



# Youth Participation in Democratic Processes and their Involvement in Open Government Partnership Platform

## Research Report

2020

The Research report was developed within the framework of the “Knowledge Transfer for Enhanced Government’s Accountability and Citizens Participation in Armenia” Project by Project partner-ProMedia-Gender NGO. The Project is implemented by OxYGen Foundation with the financial support of the Visegrad Fund.

The aim of the project is to promote the participation of citizens in the democratic system, increase awareness of transparency and involvement in policy-making processes with emphasis on youth and women as a norm in society and formalize these efforts in the new Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plan 2021-2023 of Armenia.

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## Abbreviation List

OGP	Open Government Partnership
NAP	National Action Plan
WG	Working Group
IRM	Independent Reporting Mechanism
NGO	Non-governmental organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
RA	Republic of Armenia
MM	Mass Media

## Methodology

The research has been conducted in combination with document analysis, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussion methods.

Qualitative document analysis has been implemented in order to study several researches concerning political participation of youth, studies about youth participation in different countries in the framework of Open Government Partnership (OGP), the Fourth OGP National Action Plan (NAP) and Armenia's 2018-2020 report on the Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) programme planning.

The perceptions of youth participation and political activity, and the importance attached to it, time dynamics, and changes both in local (Armenian) and international contexts have been observed in the documents.

The in-depth interviews were conducted in cooperation with OGP Secretary/ contact person for Armenia from RA Government, the representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in the OGP Working Group (WG), the representative of the company responsible for IT solutions of OGP Fourth NAP.

The purpose of the in-depth interviews is to discover how the interviewees evaluate the political activity and participation of youth in our country, how that activity is manifested (online, offline), and afterwards to discuss the role played by the youth, as well as the expectations in the framework of OGP platform and how the communication with young people is implemented for this objective.

The focus-group discussion was implemented among youth, part of which are young people that have to suggest commitment in the framework of OGP, and the other part is representatives of youth NGOs and just active young people. The purpose of the focus group discussion is to find out the preferred means of political activity among young people, and afterwards to understand how they evaluate the OGP platform as a participation tool, and how well they are familiar with the platform and the participation procedures.

The collected information was analysed around several key issues, such as the political activity of youth and its manifestation in the Armenian context, their role, and participation in the framework of OGP and NAP, while introducing corresponding solutions to those issues.

## Introduction

There are 1.8 billion young people in the world, and this is the fastest-growing age group. Despite this fact and the activeness of young people, quite often the decision-makers are not available for them, particularly in developing countries.

Young activists are trying to find solutions to issues and inequalities in both global and local nature in their communities, not only focusing on the solutions but also promoting changes out of the local context. The implemented procedures and tools promote the development of social and political skills of young people in order to contribute to the formation of an open, diverse, intercultural, and tolerant society.

As it comes to young people, participation intends involvement in political processes and decision-making procedures. It includes activism around a certain issue to the engagement in youth wings of political parties, or membership in international student unions, etc.

Nevertheless, youth participation is quite often represented as equivalent to the involvement in governmental organizations, public services, and governmental multilevel institutions both globally and locally. However, the supporting demands of the real participation are legal circles, providing information, change in work ethics and attitude among adults and decision-makers, mechanisms of involving young people in political, service, and organizational processes, as well as the opportunity to express complaints.

If we observe superficially, it may seem that young people are less politically engaged compared to the older generations. This has to do with the fact that the number of young people participating in elections or joining political parties has decreased, however, the research shows that the younger generation often prefers new ways and methods to be politically engaged.

## Key Findings and Suggestions

### I. Political participation of Youth and its manifestation in the Armenian context

There are 802535 young people in the Republic of Armenia (RA), which comprises 26.6%<sup>1</sup> of the population (Census 2011). However, the evaluations on whether young people are less politically active now are not definite. According to the representatives of governmental institutions and the young people themselves, during the post-revolution period (starting from 2018) young people have become more politically active, as they are more confident in their power and impact.

Most probably, it has to with their impact played during the “Velvet Revolution” in Armenia. However, there is an exception regarding how we understand the concept of participation. “For instance, they are more active in terms of participation in different actions and events, rather than expressing their opinion and standpoint, or formulate requirements, as the capabilities are low. Therefore, it’s more accurate to say that the youth is supportive of the current political activities”; as the Government representative believes.

According to young people, when it comes to participation it is mostly higher on the local level, as well as more effective. Local governments, various political powers want young people to be involved in their activities, however, do not fully understand the real goal and format of youth participation, as there is a lack of platforms for local participation. As for participation on regional and national levels, the existing platforms are higher in number (public councils under Ministries, State Youth Policy Strategy Working Group, youth councils under Marzpetarans (local self-government), which, however, have a low level of efficiency, according to young people, moreover, are not simple in terms of participation, and quite often young people do not have enough opportunities and skills to be involved in those procedures.

Nowadays young people appreciate the transition of their role from fictitious, as to how it was before the revolution, to real activities. However, even in the post-revolutionary activism, it is obvious that the realization of the public good is not quite vivid among youth, but rather with this participation personal benefits are pursued. “Everyone among us thinks only of his benefits, fully ignoring the factor of the common good. If we could equip a number of businessmen with the necessary knowledge, who could bring along the realization of the advantages of collective benefit, who would have an actual business thinking, as it is the case with Henry Ford, who established a charity model for communities through education, the culture of collective thinking would be created. Everyone would do their job realizing that it is a part of something big, which is beneficial for the common. And if the business is stable, it can lead the political sphere in a good way”.

According to the representatives of the civil society organizations (CSOs), however, the political activity of the youth is situational, responsive to the context, which suggests that this

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.arlis.am/DocumentView.aspx?DocID=96116>

participation lacks purpose, awareness, ideological basis, and structure. This idea is supported by the representative of the government, considering that although they have become more active, there is a lack of guidance, for which more youth-oriented programs and events are needed, not fragmented, but long-lasting and motivating. As a result of these programs, they will be educated and their participation will be more meaningful, especially in the listed initiatives if young people are involved in the stages of the development and implementation of these programs and events, and not only be its beneficiaries.

The fact that the young people are interested and can really have the governance of the country and the issues related to it, to have effective institutions, is illustrated in the picture below. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important, they rated the mentioned topics/issues.

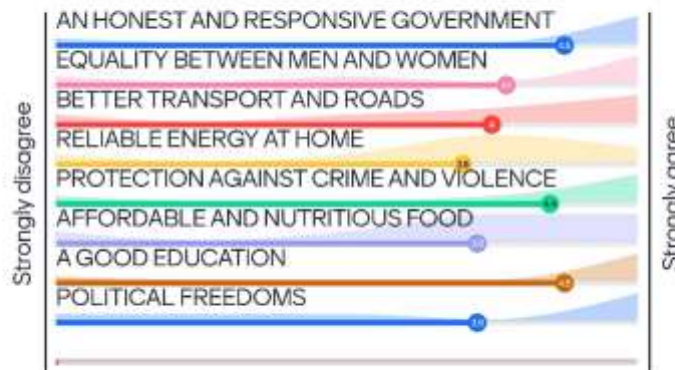
**2. Assess the enumerated topics/issues on a 1-5 scale according to their priority.**

Mentimeter



**2. 2. Assess the enumerated topics/issues on a 1-5 scale according to their priority.**

Mentimeter





As we can see, for the young people involved in the focus group, the 2 most important topics/issues that scored the maximum points (4,5) are "Good governance and effective institutions" and "Good education" categories. And if good governance is so important for a young person, then he/she will be motivated to have his role and participation in it. "One of the indicators of this is a large number of young officials in the public administration system, in the National Assembly, in the local self-government after the revolution," the focus group participants mentioned.

Both in the first graph and the focus group discussion, the issue of having better job opportunities was especially emphasized by young people. They prioritized not only the recognition of unemployment as an important issue among the youth, raising awareness about it and adopting a practical approach to it, as well as ensuring the participation of the youth in the process of developing policies on youth employment opportunities.

Nowadays, political activity, especially during the pandemic, has mostly moved to the online platform. The manifestations of online activity are predominantly common among the youth, because it is more convenient and accessible in terms of space, as it is easier not to take responsibility for one's actions on online platforms, not to refrain from self-expression without thinking about consequences, etc. However, along with the accessibility, there is a lack of "quality" activity in the online space, as there is a large flow of "fake news" distributed among young people, young people who need media literacy in the first place.

Offline activity intends greater preparedness, it must be thoroughly measured, structured. As a result, offline political activity in our country receives more serious attention in terms of the consequence and the result, according to the government and CSO representatives. And the synthesis of these 2 tools is considered to be the most efficient . Online activity as a way to distribute ideas, increase the audience, ensure continuity, and offline activity as a way to make those processes more serious, ideological, and continuous.

The lack of offline participation compared to the online one, is due to the lack of experience of young people in face-to-face meetings and discussions, lack of relevant knowledge and information, while in the case of online space it is much easier. "Lack of knowledge, awareness, and skills, gaps in media literacy are also manifested in the quality of online participation, otherwise it would be more objective than abstract, as I see much more often now," says the OGP Armenian contact person. However, if offline political participation is initiated, it is again by young people", the respondents agree.

We have some tools for online political activism, such as e-request and e-draft, the former growing in popularity, although there are still journalists who are unaware of this tool, the usefulness of which increased during the pandemic. There is little communication about the significance and use of such platforms. Of course, if we look back, there is a dynamic growth: both platforms and the awareness about those platforms are increasing, but which is not enough yet, while there is always a greater need.

The main factors hindering the political activity and participation of young people are cultural: value-based, ideological, and political. "What do they want? Is there a formal demand for positive change? Is there a vision for the development of the country?" The answers to these questions are that they do not have a good grasp and perception. " According to the CSO representative, the reason is the general political spectrum of our country, which makes the young person indifferent, because the expectations are not met, there is no quick response and, after all, the existing educational system is part of the problem. "If the education system does not root, strengthen the perception that they can do something in their country, change something among young people, they become indifferent, some look for educational programs and go to other countries for better living conditions.". The state should have a will to change the education system in such a way, so that it has an active, participating youth, ready to improve the country's situation, which, unfortunately, I do not see, On the contrary, it is getting worse".

The obstacles are also psychological. Young people have an issue with feeling equal to all other age groups, and lack self-confidence, considering the fact that they have to gain experience in order to express an opinion.

While according to young people themselves, the obstacles are more linked to the political environment we have and the quality of the playing political figures, as well as a great deal of "filthy" stereotypes that exist about politics and political activity in our country. This especially affects the desire to join a certain political force, with which they will be identified in the future. Political activism is more difficult for women today . Recalling the recent events, they note, that it causes more difficulties especially for women politicians, up to serious health problems.

## II. The Role and Participation of Youth in Open Government Partnership (OGP)

OGP is an international initiative where government reform officials and civil society leaders working together to make governance more participatory, liable, and accountable. Armenia joined the OGP in 2011. Since then, three action plans have been implemented<sup>2</sup>. The fourth action plan is currently underway.

Armenia has experienced significant political changes in 2018, as a result of which the new government has expressed greater willingness to improve transparency and undertake reforms to combat corruption. Armenia's fourth action plan reflects the new government's commitment to reform and improves transparency.

According to the IMA report<sup>3</sup> (studies all action plans to ensure that governments follow through on their commitments), the development of Armenia's fourth action plan was

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Armenia\\_Design-Report\\_2018-2020\\_ARM.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Armenia_Design-Report_2018-2020_ARM.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Armenia\\_Design-Report\\_2018-2020\\_ARM.pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Armenia_Design-Report_2018-2020_ARM.pdf)

carried out with a higher level of public awareness and civil society involvement than the previous action plan. For the first time, public consultations were held in all 10 regions of the country, targeting both civil servants and young people. In general, consultations across the country led to a more collaborative program development process, and the willingness to make legislative changes helped to create a more ambitious program than the previous phase. The fourth action plan of Armenia is aimed at increasing the accessibility of information available to the Government and promoting public participation.

The goal of open governance strategies and initiatives is to promote democracy and inclusion. Therefore, open governance participatory initiatives of the beneficiaries should include special efforts to reach the most crucial, vulnerable, marginalized groups in society. Although young people are quite a heterogeneous group with their skills and abilities, they are often considered a more difficult group in terms of making their voices heard in society. In this respect, young people can be considered one of the groups that require special efforts for communication.

There is a big gap in the awareness of the Open Government Partnership, its initiatives, strategies, values, and, in general, culture among the Armenian society, including the youth. Young people, as a separate group, are not targeted in the principles of OGP communication principles, like all other groups in society. The only communication attempt aimed at the youth that can be highlighted were a few meetings in 2018 with the students of YSU Faculty of Journalism, which, however, did not provide considerable results in terms of participation, as the dialogue initiated by the state should be not only in the program development stage, but constantly, during "implementation", "summary", otherwise it is inefficient. "We have had some regional visits, but it is still not enough, and it would be good to develop virtual platforms and keep in touch with them more frequently. For example, through Zoom application, to motivate them to feel the impact of their potential in this process," said the OGP Armenia Contact Representative.

Everyone from the government representative to CSO representatives and young people agreed on the lack of communication, existing gaps, and problems. The representative of the government, as one of the responsible persons of the OGP program, considers the reason for this the lack of resources. "The OGP provides resources for communication, but we must also support of CSO partners to include that component of the dialogue in their programs."

Some of the young people participating in the focus group were aware of the OGP. Those who work in the government or in NGOs. Apart from the workplace, some of them found out about OGP through Facebook but did not know much about the platform, because both the website and Facebook page content are not adapted for young people, neither approachable nor attractive. "One should be much more active working on the Facebook page and follow the rules of SMM, the impression is that situational, accidental, unplanned posts and publications are made. Hackathon, the Innovative Ideas & Programming Competition, organized on April 13, 2019, aimed at developing innovative solutions for governance transparency and accountability to reduce corruption risks, was a very good initiative and well

organized. Such events are very informative and should be more frequent. As for the website, it feels as if you enter a website of a state body and do not understand, you do not even want to consider the information available there . Maybe more information should be provided through pictures and videos. 80% of young people watch pictures and videos, rather than read text . You also need to speak the language of youth".

Young people continue to follow the OGP again on Facebook, however, they suggest to be subscribed to the website using a content filtering tool that will filter the interests and they will be regularly informed about the commitments and results of that field. The other suggestion, which also concerns the existing communication gap, is the absence of contact with OGP. "I applied an offer concerning commitments, but I did not receive any rejection response to my offer. I later found the list of approved commitments to see if my offer was considered or not. This is very important for follow-up communication and motivating young people".

For the young people who are familiar and aware of the OGP, it is the idea of having people with an innovative mindset that is crucial, in order for the system to be more flexible. However, they also highlight, that maybe an inexperienced person would not even have a grasp of what this is all about. "The most optimal alternative for me is to bring along new people to the team who will think out of the box and make working proposals, however alongside with whom should be experts of their field, for the new ideas correspond to the OGP framework. Hackathon and Pechakucha formats were probably designed for young people".

Young people also offer the involvement of volunteers and interns in the OGP procedures, who will later gain experience and become fully operating participants in the platform. This will enable more in-house work, thus compensating for the staffing gap that is mentioned by OGP representatives. They also find the organization of youth events very crucial, especially out of Yerevan, around regional NGOs, such as the Armavir Development Center NGO, which coordinates the 4th NAP. This will give an opportunity to the local people in the regions, especially the youth, to grow and better understand and express their own needs.

The CSO representative suggests that the OGP Working Group (WG) has a communication strategy in order to inform the public about the platform itself and its procedures for participation, particularly targeting specific groups of the public. The WG also advised that press departments of any Ministry that has a commitment in NAP cooperate with the mass media by informing about the work conducted in the particular commitment framework, providing materials, organizing discussions, and holding unprecedented press conferences.

There is a belief that if the process is properly publicized and large communities are informed, young people anyway will be the most active in participation processes. "I remember that young people again were more active in the regional meetings," says the representative of civil society.

Here, great attention should also be paid to the journalists, so that they, in their turn, publicize the information. "This is a platform where the CSO the state in cooperation and participation, work and carry out those reforms, as a result improving some aspects. But this is a very small group, and I have always expressed a concern that there is a lack of communication both in terms of participation and coverage of the results".

The gap in communication and public awareness was also evident during the collection of proposals with Google's online survey tool, which was implemented by the Armavir Development Center NGO in 2019 during the development of the 4th OGP Armenia National Action Plan. The main purpose of the Google survey was to make young people's voices heard, as it provided an opportunity for everyone who was interested in presenting their ideas. And the use of online tools is mainly spread among young people. As a result, however, only 47 ideas were received (70% from young people), most of which generally did not correspond to the OGP philosophy.

In the process of OGP communication, the NGOs of the Working Groups and their networks were used by the government, and as for the tools, the websites of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, the OGP, and their Facebook pages were implemented. "It is desirable to have youth communities, especially an IT community, in the case of OGP, where one channel of communication of OGP can be planned. For now, for instance, the activity of the Minister of High-Tech Industry is close to this, and we as representatives of the IT sector, know that we can find any news on his page".

According to a CSO representative, the communication gap is due to the lack of will of all OGP coordinators. He is convinced that even in case of limited resources, the communication can be carried out through the press service of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, as the OGP is one of the programs of the government. "The press service of the government must constantly prepare and distribute materials on the results of the commitments through the website, the mass media, but on the constant basis so that it is remembered and recognized. They say it is a matter of resources, we have no employees, no staff. However, after all, this is a Government initiative, and if it were crucial, it would have been helpful to have one employee responsible for public relations in the framework of OGP. The situation with the Working Group meetings is not very satisfactory either during the last 2 years. The Government does not provide enough time, while we agreed to meet every 3 months".

At the moment, there is no formed Working Group. The representative of the government mentioned that before forming a Working Group, a working procedure should be formulated to understand how to invite new beneficiary parties for each program, because "the same partners have been in the working group for years." "But when you look at the commitments, you understand that those partners do not have a particularly tangible contribution. We plan to engage partners based on need. The group will be formed next year, it is not a priority yet. " As for whether it is possible to intend quotas for the involvement of young people or youth NGOs in the Working Group, one option is to have a commitment, which will include young

people . "If young people are active and present commitments, it is more likely that they will be engaged on the Working Group".

In terms of communication, a lot of work is done by CSOs - TV programs, information leaflets, which, however, is not enough, as NGOs are able to do all this if they have such points provided by a grant. "Quite often, in order to involve the members of the Government in these initiatives, we asked or referred to a certain higher ranking official, in order to influence them with official levers to cooperate, while it should have been the opposite".

It is crucial for the government to engage youth as a beneficiary party at the core of the OGP strategy and initiatives, as young people are the next generation, the initiators of state Government processes, its promoters and owners, so their participation and potential development are very important. " It is necessary to strengthen the capacities of young people as citizens to carry out any reforms with the participation of today's youth, for the youth, because he is the owner of that reform. This should be the foundation and the concernment".

The perception about the OGP platform, its functions, and the involvement in its frameworks, however, is very vague among young people. Thus, without enough information, fully grasp, belief, and awareness of what role they can have in the political decision-making processes, it is unlikely that young people get involved in activism and engage in the OGP as a participatory tool. In case of the availability of this information and qualities, they will navigate themselves quite easily in the platform, otherwise, their accidental participation will not have a continuous nature. The Government must continuously work towards this, keep as well as keep contact with them. "Understanding why we need open governance, collective, public interest, which model of government system we prefer is crucial, otherwise if we artificially invite young people, and force their participation that will not be effective, so I have to refer to the education system again".

The current low participation of young people in the OGP platform, in the scope of the proposal of commitments, was mainly aimed at the solution of educational, and to some extent, social problems and reform implementation.

Young people support the idea that they should be involved and considered as partners in the OGP platform. Young people have big potential, and their involvement should not be confined only to idea generation, but also to the stage of the implementation of those ideas. "Youth is more than twenty percent of the population, and if they are not included, it means they are not heard."

The awareness about the commitments included in the OGP NAP, its short-term and long-term results, was previously provided through mid-term self-assessment reports, which are not currently being implemented. The Government has now announced a tender for a new OGP website concerning this and communication in general. It is planned that the ministries that have commitments in the OGP platform framework will lead an interactive dashboard on the website, where the information on the carried out work on the commitment and their

results will be constantly updated. Beneficiary groups, including young people, can thus be informed of the progress of the commitments, ask questions about them, make observations.

Other awareness tools are the final self-assessment report, the independent reporting mechanism-report, and sometimes NGOs carry out assessments-monitoring themselves either.

### III. The Role of Youth in National Action Plan Framework

OGP Fourth NAP commitments include key topics such as asset declaration of the government officials, transparency of the real owners, budget transparency, natural resources, health, and education. A number of commitments include public feedback mechanisms. For the first time, the Fourth Plan of Action included commitments calling for legislative changes.

There are no youth-targeted or youth-oriented commitments in this action plan either. In some of the commitments, one can find certain components that are relevant to young people, but only as much as to other groups in society.

However, the NAP is considered the important mechanism of the OGP platform where youth participation is particularly crucial and it is considered one of the possible mechanisms to ensure youth participation in the OGP platform. In particular, if youth-related commitments are included in the NAP, which should be presented by the youth themselves, then according to the Government representative, the youth may take up the supervision of the Government during the implementation of those commitments.

Another important stage of youth involvement in the development of IT solutions to the commitments included in the NAP, as the specialists in IT companies are mostly young people. "I suggest that from an early stage the ideas be discussed in cooperation with IT specialists, because the solutions that can be offered by IT sector may provide with higher quality and greater efficiency for the idea. There is an issue of clearly understanding the problem while avoiding abstract thinking. The idea should be clear, have a thorough description so that the reader clearly understands the task. We dealt with that problem when we had to provide IT solutions to the healthcare queuing system. We planned and implemented something bigger than was needed. We did the work without realizing that there were already tools we could not bypass. And we had these problems and gaps even after 2 meetings with the authors of the commitment and other OGP partners, we asked a number of questions, discussed them, however, the gaps remained".

Here is again the problem is the gap of communication and the lack of information as a consequence. Therefore, the involvement of IT partners at an earlier stage will make the process easier and clearer, and at the same time more attractive for young people . "If for me as a representative of the platform there are remaining gaps, then I can imagine the vagueness that it causes for other young people. There is a need for a wider and more massively available communication".

## Conclusion

In order to improve the issue of youth involvement and participation in the OGP platform, let us summarize the results of the research conducted in the form of suggestions in terms of youth inclusion, government accountability, and the sustainability of that cooperation.

### Inclusivity

- The necessity of formation, development of youth participation mechanisms and platforms at the local level, (including virtual ones) (according to the research, youth participation and activity are higher at the local level in terms of goal-reaching).
- Implementation of ongoing youth-oriented programs and events that promote participation, as well as educate young people by making their activism more self-aware, ideological, and organized.
- Ensuring the involvement of young people in youth programs and events from the development stage. In the implementation stages, these young people should be active actors, not just beneficiaries.
- Prioritizing and creating opportunities for new people to be regularly included in the circles of OGP's WG and beneficiary parties in order to avoid the platform remaining inflexible. At the same time, the inclusion of new employees in teams where there are already experienced experts, taking into account the size and complexity of the OGP platform.
- Involvement of volunteers and interns in OGP procedures, who will both develop and become full participants of the platform, and will fill the human resources gap in the OGP platform.

### Accountability

- Proper implementation of communication on the significance and use of platforms ensuring youth participation in democratic processes.
- Effective management of the Facebook page, by increasing the page activity, following SMM rules.
- Upgrading the OGP website, increasing interactivity.
- Reconsideration of the format of the content distributed on the website and the social media: provision of photo and video materials, taking into account the tendencies and the "language" of the youth.
- Prioritization of cooperation with each Ministry media department under OGP NAP commitment in order to regularly inform about the work carried out within the framework of this commitment.
- Implementation of communication about OGP also through the press department of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, as OGP is one of the Governmental programs.

### Stability of Cooperation, Feedback



- Opportunity to subscribe to the website as an information mechanism about the news. Provision of a filtering tool in the subscription mechanism, through which young people will be able to subscribe to the website in order to be informed about specific commitments and their progress.
- Organizing youth events and OGP events in the regions in cooperation with regional NGOs, as a result making it possible to develop the local population in the regions, especially the youth, and better understand their problems, and then raise awareness of them.
- Provide quotas for the inclusion of young people or youth NGOs in the WG (in case of there such a commitment that deals with youth issues in the NAP), and delegate them the role of the supervision of the government during the implementation phase of the commitments.
- Develop a communication strategy for the OGP WG in order to inform the public, its groups, and journalists about the platform and participation procedures (so that they, in their turn, can publicize the information)
- Providing feedback to those who have submitted commitments, creation of the basis for commitment confirmation or rejection.

## Appendix 1

### **Focus group discussion questionnaire**

Dear respondent, the current research is carried out within the framework of Oxygen "Knowledge Transfer for Enhanced Government's Accountability and Citizens Participation in Armenia" project, which aims to promote citizen participation in democratic processes by increasing governance transparency, policy-making, particularly for women's and youth involvement, and to formalize those efforts in Open Government Partnership (OGP) Armenia 2021-2023 new action plan. Your participation is crucial for achieving the research goals.

### **Political activity of Youth, Youth participation**

1. In your opinion, are young people more or less politically active now (in elections, rallies, demonstrations, involvement in parties, etc.), compared it with some point previously of your choice and knowledge?
2. Which forms of political activity (offline: campaigns on a specific issue, calls for action, protests, involvement in youth groups, council membership, and online - dissemination of views, information, discussions, etc.) are the most common among young people, what is the reason for that? (Faith in the final outcome, efficiency, ease of participation,

- etc.). What are the advantages and disadvantages of this manifestation / manifestations of political activity?
3. In your opinion, to what extent do young people communicate with government agencies through emails or discussions online? How do you assess this practice in our country, what are the dynamics, what is your opinion about the outcomes? Is there a need and potential to expand the practice of online discussions to engage and communicate with young people more intensively and effectively?
  4. Are there any factors hindering the political participation of young people in our country? If so, what are they?
    - ✓ cultural (negative stereotypes, lack of mechanisms and institutions that would make the voice of young people heard, existing regional traditions concerning national or political behaviour, structures such as centralization, etc.);
    - ✓ social (family, education, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic affiliation, membership in youth movements);
    - ✓ psychological (personal motivation, beliefs), etc.

### **Youth in Open Government Partnership (OGP) platform**

5. How is the awareness of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) platform, its initiatives, strategies, values and culture in general raised among the public, particularly among the youth?
6. Are public information and communication efforts adapted to the media habits of young people (have studies been conducted or have data from such studies been used)? If so, how?
7. How can the government communicate effectively with young people by combining traditional and new ways of communication? What are the advantages of face-to-face and online ways of communication (online: access to a large audience) and disadvantages (does not build long-term relationships and collaboration)?
8. What are the gaps, after all, in the efforts to involve young people in the OGP platform: regional, age, gender, socio-economic, etc.?
9. How do the OGP platform and the government perceive youth participation in the OGP platform (as an audience, who just needs to be informed, as a target, whose commitments are needed in the NAP, as a beneficiary party, whose participation is crucial at different levels of commitment and decision-making)?
10. Why is it important for the government to perceive youth as a beneficiary at the centre of the OGP strategy and initiatives? What are those benefits?
11. In your opinion, what do young people expect from the OGP platform? What is their motivation and interest in participating? How is this reflected in the communication

with young people (communication style, influencers, opinion leaders), how is it communicated as an outcome?

12. What are the topics / issues that are of particular interest and relation to young people (education, social inclusion, diversity, housing opportunities, healthcare, mobility, etc.)? Around which topics of commitments and suggestions are they particularly active?
13. What formal/informal structures are used in the OGP communication process (NGOs, schools, youth councils - local, national, international, etc.)?
14. Has the OGP Working Group been formed, if so, by what mechanism? Is there a special quota system for involving young people or youth NGOs in the Working Group?

### **The Role of Youth in the National Action Plan (NAP)**

15. How is the awareness of the commitments included in the OGP National Action Plan (OGP), the procedures for participating in those processes, the courses of the commitment's implementation, their short-term and long-term outcomes, especially among young people raised?
16. How is youth mobilization carried out for NAP commitments recruitment?
17. Are young people involved in OGP multi-beneficiary forum and in the NAP consulting processes?
18. Are monitoring and evaluation carried out to find out the impact of the NAP on young people?
19. Does the last 4th NAP include any commitment (s) that target young people?
20. Are resources, funds and capacities allocated to support the involvement of young people in the OGP and NAP development u implementation processes?
21. What suggestions do you have for increasing the participation and motivation of young people in the OGP platform?

## **Appendix 2**

### **Focus group discussion questionnaire**

Dear respondent, the current research is carried out within the framework of Oxygen "Knowledge Transfer for Enhanced Government's Accountability and Citizens Participation in Armenia" project, which aims to promote citizen participation in democratic processes by increasing governance transparency, policy-making, particularly for women's and youth involvement, and to formalize those efforts in Open Government Partnership (OGP) Armenia 2021-2023 new action plan. Your participation is crucial for achieving the research goals.

1. In your opinion, are young people more or less politically active now (in elections, rallies, demonstrations, involvement in parties, etc.), compared it with some point previously of your choice and knowledge?
2. Evaluate the listed topics / issues on the scale of 1-5 according to your priority.
  - Acting on climate change
  - Being free from discrimination and persecution
  - Access to mobile and internet
  - Good job opportunities
  - Better healthcare system
  - Support for people unable to work
  - Forest, river and ocean protection
  - Access to water and sanitary conditions
  - Good governance and efficient institutions
  - Equality between men and women
  - Better transportation and infrastructure
  - Reliable sources of energy at home
  - Protection from crime and violence
  - Quality education
  - Political freedom
3. Which forms of political activity (offline: campaigns on a specific issue, calls for action, protests, involvement in youth groups, council membership, and online - dissemination of views, information, discussions, etc.) are the most common among young people, what is the reason for that? (Faith in the final outcome, efficiency, ease of participation, etc.). What are the advantages and disadvantages of this manifestation / manifestations of political activity?
4. In your opinion, to what extent do young people communicate with government agencies through emails or discussions online? How do you assess this practice in our country, what are the dynamics, what is your opinion about the outcomes? Is there a need and potential to expand the practice of online discussions to engage and communicate with young people more intensively and effectively?
5. Are there any factors hindering the political participation of young people in our country? If so, what are they?
  - cultural (negative stereotypes, lack of mechanisms and institutions that would make the voice of young people heard, existing regional traditions concerning national or political behaviour, structures such as centralization, etc.);
  - social (family, education, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic affiliation, membership in youth movements);
  - psychological (personal motivation, beliefs), etc.

### **Youth in Open Government Partnership (OGP) platform**

6. Are you aware of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), its initiatives, strategies, values and culture in general? If so, how did you find out and how do you stay tuned (what are the means of communication, what are the methods)?
7. Are OGP public information and communication efforts adapted to the media habits of young people? If so, how?
8. What gaps have you noticed in the efforts to involve young people in the OGP platform: regional, age, gender, ethnic, socio-economic, etc.?
9. How do the OGP platform and the government perceive youth participation in the OGP platform (as an audience, who just needs to be informed, as a target, whose commitments are needed in the NAP, as a beneficiary party, whose participation is crucial at different levels of commitment and decision-making)?
10. Why is it important for the government to perceive youth as a beneficiary at the centre of the OGP strategy and initiatives? What are those benefits?
11. What do you, as young people, expect from the OGP platform, how does it benefit you as a young person? What is your motivation and interest in the OGP platform as a tool of participation?

### **The Role of Youth in the National Action Plan (NAP)**

12. Are you interested in the commitments included in the OGP National Action Plan (OGP), the procedures for participating in those processes, the course of the commitment implementation, their short-term and long-term outcomes? If so, how are you getting informed?
13. What issues / topics arising from OGP values do you mainly care about? Have you ever made suggestions / commitments on that particular issue within the framework of the OGP platform? Around what topics are the young people especially active in their commitments and proposals?
14. Are there any commitment (s) that target young people the last 4th NAP?
15. What suggestions do you have for increasing the participation and motivation of young people in the OGP platform?