

# Civil Society Organizations as instruments to overcome barriers to engaging political institutions

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Expert Group Meeting: Youth, Development and  
Rights

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# Civil Society



UN Photo/Evan Schneider

*“The actual problems of the world are so complex and important that they should not be left only to governments.”*

Bonian  
Golmohommadi

Secretary-General

WELINA

# Civil Society

## DEFINITION

- Organizations of the “third sector”
- Burton Weisbrod’s ideas that CSO’s supply public goods when the demand for these goods is heterogeneous.

## FURTHER CONCEPTUALIZATION

- Robert Putnam’s ideas on Social Capital to increase civic engagement
- Social Capital: trust, norms and networks that increase efficiency through coordinated actions

# Overcoming the barriers



## EXTERNAL

- 1) Showcasing the nature of these barriers.
- 2) Amplifying voices and extending reach.

## INTERNAL

- 3) Providing and equipping youth with skills.
- 4) Providing internal spaces for civic engagement.

# Way Forward

## YOUTH-LED ORGANIZATIONS

- High exit rates / Long-term strategic plans and institutional solidity
- Mix of “parenting” (brothering, sistering) and youth-led structures / Example: UNA’s
- Set of incentives

## GOVERNMENTS AND BUSINESSES

- Actively fund and promote the environment for CSO’s to emerge
- Give priority to core funding
- Coherence in age of majority and age to establish youth organizations

# Best practices

## VOTO JOVEN

- Youth-led organization that promotes voting in young audiences
- Country: Venezuela
- [www.votojoven.com](http://www.votojoven.com)

## DIARIO DEL VOTANTE

- Youth-led organization that provides information of political options to improve civic engagement
- Country: Argentina
- [www.diariodelvotante.com.ar](http://www.diariodelvotante.com.ar)

# Best practices



## WFUNA

- Civil Society organization with a membership of over 100 United Nations Associations worldwide
- Bridge between CS and UN
- Only CSO with the mission of supporting and strengthening the UN

## UNA – UNYA'S

- Grass-roots level organizations
- Independent, semi-independent or dependent
- First contact with the UN

wfuna



World Federation of United Nations Associations

