

# YOUTH & POLITICAL PARTIES:

TOOLKIT FOR  
YOUTH-FRIENDLY  
POLITICS IN EUROPE



**YOUTH & POLITICAL PARTIES:**  
A Toolkit for Youth-friendly Politics in Europe

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- + A holistic youth strategy for the political party
- + Strong youth organisations/youth party wings
- + Youth representation in key party bodies and other representative institutions
- + Academies and training programmes for young members and candidates
- + Prioritising policies that are relevant to young people in party programmes, election manifestos, and in key political debates

- + Policies for youth that are based on reliable research, evidence and data
- + Policies based on research, but promoted in crisp, clean, and exciting messaging

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- Co-creating and implementing youth outreach strategies and campaigns with young people
- + Surrender some control over outreach campaigns to non-members, grassroots initiatives and movements, who are otherwise aligned with the party's values and policies
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  - + Engage in and support multi-partisan spaces to spread information, promote discussion, and get feedback
  - + Meeting young people where they are, online and offline
  - + Promoting "Get-out-the-vote" campaigns
  - + Go back to school
  - + Recruit those who work with young people, take advantage of peer-to-peer campaigning
  - + Rely on mass mobilisation and traditional cause-oriented movement politics
  - + Social media strategies co-created by and for young people
  - + Use social media as key youth-influencers do, and mix it up with traditional campaign styles

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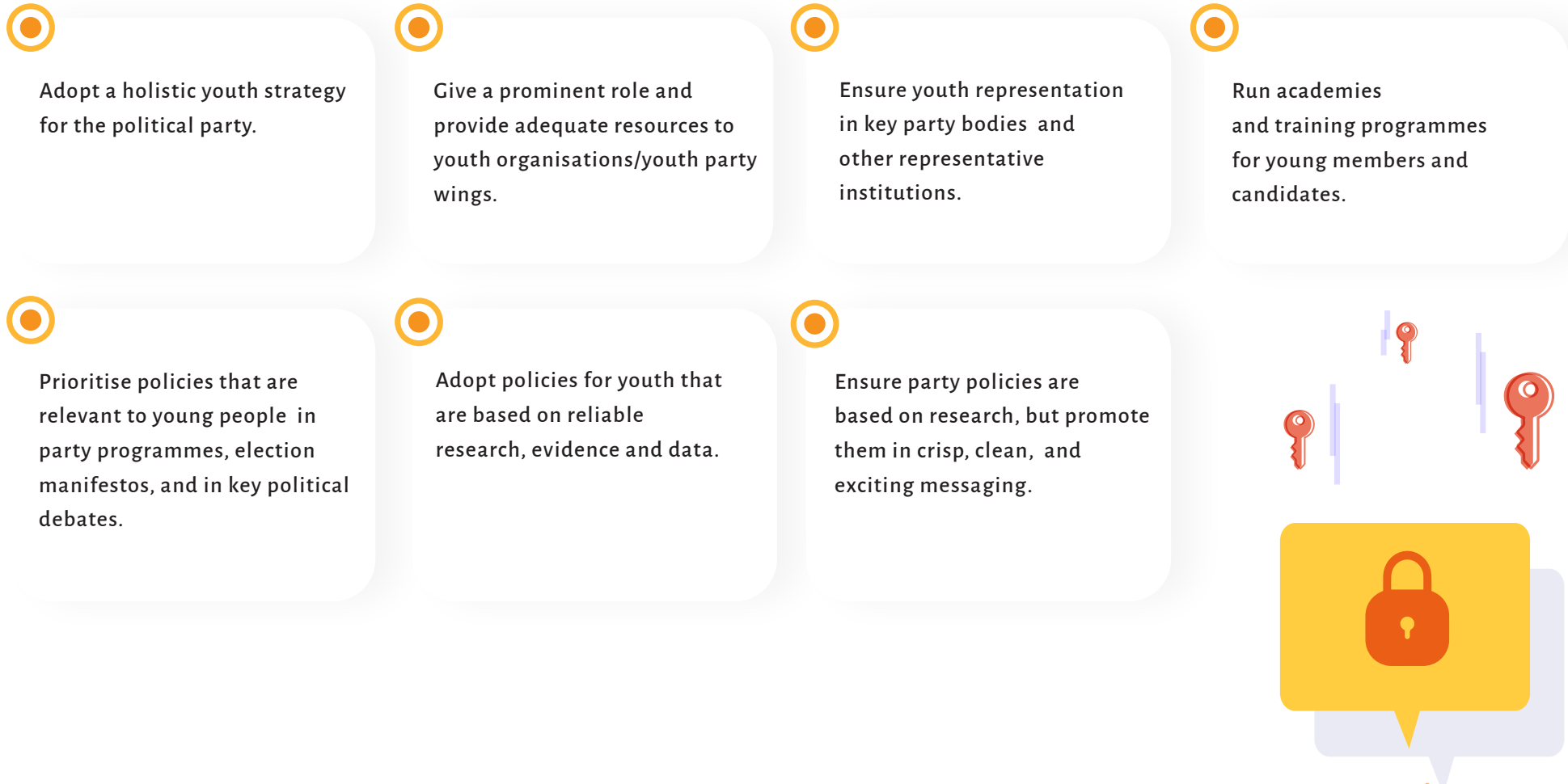
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# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

As the next European Elections are fast approaching, and political parties around Europe are starting to prepare for their campaigns in 2019, the European Youth Forum has published a new study on “Youth & Political Parties”. This study includes a number of concrete recommendations on what political parties can do to improve their appeal among young people, and improve youth turnout in the elections. It can serve as a toolkit for political parties that wish to be better at including young people, promoting youth interests, and campaigning for young people.



## TO IMPROVE THE PROMOTION OF YOUTH INTERESTS AND BETTER INCLUDE YOUNG PEOPLE IN PARTY LIFE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT POLITICAL PARTIES:





## WHEN CAMPAIGNING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, IT IS RECOMMENDED TO POLITICAL PARTIES TO:



Co-create and implement youth outreach strategies and campaigns with young people.



Surrender some control over outreach campaigns to non-members, grassroots initiatives and movements, who are otherwise aligned with the party's values and policies.



Give both a voice and an ear to ordinary young people.



Engage in and support multi-partisan spaces to spread information, promote discussion, and get feedback.



Meet young people where they are, online and offline.



Promote "Get-out-the-vote" campaigns.



Go back to schools, including after the campaigning is finished.



Recruit those who work with young people, take advantage of peer-to-peer campaigning.



Rely on mass mobilisation and traditional cause-oriented movement politics.



Co-create social media strategies for young people with young people.

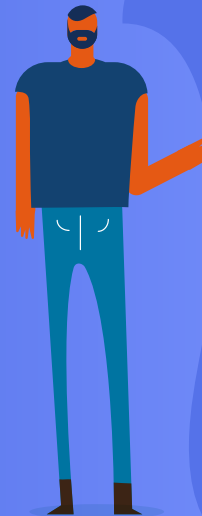


Use social media as key youth-influencers do, and mix it up with traditional campaign styles.

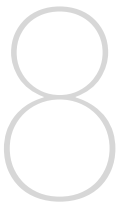


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- IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM:  
DECLINE IN YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION



WON'T VOTE  
NOPE  
I DON'T VOTE



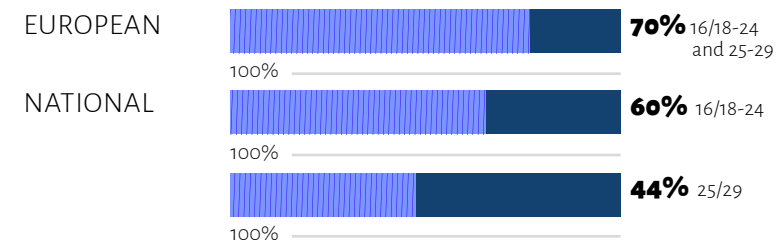
# A. YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T VOTE

With European Parliament elections just around the corner, it is time to talk about one of the most troubling issues affecting modern democracies today: the democratic world has seen participation in institutional politics decline for more than two decades (see Deželan 2015, etc.). Some claim that this is a misperception and the result of not looking in the right place, as it ignores changing citizenship norms (e.g. Dalton, 2009), changing political platforms and politicians (see Norris, 2002), and is built on an understanding of political participation that is too narrow (see Marsh et al., 2007). With such a mindset, we could argue, it is inevitable that lower levels of traditional political participation, such as voting and campaigning, will be found.

Since voting and campaigning remain two of the most widespread and regularised political activities that exist however, they still have considerable influence on governmental performance (Verba and Nie 1972, 46), making low participation rates a major issue of concern. This decline in participation moreover, has not been the same in all sectors of the population: some sectors are particularly affected. Age, along with income and education, is one of the strongest predictors of political participation (Verba & Nie, 1972; Zukin et al. 2006), with young people particularly at risk of absenteeism.

The gap between young people and other age groups is widening (see Wattenberg, 2012), and among young people, some groups are even more likely to be left out of the political process, including Roma and other national, ethnic, gender, religious and other minorities (Hammarberg, 2008). The European Parliament Election Study 2014 (see Schmitt et al. 2015) showed that young people simply do not vote in European elections, with the EU28 average of abstention at around 70% for the 16/18-24 and 25-29 age groups. There are slightly better, but still alarmingly low levels of youth voting in national (arguably the most important level) elections, with an EU28 abstention average of almost 60% for the 16/18-24 and 44.3% for 25-29 (ibid.). Equally low engagement can be found for other forms of institutionalised political participation, such as in electoral campaign activities (Moyser 2003; Deželan, 2015).

## EU28 AVERAGE YOUTH ABSTENTION IN ELECTIONS





Another sign of citizens' political disengagement is the declining membership of political parties. Party membership has plummeted across European democracies and has changed in both character and significance (Van Biezen, 2012). This is particularly true for younger persons (e.g. Cross & Young, 2008; Hooghe et al., 2004; Seyd & Whiteley, 2004; Deželan, 2015). As it is the case for voting, those most likely to miss out on party membership are young people who also identify with another marginalised category i.e. young women, young members of national or ethnic minorities, etc. (Hammarberg, 2008). This makes it harder for political parties to recruit new members to the political elite and to mobilise young people, leading to a general state of poor representation of young people.



***"Another sign of citizens' political disengagement is the declining membership in political parties."***

Overall, the net result is that young people are largely absent from the institutions of representative democracy. The lack of parliamentarians under 30 is the biggest indicator here, as it is rare to see a national parliament with more than 2% of its members below that age (see Tremmel, 2008, 211); at 0.5%, it is even lower for young women (Deželan, 2015). While it is true that this is neither the only nor the best model of assessing youth representation (see Pitkin, 1967), experience shows that, due to issues of trust, marginalised and disaffected groups are best represented when they see members of their own group involved in politics.

## **B. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T VOTE?**

If these trends continue, we run the risk of seeing the current generation of youth, the largest-ever demographic group (see ICPD, 2014), excluded from the democratic process. Most widely-accepted models of democracy (see Held, 2006) count on the active participation of politically literate citizens who are interested in how their governments work: “The more participation there is in decisions, the more democracy there is,” (Verba and Nie, 1972, 1) clearly showing that democracies cannot function properly without participation.

Legitimacy should be listed as one of the first reasons to be concerned about young people's effective alienation from institutional politics. After all, the political order is based on the assumed consent of citizens due to their participation in decision-making (Held, 2006, ix). If large groups of citizens fail to give their consent, through inactivity or small levels of influence, the legitimacy of the political order is threatened and should be questioned.

Another, less conceptual, argument in favour of higher levels of political engagement is the fact that the outcomes of the political process are biased towards those who participate the most (see Macedo et al., 2005; Martin, 2012). This should not be demonised;

widespread political participation leads directly to the articulation of interests, which improves the quality of democratic governance, and electoral participation is one of the strongest ways that citizens can control decision-makers (O'Neill, 2009, 7). In Europe, young people do tend to end up on the losing side of public policies however, not only because they do not participate in political processes, but also because there are fewer of them demographically. They are therefore not perceived as a sizeable political force, particularly when compared to other age groups, including the elderly (see Kohli, 2010). Current demographic trends, and the desire to maximise their chances for electoral success, can therefore cause politicians to put young people low on their list of priorities.

As young people's decreasing electoral turnout goes hand-in-hand with their decreased participation in political parties, no participation directly translates into no representation. The consequence of this is both a lack of representation, and political agendas that prioritise the concerns of other sectors of the population over theirs.

# 2. WHY SHOULD POLITICAL PARTIES CARE? WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM?



## A. WHY POLITICAL PARTIES SHOULD CARE

As political parties should primarily be seen as organisations that are seeking to attract votes (Müller and Strøm, 2005), demographic trends and patterns of youth participation make the promotion of youth interests by a party a strategically questionable choice. This is particularly so as politics during and after economic and financial crises is always portrayed as a zero-sum-game – a contest of winners and losers. If we accept this kind of reasoning, it is naturally the least present, cohesive and numerically strong groups that end up on the zero side of the game. Why, then, should political parties bother to promote youth interests?

In addition to those outlined above, there are several reasons why political parties should be interested in including young people. First, one of the core functions of political parties is *elite recruitment* (see Diamond and Gunther, 2001). Political parties need a constant supply of high-quality future candidates and personnel in order to achieve and sustain political relevance. Another reason is that, when political parties develop their mobilisation strategies, they tend to focus on the most stable interests of various social groups. They also play a crucial role in designing the choices and alternatives that people have with regard to key political and social issues, including those that concern young people. This is called the issue

*structuring function* (ibid.), and it inevitably drives some parties to address “niche” interests, since niche support may prove decisive in their race for office. Lastly, due to the habitual nature of political participation, a youth-oriented approach can also translate into building a long-term support base (Nurvala, 2018), particularly when a clear, long-term, and robust electoral mobilisation strategy is in place.

Apart from investing in future voters and assuring a permanent supply of candidates, political apprentices, and members – and with that also guaranteeing some much-needed muscle and brainpower to run election campaigns, and other “dirty” jobs that are less visible and more labour-intensive – political parties also need to focus on young people to ensure a supply of fresh and more radical ideas (van Run-Kvist, 2018). Young people have a better insight into what problems their peers are experiencing, and how they perceive current reality (Pitkänen, 2018; Garcia Sanz, 2018). Ensuring that young people have a meaningful voice in political parties can improve outreach to other population groups and provide parties with additional channels to disseminate their messages (Rauszer, 2018; Ugrinoska, 2018; Haavisto, 2018). Broader horizons, visions for the future that look beyond the term of office, and sometimes even the optimistic

or utopian views that young people can offer (Tårnes, 2018) moreover, can improve party discussions and provide much-needed input for more sustainable and socially just policies. At the end of the day, it could be argued that more young people in politics makes for more social justice (Pitkänen, 2018; Haavisto, 2018).

## **B. WHAT PARTIES NEED TO KNOW WHEN ADDRESSING YOUNG PEOPLE**

As the discussion about young people's political apathy (see Wattenberg, 2012) and reduced social capital (see Putnam, 2000) continues, some consideration needs to be given to how their behaviour, participation, and channels of action and communication have changed (e.g. Norris 2002; Rosanvallon, 2008). While young people have abandoned traditional politics and structures (Riley et al., 2010), they have increased their participation in protest politics (see Norris, 2002; Dalton, 2008). This should be seen as part

of a greater trend – the emergence of a new breed of citizens (Dalton 2008; Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

Regardless of whether this is a consequence of a move towards individualisation caused by post-modernisation and the consequent shift towards post-modern values (Inglehart, 1995), or a declining bureaucratic control by the state and weakened social control of religion (Goerres, 2010, 210), a decline in trust in political institutions and in identification with political parties (Dalton, 2004) is thriving among young people in the current conditions. The transition from childhood to adulthood is marked by higher levels of uncertainty and vulnerability, which also has an important effect on youth political involvement (Soler-i-Martí, 2015), with greater importance placed on peers and social media outlets than other, more traditional forms of political actors (Vraga et al. 2014). As a result, this new breed of young citizens is less collectivist and more individualist, cause-oriented, and participating in single-issue organisations, and other forms of engagement that do not require long-term commitment (Norris, 2002). They are more likely to be members of informal groups, be involved in protest politics, and concentrate on specific issues or policy concerns (Marsh et al. 2007, 10-17).

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Young people today are also increasingly resorting to the new forms of mass communication, and are willing to experiment with them (Martin, 2012, 102). Their political identity and attitudes are shaped less by their families, neighbourhoods, schools, or working environments, and more by the internet and the avenues it offers for connecting with others. As they are increasingly influenced by their participation in these social networks that they co-create, the internet plays an increasingly dominant role in their political engagement (Rainie and Wellman, 2012).

The demise of the dutiful young citizen is a long-term process, driven by broad economic and social forces that lead to a move towards self-actualising and critically networked citizens (Loader et al., 2014, 145). Such citizens are more likely to be members of nonhierarchical networks, be project-oriented, and maintain their relationships through social media. However, networked citizens do not represent a complete break from the notion of a citizenship based on duty, as they often still also engage in activities that are associated with institutional politics. Also, not all young people fit this pattern. Bearing this in mind, the old model of participation based on resources, interest, and recruitment (see Verba, et al., 1995) is still relevant, as young individuals may still engage in the political process –

***"At the end of the day, it could be argued that more young people in politics makes for more social justice"***

regardless of whether the process itself is tailored to the habits of this new breed of citizens or not – if they have the means and skills to participate, if they have the interest, and if they are appropriately mobilised.

One of the main challenges political parties face is how to attract both political and nonpolitical youth. In addition to “business as usual” for the political youth, political parties need to consider apolitical young people, who, by definition, are affected by at least one aspect of the ‘resources, interest, and recruitment’ model. Uninvolved youth are either apathetic, uninformed, distrustful, or disempowered (see Snell 2010, 268-279). If the first group is completely disinterested in politics, the others are either ill-informed, distrust politicians and the political system, or feel disempowered. The fact that youth approach politics with more or less information, trust, sense of efficacy, and sense of civic duty (ibid.) demands a broad outreach strategy that is tailored to the needs of each of these groups.

## C. SO WHAT DOES GET YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED?

Reasons given for not participating usually include “cannot” (lack of resources), “don’t want to” (lack of psychological engagement), or “weren’t asked to participate” (lack of recruitment networks) (see Verba et al., 1995). These generally centre around a limited set of variables that can be sorted into a socio-economic, psychological, and socialisation clusters:

**Socio-economic** reasons usually revolve around income, since those with the highest income tend to be the most active in both electoral and protest politics (Schlozman et al., 2005; Smets and Van Ham, 2013). Education is another socio-economic factor, although higher education levels do not necessarily lead to higher levels of traditional participation. Other such factors include marital status (Denver 2008), mobility (Smets and Van Ham 2013, 350), race, ethnicity, gender, citizenship status and religious minorities.

**Political knowledge** is another of the main predictors of participation, and is strongly linked to efficacy (Macedo et al. 2005, 35). Political interest is also an important indicator of political participation for some people, second only to a habit of voting due to pressure applied by the political environment, including political parties (Smets and Van Ham 2013, 354). Another variable of psychological engagement is political efficacy – the extent to which a person feels effective in their participation, or that their individual vote

matters (Axford and Rosamond 1997, 102). A previous political participation experience, particularly when positive, has proven to be a strong motivator for political involvement. Political distrust and cynicism, on the other hand, have proven to negatively affect political participation (Smets and Van Ham 2013, 355).

Among the variables linked to **political socialisation**, families have been identified as important socialisation agents. As parental influence weakens with age (Plutzer 2002) however, schools and other education institutions, such as youth organisations, take over in equipping individuals with the resources required for political participation (Verba et al. 1995). Likewise, peers have significant influence, as they play a key role in shaping attitudes towards politics during adolescence (Torney-Purta 1995)

On the other hand, participation does not only depend on the individual, but also on **political structure** in place, namely the influence of the political system, culture, and dominant ideas in a society. Theories on political participation that focus on structure emphasise the relationship between the structure and the individual (Hooghe and Stolle 2005, 43), and seek to determine the reasons for decreased participation in formal rules (legal

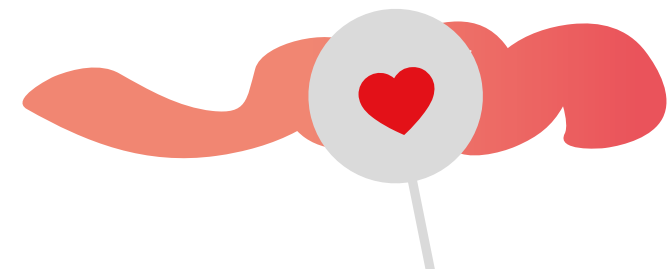
framework and organisational rules), social structures (class, religion, gender and ethnicity), and dominant ideas (belief systems, e.g. patriarchy) (see Axford and Rosamond 1997). Such explanations show how important channels of mobilisation can be for young people in particular contexts.

Political competition, for example, can be very important for political participation. Competitive environments tend to be far more engaging, as mobilisation efforts become more intense and positions on issues more developed (Kahn and Kenney 1999). Healthy partisan competition and an institutional design that allows for real debate among competing parties on important policy positions are also proven incentives for political engagement (Macedo et al. 2005, 46). Political campaigns can also serve as educational exercises—helping citizens learn about candidates, their positions and the issues relevant to them, and thus have a positive effect on political participation.

The mobilisation capacity of political organisations, including parties, have also proven to be an important driver of political participation (Macedo et al. 2005, 45), but these are losing impact, due to the radical transformation of mass membership organisations, which no longer require a wide

base (Skocpol 2003). This transformation of political parties, voluntary organisations, and labour unions has reduced grassroots activities and people's exposure to face-to-face politics (Macedo et al. 2005, 45), creating a divide between political organisations and voters. For Hooghe and Stolle (2005, 45), the question therefore is not whether young people are still interested in politics, but whether political parties are still interested in young people.

***"Political campaigns can also serve as educational exercises—helping citizens learn about candidates, their positions and the issues relevant to them, and thus have a positive effect on political participation."***





Lastly, “get-out-the-vote” campaigns that try to amplify voters’ feelings of civic duty can also contribute to greater involvement (Cox and Munger 1989; Green and Gerber 2004). Other important structural features include mass media, electoral regulations and political campaigning (e.g. electoral system, e-voting, voting age provisions and free airtime). All this suggests that young people’s involvement in institutional politics will increase if the following individual and structural conditions are fulfilled to the greatest possible degree (Hilderman and Anderson, 2017):

- They feel an obligation to participate;
- They feel social pressure from their family, peers, or others;
- They believe something is at stake;
- They have already participated in the past;
- The barriers to participation have been eliminated; and,
- They have been reached out to.

## **D. EXISTING PRACTICES: WHAT DO POLITICAL PARTIES ACTUALLY DO?**

Despite the benefits of promoting the interests of young people in political parties highlighted above (section a), the decline in party membership among youth and its consequences have not generally lead to political parties taking more interest in young people (Hooghe and Stolle, 2005, 45). Promoting youth interests can take many forms, from the inclusion of young representatives and candidates in key party bodies, to the promotion of young people and the policy issues that are most relevant for them as a key priority target group. An overview of key party documents in a selected number of countries revealed that one in four parliamentary political parties failed to recognise and reference the interests and/or organisations of young people at all (see Deželan, 2015, 62). This lack of interest can also be observed by looking at whether parties have an active youth branch or chapter. One out of four also does not have an active youth branch, though this tends to be more common in political systems with shorter democratic traditions (ibid.).

Party programmes and lists of policy priorities that the party will seek to turn into legislation if elected (see Latham 1964, 484) can serve as a good

first indicator of the interest in youth within a party. Party programmes generally do mention youth interests to some extent, although these are often low on the list of priorities, and rarely feature in a standalone title. Overall, it could be argued that political parties tend to undervalue issues that are important to young people.

***"An overview of key party documents in a selected number of countries revealed that one in four parliamentary political parties failed to recognise and reference the interests and/or organisations of young people at all."***

Institutionalised youth participation mechanisms tend to be more successful in ensuring young people's voices are heard and their interests are represented in the party in the long-term. The presence of youth representatives in party board meetings, for instance, offers a clear indication of how much a political party genuinely appreciates youth involvement. Particularly when they have a vote, this offers young people a genuine role in forming policy decisions, and effectively includes them

in fundamental party governance processes. The track record for such practices is disappointing however, as only about a third of parliamentary political parties examined indicated the existence of such arrangements. Interestingly enough, smaller and niche parties are more likely to do this than the key political powerhouses (Deželan, 2015, 63). Some of the more innovating political parties, furthermore, have introduced quotas for their executive bodies, as well as youth candidate quotas. Such mechanisms, however, remain unfortunately all too rare in European politics.

Lastly, it should be noted that a "one-size-fits-all approach" to assessing political parties' approaches to including youth and promoting their interests might be misleading. Many, particularly new, political organisations, have youth engagement engrained into their core governance processes. Some of them even initially emerged from mobilisation campaigns led by young people around issues they care about. Nonetheless, most of the examples of attempts to innovate in promoting youth interests, such as favouring the youth candidate in situations of a tie, fundraising activities for the youth branch, outreach work with youth associations, or the adoption of separate youth manifestos, are less successful, and need to improve, particularly among the more established political parties that are institutions of their own.

# 3

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:  
WHAT CAN POLITICAL PARTIES DO  
TO BE MORE YOUTH-FRIENDLY?



Promoting youth interests in political parties can, in general, be addressed in two broad ways: by including young individuals and their ideas in the life and governance of the party, or by prioritising the interests and issues of concern of young people. Any effort should be judged on the basis of the opportunities it offers to young people to participate in the formulation and adoption of the political decisions that significantly affect their lives. Hart's (1992) framework of youth participation can be applied to assess the potential of different mechanisms: building on Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, the applied framework assesses the extent to which examined mechanisms promote youth interests based on the level of youth information available, level of consultation with young people, and young people's ability to control the process (initiation and leadership). Such measures can thus range from being pure manipulation and tokenism, to a model of genuine participation (Hart, 1992: 9-14).

## **A. THE PROMOTION OF YOUTH INTERESTS AND INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN POLITICAL PARTIES**

### **+ A HOLISTIC YOUTH STRATEGY FOR THE POLITICAL PARTY**

Efforts to promote youth interests within a political party and to reach out to young people outside the party must be consistent and systematic. Improvised strategies rarely work, as the various dimensions of party life are inevitably interlinked. Even when such strategies do work, the influx of young people or their support can catch parties by surprise if the latter does not have a plan of how to accommodate this new force within the party (e.g. the case of Scottish National Party; Mason 2015). Designing a holistic youth strategy that includes participation, speaking rights, programmatic and

voting power, and the inclusion of youth perspectives in key policies, may help increase and sustain the greater involvement and long-term support of young people for the party, whether as members or supporters.

These strategies can also serve as a clear signal to young people that they are being taken seriously. It could include, for example, strategies to rejuvenate leadership (García Sanz, 2018); plans to address the specific needs of various sub-groups, and programmes to address imbalances in knowledge. Such youth strategies are best when prepared in close collaboration with youth

from within and outside the party (where relevant), and adopted in a shared decision making process – thus preventing solutions that might be rejected by young people.

Most political parties recognise the importance of young people, their needs and rights, to a certain extent. In practice however, this is all too often part of a decorative, tokenistic or sometimes even manipulative attempt to appeal to young people (Hart, 1992). Addressing young people's interests in key party documents, for example, sends a more genuine message that young people do matter to them.

Political parties should therefore:

- ***Draft coherent and comprehensive strategies on how to promote youth interests in the party.***
- ***The strategies should guarantee a genuine participation and involvement of young people throughout the party's decision-making process, and should be as broad as possible.***
- ***Include and reference the party's youth inclusion strategy in key party documents.***

## **+ STRONG YOUTH ORGANISATIONS/YOUTH PARTY WINGS**

While most political parties have some sort of youth organisation that serves various roles, it most often serves to get young people involved in political activities, supplying “foot soldiers” for the main party during election campaigns, and providing a pool of potential candidates (Pickard 2015; Rainsford, 2014, Hooghe, Stolle and Stouthuysen 2004). Youth organisations within political parties (aka youth wings) thus have a double role of serving the party's needs of reaching out to young voters, and the role of a socialising agent in acquainting young members with party traditions, key networks, and party culture (Hooghe and Stolle, 2005). This double role has become increasingly important as the distance between parties and young people has grown, and political parties' appeal has diminished (Stock 2008 in Weber 2017). In such circumstances, youth organisations are often best suited to provide candidates from groups that are distant from the main party (e.g. young ethnic, gender, and religious minority members) (Pitkänen, 2018). In addition, due to their proximity to young people, the youth wing can help identify the most relevant issues for young people, and formulate concrete solutions on how to address them.

The success of a youth wing mainly depends on its relation with the mother party. It has most impact when recognised for its potential as a powerful and relevant force for party policies (Weber, 2017). Youth wings are, however, declining in size, and this decline is faster than that of membership in political parties. In addition, as youth wings often tend to create some form of internal opposition to the mother party, there have been a number of cases of youth wings being dismantled, which should be seen as a clear restriction on young people's influence on party policies and political debates (Mycock and Tonge, 2012). Furthermore, parties tend to seek to limit young people's role to what are considered as youth-specific areas and policies. This is to better control and limit critical voices, and often leaves them with little or no influence on the party's main policies (Kimberlee, 2002), and generally to a subordinate and inferior position of the youth organisation (Rainsford, 2014). While youth organisations do enjoy some form of independence and autonomy to develop their own positions, these can only conflict with main party positions to a limited extent (Mycock and Tonge, 2012).

Since these wings have the potential of becoming incubators of genuine participation, rather than arenas of tokenism and manipulation, as is often the case in current practice, political parties should:



***Secure the autonomy and independence of youth organisations / youth wings, through:***

- a.** A stable provision of adequate financial resources for their operation and projects (e.g. a fixed percentage of the mother party's budget);
- b.** Autonomous use of those financial resources (without prior approval from the mother party);
- c.** Guaranteed provision of youth representation in the mother party's key forums (e.g. speakers at party congresses and programme conventions);
- d.** Guaranteed youth voice and vote in key party bodies.

**Support youth wings in organising events and conferences aimed at youth. In order not to be a form of tokenism, but rather a good opportunity for networking, forming alliances, and acquiring important skills and competences, these should be:**

- a.** Initiated and directed by the youth organisation themselves, and convened by the youth organisation and the mother party together;
- b.** Attended by a sizeable and meaningful representation of the mother party leadership, which should contribute to the discussions, without steering them;
- c.** Followed-up by a meaningful inclusion and reference of youth issues in main party policies.

**Provide the youth organisation with the responsibility of nominating an adequate number of young candidates with diverse backgrounds, and put these candidates in electable positions;**

**Make it the responsibility of the youth organisations to form and promote ideas and positions that reflect young people's views within the party, regardless of whether the outcome matches the views of the mother party (e.g. through separate programmes and manifestos).**

#### **+ YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN KEY PARTY BODIES AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS**

As minority group members are shown to trust individuals from other groups less than their own (see Mansbridge, 1999), the meaningful representation of interests in the case of marginalised and structurally disadvantaged groups is best assured by representation (e.g. young representing young). The promotion of youth interests in key decision-making party bodies is, therefore, best guaranteed by having a representative from the youth organisation present at all times.

There are three types of mechanisms, generically referred to as “quotas”, that aim at addressing the political exclusion of specific groups (see Krook 2009). The first is reserved seats, which guarantees a fixed level of representation to

disadvantaged groups. Reserved seats are an efficient way of ensuring youth interests are represented in boards and other key party bodies. Research shows that reserved seats in main party executive boards increase young people's ability to put pressure on, and influence, policy formation (Russel, 2005). However, being present does not always translate into real power. Many parties provide a seat for a youth representative without giving them voting rights. Having the same rights of initiation, discussion, and voting as other board members is vital for youth organisations to ensure young people's interests are addressed, particularly when the weight of the vote is qualified (e.g. according to the share of young people in the population above 15 years of age).

The second important mechanism of promoting youth interests in political parties is the use of candidate quotas. These serve to formally or informally determine the minimum required number of members of an underrepresented group within a list of candidates for various elected positions, either within the party itself, or for those external positions for which the parties compete for (e.g. legislatures). Quotas also do not guarantee representation however, as the mechanism can often be manipulated if introduced primarily for maintaining a positive public

image. To curb the misuse of quotas, the party leadership needs to show a genuine willingness to include young people in party bodies. Ensuring the presence of one or more youth wing representatives in candidate selection panels, for example, can be an effective tool.

To move away from practices of tokenism, decoration and manipulation (see Hart, 1992) and towards genuine youth participation, shared decision-making and the adequate representation of youth interests within and outside the party (Ibid.), political parties should:

- ***Introduce measures of reserved seats for representatives of youth organisations or young people in key party (executive) bodies, including candidate-selection panels at all levels.***
- The weight of these seats (voting power) should reflect the youth population size, and the rights of youth representatives should be equal to the rights of other members;***



➤ ***Introduce youth candidate quotas for elections in legislatures at all levels. Quotas should match the youth population size, and young candidates should be placed in electable positions, to the same degree as other population groups (rank on the list, electable districts, etc.);***

➤ ***Considering the previous two recommendations, candidates and representatives of young people should reflect and promote the diversity of a society's youth population (including the adequate representation of women, ethnic, religious, gender, and other minorities).***

#### **+ ACADEMIES AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG MEMBERS AND CANDIDATES**

Offering training programmes for young members and candidates is a good way of giving them the political knowledge and experience necessary for meaningful participation in institutional politics, and to familiarise them with party values and positions. These programmes are even more effective if designed as “breeding-grounds” for future politicians (see UNDP, 2013, pp. 25–26). They should be designed in a way to ensure that young people, primarily those from marginalised backgrounds, have the necessary skills and knowledge of democratic institutions and processes, as well as the practical skills needed, to succeed in institutional politics (e.g. simulations, debates, negotiations, etc.).

Political parties should therefore:

➤ ***Establish and support permanent youth academies and training programmes for young members, targeting especially young people from diverse backgrounds, and equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to run as young candidates, and navigate institutional politics effectively.***

### **+ PRIORITISING POLICIES THAT ARE RELEVANT TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN PARTY PROGRAMMES, ELECTION MANIFESTOS, AND IN KEY POLITICAL DEBATES**

Young people's interests can only be appropriately addressed if they are discussed in the party's highest-level policy debates. This translates into the prioritisation of youth-relevant issues by top party politicians, and their inclusion in key party policy documents. The problem of the 'ghettoisation' of youth issues in party manifestos (Bouza, 2014, p. 30) should be prevented by making youth issues key party priorities, linking them to other core policies, considering the youth perspective across policies, and promoting them in key political debates. A clear signal of a party's intention to promote youth interests could be by revising the party's overall values and mission statement, to 'youth them up' (Van Run-Kvist, 2018), as engaging youth on the basis of their values has proven successful.

To achieve this, it is necessary to work closely with youth organisations, ensuring their priorities are also priorities in the main party's programme, and ensuring they have a voice and vote when these issues are discussed. Only then can the genuine mainstreaming of youth values, topics, and perspectives be achieved.

Political parties should therefore:

- > Engage in modernising their main values and missions in collaboration with young members and youth organisations;*
- > Include a youth perspective in key party policies and across sectors, by assessing the effects of all policies proposed by the party on young people;*
- > Prioritise topics of interest and relevant to young people in party programmes and election manifestos, on the basis of input provided by youth organisations (e.g. separate youth manifesto).*

### **+ POLICIES FOR YOUTH THAT ARE BASED ON RELIABLE RESEARCH, EVIDENCE, AND DATA**

Messages and policies that target youth are often perceived as lacking credibility, making promises that are broad and intangible, and sometimes even based on speculation and myths. This can lead to low trust in politics among young people, especially among the most critically minded youth

with higher levels of political knowledge, who might be cynical and disappointed with politicians and their actions. As a surge of populism and surface (or phony) engagement (Garcia Sanz, 2018) may be detected across the ideological spectrum, the consistent track record of an individual politician, backed up by messages that are based on evidence and research from reliable institutions, has proven to be one of the more effective strategies in fighting populist stigmas and building credibility and trustworthiness.

Particularly when it comes to more radical, progressive agendas that appeal to young people, the provision of solid evidence has proven to be an effective strategy to address criticism, and thus gain the support of the more critically-minded youth (Rauszer, 2018). An example of the successful dodging of “pie in the sky” criticism – as Hillary Clinton branded Bernie Sanders’ positions (Time, 2016) – was demonstrated by the French presidential candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who had a firm support from well-known and respected economists for his economic programme, which was based on Keynesian principles (Rauszer, 2018).

A continuous and systematic evidence-based approach to youth policies and young people’s interests can therefore provide politicians with much-needed credibility, and ultimately lead to higher levels of trust among young people. Yet, in a world where data is not a scarce commodity, surprisingly enough, there remains a lack of reliable, age-disaggregated data, and relevant research on the particular challenges faced by youth today. Political parties should therefore also engage with and support the research community, public institutions, and civil society groups involved in youth-related research when drafting policies.

Political parties should therefore:

- ***Base their policy positions and back their messages addressing young people with solid and relevant evidence and data;***
- ***Support continuous research and monitoring on young people’s concerns and encourage initiatives, public bodies, research institutions and civil society groups, to collect more data on youth.***

### **+ POLICIES BASED ON RESEARCH, BUT PROMOTED IN CRISP, CLEAN, AND EXCITING MESSAGING**

At the same time, it needs to be stressed that borrowing dull terminology from economic textbooks will not appeal to young voters. In politics, where making compromises is an everyday affair, uncompromising and radical crisp, clear and exciting messages on issues important to young people, and based on radical agendas, can speak to youth and mobilise them (Russell-Moyle, 2018). The eye-catching Labour campaign manifesto “For the Many, Not the Few” is an example of such – for many – radical promise that for many looked like “unashamed pitch for the youth vote” (BBC, 2017). And even when these promises do tend to be just a bit too unrealistic for a world of politics built on compromises and incrementalism, it is sticking to the real life problems of young people, such as scrapping tuition fees, ending of zero-hour contracts and unpaid internships, a rise in the minimum wage, more homes for young people, that makes them appealing to youth (see New Yorker, 2015; Time, 2016; BBC, 2017).

To be perceived and become genuine champions for youth, political parties should thus:

- ***Address real-life issues and concerns of young people, and respond to them with evidence-backed policies and arguments;***
- ***Be firm in their commitment to their values and coherent in their messaging;***
- ***Be open about, and not shy away from, radical, disruptive, and transformative agendas and language.***

## **B. CAMPAIGNING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: TOWARDS OUTREACH STRATEGIES THAT ENGAGE YOUTH**

### **+ CO-CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING YOUTH OUTREACH STRATEGIES AND CAMPAIGNS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

In order to ensure the success of campaigns that aim at targeting young people, it is important for the party's campaign teams to surrender some control to, and work closely, with young people themselves, both from within and outside the party. This can include by co-creating outreach strategies with representatives from the party's youth organisations, both in terms of involving them in the design and planning of the campaign, as well as including them in the core campaign team, or by giving a role to young people from like-minded external groups and movements.

Youth-led and youth-centred initiatives can provide a real boost to the party's success in communicating with citizens, by ensuring the campaign is based on the same values and concerns of the target audience (Tårnes, 2018), by injecting extra energy, and by introducing fresh ideas (Edman, 2018). Young people are more likely to know how to spread the message among their peers (Ugrinoska, 2018). An example of such partnership is the Momentum initiative, which supported Jeremy Corbyn's UK Labour Party leadership bid. This youth-centred and youth-led initiative aimed

at involving young people in institutional politics by encouraging them to be better informed about politics and politicians, about their rights, about issues of social justice, and then by encouraging them to vote (BBC, 2018; Banaji and Meijas, 2017).

To ensure better success of youth outreach campaign, political parties should therefore:

- ***Co-create and run youth outreach campaigns with young people from within the party, and/or, when relevant, from youth-led and youth-centred organisations from outside the party.***
- ***The co-creation and campaign management should run from design, concept and planning, to implementation and follow up.***

**+ SURRENDER SOME CONTROL OVER OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS TO NON-MEMBERS, GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES AND MOVEMENTS, WHO ARE OTHERWISE ALIGNED WITH THE PARTY'S VALUES AND POLICIES**

Political parties need to have a robust and active membership base at their disposal for several reasons (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000): it can give parties the legitimacy that they need, and can provide a pool of volunteers for polling day (Cross et al., 2006). Because youth party membership is one of the worst in terms of the general decline in party membership (Van Biezen) however, parties increasingly need to focus their efforts to engage young people on non-members. Including non-members in party activities, including party supporters who do not wish to become more involved and/or people who support certain issue positions or political causes, has proven successful in recent campaigns. This approach accommodates the changing approach to citizenship among young people, who are more critical and protest-oriented, preferring a politics that is less institutionalised and more cause-oriented and based on social movements (Norris, 2002; Dalton, 2008, Loader et al., 2014).

Surrendering a certain amount of control over their campaign tasks to non-members can have the effect of mobilising a new group of volunteers - supporters who might thus lend their own online and offline social networks to the party's outreach campaign. Some of the most successful such cases involved grassroots initiatives and movements that emerged from specific causes, while being aligned with the party's positions. An example of this was the Bernie Sanders' campaign for the US Democratic primary, which had an online grassroots network of more than 100,000 supporters of his nomination, mostly young people, without being coordinated by the campaign team. The UK Labour's 2017 General Election campaign relied on Momentum's grassroots activities and online/social media engagement (Banaji and Meijas, 2017). Their loosely coordinated online and offline efforts resulted in money raised, the development of several apps and online tools (e.g. VoteForBernie.org, FeelTheBern.org), an increased spread of information about candidates and policies, and generally, increased online and offline activism. It furthermore convinced people to actually vote (The Atlantic, 2015; Washington Post, 2015).

Such peer-to-peer campaigning also produced positive results in the 2008 US Democratic party's campaign led by Obama, and has been replicated to different degrees in a number of other cases, most notably Macron's En Marche campaign. Macron's army of volunteers knocked on over 300,000 doors, and conducted more than 25,000 interviews, which later fed into communication materials on key issues (The Atlantic, 2017). Such Obama-style grassroots volunteer structures proved effective in mobilising people who were new to politics in France by using a personal approach and weekly meetings of over 3,000 committees; it also generated large numbers of new ideas for the campaign (Reuters, 2017).

In order to harness the potential of young people from within and outside, including various grassroots initiatives, political parties should therefore:

- ***Surrender some control over their outreach campaigns to regular supporters, who can spread campaign messages to their own networks, turning them into campaign promoters;***
- ***Rely on grassroots initiatives and movements that are aligned with the party's politics and share its values and ideas, to spread the message and run some key campaign activities, on the basis of loose coordination.***

## **+ GIVING BOTH A VOICE AND AN EAR TO ORDINARY YOUNG PEOPLE**

Making ordinary citizens campaign promoters not only saves money and resources, and helps parties overcome obstacles in outreach, but can also trigger a more important mechanism that has been successfully exploited in several campaigns recently, which is to use outreach activities for feedback and input from citizens on the party's policies. A typical example of a campaign that gave a voice to the citizens was the above-mentioned Macron's Grande Marche door-to-door campaign; it did not aim primarily to secure votes but to listen to people's complaints, priorities, and opinions. Similarly, Mélenchon's "Normal Heroes" approach of reversing the roles of the candidate and interviewer, where he switched roles to become a journalist, offered ordinary citizens a chance to speak while he listened (Rauszer, 2018). The UK Green Party's campaign to hold public meetings to discuss the undemocratic nature of the political system was another campaign that gave ordinary citizens a voice in the party's campaign (The Guardian, 2017).

Political parties should therefore:

➤ *Encourage their politicians to engage in a two-way dialogue with young people, by making them listen to them and collect their ideas, views, demands and complaints.*

**+ ENGAGE IN AND SUPPORT MULTI-PARTISAN SPACES TO SPREAD INFORMATION, PROMOTE DISCUSSION, AND GET FEEDBACK**

Engaging with non-partisan actors such as civil society organisations or media outlets to create multi- and cross-partisan debates is important in creating a safe environment for meaningful political discussions among young people. Such environments and debates create opportunities for young people to become familiar with politics and the political representatives from across the political spectrum, while at the same time getting informed about the main issues at stake and the differences between prevailing political views on how to address them. Such political discussions can therefore promote dialogue between political actors and young people, as well as between young people themselves on topics important to them. If in safe and youth-friendly environments, moreover, they can increase

young people's political confidence, and, in the long-run, bring them closer to politics and political parties (Eichhorn, 2014). It is important to note that such multi-partisan settings tend to be more successful when happening offline. There are however, also a number of examples of successful multi-partisan settings that were formed online.

Political organisations should therefore:

➤ *Support and engage in multi-partisan settings and debates on issues relevant for young people;*

➤ *Promote a focus on youth-relevant issues in key high-profile debates;*

➤ *Use such spaces to inform young people about issues and party positions of relevance to them.*

**+ MEETING YOUNG PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE, ONLINE AND OFFLINE**

Experience and research suggests that it is harder to get in touch with young people in the first place than it is to mobilise them afterwards. The



most effective strategy should therefore be to let the young people come to the mobilisation message, rather than sending the message to them (Nickerson, 2006). According to some experiments, it is three times more difficult to contact young people than other voter groups. As a result, campaign managers have attempted to make contact during the course of young people's everyday business (ibid.), by "walking to the young people" (Havisto, 2018). This can translate into contacting young people in churches, at work, in community organisations, nightclubs, sport clubs, shops, schools, and public services in general. Successful examples of such campaigns include the Scottish National Party's referendum campaign on Scottish independence (Mason, 2015), the Estonian Centre Party's national election campaign (Loone, 2015) and Pekka Havisto's Finnish presidential campaign (Havisto, 2018), where concert halls, dance clubs, festivals, and other popular places became arenas for political discussion and deliberation. In their efforts to facilitate contact with youth, political parties should therefore:

- ***Meet young people where they are already, letting young people come to the message and not send the message to them (i.e., organise campaign activities in spaces where young people are otherwise carrying on with their usual everyday activities).***

#### **+ PROMOTING "GET-OUT-THE-VOTE" CAMPAIGNS**

Many argue that "get-out-the-vote" campaigns do not work with young people, but evidence shows that such campaigns can in fact have positive results (Nickerson, 2006). The effectiveness of these efforts depends on the timing, tone, precision of the message, and level of professionalism (Nickerson, 2006b). The intensiveness and directness of the contact also seems to be one of the most important factors, as face-to-face contact is most effective (Anthony et al., 2013). Door-to-door canvassing is therefore an effective mobilisation strategy (Green and Gerber, 2000) and the physical presence of a person appears to be more important than the message itself (Bennion, 2005). Phone calls, text message reminders, and efforts that use the internet and online social networks also have positive effects on youth turnout (Bond et al., 2012) however.

Political parties should therefore invest in:

- ***"Get-out-the-vote" campaigns that produce genuine contact with young people, based on direct face-to-face contact;***
- ***Consider youth-specific messaging for get-out-the-vote campaigns using phone, the internet and social media.***

### + GO BACK TO SCHOOL

Education institutions have long been recognised as the obvious place to go to reach out to young people. Political organisations however, have found it challenging to fully take advantage of the potential they offer. Through their excessive caution in seeking to keep day-to-day party politics outside of school walls, heads of schools and educators frequently create environments in which political knowledge, interest, and overall engagement among young people is weak, even absent (Eichhorn, 2015; McNeill, 2015).

There is a clear need and responsibility for school authorities to open schools up to political debate (e.g. Brown 2015), since there is evidence that young individuals are interested in politics and engaged in political conversations, and that open classroom discussions about such issues increase political confidence and improve turnout (Eichhorn, 2014). Political parties need to take part in these discussions, by attending various events organised by schools. Their goal in doing so should be to spread information about political positions, or to engage in general political exercises, such as mock elections. During the Scottish independence referendum campaign, certain schools in Scotland demonstrated positive effects of politicians visiting

schools and engaging in open classroom discussions about political issues (Eichhorn, 2014). Other positive examples of party outreach campaigns in schools include mock debates in Norway, where some politicians even went back to the schools to report about the work that had been done and the changes that had been made since previous debates (Tårnes, 2018), whereas others developed partnerships with youth organisations (see Noored Sotsiaaldemokraadid, 2015). An important feature of schools is that they function for most of the calendar year, and not just during election periods. Taking advantage of this feature can add credibility, and reduce manipulation.

Political organisations should therefore:

- ***Attend school events throughout the electoral cycle to inform young people about their positions on key issues relevant to students;***
- ***Engage with students in open discussions about political issues;***
- ***Listen to what students have to say, and return to the school with feedback about the work that was done as a result, after the elections.***

### **+ RECRUIT THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PEER-TO-PEER CAMPAIGNING**

As mentioned above, the most successful strategy for making contact with young people is to meet them where they already are. This includes engaging with educators, youth organisations, teachers, pastors, coaches, and other groups that work with young people as a part of their daily work, and making them part of the political party's outreach strategy. Direct contact with peers who spread mobilisation messages is one of the most effective strategies, particularly when it comes to young people who are otherwise not engaged (Bennion, 2005). These mobilisation agents are usually not typical campaigners, volunteering for or paid by the party. They should be treated as unbiased non-partisans, concerned with young people's general disengagement from institutional politics. In some cases they can serve to "warm up" an audience, preparing young people for the message that the politicians are delivering.

Political parties should therefore:

- Engage people working with young people on a daily basis in their mobilisation efforts;*

- Include peers, particularly when it comes to approaching disengaged young people;*
- Treat them as unbiased non-partisans, creating opportunities for them to deliver (sincere) messages to young people.*

### **+ RELY ON MASS MOBILISATION AND TRADITIONAL CAUSE-ORIENTED MOVEMENT POLITICS**

Recent years have witnessed a surge in the tendency of young people to participate in protests, with traditional modes of protest politics enjoying a new wave of popularity (Sparrentak, 2018). Sit-ins, marches, public meetings, street protests, die-ins, protest concerts, and other forms of direct democratic participation have become commonplace in youth activism, often leading to mass mobilisation for campaigns and usually using social media and other ICT tools that are primarily operated and led by young people. Such mass mobilisation tactics have been a common feature of all campaigns that have been shown to appeal to youth (e.g. Sanders', Corbyn's, Obama's, Macron's, Melenchon's), either through the organising of large-scale events – such by the leader of the Dutch Green Party, Jesse Klaver, in

Amsterdam – or through small meet-ups that relied on the same sort of protest-style citizenship (The Guardian, 2017).

Young people tend to mobilise for single-issue campaigns that highlight problems they face or injustices they feel affected by. Addressing these issues can serve as a unifying and mobilising force for young people who otherwise feel disconnected from institutional politics. Single-issue activism can be understood as a form of 'new politics' where young people participate just because the old politics fails to convince there is a realistic chance for the desired changes to happen. Since these types of campaigns in essence tend to be anti-establishment, the politicians that engage in them have to prove "extra credit" by demonstrating strong links to grassroots initiatives and new social movements, putting forward sincere messages that stem from young people's complaints and concerns (Garcia Sanz, 2018).

These campaigns should be created together with young people and have clear and coherent messages expressed in their slogans and promotional materials, rather than "corporate-style" slogans coined by PR professionals and spin-doctors, which can be off-putting for young people. Successful examples of this include the UK Labour Party's "Tell the Tories" campaign,

which contained youth-centred content (Labour, 2018; The Guardian, 2017), the Scottish National Party Scottish independence referendum campaign, which addressed young people directly, and the campaigns of various Green parties (Havisto, 2018; Garcia Sanz, 2018; The Guardian, 2017b; Sparrentak, 2018).

Political parties should therefore adapt to young people's changing citizenship norms, and:

- ***Invest in activities of mass mobilisation of young people, primarily offline and in traditional forms;***
- ***Complement these activities with savvy use of various social media and other ICT platforms that local young people are most likely to use.***
- ***Engage in single-issue campaigning, addressing the direct and most relevant concerns of young people;***
- ***Co-create these messages with young people.***

## + SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES CO-CREATED BY AND FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

As most young people use social media as their main, and often only, source of political information, political parties should adapt their communication strategies accordingly, both for party members and regular citizens. Social media, if used with adequate youth-friendly language and using the right platforms, can be effective both in spreading information and in receiving feedback from young people on party policies.

Since peer-to-peer interaction is proven to be most successful, particularly for young people who are less interested in politics (see Howe, 2010), social media and communication strategies should be developed with young people themselves. They are also most likely to understand the social media behaviours and preferences of their peers, providing valuable input for targeting strategies.

Features such as surveys, polls and dialogues moreover, can be used to consult and get various forms of feedback on policies (see Gretschel et al., 2014, pp. 25–27; LSE, 2013, p. 14), and should include clear and transparent information about follow-up and how the results of their interaction will be used (see LSE, 2013, p. 9).

Political parties should therefore:

- *Design outreach strategies that include using social media tools for youth-friendly information sharing, consultation and feedback, in close collaboration with youth organisation and other young members;*
- *Use in-built interactive tools to promote participation (e.g. surveys, polls, discussion forums, consultation), primarily for the topics of key interest to youth,*
- *Be clear and transparent about how young people's interaction through online consultations and discussions will be followed up and used by the party.*

## + USE SOCIAL MEDIA AS KEY YOUTH-INFLUENCERS DO, AND MIX IT UP WITH TRADITIONAL CAMPAIGN STYLES

The Internet offers significant potential to mobilise groups of individuals behind issue-oriented campaigns, as it allows for disparate groups of individuals with diverse and fragmented political identities to connect (Chadwick, 2006, 29; Martin, 2012, 108). It facilitates the formation of issue-based organisations of young people because of a reduction in

communication costs, easier access to official sources, and the emergence of the crowd-funding, crowdsourcing and other networking practices enabled by technological innovations (Martin, 2012, 110).

The ability to be endorsed key influencers from popular culture, moreover, enables political actors to go viral and acquire a non-mainstream vibe. Obama was an obvious example of this. Another was Jeremy Corbyn, who engaged with rapper JME, Stormzy, and Akala, and was endorsed by NME and Kerrang!, media outlets popular among youth (The Guardian, 2017c; Bloomberg, 2017). Rather than paying for adverts on social media, tech savvy campaigners (e.g. Momentum) create content that social media users share voluntarily; an example of this is parody videos mocking opposing politicians (e.g. “Daddy, why do you hate me?” video satirically telling people to vote for Theresa May) (BBC, 2017).

Successful digital activism is also built on carefully designed micro-targeting strategies that unleash the power of social media and deliver messages to target audiences either by connecting them to their local environments (e.g. Chatter and Promote tool) or by supporting get-out-the-vote process (e.g. MyNearestMarginal.com, ElectionDayPledge.com).

Political actors should therefore engage into:

- > ***Use social media like key youth influencers do;***
- > ***Engage with and get endorsements from pop culture personalities, and create social media content to be shared by young people voluntarily;***
- > ***Design micro-targeting strategies targeting young people based on their location, encouraging them to get involved, and based on sincere messaging.***

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### FOR DESK RESEARCH ON STATUTORY AND PROGRAMMATIC PROVISIONS OF POLITICAL PARTIES

1. *Noored Sotsiaaldemokraadid*. Retrieved June 19, 2015, from <http://noorsots.ee/>

### LIST OF INTERVIEWEES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER:

1. Brown, Gareth (Scottish Youth Parliament, Public Affairs Coordinator). Personal interview. 5 May 2015.
2. De Schaetzen, Didrik (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party, Head of the Communication Unit). Skype Interview. 23 February 2018.
3. Edman, Erik (Diem25, Internal Communications Coordinator). Skype Interview. 12 March 2018.
4. Eichhorn, Jan (Lecturer in Social Policy, Chancellor&#39;s Fellow). Personal interview. 9 March 2015.
5. Garcia Sanz Mar (European Green Party, Secretary General; PR of the

Municipal Political Group ICV (Barcelona City Council)).

Skype Interview. 28 February 2018.

6. Haavisto, Pekka (Member of Finnish Parliament, Green League). Skype Interview. 27 February 2018.
7. Loone, Oudekki (Member of the Parliament of Estonia, Estonian Centre Party). Personal interview. 11 March 2015.
8. Mason, John (Scottish National Party, Member of the Scottish Parliament for Glasgow Shettleston). Personal interview. 8 April 2015.
9. McNeill, David (Young Scot, Partnerships & Innovation Director (Depute CEO)). Personal interview. 11 March 2015.
10. Nurvala, Juha-Pekka (Youth of the European People's Party, former First Vice President and former Secretary-General, Acting Head of Unit for Policy and Strategy at European People's Party). Skype Interview. 1 March 2018.
11. Pitkanen, Tuulia (Young European Socialists, Secretary-General). Skype Interview. 20 February 2018.
12. Rauszer, Sophie (European United Left–Nordic Green Left Group, Political advisor/Party Staff in the European Parliament). Skype Interview. 27 February 2018.
13. Russell-Moyle, Lloyd (UK Labour, Member of Parliament). Skype Interview. 20 February 2018.
14. Tärnes, Renate (The Workers' Youth League, Secretary General). Skype Interview. 2 March 2018.
15. Ugrinoska, Andrea (IFLRY – International Federation of Liberal Youth, Executive Director). Skype Interview. 13 March 2018.
16. Van Run-Kvist, Sissel (European Liberal Youth, President; ALDE, Policy adviser). Skype Interview. 23 February 2018.
17. Van Sparrentak, Kim (FYEG – Federation of Young European Greens, Co-Spokesperson). Skype Interview. 21 February 2018.

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