
Learning Democracy: Why Civic Education Matters for the Next Generation

Democracy is not inherited, it is learned, practiced, and protected by each new generation. To sustain healthy, inclusive societies, young people must not only understand democratic values but also develop the skills to put them into action. This is where civic education plays a crucial role.

The Role of Schools and Non-Formal Education

Schools are often the first place where young people encounter democratic principles in a structured way. Through lessons on history, human rights, and political systems, students gain an understanding of how democracy works and why it matters. However, civic learning is not confined to classrooms. Non-formal education, from youth clubs to cultural exchanges, offers practical, participatory experiences that make democracy tangible. Whether it's taking part in debates, planning community projects, or learning about EU institutions, these activities help young people move from theory to practice.

Building Resilience Against Extremism

A strong civic education acts as a safeguard against radicalization, misinformation, and intolerance. By teaching critical thinking, empathy, and respect for diversity, it helps young people resist extremist narratives that exploit fear and division. Understanding one's rights, and the rights of others; fosters a culture of respect where differences are seen as strengths, not threats.

Practical Ways to Engage Youth in Democratic Life

- Youth-led projects: Encourage initiatives where young people design and lead community activities.
- Debates and simulations: Role-playing parliamentary debates or EU decision-making processes makes governance more accessible.
- Digital participation: Use online platforms for petitions, opinion polls, or collaborative projects to involve tech-savvy youth.
- Intercultural exchange: Create opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to collaborate and share perspectives.

Civic education is not just about creating informed voters; it is about nurturing active citizens who contribute to their communities and protect democratic values in everyday life. By investing in these skills today, we ensure that tomorrow's leaders are ready to defend freedom, equality, and inclusion for all.



Because democracy thrives not by chance, but by choice, and that choice must be renewed with every generation.



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