

# No Platform for Old Men

## Barriers to Online Youth Civic Engagement and P-CVE in Europe

Institute for Strategic Dialogue

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## Introduction

**The challenge of youth civic engagement globally has been framed by competing mainstreamed visions and notions of youth disengagement, rather than the ever-changing, and challenging, demographic, political, and digital landscapes. Globally, civic polities have been fundamentally altered by the rise of attention-driven technologies and platforms, an ageing population in Europe versus a massive youth population in the Global South, the largest conflict-driven migration of the 21st century, and the debilitating effects of the worldwide economic crisis.**

The effects of these contextual challenges and global crises, scholars argue, have not led to a marked decrease in youth civic engagement, but have birthed new, competing frameworks for understanding youth civic engagement.<sup>1</sup> The rise of participatory politics, defined by “interactive, peer-based groups that seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern,” has replaced the stolid civic engagement formats of old.<sup>2</sup> Digital technologies and platforms are now enmeshed into young people’s daily lives, framing their understanding of civic issues, discourse and actions.<sup>3</sup>

What education and digital media scholars have described as “networked individualism,” represents a marked shift from how young people may have once defined themselves — either through “family, neighbourhood, school or work,” or a civic youth identity increasingly defined by the “social networks which they themselves have had a significant part in constructing.”<sup>4</sup> The hierarchical world of institutionalised politics<sup>5</sup> is no longer seen as the only arena where youth can effectively exert their influence on civic issues. Young people in the digital age are not only redefining the concepts of active citizenship, but they are also reconstructing the means, modes, and platforms to civically engage. This is not to state that youth civic engagement in the digital realm is without its limitations. Heralding digital utopianism, specifically because of the low barriers of entry to new digital technologies, negates the very real structural and social barriers that inhibit youth engagement in the online and offline civic space. Researchers have long-noted that real-world inequalities tied to class, education, and race, are mimicked online.<sup>6</sup>

Just as today’s youth are born “digital natives,”<sup>7</sup> and have been socialised for utilising digital technologies and platforms, politicians have sought to capitalise on this shift. Politicians and political parties have moved over to using digital technologies and platforms in order to fundraise, mobilise, and influence public debate, and in the process attempted to co-opt the language and the activities of digital natives. The generational gap between these audiences is vast. Digital natives fluent in the language of computers, video games, and the internet, are finding themselves confronted by “digital immigrants,” those above the age of 33 who are adapting to this digital environment with their feet firmly in the past.<sup>8</sup> This generational gap contributes to schisms between digital natives and digital immigrants in the civic realm. Just as “culture clash” politics are full of contentious and divisive issues around the separation of state and religion, immigration, and multiculturalism have further divided the mainstream civic discourse of global politics, the generational clash is leading to further division online.<sup>9</sup>

Complicating issues of online youth civic engagement are transnational, networked extremist groups and movements increasingly adept at online engagement. These groups leverage youthful content, as well as young people, to appeal to, recruit and co-opt the narratives and issues of civic importance to youth. The strategies and tactics of extremist groups are rooted in the use of youth grievances to spread misinformation (incorrect facts), disinformation (intentionally false information designed to confuse) and propaganda (biased information) to influence digital as well as offline civic discourse. This is true of transnational Salafi-jihadist groups such as Al-Qaeda (AQ), and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)<sup>10</sup>, as well as their global affiliates, and far-right groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazis, and Identity Evropa.<sup>11</sup> Just as politicians and political parties have increasingly migrated online to address youthful audiences, so have extremist groups sought to capitalise on the social challenges of youth across the globe. The online civic environment is complicated by the contextual challenges of the real world, which manifest themselves through the generational divides between youth, politicians, and political parties, on one side, and extremist group narratives and exploitation of social networking sites, on the other. Against this



backdrop, if we are to effectively engage youth in the process of exerting their digital influence on issues of civic importance, a shift in strategy and practice is required that takes into account the barriers and opportunities for youth engagement around preventing and countering violent extremism online.

In the shadow of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250,<sup>12</sup> UN member states were urged to involve youth in both “preventing and countering violence and violent extremism,” as well as consider ways “to increase inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions.” It is a global imperative to engage young people on issues of “social, economic, political, cultural and religious exclusion, intolerance, as well as violent extremism.”<sup>13</sup>

This report frames these issues through this lens. It is born out of more than a decade of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue’s (ISD) engagement with policymakers, and more importantly, young people, in attempting to influence peers, politicians, and their wider communities on issues of social, economic, political, cultural and religious exclusion, intolerance, as well as violent extremism. Today, there is a rise in illiberal populist political movements in both Western and Eastern Europe, a mainstreaming of extremist discourse in the media, and civic discourse, as well as the continued challenge of transnational Salafi-jihadist and far-right group recruitment, radicalisation and attacks. We need to urgently engage young people in these issues.

This is a challenge not only for governments, but also for networks, collectives and civil society organisations that seek to engage youth in both online civic life and to counter and prevent violent extremism. ISD practitioners and researchers understand these challenges and the practical implications of leveraging youth to confront them. However, the research around the efficacy and capacity of youth to influence peers, policymakers and communities on civic issues, and prevent and counter violent extremism is limited, and complicated by a number of issues. These research deficits are as broad as the definitions of youth. They also point to more problematic questions such as conceptualisations of how communities are defined by governments versus

youth. Most communities are defined by institutional politics, rather than by their social dynamics as defined by youth. Underpinning all these issues, are poorly-framed research initiatives on the intersectionality, and distinctions, of youth who are vulnerable to extremism versus youth more generally, as well as the understanding of the efficacy of countering or alternative narrative programming.<sup>14</sup>

Through ISD programmes, such as the Youth Civil Activism Network (YouthCAN), our teams have been working with young people who consider themselves civically engaged, and therefore, “activists,”<sup>15</sup> and are interested in preventing and countering violent extremism in their communities. As part of this programming, and with the support of the United States Embassy in Belgium, YouthCAN teams in 2018-2019 played a central role in resourcing and supporting 57 young activists from 14 countries across Western and Eastern Europe. ISD assisted them in understanding the contextual challenges of extremism across Europe, as well as helping them design campaign strategies for preventing and countering violent extremism online. This capacity-building effort was both based on peer-to-peer support networks, as well as ISD-practitioner mentorship with all aspects of the campaign design, development and action phases. ISD-practitioner support was further strengthened with financial support for four youth-led campaigns launched across four regions in Europe.

As a follow-up to this capacity-building effort, and the launch of the campaigns across a number of social media platforms, ISD sought to understand the motivations of a subset of these young, European activists. It also looked at barriers to youth civic engagement and involvement in preventing and countering violent extremism. This report will present the findings of the survey sample of activists that worked on campaigns during the past year, as well as make broad-based practice and policy recommendations for policymakers and practitioners at the local, national, regional and international levels.

## Key Insights and Recommendations

**Although disillusionment and distrust among young people towards institutions of governance exists, the body of research around youth civic engagement suggests that there are a number of untraditional practices and policies that can be adapted to support young people's engagement. Based on a small, survey of young European activists involved in the YouthCAN Berlin and Brussels workshops, a number of key insights and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners can be derived.**

**Institutional structures, confrontational politics, time and financial resources continue to be barriers for youth civic engagement, activism and preventing and countering violent extremism online.** Youth engagement is affected by dissatisfaction with, or alienation from, current politics, as well as by austerity measures enacted by states. Policymakers and practitioners should be aware of these barriers and seek to limit any knock-on, negative effects on the young people they hope to involve in programming. The ability to limit the tenor of the "politics of division,"<sup>16</sup> during this current period of time requires pressure on media outlets, influencers, and the politicians themselves. While confrontational-style politics appeals to some youth activists who are affiliated with parties or groups, it seems to be an inhibitive factor to non-partisan survey respondents who wanted to take action.

**Placating youth by involving them in the outcomes of preventing and countering violent extremism campaigns, rather than involving them in the design, development and deployment stages inhibits their capacity, and limits their ownership.** It is better to involve young people at every stage of the design, development and promotion of campaigns in order to support youth activism. Youth are generally involved in single stages of campaign processes, rather than holistic approaches to youth involvement in all phases of the campaigning process. In order to go beyond tokenistic youth involvement in campaigns, youth programmes need to have an underlying understanding of the issues, and social dynamics, that inhibit youth in all of the campaign processes. Campaign teams should design effective work-arounds that can meaningfully involve youth beyond inclusion at only the

design, development, or deployment phases, and include youth in all aspects of the campaign process.

**Fear drives youth disinterest in civic engagement and activism on issues around security, peace, and extremism.** Respondents specifically mentioned "fear of professional implications" or "fear of being laughed at" as barriers to engagement within their own social circle. Also "fear of becoming too politicised" among the general public because of potential engagement. More research is needed into the barriers created by a fear of reputational repercussions eg. in employment, social networks and the wider public.

**Feelings of powerlessness are often conflated with youth apathy, and feed into mainstreamed narratives of youth disinterest in civic engagement, activism, as well as preventing and countering violent extremism online.** Because of this, young people engage in different forms of civic engagement activities that relate to their own understanding of democracy and citizenship and find different ways of making their voices heard. These approaches to participation may not be viewed as important or measured by those studying youth engagement. Policymakers and practitioners should understand these alternative forms of involvement and support youth using non-traditional engagement methods.

**Practitioners and civil society organisations should create awareness of how activism can take on varied**

**"Practitioners and organisations should be aware of the pathways, and motivating factors, that prompt young people to civically engage, and leverage the power of emotional narratives"**

### **forms, rather than traditional oppositional activism.**

A primary recommendation from respondents was to make youth aware of the various forms that activism can take, including non-traditional methods and use of the arts, which may be more attractive to them.

### **Civil society organisations should amplify the work of the individual and independent young activists rather than co-opting their messages and activism.**

Practitioners and organisations should refocus efforts on amplifying the messages of vocal independent youth activists and educate others about the work these individuals are carrying out, rather than trying to co-opt them into larger, traditional institutions or movements.

**Activism, and more broadly civic engagement, is driven by personal motivation, as much as it is around issues.** Practitioners and organisations should be aware of the pathways, and motivating factors, that prompt young people to civically engage, and leverage the power of emotive narratives and campaigns that will entice youth to engage in activism, civic engagement, and preventing and countering violent extremism.

## **Survey Methodology and Limitations**

In order to gauge young people's pathway into activism and the criticisms they might have of other youth who remain disengaged, ISD researchers distributed a structured survey to all of the 57 participants who attended YouthCAN workshops in Brussels and Berlin in July and October 2018. Of the 57 surveys sent to participants, we received 21 responses. While the small sample size is inhibitive, the respondents were geographically diverse and represented gender and ethnic minorities well. The survey and the responses are part of can be found here.

The structured survey asked young people to first describe their education, family life, religious identity, and relationship status. We began with this line of questioning in order to ascertain the biographical availability of young people to engage in activism. As social movement scholars have noted, biographical availability refers to the "absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement

participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities."<sup>17</sup>

The survey asked about their pathways into activism, the kinds of activism they were involved in, their motivations for continued involvement, and their thoughts on why more youth are not socially engaged. While the survey was a typical questionnaire, we also left room for young people to reflect with short answers if they chose.

One of the main limitations of this study is the small survey sample (N=21). For future studies, ISD researchers hope to not only embed research techniques into the youth workshops but also conduct longer one-on-one interviews with several of the participants. The YouthCAN team is currently analysing the data from a survey of more than 1,000 activists globally, which will undoubtedly build on this smaller Europe-focused sample. Our ability to understand issues around youth engagement globally will also be complemented by extended interviews with select activists from a range of countries and regions. We believe that these extended discussions will contribute much to understanding some of the nuances of youth engagement and activism, which may not be so easily captured with a structured survey.

## **Survey Findings**

The survey respondents were selected from an initial application process for the YouthCAN Brussels and Berlin workshops in 2018, which totalled 25 and 34 participants respectively. From this subset of the young European activist population, the team worked with those interested in producing campaigns and initiatives that tackled issues around hate, polarisation and extremism. The first workshop built the capacity of these young activists to understand the current challenge of extremism in Europe, the second sought to enhance their campaign, design, development and promotion skills in order to launch their own campaigns/initiatives on the issues. The respondents had limited experience working on these issues and many had never been involved with developing creative campaigns on these themes. This group represented a prime population for surveying the barriers and opportunities that activists face in supporting the prevention of extremism in Europe.

## Key Insights and Recommendations

### Demographics

Results from youth survey participants in some ways mirrored the findings in the body of research on youth engagement. The bulk of the participants were between 22- and 30-years-old, with an almost even split between males (11) and females (10). Religion did not appear to be a major factor in motivations of this particular group, as 13 of the 21 survey users identified as either “no religion”, “secular/atheist/humanist” or “agnostic”. The education level of the participants was high, with 19 of the 21 respondents having identified bachelors, graduate or PhD as their highest level of education. None of the participants had completed less than high school education. The majority (14) of the respondents also noted that they had never been married, with 6 having steady partners.

### Types of Activism and Engagement

Of the participants surveyed, 65% (13) engage in social media/internet activism, followed by 50% (10) in countering violent extremism/peacebuilding, 25% (5) in environmental activism, 20% (4) in consumer activism, 5% (1) in economic activism and lastly, 25% (5) engaged in other types of activities. The specific types of activism undertaken by the participants were: 80% social media/internet activism, 70% community organising, 60% communications campaigns and crowdsourcing, 45% political campaigning, 35% street marches, protests and hunger strikes, 25% lobbying and 20% other types of activities.

### Motivation for Personal Engagement

The motivations given by respondents for becoming personally engaged in activism were largely related to a specific issue that was important to them and sometimes related to their own personal history. One participant stated that he had become involved in activism as a way to educate himself on the issue of immigration, particularly because of the rhetoric around this issue in advance of Brexit. He responded that:

“In the build-up to Brexit and in my home town,

there was lots of talk about how immigration and its various connotations were at fault for many of the ills in our society. I felt that this wasn’t the case, but living in a town that had experienced no migration, wanted to immerse myself in this area to find out for myself...”

Another respondent similarly noted being motivated by conditions in her home country, as well as corruption, racism and income inequality. Some participants were drawn into activism in response to the current media environment. Survey respondents specifically noted, “anger against the mainstream media” and “misleading communication in the form of framing, agenda setting and post-war era propaganda techniques,” as well “using technology as means for mass public surveillance” as motivators. Others listed more generic reasons for initially becoming engaged in activism including curiosity, gaining new experiences and a desire for social change. Access to school courses on community involvement and having friends or family engaged in such programmes were also mentioned as entry points for becoming involved in activism. One individual was motivated by having a specific skill set that could be useful to activists, stating the desire to “share my knowledge about video editing and basic storytelling/script structure.”

### Continued Motivation

Survey participants who provided their continued motivation for engaging in activism stated that they have remained involved because of continuing social and political concerns. One respondent stated that they continued to engage in activism because “we continue to live in a world that needs it.” Another noted concerns over the possible break-up of the European Union as a continuing motivator. One respondent noted:

“I feel that in the world things are going in wrong extremes. It’s becoming more and more widely acceptable to attack people from other nations, races, religions, sexual orientations or based on their cultural or social background. It’s really worrying me what will happen to our world in a few more years.”



## Why Don't Other People Get Involved?

Survey respondents gave a number of reasons for why some of their less active friends are not involved politically or civically that generally mirrored the barriers identified by youth engagement research. A common difficulty was time. One respondent noted that more of his friends are not involved “because they are still coping with their daily lives.” Others said that “it’s hard to guarantee stability and fit into busy schedules” and friends “lacked time and money.”

Other survey participants noted that the people around them are not engaged because of a sense of apathy or powerlessness to make real change. One young person stated that his friends: “don’t care, don’t see the problem, don’t see how it affects them, believe that it someone else will deal with it, believe that their voice won’t make a difference.” Others stated that “general apathy and a feeling of helplessness” act as barriers to engagement and that people in their social circles lack interest “to get deeper involved with subjects or have no understanding of the relevance” or of the importance in engaging politically and socially on such issues. Another issue mentioned was that peers simply would not know how to get involved even if they wanted to. A feeling of powerlessness or lack of knowledge about how to engage was generally seen to feed apathy. One respondent added that his peers are “Busy posting selfies and I am not kidding about it.”

# 19/21

Respondents identified bachelors, graduate or PhD as their highest level of education.

Another factor raised repeatedly by respondents as a reason that their peers are not engaged on social or political issues was fear. Most respondents believed that any role in campaigning would require them to be up front and centre. Respondents neglected the aspects of campaign management that could be led with limited, or no, visibility at all during the campaign process.

Similar to the research findings by the London School of Economics US Centre,<sup>18</sup> several respondents said that perceived potential ramifications for reputation and employment kept their friends from becoming more

engaged. Respondents specifically noted “fear of professional implications” or “fear of being laughed at” as barriers to engagement in their social circles as well as “fear of becoming too politicised” or of being perceived as being strongly affiliated with a particular political party. Negative connotations regarding the framing of the word activist were also stated as a concern among the respondent’s peer group.

## Suggestions to Engage Other Youth in Activism

The Brussels survey participants gave a number of suggestions for attracting more young people to activism and engagement.

# 65%

Of survey respondents engage in social media or internet activism.

The main recommendation was to make youth aware of the various forms that activism can take, including non-traditional forms that may be more attractive to them. A respondent advised to “show the varied nature of activism” which allows individuals to “find a style that works for them.” Another suggested creating easy-to-use technological tools that allow

young people to make stories about issues that interest them and of which they can remain in control. Others suggested the importance of illustrating to young people that their activism can have value, real results and effect change on issues that they care about. One participant also recommended addressing the loaded nature of the word activist which can itself make people fearful of being labelled. These recommendations are similar to the recent successful instances of youth engagement, where young people are given opportunities to engage in activism outside of traditional hierarchies or structures in a manner where they have greater control over their message.

## Recommendations for Youth Engagement Best Practices

Traditional Communication for Development (C4D) programme — that underpin the approaches leveraged

## Key Insights and Recommendations

by international civil society organisations, such as the United Nations — place the utmost importance on participatory elements of engagement as central to working with, and supporting, young people tackle a number of contextual, and sociopolitical developmental challenges in their communities. These approaches require organisations to (i) tackle specific issues of importance to youth (ii) promote a learning environment that allows for youth trial and error and (iii) place youth at the centre of the design, development and promotional processes, including budgeting and measuring their own programming.

The YouthCAN network is founded on these programmatic principles. Since its launch at the Oslo Youth Against Violent Extremism Summit in June 2015, YouthCAN has been the top ISD youth engagement programme. Supported by the Norwegian government, YouthCAN is a network, and movement, of young activists designing and implementing campaigns and initiatives with the aim of tackling issues such as hate, polarisation, and preventing and countering violent extremism globally. By connecting young activists, artists, tech entrepreneurs, civil society leaders, youth workers, filmmakers, graphic designers, students and innovators, YouthCAN provides young activists with resources and opportunities to create and share counter-narrative campaigns based on evidence-based best practices. Based on years of experience, working with youth activist groups in more than 20 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa,

Europe and Asia, YouthCAN has been improving its model of engagement. It has built an evidence-base, which is supported by in-depth research with youth populations, to frame its interventions and provided targeted, contextualised support to young activists, and local, community-led responses to hate, polarisation and extremism.

The YouthCAN model and approach have been leveraged by international governments, as well as local partners. It follows a consistent practice that seeks to support young activists who require:

- **Knowledge of best practices for localised, grassroots-based responses to hate, polarisation and extremism.** The model also highlights campaigns or initiatives leveraged by youth across the network as a means to provide peer-to-peer examples of how young people have tackled these issues in differing contexts.
- **Practical experience in designing, developing and promoting campaigns and initiatives that challenge hate, polarisation and extremism locally.** This is an iterative model of support, whereas experts provide the framework and tools for designing campaigns and initiatives, and youth design the approaches and responses to the local challenges they face. The aim is to have youth-led and owned responses to these issues.
- **A network of creatives and experts that can hone, and support young activist initiatives throughout the campaign design, development and promotional processes.**

**“Reinforcing the value of youth participation to young people and impact that they can have on issues they care about is an important step to increasing participation”**

ISD considers this three-multi-layered support approach as key to providing young activists with the resources and skills they require in order to begin crafting responses to and challenging issues of hate, polarisation and extremism in their local communities. In Lebanon, YouthCAN played a central role in supporting young activists inside of the largest Palestinian refugee camp in the country — Ain al-Hilweh. Based on years of marginalisation, as well as ebbs and flows in armed conflict within the camp, young people inside the camp wanted to counter stereotypical narratives of criminality

and extremism tied to Palestinian youth in Lebanon, and specifically Ain al-Hilweh. With support from YouthCAN teams, the young people designed a weekly web-based video series titled “WashWasha” (whispers) that countered these noxious stereotypes with individual stories of artists, activists, and other youth in the camp, as a means to counter unhelpful notions of Palestinian social deviance in Lebanese society. The first four videos developed and released by this group of young people received more than 79,000 views and 1,200 Facebook likes. The programme and the youth behind the concept were then interviewed on national radio and television. The programme was successful not because of its social media metrics, but in its ability to self-sustain its own

development. YouthCAN creatives trained a core group of youth in the camp on how to produce video content and provided equipment. This capacity-building initiative has now transformed into an informal training programme for young people to learn photography and editing processes.

The youth engagement model employed by YouthCAN sometimes takes on

untraditional forms such as: signing petitions, conscious consumerism, dressing up, graffiti, making verbal and visual statements online and on social media, as well as flash mobs, street performances and stunts.<sup>19</sup>

Insights on how to engage youth in issues of civic importance are available from a range of researchers, scholars and institutions. However, rarely are the voices of young European activists central to the recommendations for best practice. ISD believes the voices of youth in the design, development and promotion of civic engagement activities, as well as preventing and countering violent extremism, need to be leveraged for policymakers and organisations to build more responsive and iteratively designed processes for engaging youth.

In order to properly address issues of youth engagement, expanded survey and interview research on this topic

would be highly beneficial. The small sample size in the Brussels survey and workshops provided an interesting insight into motivations for youth activism, as well as barriers which may inhibit youth engagement. Conducting a larger online survey of youth activists could further help validate the findings. The findings related to barriers created by fear of reputational and employment repercussions are less explored in the body of literature on youth engagement in general and could be expanded upon in further survey work along with potential solutions for addressing these concerns.

Encouraging organisations involved with youth to engage participants in the specific ways that have shown success and been mentioned by survey participants could also prove effective in increasing meaningful youth activism. Organisations looking to increase youth members should be advised to give youth participants valuable roles in campaigns and to treat their contributions meaningfully. Such organisations should also engage youth by listening to their concerns and ideas and allowing them to speak on issues in their own words in less polished, but more authentic ways. Groups looking to increase youth engagement could also do this by helping to amplify the messages of vocal independent youth activists and educating others about the work these individuals are carrying out, rather than trying to co-opt them into larger, traditional movements, organisations or institutions.

Also, reinforcing the value of youth participation to young people and impact that they can have on issues they care about is an important step to increasing participation. The survey participants noted that a feeling of helplessness or inability to effect change acts as a deterrent to peer engagement. However, illustrating to young people examples of successful youth engagement in recent times can perhaps help to alleviate this feeling.

## 13/21

Survey users identified as either “no religion”, “secular/atheist/humanist” or “agnostic”

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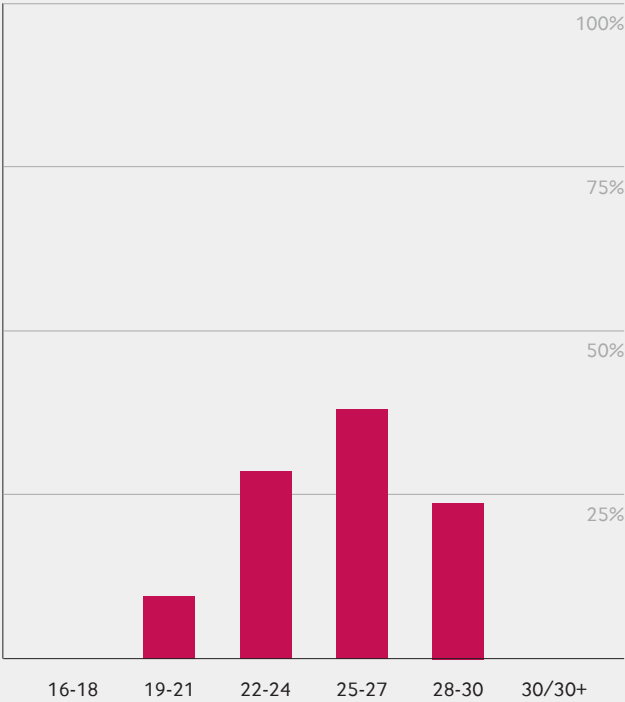
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# Survey responses

## Age

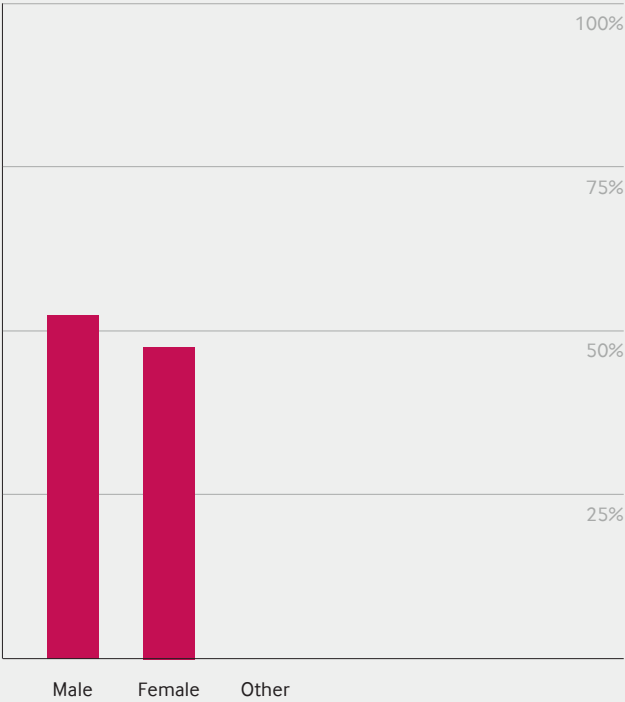
Answered 21/21



Age	Responses
16-18	0.00%
19-21	9.52%
22-24	28.57%
25-27	38.10%
28-30	0.00%
30/30+	0.00%

## Gender

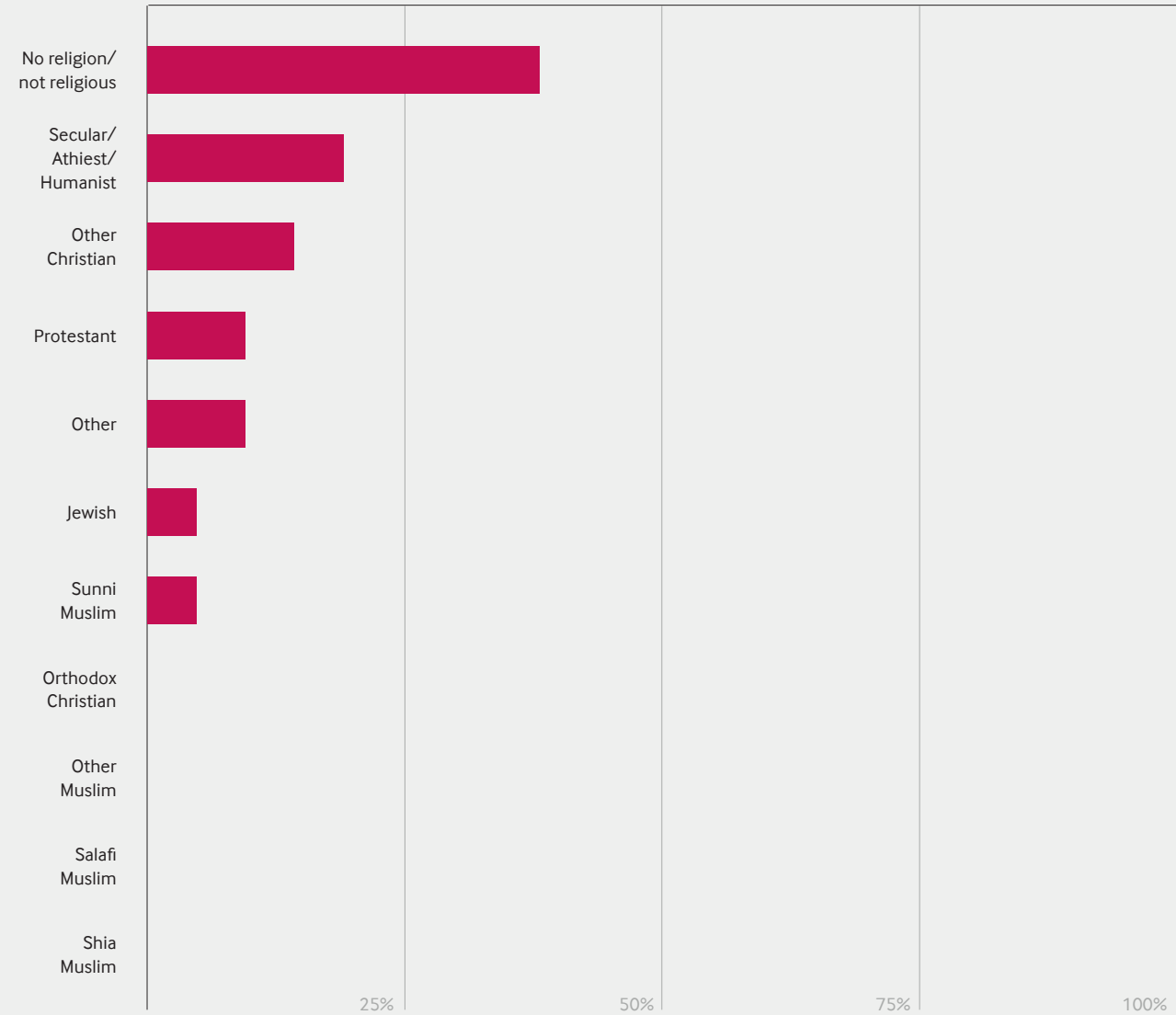
Answered 21/21



Gender	Responses
Male	52.38%
Female	47.62%
Other	0.00%

Religion

Answered 21/21



Religion	Responses
No religion/not religious	38.10%
Secular/Athiest/Humanist	19.05%
Other Christian	14.29%
Protestant	9.52%
Other	9.52%
Jewish	4.76%

Religion	Responses
Sunni Muslim	4.76%
Orthodox Christian	0.00%
Other Muslim	0.00%
Salafi Muslim	0.00%
Shia Muslim	0.00%

## Survey responses

### In which country do you hold citizenship?

Answered 21/21

Country	Responses
Belgium	3
United Kingdom	3
Germany	2
India	2
Austria	1
Cameroon	1
Estonia	1
France	1
Malta	1
Montenegro	1
The Netherlands	1
Nigeria	1
Norway	1
Pakistan	1
Slovenia	1

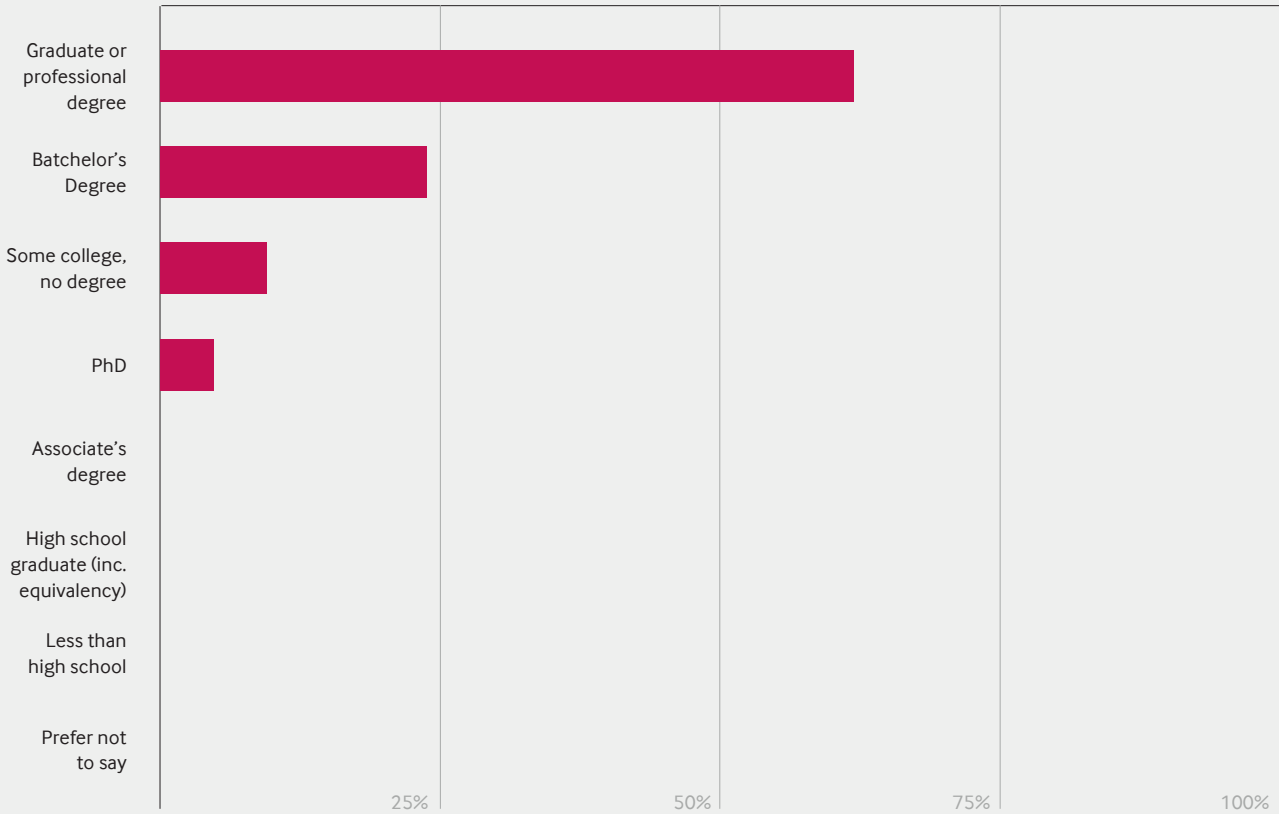
### How old were you when you first got involved in activism?

Answered 21/21

Age	Responses
18	5
16	3
27	2
7	1
8	1
14	1
15	1
17	1
19	1
20	1
21	1
24	1
25	1

Highest level of education

Answered 21/21

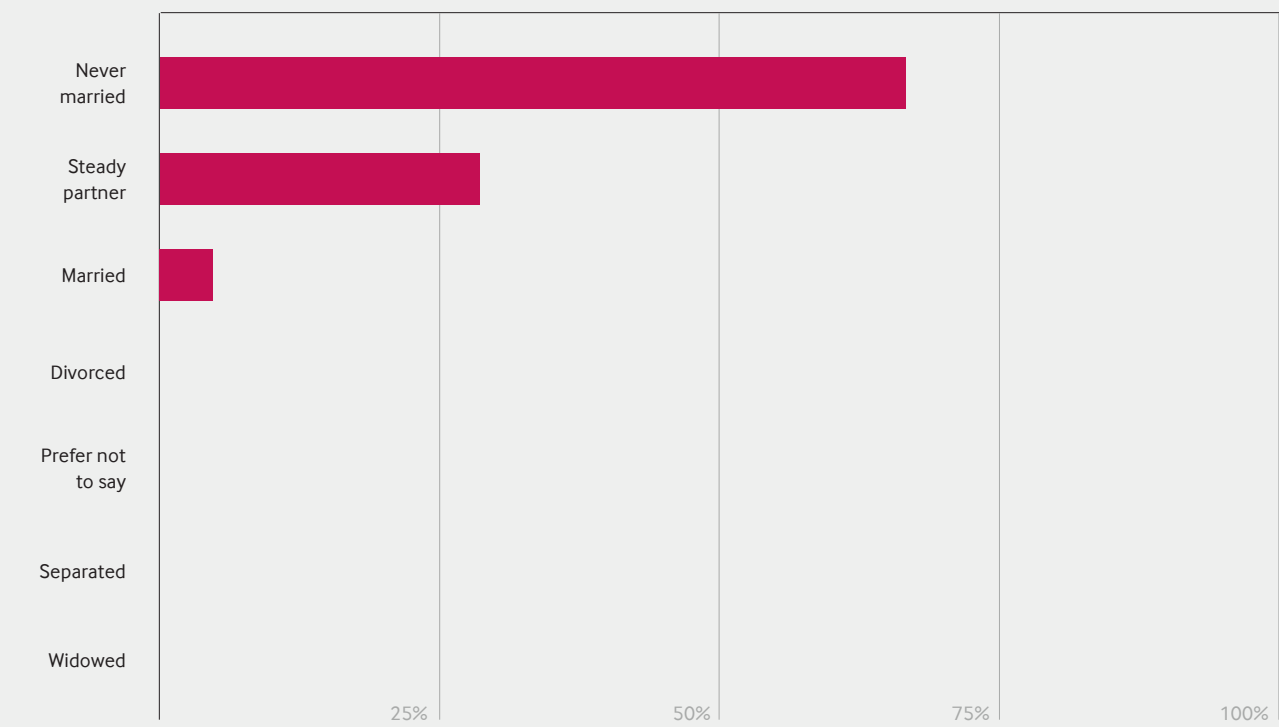


Highest level of education	Responses
Graduate or professional degree	61.90%
Bachelor's degree	23.81%
Some college, no degree	9.52%
PhD	4.76%
Associate's degree	0.00%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	0.00%
Less than high school	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0.00%

# Survey responses

## Marital status

Answered 21/21



Highest level of education	Responses
Never Married	66.67%
Steady Partner	28.57%
Married	4.76%
Divorced	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0.00%
Separated	0.00%
Widowed	0.00%



## What motivated you to get involved in activism initially? Has that motivation changed?

Answered 19/21

### Responses

Wanting to not just talk about the things that bothered me, but raise awareness for them and increase pressure on those who can actually make a difference. Sometimes ourselves, individually and collectively. Not really changed over the years, just I'm more selective of what campaign, ideas or projects I get involved in.

No

Social Justice

An interest in finding out the truth about immigration. In the build up to Brexit and in my home town, there was lots of talk about how immigration and its various connotations was at fault for many of the ills in our society. I felt that this wasn't the case, but living in a town that had experienced no migration, wanted to immerse myself in this area to find out for myself. Starting to work at a refugee centre in Coventry, this immediately added overwhelming evidence that my initial thoughts were correct. Since then, I've grown ever more passionate to challenge the poison echoed by some elements of the establishment towards people who have committed no crime, and whom are only seeking the most basic of human rights.

The rise of extremist groups and radical ideologies

Actually it was the people around me. I wanted to contribute to something good and make a change together with friends who believed in equality and peace.

The need for a change a situation. No!

Because of my parents, now it has changed into wanting more equality in society.

It was an urge to change things. To cry out on things that concerned me and my mates in the University. The motivation did not really change but rather kind of expanded over time. It got mature and I have been engaged in many more issues concerning humanity.

### Responses

Looking at the injustices around and personal experiences.

Curiosity into what activism was about. I was interested in how I would be able to influence the world.

My school had a course to get involved with community issues and community service. My friends joined, and I did because I wanted to do some good in my free time.

Social, economic and political inequality. Worldwide instances of fraud and corruption. Misleading communication in the form of framing, agenda setting and post-war era propaganda techniques. Fear- and warmongering as tools for gaining political office. Using technology as means for mass public surveillance. No.

Gaining new experiences and assisting the overall development of the society of which I am a part. That motivation has not changed.

The conditions in my home country Lithuania. Low wages, issues with xenophobia, corruption and homophobia. The refugee crisis in 2014. My education as a social worker. Motivation has not changed, but it has become more field-specific centered around empowering refugee communities in Berlin, Germany where I am taking my masters in intercultural studies.

I wanted to share my knowledge about video editing and basic storytelling/script structure. 4 years latter my motivation did not changed, but know I want to share more because in the last 4 years I have been learning how to use FB Campaign to create good campaign against hate speech.

The lack of knowledge about europe on the local level

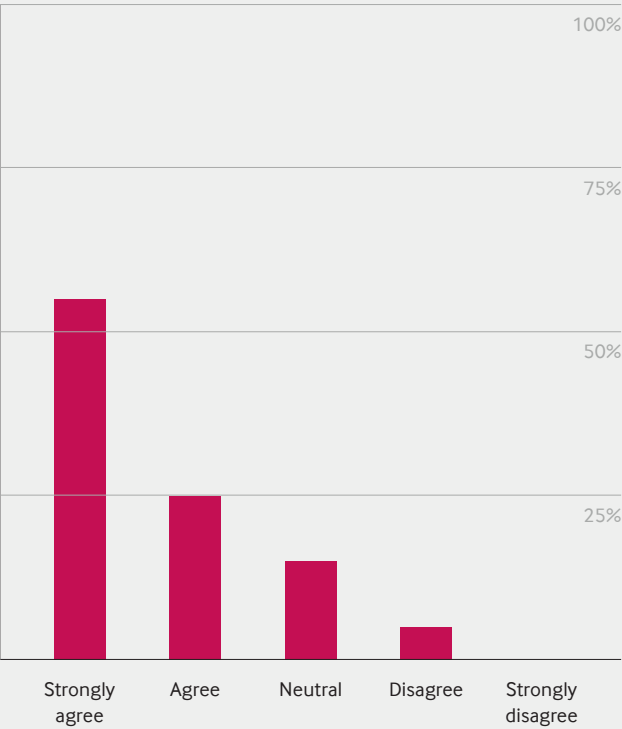
Grew up in political family with strong sense of social justice. I think I've become a little more policy oriented than activism oriented over time

Combating antisemitism as a student, now as a profession

# Survey responses

How much do you agree with this statement:  
“Since first getting involved in activism, I have  
been consistently engaged and active in  
addressing social issues year after year.”

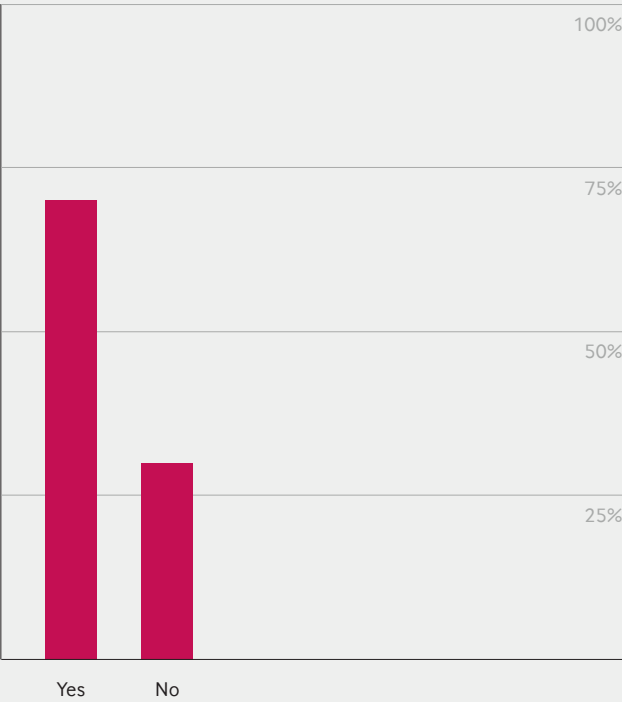
Answered 21/21



Age	Responses
Strongly agree	55.00%
Agree	25.00%
Neutral	15.00%
Disagree	5.00%
Strongly disagree	0.00%

Have you received training that has  
supported your activism? (Excluding the  
YouthCAN Innovation Labs)

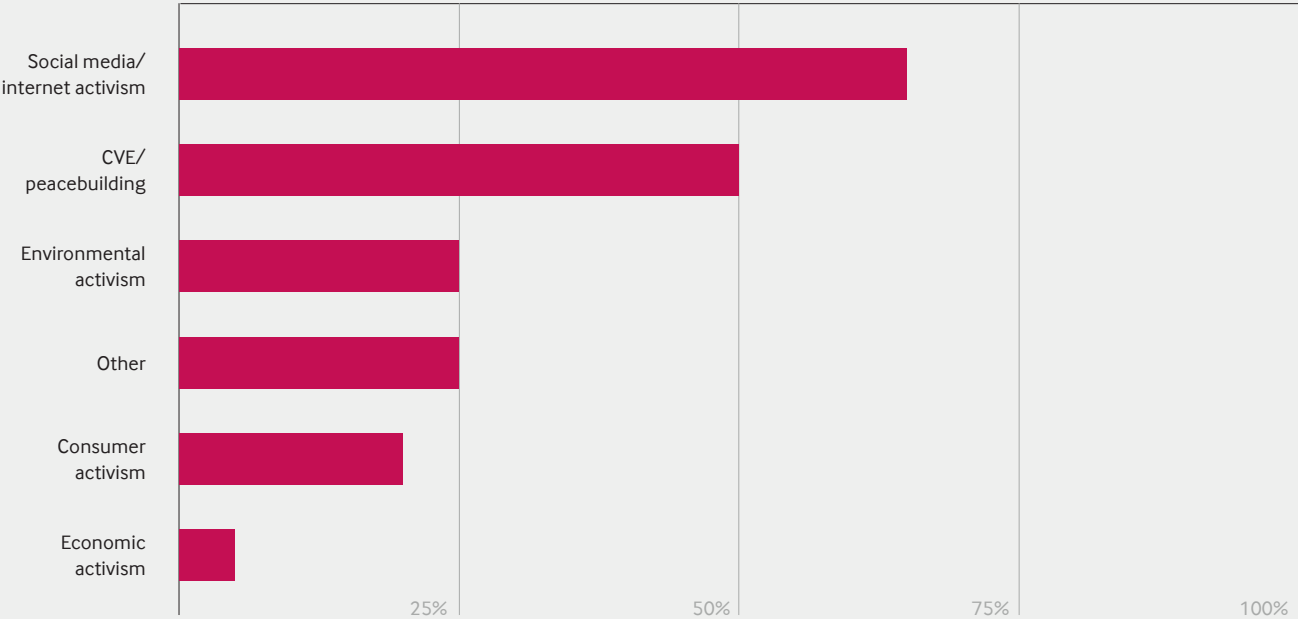
Answered 20/21



Age	Responses
Yes	70.00%
No	30.00%

What best describes the area in which you engage in activism?

Answered 20/21

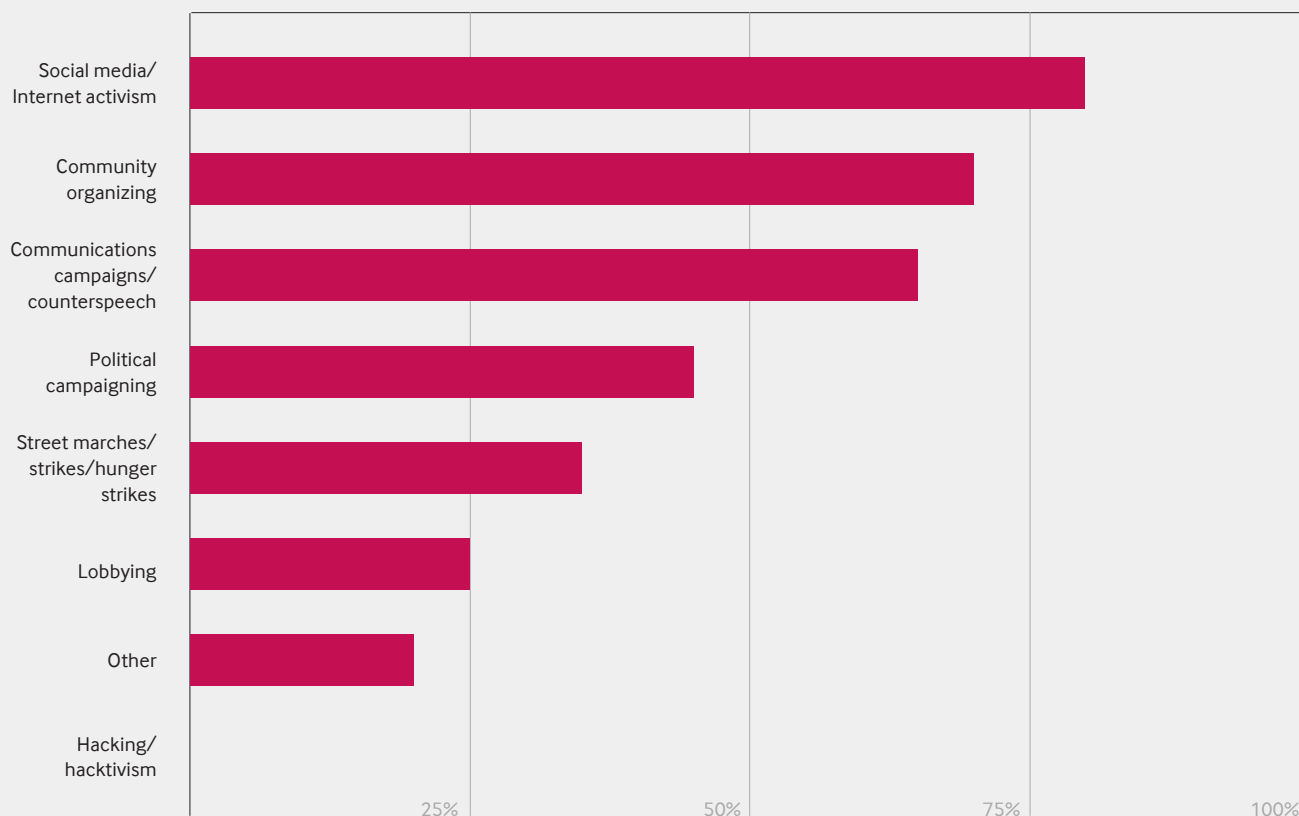


Religion	Responses
Social media/internet activism	65.00%
CVE/Peacebuilding	50.00%
Environmental activism	25.00%
Other	25.00%
Consumer activism (ethical shopping, simple living, etc)	20.00%
Economic activism (boycotts, etc)	5.00%

## Survey responses

**What types of activism have you been involved in? Select all that apply.**

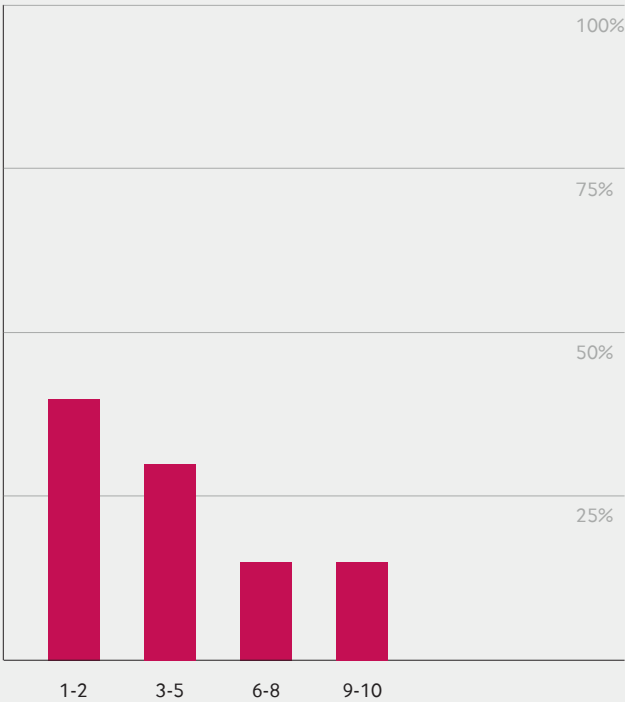
Answered 20/21



Activism type	Responses
Social media/internet activism	80.00%
Community organizing	70.00%
Communications campaigns/counterspeech	65.00%
Political campaigning	45.00%
Street marches/strikes/hunger strikes	35.00%
Lobbying	25.00%
Other	20.00%
Hacking/hacktivism	0.00%

Among your 10 close friends or family members, how many are also activists?

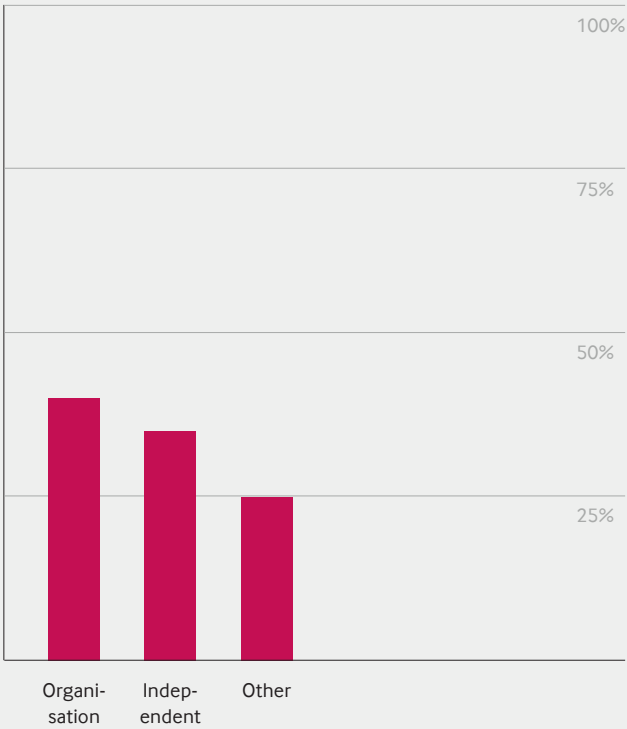
Answered 20/21



Friends	Responses
1-2	40.00%
3-5	30.00%
6-8	15.00%
9-10	15.00%

Are you an Independent activist or do you work for an activist organization?

Answered 20/21



Activist type	Responses
Organization	40.00%
Independent	35.00%
Other	25.00%



## Survey responses

### What motivates you to continue in your activism?

Answered 20/21

#### Responses

Small examples of successes and steps forward.

To minimise distrust and disrespect among people and communities  
desire for change

Because the battle isn't won and I doubt will be for a very long time, if ever. As a person with various privileges - white, male, born in the UK - it's the very least I can do.

The lack of real improvements

I feel that in the world things are going in wrong extremes. It's becoming more and more widely acceptable to attack people from other nations, race, religion, sexual orientation or based on their cultural or social background. It's really worrying me what will happen to our world in a few more years.

Again the need to cause change in a situation

Seeing results and having a great team.

The desire to continuously create change. To influence the things that affect me and the society.

The will to help others & the amount of work which is still out there to be done.

I genuinely like helping people. At the end of the day we are all in this together

I want to contribute as much as I currently can, in order for the world or my environment to become a peaceful, equal and enjoyable space. It makes me feel good to do good and I think that even the smallest step in the right direction is important.

/

The fact that - still - not enough progress has been made in various areas.

Other activists I meet, news articles, social media activism led by various organizations.

Ideas, I can't sleep at night because of them..

The rise of Euroscepticisms

We live in a world that needs it!

New skills, the problems I am active on have not been dealt with

Anger against mainstream media

### Why do you think some of your less active friends don't get more involved in activism?

Answered 20/21

#### Responses

Small examples of successes and steps forward.

There's no financial rewards, usually. It's hard to guarantee stability and fit into busy schedules. Fear of risk.

Lack of awareness and will

the framing of the word "activist" and fear of being judged negatively

Because they either have no knowledge of such injustices, and if they do feel they can either do nothing about it or just simple don't want to. They're ok and are too busy looking about number 1.

It's easy to ignore problems

Because they are not active enough in any other area of their life in the first place. So why would they bother here.

Fear of being laughed at

They are apathetic towards politics and they don't know exactly how to get involved.

They just don't care or can't appreciate the magnitude of their voices

They don't think anything will change.

I don't think that it's on the top list of the people around me. But I could be wrong

No time or interest to get deeper involved with subjects or no understanding of the relevance.

Because they are still coping in their daily lives.

General apathy and feeling of helplessness.

Other fields of interest, lack of time and economy.

They think all of it is way to far from their problems

Fear of becoming to politicized or fear to get affiliated with a political colour

Fear of professional implications and apathy

Don't care, don't see the problem, don't see how it effects them, belief that it someone else will deal with it, belief that their voice won't make a difference

Busy posting selfies and I am not kidding about it.

## What are some of your suggestions for how we can get more people, like your inactive friends, more involved?

Answered 19/21

### Responses

Ensure all campaigns have a hardcore activist avenue and a soft activism avenue.

By showing them what the lack of activism nowadays is leading to.

different framing of "activism"

That's difficult. Highlighting to a wider audience how one person, small group or community can have a real and tangible impact, could be a way to inspire people. Also highlighting that the individuals responsible for this, come from a similar background or experiences to them.

Free workshops, public outreach, free activities

You are who you hang out with. So when they start seeing enough positive examples in their community, among their friends, they will become more active. They have to see positive examples and start to wish to become a part of positive community where they can also meet more friends who think alike.

Show them that their little action matters

Campaign online and have innovative in person events

Maybe organising much more simple and targeted outreaches.

Show that each person's actions matter and connect it to them bigger cause.

The barrier to entry is quite low so maybe focus on making that clear for people who are hesitant. I think most people wouldn't know how to start

Clear and easy information about a certain problem and what you can do against it. It must be in your face, relatable and easy to understand so no one can scroll past or ignore it.

### Responses

Having the courage to publish truth even if it wakes the financial and political giants that try with all their might to suppress it. Because courage is what activism is all about.

Explain to them clearly how exactly can their activism be noticed and valued by others.

I think a lot of it has to do with ones' own motivation and finding a meaningful path doing own research. There is a lot of material out there for anyone interested. In some cases organizations should be promoting their work more.

I do not have the answer to that question. I am 20 years old, so it's need to be focus on what people like with 20 years old (or less).. For me the answer is storytelling. Storytelling is a powerful weapon. To do so, I will (probably) create a Messenger Chatbot that gives you a interactive story (only with dialogs).. The youngest want to take part of the adventure, and by giving them the opportunity to create their one story in the facebook messenger app they are in total control of the story, and by the way them self. They are building their own story. Well, maybe a great idea right here ? If I can give you more information, please send me a email

Spreading more tailor made info, starting with neutral stuff like the Erasmus+ program. That's the first step to make youngsters active

Show varied nature of activism - which means people can find style that works for them

Show everyone can take part, explain why the issues matter to wider society and them personally



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