Youth Participation Index
Mexico
Executive Summary
Youth Participation Index

Mexico lacks objective information about the participation of young people in the society. This results in a waste of the demographic bonus, which the country relies on, since one out of three Mexicans is between 12 and 29 years old.

It is in this context that we developed our research project, the Youth Participation Index. We wanted to know what we, the young people, were doing in our country. We asked ourselves: where are we? What are we doing? What are we interested in? What are we participating in? What motivates us?

The Youth Participation Index is a piece of scientific research. Its purpose is to measure the level of involvement of young people in Mexico, specifically in spaces that are dealt with in the national agenda, i.e., universities, political parties, different government agencies, NGOs and private enterprises. This Index is renewed annually. Based on the results, policy recommendations are generated in order to foster young people’s participation in the country.

The Index’s results allow all relevant actors to have solid input and objective information for the construction and follow-up of public policies, which are dedicated to strengthening young people’s participation in Mexico.

Methodology

This study is elaborated with the application of our own methodology, developed by our research team, which considers youth participation in selected spaces.

The spaces that we have defined as the axes of our study are: universities, political parties, civil society, private sector and government. From the collection of statistical information on each of these spaces, we can measure objectively the level of youth participation that exists within them.

Our research measures three fundamental aspects of youth participation in each space:

1. The overall youth participation in these spaces;
2. The access that young people have to paid positions within the structure of these spaces; and
3. The involvement of youth in decision-making processes in each space.

First, the overall participation is determined by the number of young people that participate in relation to the total amount of people that participate in the given space. Second, the amount of young people in paid positions is calculated in relation to the amount of all ages that hold this kind of position. Finally, the last element is calculated by taking the amount of youth that have decision-making positions in relation to the total number of people that are involved in the organization’s decision-making processes.

According to the 2013 Youth Participation Index, the main sector where youth participate in Mexico is organized civil society, where eight out of ten participants are young people. This is followed by universities, where participation is high, since young people represent the main source of students. The perceived problem is that despite the high participation in some spaces, access to decision-making in all cases is much lower. This limits young people’s ability to make decisions that influence the country’s development.

One of our main discoveries from the Index is the realization that young people are more willing to actively participate in civil society, where eight out of every ten participants are young. Unfortunately, Mexican civil society does not have the structure or capacity to allow them to access to paid positions inside their institutions.

We also use the information gathered through the Index to design new projects for our own organization. These projects focus on the promotion of young people’s participation in society. It is for this reason that projects like “Orgullosamente Jóvenes”, “Distintivo IuVENIA” (IuVENIA Award) for youth-friendly enterprises, and “Plan Joven por la Democracia” among others, were created.

2013 Youth Participation Index Mexico

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In contrast, for those who stay in the traditional structures, such as government, universities, political parties or private sector, their levels of participation are strictly constrained to unpaid and minor roles within the organizations, with one out of ten young decision-makers in private enterprises, political parties and universities, and two out of ten in the government.

Based on the conclusions of the 2013 Youth Participation Index, we generate two types of actions. First, we generate public policy recommendations. These policies are then promoted through lobbying. Second, we identify the main opportunity areas where we can develop our own projects.

Our public policy recommendations were divided in three main topics:

1. The construction of a comprehensive policy on youth;
2. The continuous collection of accurate information on youth participation; and
3. The unrestricted access of young people to the structures and decision-taking processes.

These recommendations are directed to many actors, including the Mexican Institute of Youth (IMJUVE), the Citizen Monitoring Board of Public Policies for Youth (CONSEPP), the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (INEGI), the National Government, Political Parties, Organized Civil Society, among many others.

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**Non-Governmental Organizations**

- **Institutions**: 252
- **Global Participation**: 28,271 total participants, 23,143 young participants
- **Access to Paid Positions**: 5 out of 10 employees are young
- **Decision Making**: 4 out of 10 decision makers are young

**Federal Government Agencies**

- **Institutions**: 189
- **Global Participation**: 438,616 total participants, 101,816 young participants
- **Access to Paid Positions**: 2 out of 10 employees are young
- **Decision Making**: 2 out of 10 decision makers are young

**Political Parties**

- **Participants**: 3,849 total participants, 480 young participants
- **Decision Making**: 1 out of 10 decision makers are young

**Private Enterprises**

- **Institutions**: 189
- **Global Participation**: 31,553,443 total participants, 10,179,248 young participants
- **Access to Paid Positions**: 3 out of 10 employees are young
- **Decision Making**: 4 out of 10 decision makers are young
Looking Forward

In the forthcoming 2014 edition, the study will include a section that compares this year’s findings with past studies, to provide continuity and follow-up to the recommendations contained in past editions. This will allow us to see the evolution of young people’s participation over time and to highlight good practices that have promoted participation from year to year.

Past editions have also highlighted the lack of disaggregated information, according to gender and age, within different institutions and in studies conducted by other governmental and non-governmental organizations. However, thanks to the National Youth Participation Index, some spaces are becoming aware of the importance of generating this kind of information, and have started to compile it.

The method used by the Index can be adapted to suit different contexts. Therefore, it is also possible to elaborate indexes for different countries, states or counties. The only thing that changes is the process of obtaining information. Ollin’s team already has the experience on the application of the Index on a state and national level.

For further information about this project please contact:
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Ollin is a youth-led initiative to foster young people in Mexico. We are a think-tank that develops and implements strategies to improve young participation levels in Mexican society. We work on 4 lines of action: research; advocacy; communication; monitoring and evaluation.

On the field of research, we have been working since 2012 on an annual National Youth Participation Index. This is a multidisciplinary research project on youth and participation that provides us with objective information on which we base our public policy proposals, as well as the means to measure their implementation and our own internal programs. The final purpose if having such an index is to be able to actively improve the levels of youth participation in strategic sectors of the Mexican society and, by doing this, ensuring that young people have access to better opportunities and may take well-informed decisions about their role in it. The National Youth Participation Index is the starting point for all our programs.

We like to share what we are working on – and get news from others, so we can improve our work! This is why we host an annual gathering in Mexico City, in which we spend a couple of days listening to examples of good practices regarding youth participation around the world and other research projects that are underway. “Orgullosamente Jóvenes” was held on September 2014 and we had attendees and speakers from more than 10 countries, among which were representatives of several universities, NGOs and governments.

We believe in the power of communication. We have been running a blog for the past 3 years, in which young people are encouraged to share their views on topics that they consider themselves experts on. With almost 1 million views so far, “Jóvenes Construyendo” has helped some very talented young people get their posts read and commented by a lot of people, but it has also worked as the launching platform for some of them to get job offers as bloggers or journalists in several other projects.

Youth employment conditions is one of our main areas of interest. We know that there are some enterprises that are doing a great job in this regard. Ollin wants to find them and give them a public award, so that they keep up and enhance their good practices, while inspiring other companies to adopt some of these. The “Iuvenia Award for Youth-Friendly Enterprises” will be granted on an annual basis to those companies that demonstrate a minimum standard of working conditions for youngsters working for them. We will be launching this program on January 2015.

In our nation, young people have little interest for political matters. Ollin sees this as a big area of opportunity. We want more and more young people involved in politics, because this is a very good chance to refresh the ways in which politics are conducted in our country, while making sure that young people’s ideas and needs are properly reflected in political decisions. We have been working since 2014 to make information about politics available and understandable for young people, on the one hand, while, on the other, we hold periodic meetings with the young leaders of all political parties, in order to develop joint strategies to foster youth involvement in politics.

For more information on our programs, please refer to http://www.ollinac.org