



bmz youth advisory council



HAMBURG  
SUSTAINABILITY  
CONFERENCE



# Recommendations for Action

Empowering Voices of Youth in Global Sustainability:  
Intergenerational Justice & Empowerment for Sustainable Development

# Background Information



The global community has set itself ambitious and urgent targets for sustainable development by 2030. With the Agenda 2030, 17 goals were adopted which, among other things, define how health and prosperity are to be promoted worldwide, the climate crisis curbed, and poverty ended. Although there is still time to implement these ambitious goals by 2030, the progress is too slow in view of the agreed remaining time. It is the responsibility of politicians, but also of the private sector, to do more to successfully implement the Agenda 2030.

As part of a survey, the BMZ Youth Advisory Council and the One Youth Ambassadors asked young people from all over the world about the Agenda 2030 and the associated youth participation. In response, 380 young people gave their opinion and agreed on one point: successful implementation of the SDGs requires meaningful youth participation, as young people are critical agents of change- today and in the future. The following recommendations for action in this overview are derived from the results of the survey.



Our aim is to empower young voices. However, this empowerment begins with emphasizing that our panel at the HSC as well as the survey and recommendations for action were created and developed by young people, and on a voluntary basis. It is largely the voluntary political commitment of young people from both institutions, with the support of full-time staff from ONE and with the Youth Advisory Council Accompanying Team (GIZ staff, on behalf of BMZ) that makes these recommendations for action and the empowerment of the 380 young voices possible. Let's continue to exchange and shape our future sustainably after HSC 2024. Let's give young people a meaningful voice and continue to drive the implementation of the SDGs forward, with young commitment!

# About Us



A young team of pupils and students conducted a survey on youth participation in summer 2024. The Youth Advisory Council of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ) and the ONE Youth Ambassadors of ONE Germany were involved.



**bmz youth advisory council**

The BMZ Youth Advisory Council is an advisory body of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ). 16 members between 16 and 24 years advise the BMZ on various future issues of German development policy from the perspective of young people.

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ONE Youth Ambassadors are part of a global network of activists working for greater global justice. Since 2011, they have been working in Germany to raise awareness of the successes of development cooperation, mobilize people to fight extreme poverty and demand more development policy commitment from politicians.

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The following ONE Youth Ambassadors were involved: Romance Bassingha, Jan-Christian Menden, Leonie Maier, Maximilian Linder, Pia Francke, Gesa Schmidt

# Overview



1. Summary of Recommendations for Action to Decision-Makers
2. Background: The consultation process
3. Results:
  - What should decision-makers do today to prepare people & societies for the challenges of the future?
  - What are the biggest challenges to achieving the SDGs from a young perspective?
  - What changes are particularly needed to ensure that the voice of young people is taken into account in achieving the SDGs?
  - What are the biggest challenges for the participation of young people?

# 1. Summary of Recommendations for Action to Decision-Makers



1. Promote Peace, Social Cohesion and Good Governance

2. Promote integrated Climate Policy through Sustainability and Innovation that leaves no one behind

3. Strengthen Education and Awareness among the Population

4. Strengthen Financing and make Economic Systems more Sustainable

5. Promote Healthcare, including Mental Health

6. Promote Inclusion and Equality

7. Strengthen Child and Youth Participation





# 1. Promote Peace, Social Cohesion and Good Governance

- Governments must promote transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency to tackle corruption and political instability.
- Accountability mechanisms in international cooperation must be expanded to ensure that all countries commit to common standards.
- Targeted measures are needed to protect the rights of young people and strengthen peacebuilding and violence prevention programs. In addition, a safe environment for political participation must be created in which young people can participate without fear of persecution.
- Campaigns for political participation and the strengthening of media skills must be promoted in order to overcome disinformation.
- Clear and transparent communication about political decisions must take place in order to strengthen the population's trust in politics and institutions.
- Decision-makers must prioritize peacebuilding and conflict prevention to ensure political stability and promote sustainable development.





## 2. Promote integrated Climate Policy through Sustainability and Innovation that leaves no one behind

- Climate policy must be an integral part of all policy areas to ensure environmental protection, biodiversity conservation and emissions reduction.
- International treaties and regulations on climate issues must be consistently implemented in national policy. For example, measures for sustainable consumption must be developed.
- Companies must be more strongly challenged in their responsibility for sustainable action.
- In order to promote climate justice, a focus on climate education and the creation of platforms to help shape climate policy is crucial.
- In particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged regions, sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural practices and policies must be promoted to ensure food security.





### 3. Strengthen Education and Awareness among the Population

- Quality education (including early childhood and vocational education) is crucial for the active participation of young people in society. Curriculum reforms must promote critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy and subjects such as sustainability and teach democratic values.
- Age-appropriate civic and political education programmes must be offered from an early age on in order to promote political interest and understanding at an early age.
- To ensure participation for all, low-barrier, culturally sensitive and specific educational programmes must be promoted.
- Increasing education funding is crucial to provide educational institutions such as schools and training centers with the necessary resources for high-quality education. Funding programmes and scholarships must facilitate access for disadvantaged groups.







## 4. Strengthen Financing and making Economic Systems more Sustainable

- Policy makers must expand international financial instruments, Official Development Assistance (ODA) and favorable lending conditions and promote Public-Private Partnerships that countries in the Global South have access to.
- Decision-makers must prioritise sustainable projects, child rights-specific climate financing and channel funds specifically into programmes with a proven positive impact on the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Decision-makers must also promote reforms that make the economic system more sustainable and social. This includes fair and sustainable resource management and poverty reduction.





## 5. Promote Healthcare, including Mental Health

- Precarious living conditions and a lack of basic healthcare infrastructure represent considerable obstacles for many people. There is an urgent need to ensure access to comprehensive and high-quality healthcare.
- In addition, education about mental health as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights should contribute to the de-stigmatisation and reduction of prejudice.
- To strengthen both physical and mental health, prevention programmes are needed.
- Healthcare should be provided by targeting and taking local needs into account, for example through partnerships with local organizations.





## 6. Promote Inclusion and Equality

- Marginalized groups must be represented in decision-making bodies in all their diversity so that their perspectives and needs are taken into account.
- Programmes and information must be provided in different and accessible languages, to ensure access to information for all.
- Governments and decision-makers must actively promote an inclusive and equitable society. This includes, for example, anti-discrimination measures and awareness-raising campaigns.
- Financial support for disadvantaged people must be increased in order to promote equal opportunities and enable all people to actively participate in society.



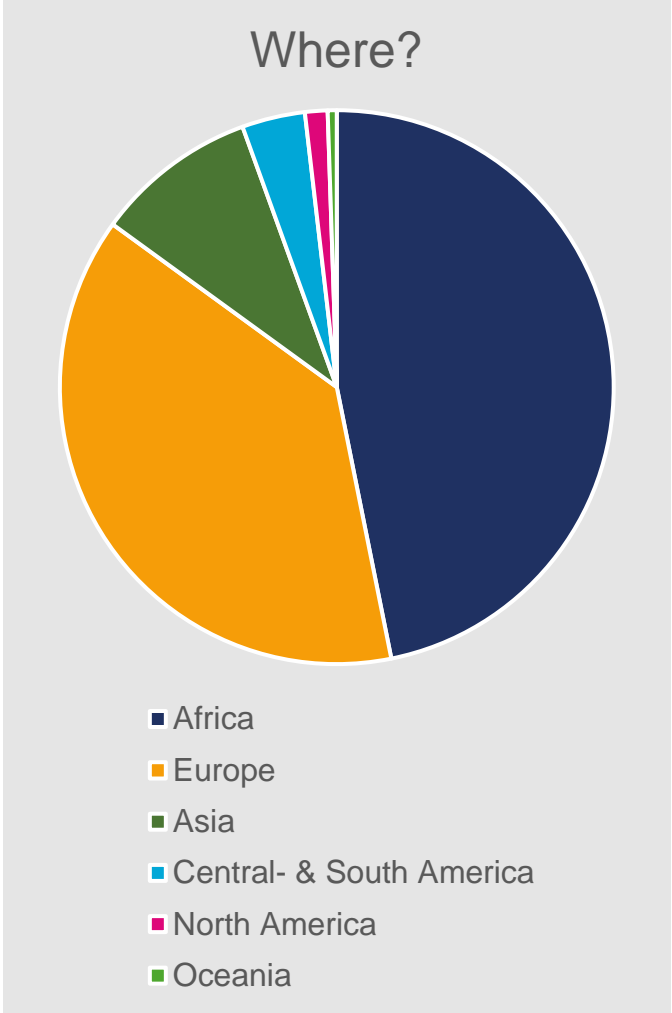


## 7. Strengthen Child and Youth Participation

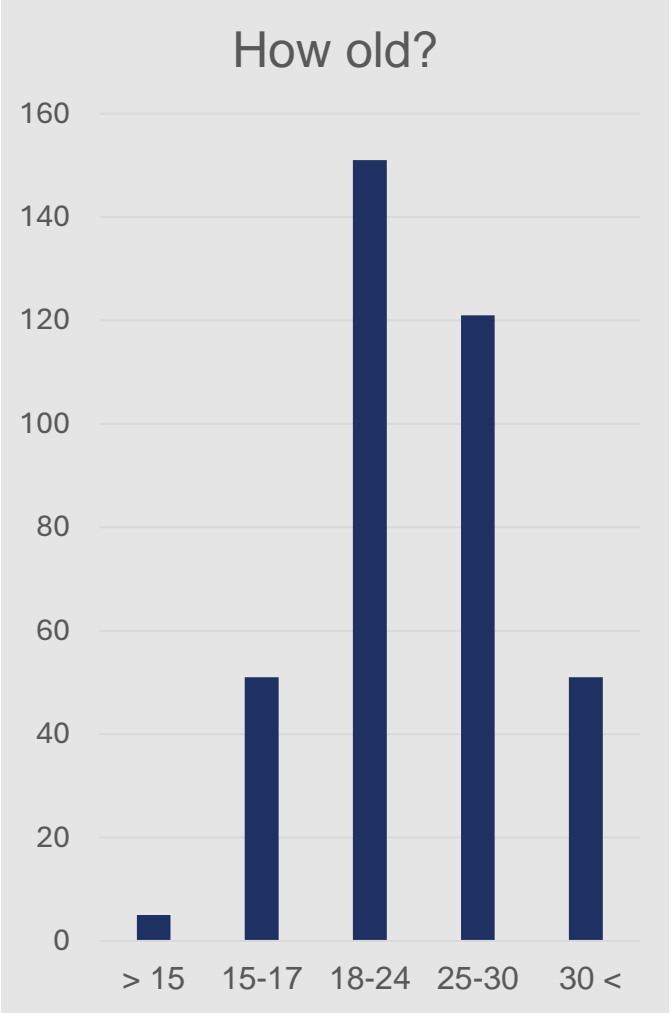
- There is an urgent need to increase financial support for youth projects, initiatives, associations and committees.
- Children and young people must be empowered to participate. This can be achieved through accompanying training (also for decision-makers), low-threshold participation opportunities or mentoring programmes for children and young people.
- Participation must be institutionalized and made permanent - for example in the form of youth parliaments, advisory boards and open forums for intergenerational exchange.
- Politicians and institutions must also address young target groups specifically through their communication, especially via social media. They must sensitize society to the importance of young voices through campaigns.
- The representation and influence of young people in politics must be made possible, for example by introducing quotas in political bodies or by lowering the voting age.
- Social and cultural norms can prevent young people from actively participating in political and social processes. These norms must be challenged and transformed.



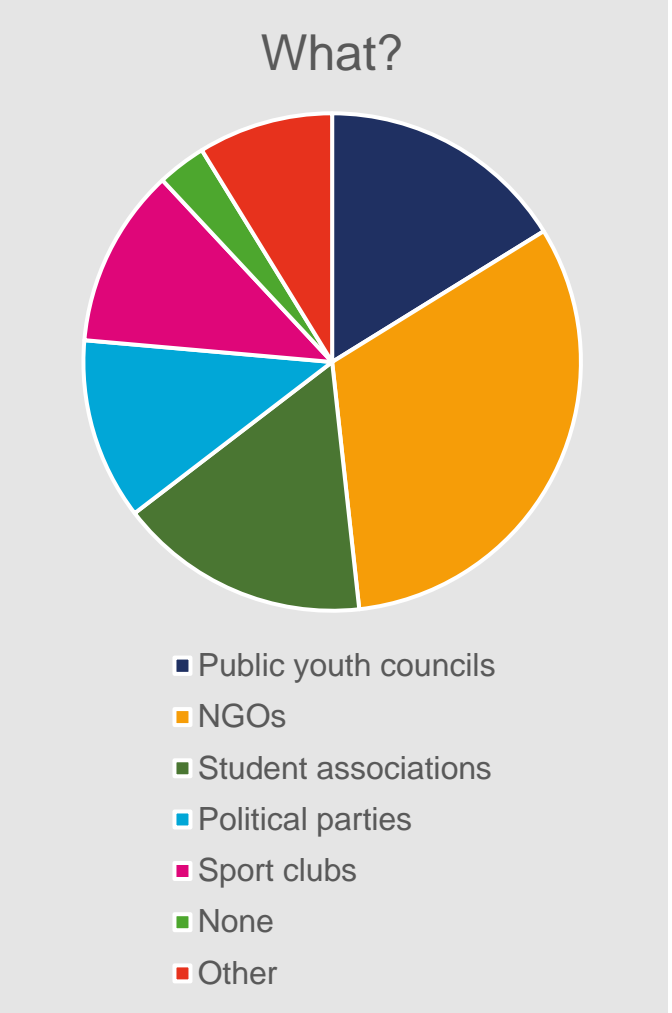
# 2. Background of the Consultation Process: Who participated in our survey? 4280 single answers from 380 participants!



Continent of origin of participants



Age of participants



Social engagement of participants

# Top 5 SDG Priorities for Youth



1. Environmental & Climate Protection	2. Education	3. Participation and Social Cohesion	4. Health & Well-Being	5. Gender Equality
<div data-bbox="147 422 422 675"> <p><b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION</p> </div> <div data-bbox="147 701 422 953"> <p><b>14</b> LIFE BELOW WATER</p> </div> <div data-bbox="147 979 422 1232"> <p><b>15</b> LIFE ON LAND</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="631 422 907 684"> <p><b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="1133 422 1409 684"> <p><b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1133 714 1409 975"> <p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1065 1043 1243 1222"> <p><b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1302 1043 1480 1222"> <p><b>17</b> PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="1633 422 1908 692"> <p><b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="2122 422 2397 686"> <p><b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY</p> </div>

Results of Question No.6: "In your opinion, which aspects of achieving the SDGs should be promoted more actively?"

### 3. Results: What should decision-makers do today to prepare people & societies for the challenges of the future?



With the survey, we were able to collect 420 personal messages from 380 young people to decision-makers, hundreds of youth voices we would like to present:

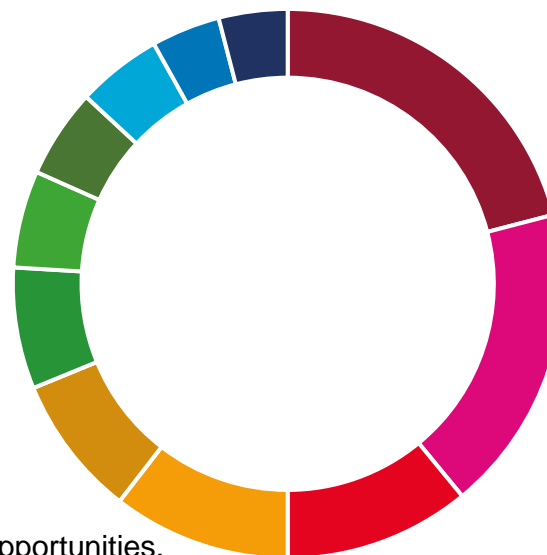
#### Technological innovation and sustainability

The use of technological innovation to promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life as well as the need for action against climate change and for sustainable practices is emphasized. Political and economic decisions should be geared more towards sustainability and long-term goals, including the promotion of green technologies and infrastructure. Openness to new approaches and the promotion of entrepreneurial thinking and sustainable business practices are called for. Companies should more often be made responsible for unsustainable action.

#### Youth empowerment and participation/citizen involvement

There is a strong call to promote youth involvement through better educational opportunities, job creation and mentoring programs. Young people should be actively involved in decision-making processes. It is recommended to strengthen civic participation and social engagement: Citizens should be given more opportunities to participate and take responsibility in the implementation of the SDG.

Most mentioned topics of question No. 10: „What should decision-makers do today to prepare people & societies for the challenges of the future?“



- Youth Promotion & Participation
- Education & Lifelong Learning
- Sustainability & Long-term Thinking
- Civic Engagement & Social Responsibility
- Technological Innovation & Sustainability
- Improving Transparency & Communication
- Diversity, Equality, & Inclusion
- Promoting Social Cohesion & Diversity
- Strengthening Governance
- Health & Well-being
- Promoting Innovation & New Thinking

# 3. Results: What should decision-makers do today to prepare people & societies for the challenges of the future?



## Strengthen Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in Society

Promoting diversity, equality and inclusion is considered important. It is about the representation of marginalized groups and the promotion of empathy and understanding within society. Social cohesion should be strengthened through inclusion and justice. Equal opportunities, diversity and global solidarity are advocated for.

## Increase Promotion of Health and Well-Being, expand Education and Health Services

Greater support for people's mental health and general well-being is required. This includes the expansion of education and health services.

## Establish Transparent Communication about Political Decisions

Improve transparency and communication:

Clear and transparent communication about policy decisions is important to increase public confidence.

*"Decision-makers need to actively invest in education systems that go beyond traditional learning to include critical thinking, sustainability, and digital literacy. By fostering environments where young people are encouraged to think creatively and solve problems collaboratively, we can better prepare them for the complexities of the future. This means integrating climate education, social justice, and technology into curriculums, ensuring that students not only learn about the world they live in but also how to shape it. Moreover, decision-makers must prioritize inclusive and equitable opportunities for all, regardless of background. This involves creating pathways for underrepresented groups to access quality education, leadership positions, and economic opportunities. By engaging youth in policy-making processes and offering mentorship and resources, we can build a generation that is not only aware of global challenges but is also empowered to take action. To truly prepare societies for the future, it's essential to support young people in becoming leaders and innovators in their own right."*

*~Quote from the survey*





# 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges to achieving the SDGs from a young perspective?



## **Promoting Political Will and Good Governance**

In order to combat corruption and political instability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency must be strengthened in terms of good governance. Governments should insist on active citizen participation and simplify opportunities for participation. In the interests of intergenerational justice, young people in particular must not only be heard, but also actively involved in the shaping of processes. The same applies to public welfare-oriented NGOs for sustainable and political practice to counterbalance purely economic interests and ensure that political actors are fully informed.

## **Strengthen Financing**

Better access to financial resources for the Global South and low-threshold, innovative financing options are essential for achieving the SDGs. Policymakers must create the space for this by expanding international financial instruments, Official Development Assistance (ODA) and favorable credit conditions, as well as promoting public-private partnerships. Decision-makers should prioritize sustainable projects and channel funds specifically into programmes with a proven positive impact on the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **Strengthen Education and Awareness among the Population**

Programmes to educate and raise awareness among the population about the SDGs should be promoted through educational initiatives, campaigns and civil society organizations. This particularly applies to creating the knowledge base for young people, who should be involved in decision-making processes through empowerment and engagement. This should be done, for example, with youth councils, whose views are not only heard, but firmly integrated.

## **Prioritize Climate Protection**

Climate policy must be an integral part of all other policy areas to ensure environmental protection, biodiversity and the reduction of emissions. Measures for sustainable consumption and resource management should be developed to promote environmentally friendly practices at individual and corporate level.

## **Promote International Cooperation**

International treaties and regulations, particularly on climate issues, should be consistently implemented in national policy. Accountability mechanisms in international cooperation must be expanded in the spirit of global governance to ensure that all countries commit to common standards.

# 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges to achieving the SDGs from a young perspective?



## **Aim for Structural and Economic Reforms**

Decision-makers should drive forward reforms that make the economic system more sustainable. This includes a generally sustainable resource management. The aim should be to remove structural barriers that prevent the equitable allocation of resources. Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in particular do not have free decision-making power over their own raw materials due to, among others, economic reasons.

**Infrastructural development** and access to new technologies that have a positive impact on economic growth should be promoted, especially in LDCs, in order to advance the SDGs.

## **Combating Inequality and Poverty**

Efforts to combat global inequalities, particularly of a social and economic nature such as inequalities of opportunity and wealth, should be stepped up. To this end, a fairer distribution of resources must take precedence over short-term profit interests.

Investments in and access to education, medical care and fair employment opportunities are fundamental levers in this regard. In vulnerable regions, investments in resilient healthcare systems and preventive healthcare measures must be expanded, but agricultural policy and sustainable agricultural practices must also be promoted to achieve food security.

## **Strengthen Youth Participation**

Young people should be systematically involved in decision-making processes to promote innovative ideas for sustainable development: set up special bodies that take into account the views of young people and address demographic trends in a future-proof way. Multi-stakeholder processes should ensure the inclusion of all population groups to achieve the SDGs effectively.

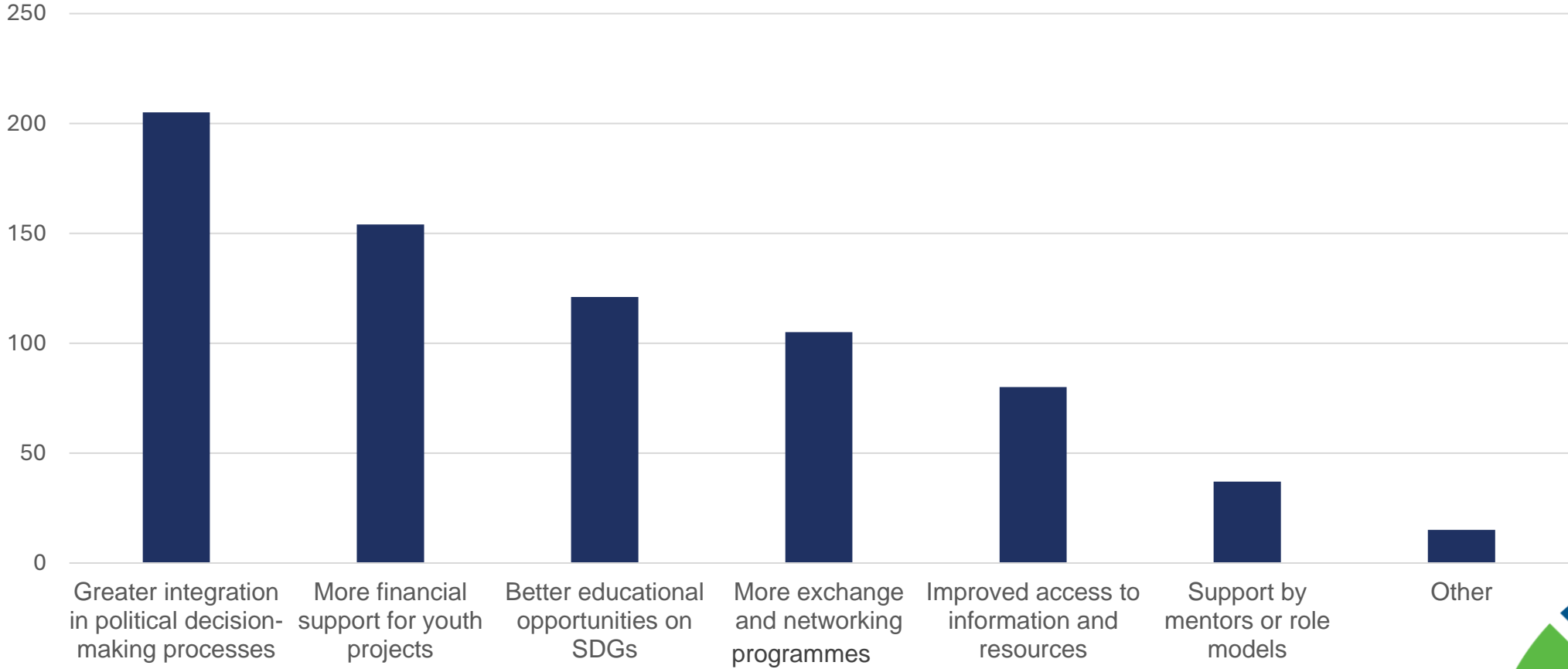
## **Overcoming Global Crises and Political Instability**

Governments must develop and promote sustainable and robust crisis management strategies to counter the effects of conflicts, refugee flows and global crises. Decision-makers should prioritize peacebuilding and conflict prevention to ensure political stability and promote sustainable development.

## **Improve Transparency and Data Collection**

Decision-makers should ensure that progress in implementing the SDGs is measurable through improved data collection, especially across borders. Efforts should be made to establish transparent systems to inform the population and the international community about progress and challenges in a transparent manner.

### 3. Results: What changes are particularly needed to ensure that the voice of young people is taken into account in achieving the SDGs?



### 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges for the participation of young people?



#### 1. Education, information and accessibility of information

##### **Addressing Educational Deficits and Knowledge Gaps by Promoting Political Education**

A sound education is crucial for young people to actively participate in society. There is a lack of education for sustainable development (ESD) as well as political, civic, and democratic education. These deficits limit the ability of the younger generation to get involved. Governments and educational institutions should therefore implement initiatives to promote ESD and political education. Such programs should impart knowledge about political, ecological, social, and economic interrelationships while strengthening critical thinking, methodological skills, and the ability to form independent opinions. This encourages young people to participate in social discourse and decision-making processes. Through targeted educational measures, we can ensure that the younger and next generation is able to make informed and responsible decisions. In addition, civil society organizations should be involved to expand access to political education and promote youth participation in democratic processes.

##### **Equity in Education by Increasing Education Funding and Combating Misinformation**

Increasing education funding is crucial to providing educational institutions such as schools and training centres with the necessary resources to provide quality education. This measure is necessary to reduce barriers and ensure access to quality education for all young people. To ensure educational equity, it is important to dismantle existing knowledge hierarchies that make it difficult for young people to access relevant information. Furthermore, governments and civil society actors should work to provide transparent and reliable sources of information to counter misinformation and enable young people to participate in an informed way. In addition, education and awareness-raising programmes should be developed to counter misinformation about education and career opportunities. Civil society organizations should be involved in developing initiatives that facilitate access to reliable information and help young people make informed decisions about their education and careers, as well as to help them develop future prospects.



# 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges for the participation of young people?



## Early Political Education

Implementing age-appropriate political education programmes as early as elementary school is important to promote political interest and understanding at an early age. Practice-oriented participation formats: Creating opportunities for co-determination and participation in day-care centers and schools to experience democratic processes in practice. Democratic school culture: Promoting a democratic school culture that enables people to experience democracy as a way of life.

## Participation in Educational Institutions

Promotion of a democratic culture that enables pupils to experience democracy as a way of life and actively involve them in decision-making processes. Practice-oriented participation formats: Creation of opportunities for participation and involvement in day-care centers and schools to experience democratic processes in practice.

## Strengthening Political Education

Implementing age-appropriate political education programmes as early as primary school age to promote political interest and understanding at an early age. Strengthening media literacy: Expanding offers focussing on media literacy so that young people can deal critically with sources of information and develop evaluation skills.

## Improving Vocational Education

To improve vocational education, educational institutions should adapt their curricula to incorporate Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) standards. Practical experiences through internships and projects must become an integral part of the training to promote the employability of young people. Funding programmes and scholarships should be developed to facilitate access to TVET for disadvantaged groups. To enhance collaboration, stronger networking between educational institutions, employers, and the community is essential to ensure fair opportunities for successful careers. Additionally, establishing partnerships with local businesses can create pathways for apprenticeships and job placements, further bridging the gap between education and employment.

## Raise Awareness of the SDGs and Improve Vocational Training

It is essential to promote awareness and education about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in schools. Educational institutions should develop programs that raise awareness of these global goals. In addition, training opportunities, particularly in vocational education, should be expanded to provide young people with practical skills.

# 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges for the participation of young people?



## 2. Accessibility and design of child and youth participation

*It is indispensable and absolutely necessary that young people are involved in and shape the design of participation structures and formats themselves.*

**Adaptation of Political Communication, E-Participation:** Target group-oriented approach: Political parties and institutions should revise their communication strategies to better reach young people, for example by increasing their presence on social media platforms. Introduction of binding e-participation procedures in which young people can participate online. Beside e-participation bottom-up initiatives are a second possibility to strengthen participation: We need more promotion of neighborhood and citizen initiatives organized by young people themselves.

**Transparency and Accessibility:** Simplifying political processes and decisions through clear, youth-oriented communication and easily accessible information. implementing these recommendations for action requires a fundamental rethink of political culture.

It is about recognizing young people as equal political actors and providing them with the necessary tools and spaces to get involved effectively. This is the only way to create a vibrant and inclusive democracy that involves all generations and benefits from their different perspectives.

Problem	Possible Solution
Young people do not have the opportunity to express their opinions freely and their opinions are not taken seriously, which often leads to a lack of interest in youth participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging active participation e.g. financial support for projects, targeted support for young people.</li> <li>• Raising society's awareness of the importance of young voices through public awareness work.</li> <li>• Promoting communication skills and self-confidence with the help of educational opportunities.</li> </ul>
There is no access to existing platforms that are important for political/SDG-relevant exchange.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating secure platforms for the free exchange of young opinions or providing access to existing platforms.</li> </ul>
The lack of inclusion/diversity and equal opportunities leads to the exclusion of marginalized minorities and the prioritization of the opinions of privileged groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring the representation of marginalized groups in decision-making committees.</li> <li>• Promotion and implementation of programs to target marginalized groups, e.g. workshops.</li> <li>• Providing information in different languages and in simplified language.</li> </ul>
The fundamental lack of real participation in decision-making processes means that many young people are only symbolically involved and have no influence on important decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively involve young people in processes, e.g. through youth parliaments, youth advisory councils, school projects, opinion forums, workshops.</li> <li>• Establish access to decision-makers through regular meetings and dialog formats.</li> <li>• Involve young people in specific projects that affect their interests.</li> </ul>
The existing participation structures are not low-threshold enough to appeal to the broad masses and enable genuine participation; in addition, there is a general lack of opportunities for youth participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing open forums/round tables for exchange.</li> <li>• Cooperation with schools and youth organizations to promote active participation, e.g. through project work.</li> <li>• Collecting feedback with the help of anonymous surveys to record the needs of young people.</li> <li>• Raising awareness of participation options and their importance through campaigns, e.g. via social media.</li> </ul>

# 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges for the participation of young people?



## Breaking Down Financial Barriers and Intensifying Support

A key obstacle are financial hurdles and restrictions. There is an urgent need to increase financial support for youth participation and to establish a comprehensive support structure for professionals who accompany young people and promote their participation. Governments and relevant stakeholders should provide targeted funding for youth initiatives to reduce financial barriers and ensure that young people can realize their projects while making their voices heard by participating in social and political co-creation. It is also important to intensify financial support for disadvantaged young people to promote equal opportunities and enable them to actively participate in society. Additionally, creating mentorship programmes and networking opportunities can further empower youth to navigate financial obstacles and foster collaboration among peers.

### Political/ socio- political aspects



**Issues:** Disenchantment with politics and a lack of trust in state institutions and political parties hinder the participation of young people.

#### Possible Solutions:

**Strengthening trust in Political Institutions:** To counteract this, political decision-makers must increase the transparency and traceability of their decisions. It is important that young people feel taken seriously. Governments and organizations could create targeted opportunities for participation, such as youth parliaments, forums and advisory councils, in which young people are involved in political processes on an equal footing.

**Promoting Democratic Structures and combating Populism:** Populism, political polarization, and authoritarian or autocratic governments threaten democratic forms of participation. It is essential that democratic structures and institutions be protected and strengthened to ensure long-term opportunities for youth participation. Education for democracy and human rights, as well as education about the importance of participation, are crucial to counteract growing populism and should be integrated into educational institutions and public discourse, complemented by awareness-raising campaigns about the importance of political participation. Strengthening media literacy is essential to recognize disinformation, while civil society organizations and dialogue between politics and youth promote trust in democratic values.

**Stabilizing the Security Situation and combating Political Repression and Violence:** In many regions of the world, young people are restricted in their engagement by political repression, systematic persecution and violence. It is crucial to create a safe environment for political participation in which they need not fear persecution. International communities and governments should take targeted measures to protect the political rights of young people, while programs for peace building and violence prevention must be strengthened. It is also important to develop transparent and inclusive strategies for conflict resolution to promote dialogue between social groups and to sustainably strengthen human rights and the rule of law.

### Health care/mental health



**Issues:** Precarious living conditions and a lack of basic health infrastructure, especially in the areas of general medical care, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health, represent significant hurdles for many young people.

#### Possible Solutions:

**Promoting Health Care and Mental Health:** There is an urgent need to expand access to comprehensive and high-quality health care.

In addition, education about mental health and sexual and reproductive health should be provided in a way that breaks down taboos to reduce prejudice and stigmatization. Specific programs aimed at promoting mental health are crucial to providing young people with a stable environment for their personal and social development.

Prevention programmes that strengthen both physical and mental health, as well as the expansion of support services, are essential to giving young people the opportunity to get actively involved and to fully realize their potential. Promote partnerships with community organizations that can provide on-the-ground support and resources.

### 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges for the participation of young people?



#### Representation and Participation in Decision-Making Processes

##### Recognition and appreciation of young engagement

A frequent lack of self-understanding about the need for participation and the (political) competence of young people prevents them from participating. In addition, there is a lack of exchange at eye level, the promotion and appreciation of young commitment and, fundamentally, the acceptance of young people. Young and youthful engagement must be recognized and valued; it needs serious involvement: Political decision-makers should see young people as experts in their environment and actively involve them in decision-making processes. This means taking their opinions and suggestions seriously and not just treating them as a symbolic gesture. This also includes increasing their visibility: The commitment of young people should be publicly recognized and appreciated. This can be done through award ceremonies, media reports or invitations to official events.

##### Missing lobby for young people and structural changes

There is a lack of a lobby for young people, resulting in a clear lack of political representation. In addition to the fundamental lack of representation in political decision-making structures, there is still a high average age in the political landscape. The seniority principle and political and social adultism continue to make effective participation difficult. We need structural changes in politics: a quota system for young people: The introduction of a mandatory quota for young people under the age of 35 in parties, parliaments and political bodies could significantly increase representation. Dismantling the seniority principle: Political parties and institutions should review their internal structures and introduce mechanisms that give young people faster opportunities for advancement. Other possibilities could be the establishment of a non-partisan organization that acts as a mouthpiece for the interests of young people in politics or the mandatory introduction of youth representatives in ministries and authorities who represent the interests of young people in decision-making processes.

##### Feedback mechanisms and “youth check” for legislation

Establishment of systems that give young people feedback on how their contributions have been incorporated into decision-making processes. Transparent decision-making processes: Improve communication of political decisions in youth-friendly language and through youth-friendly channels. Introduction of a mandatory “youth check” for proposed legislation that examines the impact on young people and takes their perspectives into account.



### 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges for the participation of young people?



#### Promoting opportunities for participation, institutionalization of youth participation

We need to create more opportunities for participation. A review and possible lowering of the voting age to 16 for all electoral levels could promote the political participation of young people. However, the development and promotion of online platforms and forums for political discussion and digital participation could also facilitate the participation of young people, as these formats correspond to their communication habits. There is also a need for institutional anchoring: the introduction of youth quotas in political committees and parties could increase the representation of young people in decision-making positions. Youth bodies or councils need real decision-making powers: Establish youth bodies at political, civil society and private sector level with real decision-making powers on youth-related issues. This binding institutionalization goes hand in hand with mandatory participation structures that have clearly defined rights, obligations and opportunities to exert influence.

#### Encouraging dialog between all generations

The establishment of mentoring programmes in which experienced politicians accompany young people and the creation of intergenerational forums would be further important steps: regular events at which young people and established decision-makers enter into direct dialogue can break down prejudices and promote mutual understanding. In addition, conducting workshops and seminars for older politicians and administrative staff to sensitize them to the needs and perspectives of young people.

#### Creation of inclusive participation structures, dismantling structural barriers

Development of participation formats specifically tailored to the needs and realities of marginalized groups, use low-threshold formats. Barrier-free access: Provision of free and accessible spaces as well as support services such as childcare to facilitate participation. Culturally sensitive mediation: Use of cultural interpreters and bridge builders to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers. We need an adjustment of meeting times and formats, adjusting them to the life realities of young people. Target group-specific approaches: Development of educational offerings that recognize the specific experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups.

### 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges for the participation of young people?



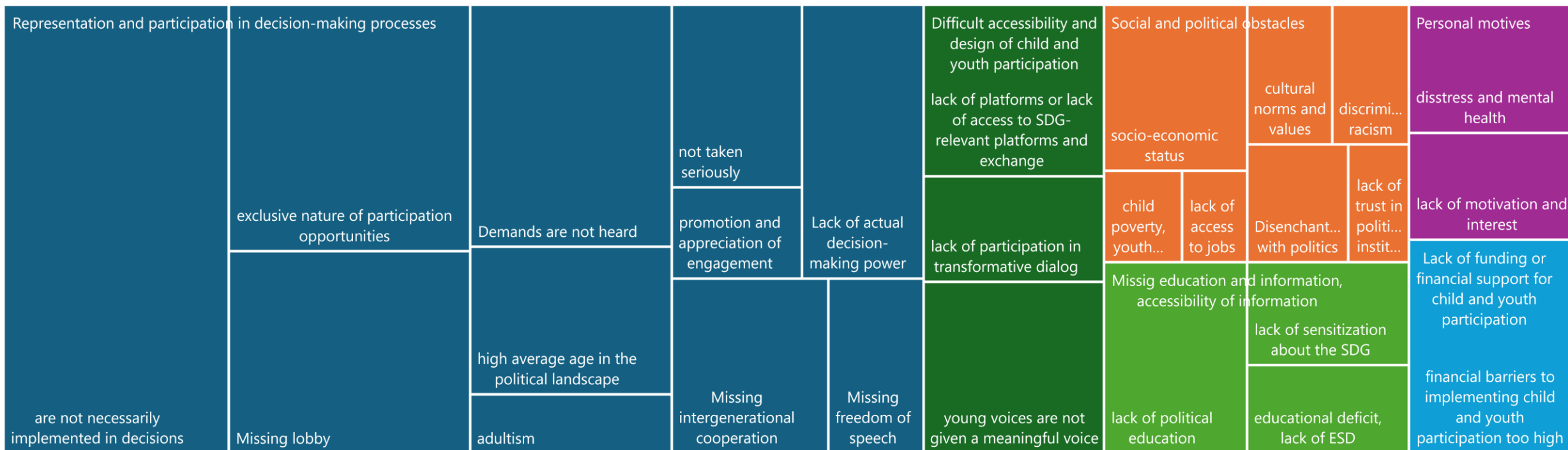
Socio-Cultural Aspects	Socio-Ecological Aspects	Socio-Economic Aspects
<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <p>All forms of discrimination, racism, sexism and gender inequality, ableism, prejudice and stigmatization inhibit youth participation.</p>	<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <p>Although they are increasingly committed to environmental and climate protection, they are limited in their commitment by inadequate political measures and insufficient climate financing, which do not sufficiently take into account historical and current responsibilities.</p>	<p><b>Issues:</b></p> <p>Socio-economic inequality, such as child poverty, youth unemployment and limited access to jobs, are significant barriers to youth participation. Insufficient (financial) support of youth work.</p>
<p><b>Possible solutions:</b></p> <p><b>Fight Discrimination and Social Inequality:</b> Governments, organizations and decision-makers must work harder for an inclusive, intersectional, just society and politics in which every person has the opportunity to actively participate in social and political processes. This could be achieved through anti-discrimination measures and education, awareness-raising campaigns and training aimed at social justice.</p> <p><b>Questioning Cultural Norms and Social Taboos:</b> Cultural norms and taboos can prevent young people, as well as society's expectations, from actively participating in political and social processes. Societies should break down cultural barriers that prevent youth participation. This requires an open dialogue about traditional values and norms to create an environment in which young people can freely express their opinions and actively contribute to society. Programs that promote intercultural exchange could make an important contribution here.</p> <p><b>Combating Adulthood:</b> Awareness campaigns: Carrying out campaigns to raise awareness of adulthood society in order to raise awareness of young people's skills.</p>	<p><b>Possible solutions:</b></p> <p><b>Promoting Climate Justice and Environmental Protection:</b> To promote climate justice and environmental protection, it is essential to intensify the active participation of young people in political decision-making processes. Climate protection should therefore be prioritized at all political levels to ensure access to a healthy living environment for future generations. Governments and institutions must develop concrete programs that specifically address the needs of young people and provide resources for sustainable projects. An increased focus on climate education is crucial to raise awareness. In addition, platforms should be created that enable young people, marginalized and most affected communities (MAPA) to actively shape climate policy. Ultimately, effective climate policy requires international solidarity and cooperation to develop action-oriented global strategies. Incorporate youth-led initiatives into climate policy discussions, ensuring their voices are prioritized.</p>	<p><b>Possible solutions:</b></p> <p><b>Tackling Socio-Economic Inequality and Poverty:</b> Governments and organizations should develop measures to make it easier for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate in political and social processes. This could be done through targeted programmes to combat unemployment, through scholarships or support measures. A central goal should be the fair distribution of resources and improving access to job opportunities to make social engagement possible in the first place.</p> <p><b>Strengthening Municipal Youth Work:</b> Expansion and financial support of municipal youth work that empowers young people for democratic participation and raises awareness of socio-political issues.</p>

# 3. Results: What are the biggest challenges for the participation of young people?



The biggest challenges for youth participation

- Representation and participation in decision-making processes
- Difficult accessibility and design of child and youth participation
- Personal motives
- Social and political obstacles
- Lack of funding or financial support for child and youth participation
- Missig education and information, accessibility of information



Overview of the consultation results



*"In my opinion, one of the biggest challenges in achieving the 2030 Agenda and SDGs is the lack of inclusive opportunities and access to resources for young people, especially in marginalized communities. We often see that the voices of youth, who are at the forefront of driving change like myself, are not adequately represented in decision-making processes. This exclusion not only limits our ability to contribute to sustainable development but also stifles the innovative solutions that we could bring to the table. Climate change, economic disparities, and social injustices are all issues that disproportionately affect young people, yet we are often left out of the conversations that shape the policies meant to address these challenges. Another major hurdle is the disconnect between short-term political agendas and the long-term vision needed to achieve the SDGs. Many governments and institutions prioritize immediate economic gains over sustainable development, which leads to policies that are not aligned with the goals of the 2030 Agenda. This lack of long-term commitment, combined with insufficient funding and support for youth-led initiatives, makes it difficult for us to implement the transformative changes needed to create a more just and sustainable world. To truly make progress, we need to be included as equal partners in the journey toward 2030, with our ideas, energy, and creativity fully recognized and supported."*

*"youth face many barriers to meaningful social participation, including exclusion for formal leadership and decision-making roles as well as gaps in their education. Its barriers such as unemployment and underemployment make their challenges even worse while socio-cultural norms largely socially exclude youth, especially young women, marginalized groups. Political instability and conflict also pose extra challenges, as does tokenism that can result in shallow inclusion with no real power. Even deeper are the digital divide and mental health-related limitations, which further inhibit them from participating"*

*"I would like to emphasize the importance of creating genuine, long-term partnerships between generations to address the pressing challenges of sustainable development and intergenerational justice. Youth should not only be seen as future leaders but as current change makers with valuable insights. To make this a reality, decision makers need to actively listen to and collaborate with young people, ensuring their contributions are recognized and acted upon by fostering mutual respect and shared responsibility, we can build a more just and sustainable world for all generations."*

**Quotes from the survey**



## bmz youth advisory council

The BMZ Youth Advisory Council is an advisory body to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ). 16 members between 16 and 24 years advise the BMZ on various future issues of German development policy from the perspective of young people.

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ONE Youth Ambassadors are part of a global network of activists working for greater global justice. Since 2011, they have been working in Germany to raise awareness of the successes of development cooperation, mobilize people to fight extreme poverty and demand more development policy commitment from politicians.

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