would be done two-fold:

- 1) By accrediting chosen journalists with "journalistic immunity" a status equivalent to diplomatic immunity - journalists could be protected from any form of attacks and be given full opportunities for independent reporting. Given the fact that journalists play as crucial of a role as diplomats in sustaining the structure of a democratic society, they should be provided with an official protection and full freedom of speech.
- 2) By creating a global support network of intergovernmental organizations for journalists and whistleblowers, people would have access to unfiltered information that spells out the truth about governments' actions.

Both actions could be initiated and conducted by international organizations that remain impartial in regards to national affairs. As journalists may be targeted by their national authorities, we advise such journalistic support should not be provided just at the national level, but form an organ at a higher, non-national level.

Third, the Charter would provide an urgently needed clarification on the data ownership issue. As of today, users pay with their data and our suggestion would bring back the power to the users. The data is currently used by tech companies to gain profit and political power. The newly proposed Charter would push towards more transparency and de-commodification of users by tech companies.

Result

The expected result of the proposals is to ensure that citizens globally have safe access to true, reliable information through the media. Through systemic trademarking of the media publications, readers would be pushed to approach the content critically, which could thus initiate a safer and more rational usage of media, and would provide citizens with key information to make suitable decisions as part of the civic society. Moreover, the support next for journalists and the journalistic immunity would lead to more accurate reporting since the journalist would not need to fear repercussions from the governments. The data ownership would give users more power over their privacy and have more control over what their data is used for.



1.2 Reshape Education

Key issues

Looking at the current education system we identified a couple of problems that need a response. In order to maintain a critical minded society there is a need for thoughtful individuals who are equipped with a set of tools to guide them through a democratic and developed society. In a changing society with a huge amount of information circulating around every day it is not easy to sort out the true information and perceive it critically. Critical thinking is one of the key instruments an individual needs in order to vote, understand decision makers, to know how to live and participate in a democratic world.

With the globalization of the world, there is a need for multilateralism and to make sure we develop good relationships with other states. Knowing this and looking at the international sphere, knowledge on the EU is essential for a citizen living in Europe. We must educate the European citizens on what rights and duties they have, the power they have to influence the European decision making and what programs and opportunities might be available for them in Europe.

We believe that education is supposed to be inclusive at its core. Each student must be seen, heard and included in the educational process. Many European countries today have educational systems which cause segregation and polarization. Children never get the chance to interact with people from a different socioeconomic background or ethnicity. This is an enormous issue. Furthermore, we do not believe that education is solely for young people. As of today, most people do not continue educating themselves after they have received some form of educational degree. This is also a problem. It should not be rare or stigmatized for adults to enter educational programs. It should be encouraged.

In short, the main issues which we have identified regarding the current education system are exclusion, lack of critical thinking, lack of knowledge about the EU, lack of different cultural perspectives during lectures and a lack of life-long learning programs.

Response

To enhance critical thinking we want to reshape education methods. This reform should impact all generations, the goal is to reshape education to the youth, but also to tackle lifelong learning, make sure everyone is in a constant evolution and is equipped with a "tool-kit" who would allow them to navigate to a democratic world.

Taking a look at the youth education, the teachers need to implement the 4C's (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication) in classrooms. This would allow a more stimulative learning for the students, instead of just memorizing, they would become active, problem solvers and encourage discussion. This can be achieved by, e.g, discussion groups; the class is divided into smaller groups which allows the professor to see how the student interacts in a discussion and pay more attention to certain traits of his/her



personality, this way the teacher can personalize the teaching method to the students. Another interactive learning method is problem-based learning; a problem/question is presented to the students and they have to do the research by themselves, finding their own arguments, their own ideas on the matter and present them to the class who would discuss it. The goal is for the students to make their own opinions on the issues that they would face through life, to have the ability of researching and critically analysing a certain situation, to be prepared and well equipped for the future.

Lifelong learning is also developed in our program, the teachers need to do workshops and learn as well, so they can keep up with the world developments and know the latest teaching methods. These workshops would be provided not only to teachers in schools but also to managers at companies who want to increase the aggregated knowledge and awareness among their employees. The goal is to help a citizen perceive the media news, see through fake news, understand how to get information regarding political issues, and have presentations on world political decisions that are complicated. These workshops to be more efficient would occur near political events, so the attention is already on these circumstances and it is easy to get people to join. If possible a company should provide incentives, so there is another reason for the employees to join these seminars and workshops.

Result

As a result of participating in these modernized learning methods in forms of classes, lectures, seminars and workshops we aspire to provide all European citizens with a tool kit for critical thinking and openness. With these learning methods we strive to increase knowledge, awareness and participation among everyone situated within the European borders. Equipped with an open mindset and the ability to think critically we believe that European citizens would ensure the maintenance and prosperity of democracy and human rights.

Additionally, we want to stress that these outcomes would not solely be applicable to students at a certain age. We aim to ensure that our proposed changes would appear in educational programs for people in all ages, including teachers and adults. As a result of not only in class-education but also workshops for employees at companies we aim for the principle of lifelong learning as well as a stronger feeling of a European identity.

In times of international crisis, misinformation and conspiracy theories it is more important than ever to obtain the ability to think critically and the knowledge of how to make a difference in society. The result of implementing our proposals would in the long run lead to a more democratic, open and deliberate society where people would welcome and embrace cultural differences. People would desire to have rational, fact-based, open dialogues with people from different backgrounds and opinions, instead of turning against each other.



1.3 Intercultural Exchange

Key issues

Intercultural exchange is important for a mutual understanding of different cultures and thus promoting values for an open and democratic society. Exchange programs are highly important to get to know Europe and its diversity. Intercultural exchange programs can help students overcome cultural stereotypes and are a substantial benefit to shaping their own identity.

However, when it comes to the current educational system in most European countries we identified a hazardous lack of intercultural education. Second, intercultural exchange programs most of the time have a limited scope and mainly reach privileged students and schools, widening the social gap and excluding a great number of disadvantaged students. Those students often do not have the financial means to take part in exchange programs or do not have the necessary information about them and therefore are not curious about them.

Response

In order to tackle these problems and issues in the domain of intercultural exchange we propose a number of measures to promote and foster values of an open and democratic society. We want to suggest the EdUcation+ program as a successor of the ERASMUS+ program. This program should again receive a great amount of funding by the European Union, as it is in line with its fundamental values of personal freedom, human dignity, solidarity, active civil society, democracy and the rule of law.

We want to revolutionize the EdUcation+ program: school classes would get to meet each other digitally over a long time period before the actual physical exchange - perhaps for one or two years. This would make the students curious about the exchange and make them more eager to go. Additionally they get to know each other even better. The second part of the programme would be a monthly lesson for all European students where they meet a random class from another country in class at school. In those meetings the students would have different lessons accordingly adjusted to their age. Younger students would play games to overcome language barriers and to know a different culture playfully. Older students would discuss political themes, cultural differences and problems that the world might be facing.

Thus we propose the introduction of a digital exchange platform with the ultimate goal of fostering long-term connection and interaction between classes. This platform should provide games, discussions and workshops. Also for teachers to prepare the digital exchange

We propose a dedicated class in school where students are provided with the necessary infrastructure such as a computer, notebook, a stable internet connection etc. Moreover, we want to ensure that *all* schools and students have the chance to participate in such a



program and not just the ones that are particularly interested in the topic anyway. One way of achieving this would be by randomly selecting a certain number of European schools and refrain from difficult application procedures. These procedures often present a vital obstacle for both teachers and students.

In concrete, this program needs to be fully funded by the European Union, as even small financial payments can present a hurdle for less privileged students and prevent their participation in such cultural exchanges. However, we do not see that this would be a problem. The new EU-budget includes funding for the existing EU exchange program ERASMUS+. Our proposals for EdUcation+ do mainly focus on extending the exchange experience by having digital meetings as well as writing emails and letters. This would not require a large amount of further funding.

Result

We are convinced that by building up an exchange program like this, we would manage to build up a strong European identity among young people in particular. In this new generation we strive to include all Europeans, no matter their socioeconomic background, ethnicity or religion. The use of technological infrastructure in the build-up phase of the exchange is designed to engage all age groups of students: This way students would learn about Europe, the EU and European values from an early age. By interacting with students from different parts of Europe they would also gain knowledge about other cultures, countries and perspectives. Even if these students do not speak a foreign language, they would be able to communicate and work together on different projects online. We think that by expanding the access to such programs people become more open-minded and tolerant. The program would be very beneficial for the students' personality as well as for teachers and the parents.



2 Empowering Political Participation

Liberal democracy sets limits to the majority and protects minorities through "checks and balances", nevertheless in a context where the populistic narrative is gaining ground, liberal democracies need to innovate and bring solutions to the constant arising challenges.

Political participation does not lie in elections alone, since this is not the adequate solution to engage people, there is the need to make the decision-making processes accessible to people from all social layers and politicians need to listen and act upon it - "It's not enough to say that you have a right to exist: there have to be clear interventions in your favour." ²

When there is lack of trust in institutions, miss representation and constant feeling of disregard towards each person's voice, liberal democracy loses ground, therefore we propose some measures to tackle some of the most urgent issues.

It is essential to have an anthropological view when we think about solutions for different challenges, because each community is unique and perceives different understandings of similar ideas and concepts.

This question takes us further to analyse the realities in different levels, since we might argue that local projects might be very limited in its impact and not match the scope of the challenges, nevertheless building trust needs to start on a smaller scale, since when people do not see the powerful force of change they can be on the local level, the decisions made at European level are perceived as far away and, perhaps, irrelevant.

² Salter. 2011. International Idea.



2.1 Training for Political Participation

Key issue

There are a number of issues that have resulted in a lack of political participation. First of all, the current educational system, which is mainly focused on formal education, doesn't promote critical thinking. Therefore, we inevitably walk towards a society of citizens which do not understand the political processes and, therefore are not actively taking part in them. Moreover, the limited knowledge does not only result in lack of interest, but also in a constant feeling that they do not have the capacity to intervene in the decision-making process that often presents itself as a field for the elite.

Response

Active participation is scarce in certain stratums of society and there is a clear need to improve the political engagement and the trust in the political institutions and respective representatives. In order to achieve better results to these challenges, we believe in the creation of a mentorship programme, which is not targeted to a specific group, but to everyone weighing interest and devisity. Therefore, there should be a special focus on groups that have been excluded from the decision-making process, such as minorities, among which, first and second generation migrants, LGBTQIAP+, economically disadvantaged population are included.

This mentorship programme allows mentees to be followed by mentors from different fields, which could be local politicians, relevant stakeholders and professionals in the area of interests for each participant. Overall, role models are important and trust is at the centre of this scheme. Since there is often some stigma regarding the lack of understanding about political processes and also lack of opportunities to learn about it, these mentors would allow each mentee to expose questions, learn and put into practice concrete ideas and projects.

The mentorship programme is inspired by the best practices which are already implemented in different countries, such as local climate councils in Denmark, which gather groups of interested youngsters who write proposals to the mayor's office. This programme allows it to conclude it is easily replicable in different contexts and there are multiple opportunities to receive funding for its implementation, such as local, national or European funds.

Impact

The scheme of mentorships programme is not limited to a specific time frame, since there is the constant need to reach different target groups, increase trust and raise awareness about political participation. This is the only way to have a society that lives up to its potential.

It is important to highlight that the project aims to start on a local level, due to the fact that



when citizens feel that their voice is not being heard or promoting change on the closer scale, it becomes harder to involve people in national politics and European politics. At first, the multiple locations where the project is implemented would experience impact in different levels, such as, increased understanding of the decision making context, increased representation and active participation.

As referred previously, people with higher levels of education have the tendency to be more politically active. Therefore, education through a non-formal education context would have a longer impact when it comes to involvement in national and international politics. This would therefore contribute to an increased representation and engagement on larger scales, contributing to a more inclusive policy making.

Overall, we can conclude that the mentorship programme w positively drive policy making on a local, national, European and international levels among all scopes of society.



2.2 Equalizing Access to Highest Ranking Positions in the Public Sector

Key issue

In powerful executive and political positions, certain groups are underrepresented, often based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disabilities, religion and social class. The people in power are a largely homogenous group, who do not adequately represent the diverse communities in their town, region, or country. To ensure that policy-making truly serves the people, it is necessary to reflect diversity in our public institution and especially in executive positions. In a contemporary democracy it is of a particular importance that everyone's voice is heard and everyone feels represented in order to ensure a vivid and functioning democratic system. In addition, the underrepresentation of certain social groups generates a feeling of being left behind and hinders inclusion. Having powerful positions that are only held by a privileged few can lead to social alienation and increased biases. Alienation and biases can normalize xenophobia and hate speech which also endanger the safety of citizens and the functioning of our democracies.

Response

In order to gain a more equal representation and to increase access to political positions we already proposed a mentorship programme in <u>2.1 Training for Political Participation</u>. With this proposal we want to address the representation in non-elected positions of public institutions and especially the highest ranked positions. Therefore, we propose an equal-opportunity program for all executive positions in the public sector.

As we learned from past discussions, implementing quotas for recruitment of members of underrepresented groups is doubtful, because the focus should lie on competences and not solely on social background. However, we need a mechanism of affirmative action embedded in recruitment structures in order to grant equality and a realistic representation. When there are two equally skilled applicants, one from an overrepresented group and another from an underrepresented group, the recruitment should be decided in favour of the member of the underrepresented group.

In this place, the crucial role of role models and their strong impact on the society needs to be mentioned. In order to encourage more and more members of underrepresented groups, strong and dynamic role models in highest ranked positions are helpful so they need to be promoted to a higher rank. We hope that with those methods we will reach the positive effects described below.



Result

A realistic representation of the diverse society in public institutions would begin to address structural inequalities and counter social alienation. Having role models with whom they identify, more members of underrepresented groups could gain inspiration, guidance, and visibility to seize powerful positions. An institutionalized equal recruitment process could prevent biases, that are deeply rooted in societies around the world, from skewing hiring processes. In the long run, programs that seek to correct past discrimination could lead to public institutions that truly reflect the communities they serve.

Concerning this matter, the important role of role models and it's a big impact on the whole society needs to be underlined. Easing the access of members of underrepresented groups to leading positions of public institutions would motivate others to follow their example and lower restraints, which leads to a fairer recruitment process.

Starting in public institutions, we hope that this will impact the private sector as well, which is no less important to the bigger picture. Equal representation in every aspect of the society would also avoid negative stereotypes and hate speech.



3 Supportive Governance 3.1 True Legal Equality

Key issue

The main problem that needs to be addressed is the unequal representation and access to opportunities for women and minorities both through legal and social means. Systems and markets are often unfairly manipulated to benefit only the dominant groups and discriminate against minorities. Namely, this includes unequal access to education, jobs, institutions, health care, justice, political participation and many more. There are discriminatory policies in place that exclude and categorize certain groups of people, thus invoking inequalities. Moreover, commonly the needs and problems unique for the specific minority groups are completely overlooked and ignored. These inequalities are products of social biases based on people's gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, religion and social class. Furthermore, these problems affect the homeless, senior citizens, persons living in poverty, military combat veterans, refugees and immigrants, persons with a serious and persistent mental illness and substance abusers.

As far as gender equality is concerned, women are not treated the same as men, one of the most pressing examples arising in the workplace. In many cases, even though men and women are in the same profession and position, women's pay is lower than that of their male colleagues. At the same time women very often have fewer career opportunities to begin with. To some extent this is a result of the societal bias under which the figure of the caregiver is still associated only with women. They are expected to take care of the children and the house. As far as the figure of the father as care-giver is concerned, it is subject to several negative stereotypes, in fact it is normal that in some countries, after the birth of a child it is only the mother who takes care of it. These stereotypes do not negatively influence only women but also everyone on the non-binary spectrum and transgender persons. Furthermore, they affect non-heteronormative relationships and non-nuclear families. It is important to remember that each individual has a specific social and political identity, which creates different modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that identifies these advantages and disadvantages as a combination of factors to help understanding each individual's experience.

Response

How could this be solved from the point of view of political incentives? We believe that states should invest more in the welfare system so that everyone can have the same opportunities and above all so that the gender pay gap between men and women is reduced legally but also practically.



We recognise that in some countries a cultural transition would be needed to end prejudice, and we also recognise that it cannot happen overnight, yet governments can make a major contribution and direct society towards socio-cultural change through targeted reforms.

Scandinavian countries are good examples of equality between men and women, and we refer in particular to parental leave, granted to parents regardless of gender. In addition, we should not forget that families are not necessarily made up only of a mother and a father, which is why governments must ensure that these rights are also granted to families with parents of the same sex or in transition.

Another key issue in our view is aid to people and families in minority conditions. As highlighted in the previous paragraph, within a society, we can find different citizens and therefore disparate kinds of families, with different problems and needs. So, that all people and families can have the same opportunities, states could for example guarantee child care access for all. Furthermore, so that families can ensure that their children have a good education, that they are treated equally and have the same opportunities as their peers, we propose free or subsidized education; other incentives that can be adopted politically could take the form of tax credits, pension or non-economic contributions, such as health care.

At the legislative level, it is necessary that states protect minorities, such as people with disabilities, foreign citizens, immigrants, asylum seekers and members of the lgbtq+ community, through targeted and specific aid, but also through legislative actions, such as anti-discrimination laws. As far as companies and public institutions are concerned, recruitment measures such as blind job applications could be taken to eliminate prejudices at an early stage, so that jobseekers will be treated equally.

Results

By increasing representation and access to opportunities for minority groups and other such initiatives we can increase participation by establishing a stakeholder society, help and encourage all people to voice their opinions. Pushing antidiscriminatory and affirmative laws will eliminate cultural barriers. For example equality of care responsibilities in the law ensures that the father and mother can share equally the care of their children and consequently women would have the same opportunities as their male colleagues in terms of work and earnings. Furthermore incentives in form of tax credits and non-economic such as free or subsidised healthcare and education would help normalise such practices and hasten the cultural shift.

Since equality is a fundamental human right, it is extremely important for these standards to be adopted on a global level. If citizens of all nations are treated in the same way and receive the necessary aid we have mentioned in the previous paragraphs, it would result in higher representation in public institutions, which will make women and minorities further empower them to get involved in politics as well as other fields. Their trust towards the government would increase and they will be able to take full advantage of their rights as citizens of a democratic society.



3.2 Enhancing economic freedom

Key Issue:

Economic inequalities have been increasing within countries as the top ten percent decile gets richer, and the bottom 50 percent becomes poorer.³ Both income and wealth inequalities represent a key problem when addressing the problems our societies face, as these issues increase the economic divide among citizens, and can result in social upheavals. Furthermore, as wealth inequality grows at a faster pace than income inequality, a handful of billionaires accumulate excessive amounts of money at the same time that hundreds of millions are barely able to survive under the extreme poverty line.⁴

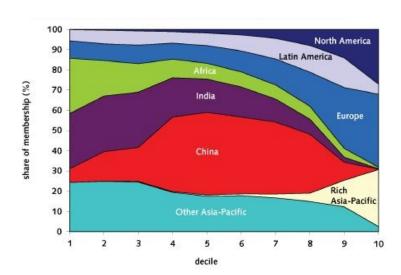


Figure I: Regional Composition of Global Wealth Distribution⁵

These staggering economic inequalities are caused by many societal issues, rooted in the structure of our economy. The lack of functioning education systems, structural racism and discrimination, large generational inequalities, among other issues are an impediment for minorities and less privileged groups to fully develop their economic freedoms.

³ OECD. (2015). "Why is income inequality rising?" Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264246010-5-en.pdf?expires=1605780896&id=id&accna me=quest&checksum=F848EE730DD991EDC674AC072C6E34F5 [Accessed 19.11.2020]

⁴ The Harvard Gazette. (2020). "How political ideas keep economic inequality going." Available at: https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/03/pikettys-new-book-explores-how-economic-inequality-is-perpetuated/ [Accessed 19.11.2020]

⁵ UNU-WIDER. (2006.) "The Global Distribution of Household Wealth." Available at: https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/global-distribution-household-wealth [Accessed 19.11.2020]



A society with large inequalities and lack of equal economic opportunities tends to be more divided, and hence, the support for democracy becomes less straight-forward. The trust in democratic institutions tends to decrease when people do not feel considered in its policy outputs. Therefore, as inequalities arise, and as the social and economic conditions of the citizens worsen, the legitimacy of the democratic state may decrease.

In this way, supporting economic policies that aim at bringing back the 'left-behind' can have a potentially positive consequence in the support for democracy, and the development of inclusive and sustainable societies. The left behind may include a wide range of social groups. Therefore, our approach to tackling the lack of equal economic opportunities is through an intersectional and green perspective that takes into account the relevance of human diversity and the current environmental crisis.

Responses

Solution 1: New Measures of Economic Success:

Within nearly all countries across the world, economic success is measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and its continual annual growth. We consider this measure of success to be inadequate. Increasing economic growth is a distraction for decision-makers as it covers up a more detailed picture of what is actually happening within society. Simultaneously, the continual desire for economic growth leads to increasing pressures on our environmental and planetary systems as it demands never ending higher levels of resource use.

Taking inspiration from Economist Kate Raworth's "Doughnut Economics", we propose an alternative model. Within this model, the economy is framed within the context of and as a dependent of the environment. Continual environmental degradation in the name of economic growth is destined to lead to wide-spread economic and political instability in the future. Secondly, the performance of the 'economy' shall be measured by an array on indicators that determine overall human 'wellbeing'. These indicators shall include access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, good quality housing, food, clean water, electricity, as well as income inequality and social equity. The definition of a 'good economy' and subsequent policy decisions should use these measures of wellbeing to understand economic success.

Solution 2: Universal Basic Income (UBI)

We propose a Universal Basic Income, ideally funded via a wealth tax. This proposal can be implemented on any level of governance, regional, national, or (ambitiously) international. The specific amount required should cover the minimal living costs within a locality. This can be calculated using any kind of index that measures the cost of living, with reference to currency purchasing power parity (PPP)⁶

Solution 3: Worker Empowerment

⁶ World Data. (2019)." *Comparison of worldwide cost of living*". Available at: https://www.worlddata.info/cost-of-living.php [Accessed 19.11.2020]



This solution suggests two changes to corporate structures and practices. First, we propose the expansion of co-operative business structure, in which company profits are shared among all levels of the workforce rather than just an executive elite. Second, we want to promote greater democracy within internal international corporate structures. Expanding decision-making powers across the entire supply chain, so that the voices of those most exploited by predatory corporate practices can be heard.

Result

The solutions proposed cover a wide range of issues that are linked to each other and the reason for this is the intersectionality of social and economic issues. The main idea behind our proposed solutions is the integration and inclusion of all different communities and social groups into the economic system allowing everyone to have equal opportunities. These equal opportunities may refer to the equal access to good-quality education, labour market opportunities, health care, pension systems, among other issues.

All in all, the solutions proposed will redistribute economic power among all sectors and groups of the society. This means that the intergenerational inequalities will be addressed, as well as other inequalities based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among other factors.

The end-goal of leaving no one behind is that citizens can refocus from securing basic needs (such as food, shelter, or clothing) to higher psychological and self-fulfillment needs. This will in turn empower citizens to thrive, embrace their economic freedom, and understand that democratic systems work for the people and are in the interest of all citizens.



3.2 Global Governance for Real - United Nations in 21st Century

Key issue

The world is currently facing several global challenges and crises: the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, and the decline of democracy in several states. States are turning away from global cooperation and are trying to come up with national solutions for global challenges. Therefore, it has become evident that the world is in desperate need of global solutions for these global problems. The best platform for global solutions is still the United Nations (UN), since most of the world's nation-states are members of the UN. However, the UN does not have the tools or the adequate structure to address the burning issues of today. The UN lacks the ability to respond to the urgency of the climate crisis and fails to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The UN has not adapted to the changing world and the new types of crises. Therefore, the UN needs to modernize.

Response

The idea of the United Nations, or rather the League of Nations, came after World War I as an attempt to promote world peace. However, this attempt failed, and it was not until after World War II that the current UN was established. It is evident that wars and crises are the drivers for change and for establishing platforms for cooperation. However, since World War II, the UN has not been reformed or updated to address the new global order and the new challenges that come with it. Therefore, it is time to modernize the United Nations and bring the UN into the 21st century. A modernization and a reformation of the UN would allow the UN to appropriately respond to the global challenges ahead of us. Therefore, we are calling for the United Nations 2.0, which includes a series of radical reforms that would bring the UN into the 21st century.

In order to make the United Nation more efficient and to improve the decision-making procedure, the first necessary reform needs to be to end the current veto-powers that the five permanent Security Council members have (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States). First, the veto-power is an undemocratic tool that belongs in the history books. The veto-power allows these five member states to completely block necessary and pressing resolutions, sanctions, proposals, and missions, which could still have the support of the majority of states. Moreover, not all five members are democratic countries, which makes it difficult to enforce, enhance and spread democracy. Additionally, the veto-power gives these five member states an unfair tool to pursue their political interests and agenda, which comes at the cost of public interests and in some instances human rights and democracy. Second, the current veto-powers reflect the time of the



founding of the UN, and not the global powers of today. Thus, the veto-powers are not only an ineffective and undemocratic tool, but it is also not reflecting the current world.

Therefore, the second necessary reform is to increase the regional representation and update the UN to the current state of the world. As of now, several continents lack permanent representation in the Security Council. Since it is inevitable that every region will experience different consequences and effects of climate change and pandemics, it is important that there is a regional representation that could represent the interests of that specific region. Moreover, the regional representation would also improve the equality within the UN and improve the disproportionate power that currently exists.

The third necessary reform is to make the agreements more binding than they are today. While the resolutions are legally binding, most experts agree that the General Assembly resolutions are in practice non-binding and are more similar to recommendations. Therefore, necessary measures would be to improve the mechanism that would ensure that resolutions are implemented and make the agreements also in practice binding. We as humanity need stronger international guidelines and measures to deliver a global response to global challenges. Making agreements more binding would assure that the member states implement the agreed proposals. Moreover, there needs to be a mechanism that will follow up whether states have implemented the necessary agreements and solutions.

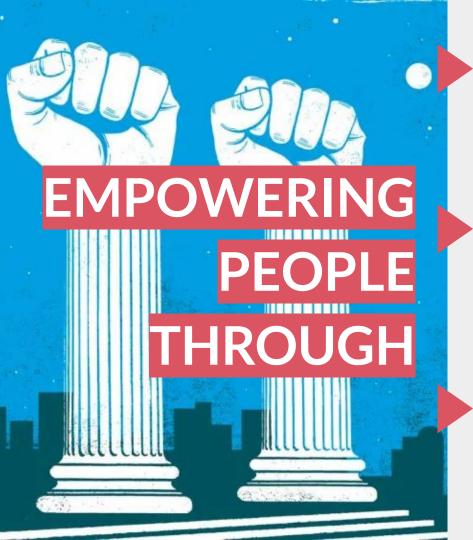
Result

These three reforms will ensure that the United Nations enters the 21st century and is equipped to respond to the challenges that the world face today. It would increase global cooperation and especially in the areas that are most pressing, such as climate change and pandemics.



Appendix

Attached are the slides from the final presentation of our proposals.



SUPPORTIVE GOVERNANCE



GOOD INFORMATION - MEDIA AND EDUCATION

IMPROVED AND EQUAL PARTICIPATION



21st CENTURY UNITED NATIONS

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE FOR REAL



RESPONSE

RESULTS

- **REGIONAL** REPRESENTATION
- **END VETO**
- **BINDING AGREEMENTS**

KEY ISSUE

GLOBAL COOPERATION IN CRISIS

UN 2.0.



FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN A DIGITAL WORLD

GLOBAL
CHARTER FOR
TRUTH



RESULTS

KEY ISSUE

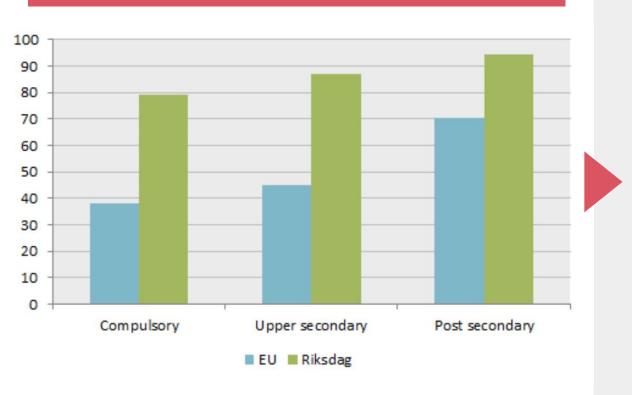
TRUTH CRISIS

RESPONSE

A GLOBAL
CHARTER
FOR TRUTH

- INFORMATION TRADEMARKS
- JOURNALISTIC
 IMMUNITY
- JOURNALISTIC SUPPORT
- DATAOWNERSHIP

VOTER TURNOUT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



BUILDING A EUROPEAN IDENTITY THROUGH EDUCATION

Source: Statistics Sweden: Big differences in turnout by level of education



RESHAPE THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



RESPONSE

KEY ISSUES

LACK OF:

- CRITICAL THINKING
- KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EU

 INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS

POLITICAL WORKSHOPS

RESULTS

- "TOOLKIT" FOR CRITICAL AND OPEN MINDED CITIZENS
 - KNOWLEDGE
 - AWARENESS
 - PARTICIPATION
- LIFELONG LEARNING



INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE



KEY ISSUES

- LACK OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION
- DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS EXCLUSION

RESPONSE

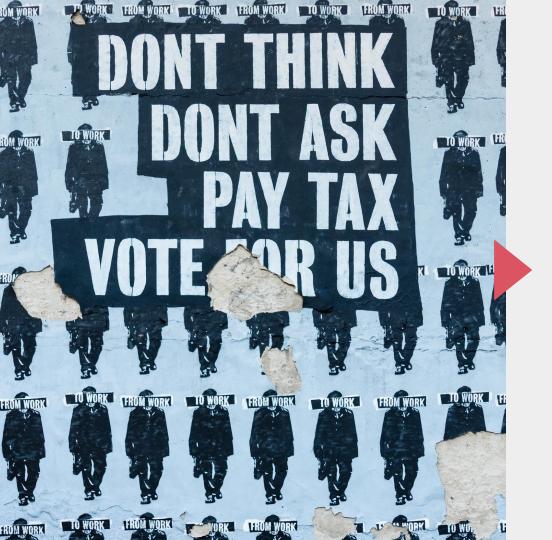
- EDUCATION+
 AS SUCCESSOR OF
 ERASMUS+
- DIGITAL & PHYSICAL EXCHANGES
- DIGITAL EXCHANGE PLATFORM

RESULTS

- A FEELING OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY
- INCLUSION
- BENEFICIAL FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND ADULTS

EDUCATION IS NOT A PRIVILEGE, IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT.

Article 14. Right To Education - EU Charter of Fundamental Rights



EMPOWERING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

"IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SAY THAT YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO EXIST: THERE HAS TO BE CLEAR INTERVENTIONS IN YOUR FAVOUR"

- SALTER. 2011. INTERNATIONAL IDEA



TRAINING
FOR
POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION



RESPONSE

KEY ISSUE

LIMITED
KNOWLEDGE
AND CAPACITY

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

RESULTS

- INCREASED
 REPRESENTATION
 (LONG RUN)
- LOCAL IMPACT (SHORT RUN)



EQUALIZING ACCESS TO HIGHEST-RANKING POSITIONS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR



KEY ISSUE

RESPONSE

INSTITUTIONAL **PLAN FOR DIVERSITY**

RESULTS

- **DIVERSITY**
- **COMPENSATION FOR STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES**
- **BROAD IMPACT**

UNDER-REPRESENTATION





TRUE LEGAL
AND
CULTURAL
EQUALITY



RESPONSE

KEY ISSUE

UNEQUAL SOCIETAL REPRESENTATION

LEGAL EQUALITY
AND INCENTIVE
POLICIES

RESULTS

- BREAKDOWN OF LEGAL AND CULTURAL BARRIERS
- EXPANDING
 MINIMUM
 STANDARDS
 GLOBALLY
- INCREASED STAKEHOLDERS



ENHANCING ECONOMIC FREEDOMS



KEY ISSUE

"LEFT BEHIND" COMMUNITIES

RESPONSE

- NEW MEASURES
 OF SUCCESS
- UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME
- WORKEREMPOWERMENT

RESULTS

- A HOLISTIC
 ECONOMIC POLICY
- COMBATING
 INTERGENERATI ONAL INEQUALITIES
- ENHANCING ECONOMIC FREEDOMS
- REDISTRIBUTING
 ECONOMIC POWER





PRELIMINARY REPORT:

https://iythinktank.com/