

The Global Youth Participation Index (GYPI)



What is the GYPI?

The GYPI is the first ever attempt to systematically collect – and in the future update – data on the participation of young people in economic, civic and political life for 141 countries.

Provides young people and their allies with the systematic data needed to advocate for the removal of barriers to youth participation, and for the investment needed to facilitate the kinds of structures and processes in which youth want to participate.



Myth or Reality?

The **GYPI** provides statistical data to advance youth participation and **dispel key myths on youth participation.**

For Example:

Myth: young people don't participate in politics because they are apathetic and live in their own virtual world.

Reality revealed by the GYPI: many young people face extremely high barriers to participating in political institutions. They are often shut out, rather than disengaged.

*“The **GYPI** proves that youth exclusion is a global design flaw, not a personal failure. Data like this should empower us to not just advocate but also demand structural change. As a young Zambian woman, this report is a **call to action.**”*

Melissa Sarah H., Zambia, GYPI Youth Panel



Research team

CEDAR

Centre for Elections, Democracy, Accountability and Representation (CEDAR) at the **University of Birmingham** (UK) and a team of five researchers at leading universities (University of Amsterdam, Merrimack College, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle (USN)).

GYPI Youth Panel

9 young people from various countries advising core research team

66 data contributors

We worked with country data consultants where data was not available in major datasets

GYPI

in numbers

4

Key Dimensions

41

Variables

141

Countries

Socio-Economic Dimension

The opportunities and barriers to young people securing an education and participating in the economy.

Civic Space Dimension

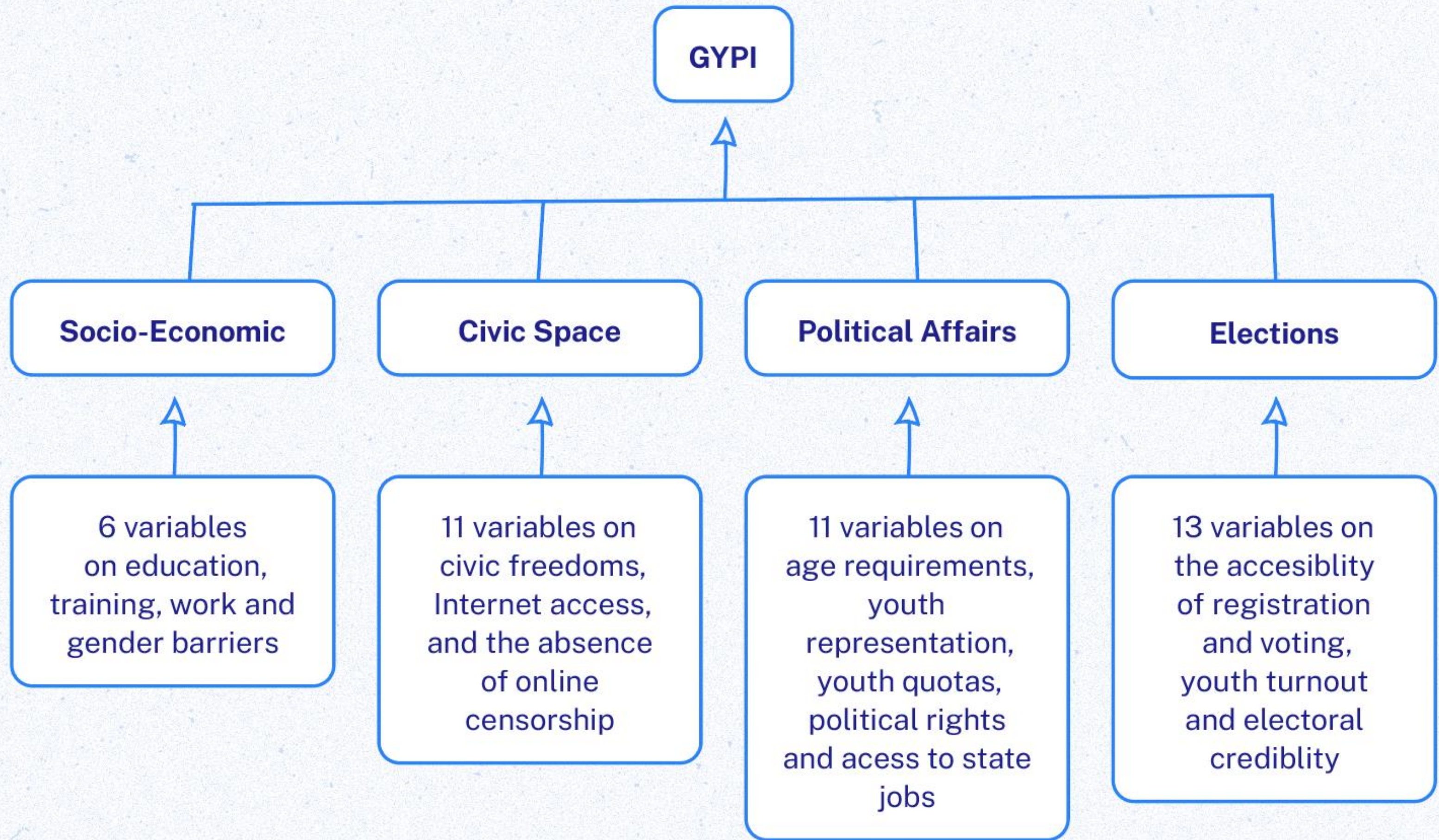
The extent to which young people can play an active role in social and political developments both online and in person.

Political Affairs Dimension

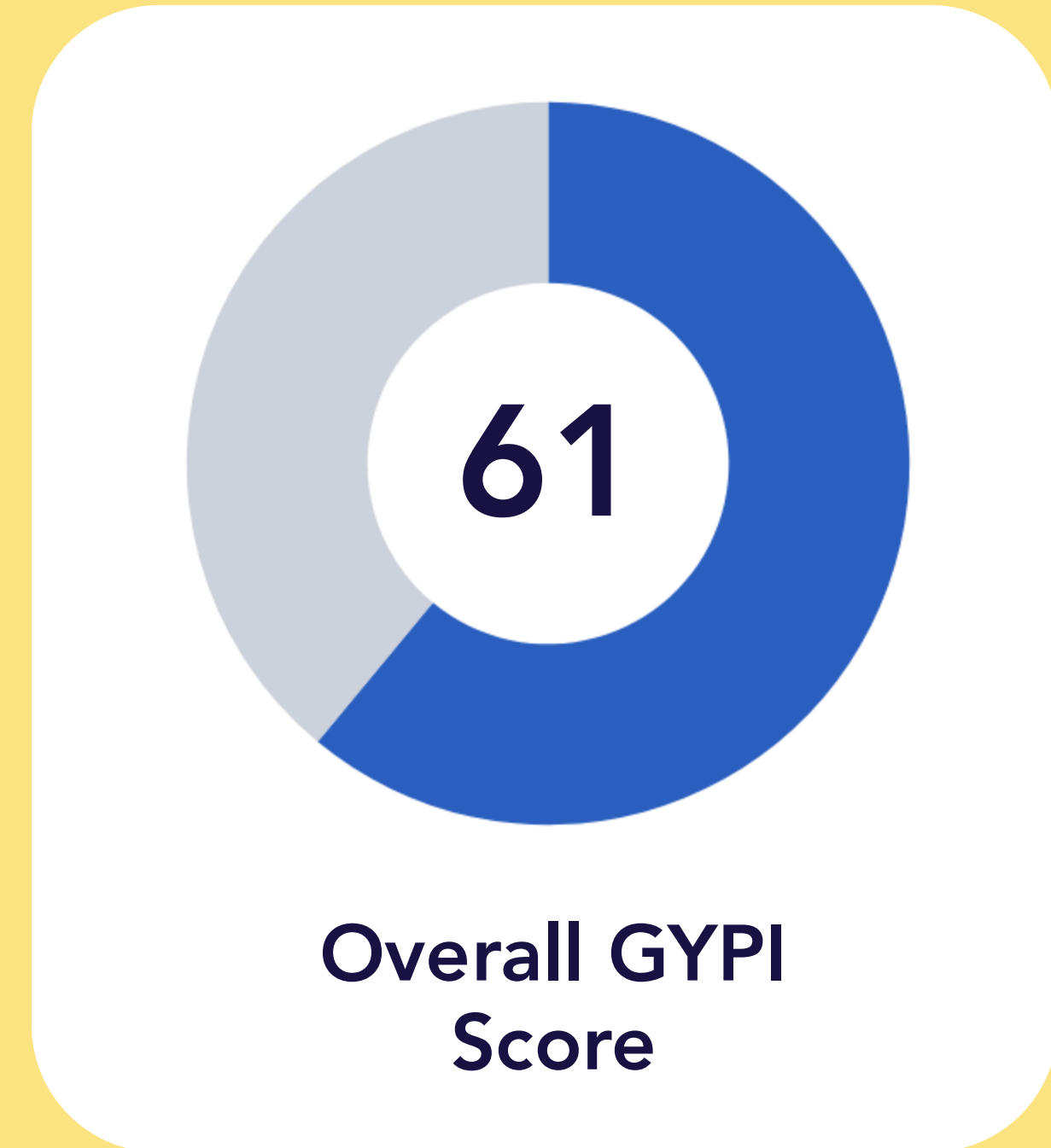
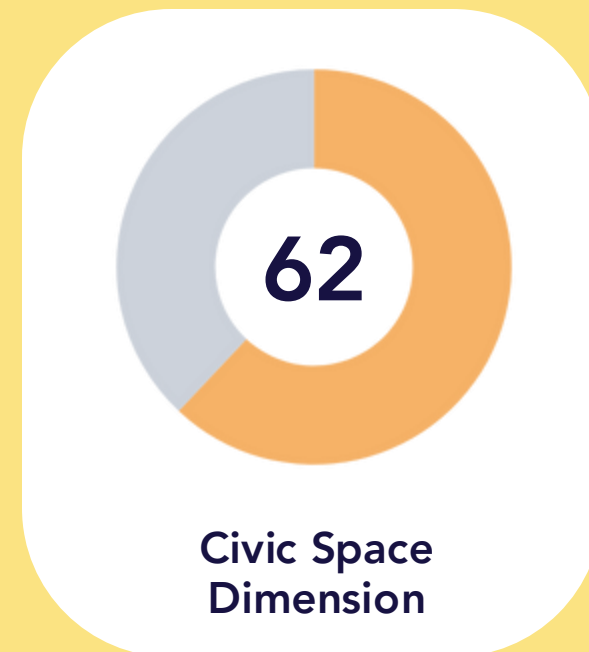
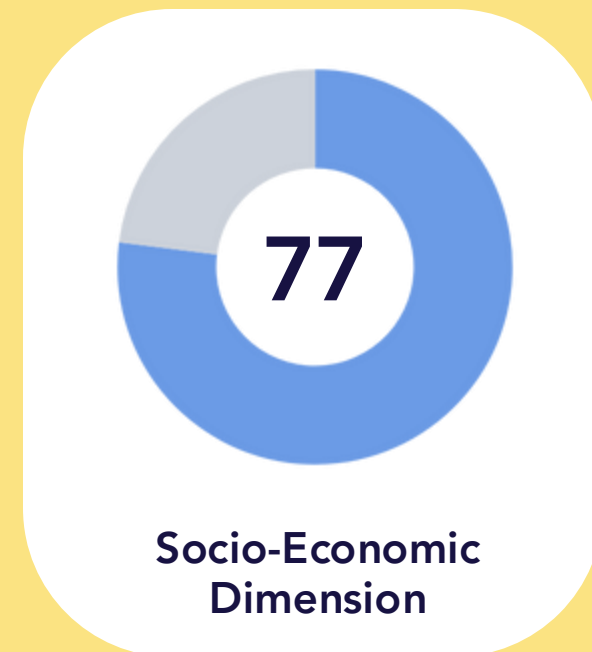
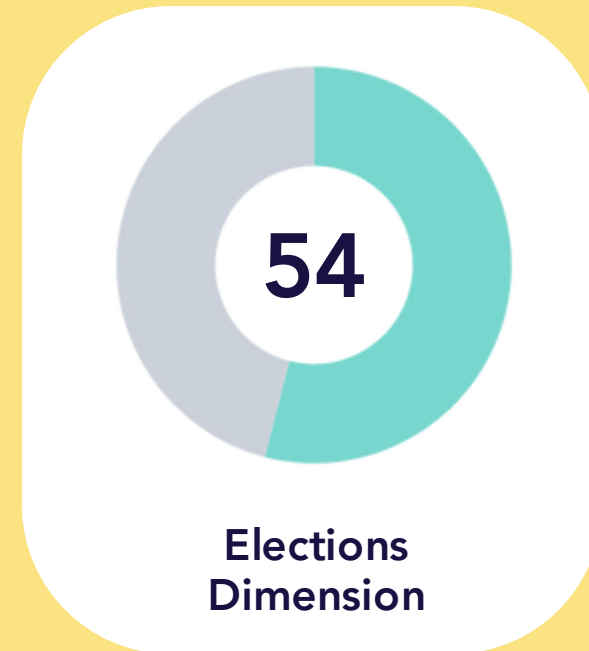
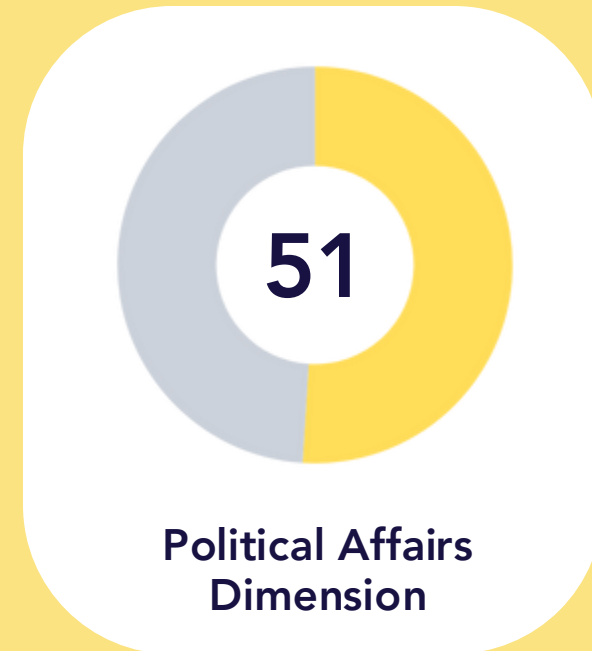
The extent of youth participation in legislatures, political parties and other political spaces.

Elections Dimension

The opportunities and barriers to young people participating in elections and casting ballots.



Key differences by dimensions



» Elections Dimension - the most diverse

Ecuador leading the ranking, followed by New Zealand, with Timor Leste in the top 10 countries

» Political Affairs Dimension

Led by Norway, with Latvia and Slovenia in the top 10 countries

» Civic Space Dimension

Led by New Zealand, followed by Malta, Spain and Canada in top 10

» Socio-Economic Dimension

Japan leading the ranking, with Czechia and Iceland in top 10

**Countries with societal and systemic barriers,
persistent gender inequality, and authoritarian governance
tend to perform worse in overall rankings**



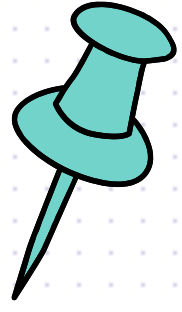


The **GYPI** report, if brought to the attention of government authorities and key decision-makers through advocacy, would propel fresh efforts to create more opportunities for young people – through education, capacity building, improved funding for youth projects, and policies to engender youth leadership – which will lead to the empowerment and improvement of young people's economic, political, and technological capacity for national development.

- Daisi Omokungbe, Nigeria, The GYPI Youth Panel

GYPI Political Affairs Dimension





Let's dig deeper into the data

The **GYPI** Political Affairs dimension (11 variables)

- Trust in Political Parties
- Youth Party Association (youth wings, youth sections of political parties)
- Quality of Political Rights
- Presence of a Youth Quota
- Access to State Jobs by Class
- Access to State Jobs by Gender
- Quality of Freedom of Expression
- Presence of a National Youth Policy
- Representation of Young People in the Legislature
- Age Requirement for Candidates in the Legislature
- Representation of Disadvantaged Groups in the Legislature

Main Findings in the Political Affairs GYPI dimension



The average overall GYPI score is just 61 out of 100. While some countries perform well when it comes to youth participation, most feature a number of significant barriers to the realisation of young people's rights.



Despite the spread of new technology, many young people **lack access to government information and services online**. Scores fall below 60 out of 100 for more than 75 countries.



Youth participation in **Political Affairs** scores **the lowest of all dimensions**: 51 out of 100. This is indicative of the limited efforts that institutions, such as legislatures and political parties to facilitate youth engagement.

Key findings: Political Affairs dimension



Ten countries still lack a comprehensive **National Youth Policy**, including a number of states with particularly youthful populations.



In most cases, young people remain significantly underrepresented in the legislature, with no representation at all in **28 countries**.



The lowest scores are due to the **barriers to being elected** that exist for young people, such as restrictive age limits on standing for office and the limited efforts political parties make to run young candidates.



"Young politicians, leaders & decision-makers should not be seen as a novelty, an exception, or a surprise."

Daniel Ekomo-Soignet. Central African Republic, GYPI Youth Panel

Low scores on the GYPI Political Affairs dimension are not limited to regions where democracy is newer or more fragile: they are instead a broader, global phenomenon.



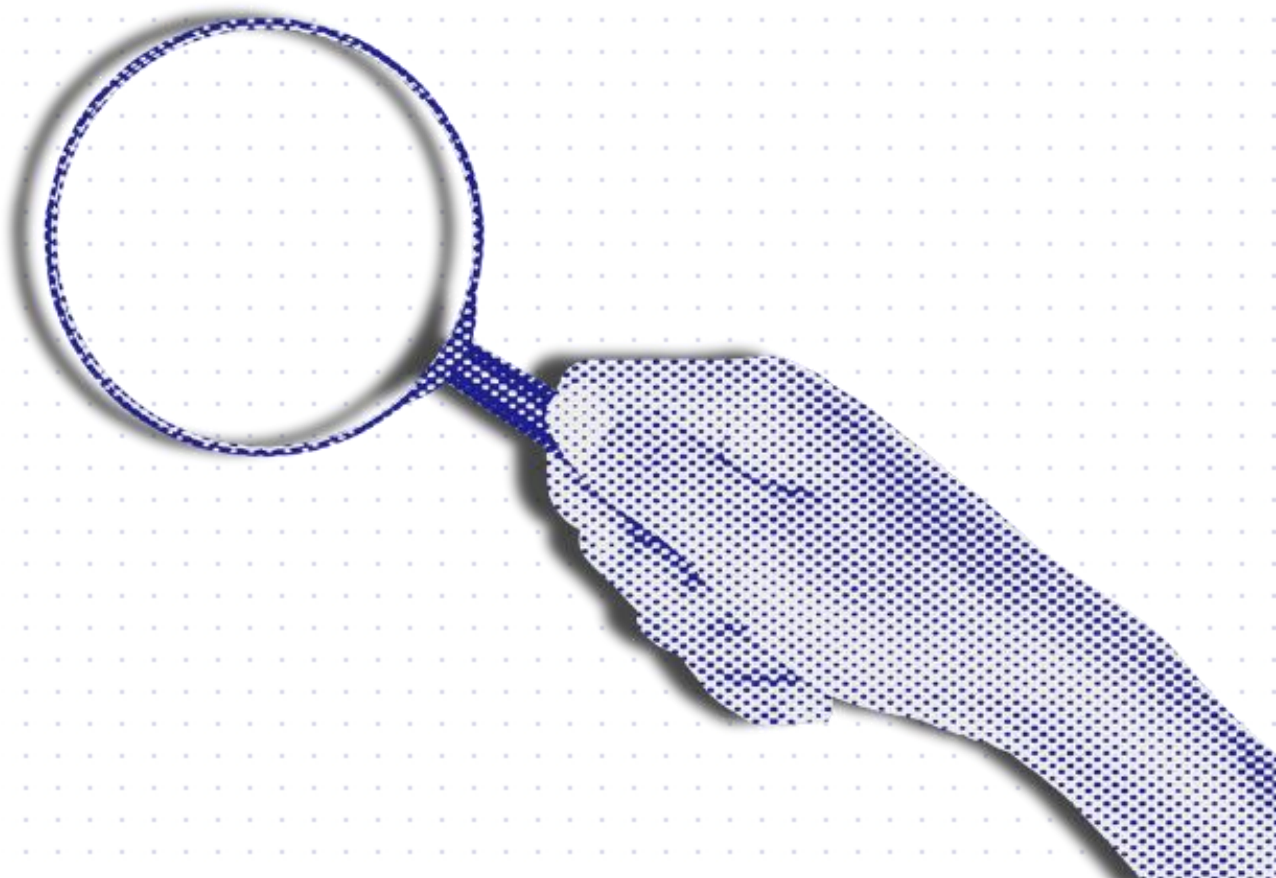
Learning from the GYPI: Same scores, different realities



A tale of two countries

Colombia and **South Africa** both receive the same **overall GYPI** score: **64**, which puts them just above average in the **GYPI** ranking.

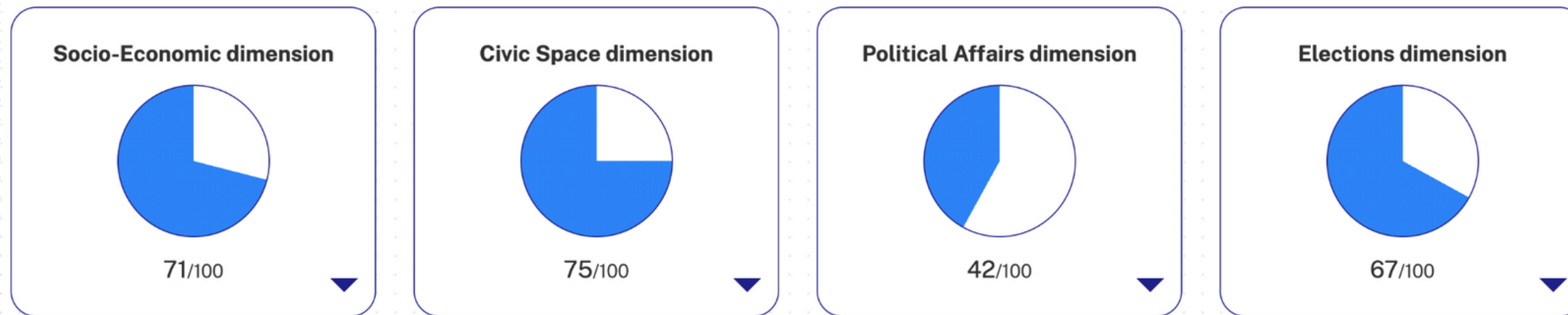
61	South Africa	64	High ●
62	Colombia	64	High ●



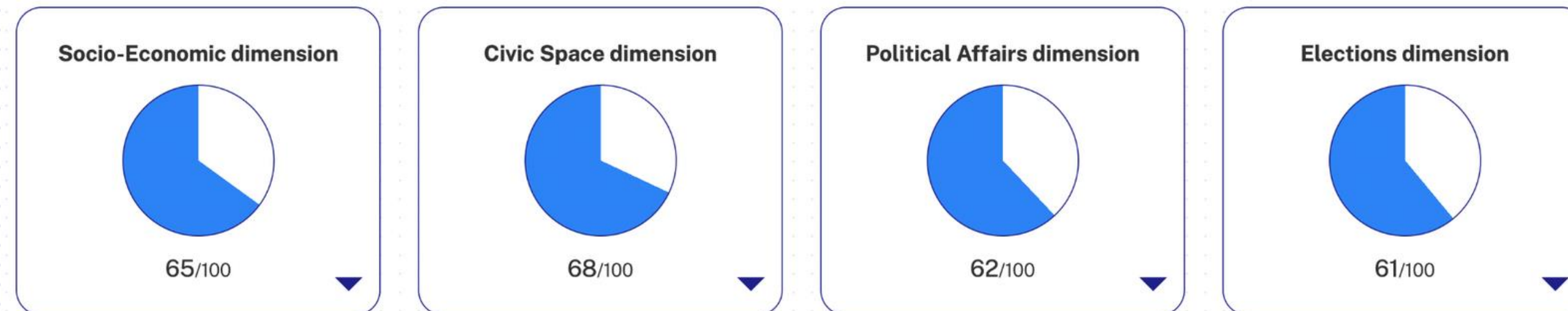
A tale of two countries

However, the scores for these countries differ considerably across the four dimensions:

Colombia scores very well in the **Socio-Economic**, **Civic Space** and to a lesser extent **Elections** dimensions, but badly in the **Political Affairs** dimension, according to the data .



South Africa performs more consistently across 4 dimensions.



Why does Colombia perform less well than South Africa in the Political Affairs dimension?

- This is partly because Colombia has **an age requirement**: (25 lower house, 30 upper house) to stand as a candidate.
- South Africa has **no such restriction**: all eligible voters can stand, which effectively sets a limit of 18.
- It is also partly because Colombia has far fewer political parties with formal **Youth Party Associations** (i.e. youth wings or youth sections), whereas this is common in South Africa.



Civic space and youth participation

- Most countries have higher average scores for the Civic Space dimension than the Political Affairs dimension and the Elections dimension.
- In Europe, all countries show higher Civic Space average scores, **Belarus** is an exception, with narrow margins in **Russia, Turkiye Azerbaijan**
- Concerning differences:
 - Italy** Civic Space 84 Political Affairs 49 Elections 67
 - Poland** Civic Space 76 Political Affairs 55 Elections 59
 - Czechia** Civic Space 81 Political Affairs 48 Elections 61
- The highest-scoring country for the Civic Space dimension is **Malta**



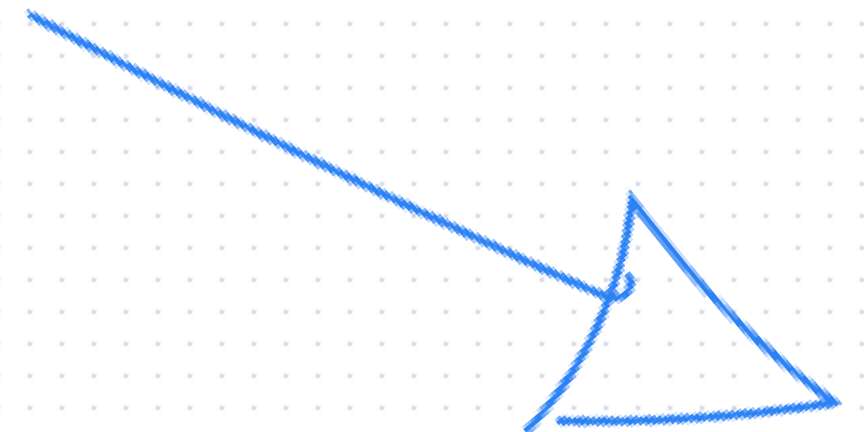
Civic space and youth participation

- Globally, if we compare average scores for each dimension, about 40 countries have lower Civic Space average score, than Political Affairs, Elections or both.
- Most of these countries are autocracies, such as Burkina Faso, China, Cuba, DRC, Iran, Venezuela, etc.
- All these countries perform lower on the overall ranking in comparison with more democratic countries
- Free civic space is vital for youth participation
Reflections on Georgia and Belarus



Key takeaways (1/3)

- ➔ The GYPI provides actionable evidence of the opportunities, but also the barriers facing young people's participation.
- ➔ The four dimensions of the GYPI also enable us to understand how these barriers vary across countries.
- ➔ Making further progress on dimensions such as Political Affairs will require...



Key takeaways (2/3)

- ➔ Adopting a **holistic approach** – individual reforms are likely to fail in isolation.
- ➔ Improving the **quality of education** and ensuring equal access.
- ➔ Providing **(affordable) internet access** for young people (e.g. in school).
- ➔ Opening up access to state jobs and political opportunities to **all young people**, including young women, young people living with disabilities and those from ethnic minorities, LGBT+ youth, etc.
- ➔ Introducing **automatic voter registration**.

Key takeaways (3/3)



Strengthening the representation of young people in the local and national executives of **political parties**.



Increasing the representation of young people in the legislature, for example by **removing prohibitive age barriers** to elected positions.



Enhancing **respect for political rights and civil liberties**, so that young people can speak their minds and fully participate in civil society.



And other changes set out in the **GYPI report!**

The following researchers delivered the GYPI

- **Brit ANLAR** Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Amsterdam
- **Nic CHEESEMANN**, Professor of Democracy, University of Birmingham
- **Kirstie Lynn DOBBS**, Assistant Professor of Practice, Merrimack College
- **Lien NGUYEN**, Assistant Professor of Practice, Merrimack College
- **Sarah PICKARD**, Professor of Contemporary British Politics, Society and Culture, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle (USN)



Feedback and Questions

The **GLOBAL Youth Participation Index (GYPI)** is part of the WYDE Civic Engagement project, led by European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) and launched as part of an European Union (EU) initiative focused on increasing the participation of young people and women in democratic processes and public life.



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