Civil Society organizations as instruments to overcome barriers to engaging political institutions

Expert Group Meeting: Youth, Development and Rights

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Civil Society

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

Bonian Golmohommad
Secretary-General
WFUNA
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

DIARIO DEL VOTANTE
- Youth-led organization that provides information of political options to improve civic engagement
- Country: Argentina
- 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