

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



EUROPEAN UNION



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Information sheet

YOUTH AND THE WORLD

Sweden



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1. Implementation of a new field of action: “Youth and the World”

How is the field of action “Youth and the World” of the current EU youth strategy transposed in your country?

With regards to the current national youth policy in Sweden this field of action or theme does not exist on a policy level. However, the Swedish government is in the middle of preparing a renewed youth policy in Sweden.

2. Awareness raising on Global issues

2.1. Promotion of Global Education

Is there any national/regional policy document which lays the legal basis for the promotion of Global Education? If yes

Preschools, schools and adult education have a distinct assignment to contribute to social, economic and ecological sustainable development. The assignment is expressed in national policy documents e.g. Education Act, curriculums and syllabuses. The opening paragraph of the Education Act states that anyone who is active in pre-school, school and adult education is to promote respect for the intrinsic worth and our shared environment.

The [curriculum](#) for the elementary and upper secondary schools states four general perspectives: the environmental, the historical, the international and the ethical perspective. These overall perspectives should characterize the education and be present in all teaching. The new 2011 curriculum states that the school has an increased responsibility to enhance students and teachers' ability to understand and empathize with other people's values and living conditions.

For reports and more information, refer to: [The Swedish National Agency for Education](#) (in Swedish)

How is Global Education promoted?

[The Swedish National Agency for Education](#)

has a commission to support and inspire schools in their work with sustainable development and to be a part of national cooperations.

[The Global School](#) (Den Globala Skolan)

[The International Programme Office for Education and Training](#) is a government agency that promotes academic exchanges and cooperation across national borders. They are in charge of the program *the Global School*, which is addressed to pedagogics and teachers, school leaders, decision makers, politicians and

civil servants in municipalities. They arrange activities, workshops and seminars on global learning for sustainable development across Sweden. The goal is to help schools in educating “the adults of tomorrow to take responsibility for sustainable development in a multicultural society”.

[The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency \(SIDA\)](#)

SIDA is a government agency that works on commission from the Swedish Parliament and Government to decrease the poverty in the world. They are one of the main actors to carry out the Swedish policy for Global Development (PGU). During 12 years they were responsible for *ZENIT – a global forum for youth*, where over 200'000 young people met to discuss global issues such as poverty, justice, gender equality, fair trade and allocation of resources. This project carries on through different teacher instructions, such as an [inspiration folder](#) with valuation and discussion exercises for teachers working with youth and the interactive web game [Zenit City](#).

[ASPnet – The UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network \(Unescos skolnätverk\)](#)

This is a global network of more than 9000 educational institutions (pre-schools, primary, secondary and vocational schools to teacher training institutions) in 180 countries. The network works in support of international understanding, peace, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and quality education in practice. In Sweden the network is placed under the [Ministry of Education and Research](#). The network gives the possibility to start new cooperation projects on e.g. democracy, human rights, intercultural learning, environment and sustainable development. There is also the possibility to join an existing school network within one of three “flag ship projects”.

[Young Masters Programme on Sustainable Development \(YMP\)](#)

is a global web-based distance education and learning network on sustainable development, aimed at high school students and their teachers. YMP is empowering young people to build a smarter, more sustainable, world through new tools and networks. The course is free of charge to all schools worldwide. Initiated in 1999, the YMP has been developed as an innovation project by the International Institute of Industrial Environmental Economics (IIIEE) at Lund University in Sweden.

The pedagogy is built on an exploratory method for learning, where off-line studies of real-life facts alternate with on-line study, discussion and exchange in international virtual classrooms. Through the YMP students gain knowledge of how sustainability challenges are interconnected globally. They are empowered to make a difference as individuals acting at the local level in a global context. This set-up also provides YMP with its huge potential for rapid growth, as many of the bottle-necks of traditional distance education can be avoided. It offers a unique learning experience by connecting youth and building understanding and cooperation about sustainability issues.

[Atlas – by the International Programme Office for Education and Training](#)

Atlas is a European Union program for global cooperation and internships and the target groups are teachers, staff and pupils in preschools, elementary schools, secondary schools and adult education. The objective is to encourage international contacts, support the development work to achieve the objectives set out in the school curriculum concerning internationalization and to promote the development of vocational training and global internships for young students.

There are four different grants for participation in [conferences](#) (e.g. hold speeches, workshops or exhibitions), [partnerships](#) (e.g. project meetings, pupil- or teacher exchanges or field work with a partnership school), [internships](#) (for students at vocational high schools) and [cooperation](#) with development countries (to encourage experience exchange, develop understanding of different cultures, aid activities, an increased interest in language and strengthening of professional competence).

Examples of prominent NGO's within the field:

[Amnesty](#)

Amnesty Sweden has a school site on the basis that Swedish education is to convey respect for human rights. In cooperation with teachers they have developed an education material with movies and exercises for the upper secondary school. Amnesty has also produced an interactive and creative material on human rights, including a documentary film festival and a DVD with films made by youth and a digital game about poverty and immigration.

[Plan International](#)

is an international children's rights organisation that works for and together with vulnerable kids all over the world the world. Plan Sweden has launched the site [Children and Climate](#) to increase the commitment for sustainable development and the knowledge on the climate change from a human rights perspective. The site contains educational material with teacher instructions, a climate role play and movies.

[The Swedish Development Forum \(Föreningen för Utvecklingsfrågor, FUF\)](#)

FUF is a nonprofit organisation with the aim to inform and encourage debates on development issues in a global perspective to support mutual understanding and cooperation. FUF arranges seminars, debates and conferences on international issues, with main focus on development countries and development cooperation. They also act as intermediary for internships for university students interested in global issues and act as a platform for young people who are entering the working life within this field.

[Forum South \(Forum Syd\)](#)

Forum Syd is an umbrella organisation that brings together 163 Swedish organisations that work with international aid and advocacy on global issues.

What are the most tackled aspects of Global Education?

According to the Swedish Government Official Report *To govern towards sustainable development* ([Att styra mot hållbar utveckling, SOU 2004:104](#)) the policy documents of the educational system emphasize areas central for sustainable development such as democracy, values, internationalization, ethics and environment. Still there seems to be no accepted, common understanding of what education for sustainable development is. According to the report, the areas are not integrated enough with each other and the term 'sustainable development' is often defined with focus solely on environmental issues.

What are the main stakeholders in the field of Global Education?

[The Swedish National Agency for Educations](#)

According to the Swedish Education Act the schools have a distinct assignment to contribute to social, economic and ecological sustainable development as well as to convey respect for human rights. The government agency in charge is The Swedish National Agency for Educations. The issues are to be integrated and addressed within different subjects and there are plenty of NGO's and government agencies that make material and lesson plans on e.g. global issues, human rights and sustainable development available for teachers free of charge.

globalportalen.org

A web portal about global issues run by a collaboration of 50 different NGO's within the field. The site present news, fact and articles as well as pedagogic material for teachers, information about voluntary work and international exchanges as well as education and courses focused on global issues. The site links to NGO's and congregates current events in a joint calendar. There is also a collection of young voices and stories from young people all over the world. The site also lists all the current campaigns on e.g. equality, human rights and environment run by the different NGO's.

[The International Programme Office for Education and Training](#)

A government agency that promotes academic exchanges and cooperation across national borders, with the mission to support different forms of international cooperation within education. The primary funders are the [European Commission](#), [the Nordic Council of Ministers](#), [the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#) and [the Swedish Government](#). They award all sorts of funding, ranging from grants for different cooperation and development projects to individual scholarships for overseas study, teacher exchanges and further education. The goal is to attain greater mutual support, cultural understanding and new knowledge, as well as to create and develop international contact networks.

Example of NGO's:

CISV

A global youth organisation for peace education. Their goal is to create a better world and to increase the self-confidence and self-esteem among the children and young people who are participating in the organisation, giving opportunities to gain new friends and develop an intercultural competence of attitudes, knowledge and skills. CIVS wish to strengthen an active citizenship in a multicultural society, locally as well as globally.

Peaceworks

PeaceWorks is a nonprofit peace organisation by and for young people with three main activities: voluntary exchange, local associations and education.

Intercultural Education (Interkulturell Utbildning, AFS)

A nonprofit organisation, based on voluntary work, with the goal to give people possibilities to intercultural education, so that they can develop knowledge, understanding and competence about people and their cultures to create a more equitable and peaceful world.

Civis

Civis works to increase young people's possibilities to affect and change their lives. The main goal is to create a culture of peace based on non-violence, active citizenship and gender equality. Civis wants to encourage young people's commitment for organisation and peace, create forums for international exchange between youth, academics, politicians and peace activists and increase to knowledge in Sweden on the situation in the countries where Civis is active.

Is there any report/survey available on Global education and young people in your country? If yes what is its focus of research and what are the main outcomes?

In 1998 the Swedish National Agency for Education presented the report [Läroplanerna i praktiken](#) (*The Curriculums in practice*) evaluating the schools' work and the Swedish pupils' abilities to see coherence and orient themselves in the world around them, make ethical standpoints and to understand and practice democracy. The report shows e.g. that there is a distinct development by increased age, but the schools are still lacking in the ability to connect different subjects so that the pupils are able to link knowledge from different courses and subjects.

The knowledge on global issues and "the state of the world" seems to increase when pupils work in groups and think and discuss together with others, compared to the answers of individual pupils. The "results" are also shown to be richer and less narrow when pupils are allowed to reflect and discuss more freely, rather than when answering questions and presenting written answers to tests. Previous national evaluations

shows that Swedish pupils need to improve their critical thinking, something that was also confirmed in this report and course criticism is identified as one area of improvement.

According to the report, all age groups have shown a good ability to develop their thought on how people and countries in different parts of the world affect and depend on each other. The pupils show a good faith in their possibilities to affect their own future and to some extent faith in the ability to affect the future of the world.

A majority of the pupils find the target areas of the report urgent and important, but at the same time they don't consider themselves to have received that much education on the concerned issues in school. The area that conducts most concerns about the future among the pupils is the environment. Conflicts, war and nuclear weapons come in second place.

For more information, refer to the [report](#) and particularly the section *Tema tillståndet i världen* (Theme the State of the World).

2.2. Young people and sustainable development

What are the most relevant initiatives/projects at regional/national level encouraging green patterns of consumption and production with young people?

[The Swedish Consumer Agency](#) (Konsumentverket)

is the Swedish government agency responsible for consumer issues, and one of the agency's commissions is to stimulate environmentally, economically and socially sustainable consumption. They supply a "[lesson bank](#)" with free material for teachers, including lesson planning and student tasks on consumption, ethics and environment. They are also in charge of the web portal [Ungkonsument.se](#) (Young Consumer) – a site for young people that encourages them to become more active consumers. The site contains articles, facts, movies, digital stories and commentaries from young people. The site has a section for ethics and environment.

[Swedish consumers](#) (Sveriges konsumenter)

Swedish consumers is an organisation promoting that consumers easily should be able to choose goods and services on the basis of e.g. environment, ethics and quality, and purchasing them without risk. They run the project [Ingen blåser mig](#) to mobilize, support and encourage young people to use consumer power and to become aware of what they buy, as well as their rights as consumers. They run a webpage and travel around Sweden to discuss consumer related issues with politicians and young people. One main topic is environment – conditions of production, recycling/remaking/reusing, eco labeling, clothing industry etc.

Keep Sweden Clean (Håll Sverige rent)

Keep Sweden Clean is a foundation that provides material, education, experience exchanges and inspiration to work with environment and sustainable development. They provide help to schools and preschools to work action oriented with sustainable development from a children and youth perspective, e.g. through the international certification Green Flag. Green Flag is the largest environment network for schools and preschools in Sweden and the use of the certification is used by the Nordic Councils of Ministers as one of the indicators to evaluate the work with their Strategy on Sustainable Development.

Dolceta

is a web project for educating youth (7-9th grade and high school) in consumer issues and it as a module on sustainable consumption. The site is run by the European Commission and contains free lesson planning, short articles, fact sheets etc. The content is written in Sweden based on the EU consumer policies.

Camino and Conscious Consumption Association (Föreningen Medveten Konsumtion)

During 2012 the media company and environment magazine Camino, together with the nonprofit organisation Conscious Consumption, ran a project on environment and sustainable development which resulted in six movies. The aim of the movies is to affect young people's consumption habits in a "greener direction". The movies are written and recorded by students in secondary school and they focus on different themes such as meat production, clothing, fair trade, economic growth etc.

Local and regional initiatives

There are plenty of municipal initiatives and projects for young people on green consumption and production. The municipality of [Falun](#) runs the project *Nothing Buy It* to discuss active, reduced and sustainable consumption. They arrange lectures and clothes swapping, teacher education and have produced information folders. The municipality of [Malmö](#) runs an initiative on "consumer power and sustainable choices" with the aim to stimulate conscious consumption by increased knowledge on e.g. consumer power, active choices, commercial pressure and eco labeling.

Is there any report/survey investigating the awareness of environmental issues among young people in your country? If so what are the main outcomes?

In 2011 [The Swedish Consumer Agency](#) released the report *How do young people act/consume? – a study on young people's consumption 2011 (Hur handlar unga? – en studie om ungas konsumtion 2011)*. The report shows that almost two thirds of the youth *never* or *seldom* consider ethics or environmental-impact before a purchase, only around 10 percent claims to *always* or *often* make this consideration. Ethical impact is valued lower than environmental. Young peoples' main focus when making a purchase is on price and quality, rather than ethical aspects. What consequences the purchase and the production of the good has had on people, animals or nature is valued as the least important factor.

Two Swedish consulting and research companies have a focus on young people - [Ungdomsbarometern](#) and [Kairos Future](#) – and present reports on youth and consumer and sustainability issues. The reports are not available for free downloads, but are often referred to by newspapers and government agencies. One example is the global value survey *Global Youth* by Kairos future in 2007 (a new similar survey will be conducted in 15 different countries in 2013) which shows a low interest for environment issues among Swedish youth. According to the report they consider the environment problem a huge threat, but still they are the least inclined to consume from environmental friendly companies. There is a lack of relation between thought and action.

Is there any report/survey investigating the civic engagement related to environment issues among young people in your country? What are the main outcomes?

See 4.3.

2.3. Young people and human rights

Is there any report/survey investigating the civic engagement related to global human rights issues among young people in your country? What are the main outcomes?

See 4.3.

3. Cooperation with third countries in the field of youth

3.1. Agreements and areas of cooperation

Are there any bilateral or supranational agreements with countries / regions outside Europe in the field of youth?

No

Cooperation in the field of youth policy and /or youth research

Support to the development of youth work on other continents

3.2. Support measures for young people

What are the opportunities offered to young people to explore and enhance global understanding by going abroad such as volunteering and youth exchange programmes?

[The International Programme Office for Education and Training](#)

is a government agency that promotes academic exchanges and cooperation across national borders with the mission to support different forms of international cooperation within education. The primary funders are the [European Commission](#), [the Nordic Council of Ministers](#), [the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#) and [the Swedish Government](#). They award all sorts of funding, ranging from grants for different cooperation and development projects to individual scholarships for overseas study, teacher exchanges and further education. The goal is to attain greater mutual support, cultural understanding and new knowledge, as well as to create and develop international contact networks.

For a qualitative and more detailed oversight on contents, aims, participants, financing etc. within global voluntary work and exchange programs for youth please refer to the report [Volontärprogram riktade till ungdomar](#) (*Voluntary programs addressed to youth*).

Some examples of NGO's offering different kinds of voluntary work and international exchange programs:

[Center for International Youth Exchange](#) (Centrum för Internationellt Ungdomsutbyte)

arranges the exchange programs YPD (20-26 year olds) and SWY (17-23 years olds). The exchanges are six months long and the participant spends three months in the exchange country and three months in Sweden. In both countries the participant lives together with a counterpart in host families and work in a local project. Funding mainly through the [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#).

[Forum South](#) (Forum Syd)

Forum Syd is an umbrella organisation that brings together 163 Swedish organisations. They work with international aid and advocacy on global issues and offers funding support for individuals and organisations to arrange their own international exchanges.

[YMCA- YWCA Sweden](#) (KFUK-KFUMs Riksförbund)

YMCA movement in Sweden devotes itself mostly to the different ways to create positive and meaningful leisure venues for young people. They offer a six months long international youth internship for young people in the ages 18-30 without working life experience. The program is offered in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

[The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations](#) (Landsrådet för Sveriges Ungdomsorganisationer, LSU)

A coordinating body and umbrella organisation for 73 Swedish youth organisations and part of a big international youth network. LSU offers organisations to apply for funding to arrange exchanges, start cooperations or invite international guests to Sweden. Between 1999 and 2010 LSU where also administrating something called the [Youth Fond](#) (Ungdomsfonden), read more in section 4.1.

[The Swedish Red Cross Youth](#) (Röda Korsets Ungdomsförbund)

Four members, two from each country, participates in an exchange during six months where they work

together with a project within the local Red Cross Youth. They spend three months in each country and live in host families to get an insight in other cultures and everyday life.

Rotary Youth Exchange Sweden (Stiftelsen Rotarys Ungdomsutbyte)

Arranges exchanges within and outside Europe, where you can spend four to eight weeks together with a counterpart from over 30 different countries. The arrangements are set up by the participant and the counterpart.

Church of Swedens Exchange Program (Svenska kyrkans utbytesprogram)

The exchange program "Young in the world wide church" is a possibility for young people within the church of Sweden and their international partners to share their everyday life during three months with people from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. The aim is for the participants to gain experience on the interpretation of the Christian message globally and on how to work for a just and equitable world together with others.

Folke Bernadotte Memorial Fund (Folke Bernadottes Minnesfond)

The Foundation Folke Bernadotte Memorial Fund for International Exchange has a commission to promote young peoples (11-25 years) international understanding by supporting youth exchange between different countries. Funding is available after application for international camps with common activities, exchanges (visits and counter visits with countries outside Sweden) and voluntary work lasting longer than a month.

AFS Intercultural Education (AFS Interkulturell Utbildning)

is a nonprofit organisation with the goal to give people possibilities to intercultural education, so that they can develop knowledge, understanding and competence about people and their cultures to create a more equitable and peaceful world. They have an international exchange program for youth and adults and operate in 80 countries.

Young Leaders Visitors Program

Unites leaders for future change. An intercultural leadership program with the aim to create a platform for durable exchanges between young leaders in Sweden and the MENA region that works actively for human rights and democratic community development. The program combines intercultural leadership education, seminars, workshops, study visits and project work with focus on transparency, human rights and democracy. For people aged 20-32 within the fields of culture, society and politics, e.g. youth politicians, activists, journalists and legal experts,

Promotion of youth entrepreneurship and employment opportunities with regions/countries outside of Europe

The Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen)

The Swedish Public Employment Service is the government agency responsible for placement service for work in Sweden. Their most important task is to contribute to a well-functioning labour market by creating meeting places for employers and jobseekers. At their web site they keep a section on [internships and youth exchange](#) to promote employment options outside Sweden, e.g. through Working Holiday Visas, vocational training, exchange programs, internships within the EU or international organisations, scholarships or summer employments.

Examples of local initiatives:

Social Entrepreneurship with an International Outlook (Socialt företagande och entreprenörskap med internationell utblick)

A project financed by the Region Västra Götaland with the aim to encourage social companies, entrepreneurship and cooperation with an international perspective among young people in the suburbs of Gothenburg. The comprehensive aim is sustainable society development through stimulation of social entrepreneurship.

4. Participation of young people and youth organisations in policy making on global issues

4.1. Have young people and youth organisations been given political and financial support to be individually or collectively involved in the policy regarding dialogue and cooperation on regional and global issues? How?

In 2011 the [The National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations](#) (LSU) presented the report *Ungdomsperspektiv i utvecklingssamarbete* ([Youth Perspective in development cooperation](#)) with their analysis on the implementation of the youth perspective in Swedish development and aid policy. They claim that more and more agents value a youth perspective on a policy level, but still it is not in the same extent implemented in practice. They enlighten the fact that two thirds of the inhabitants in the Global South are under the age of 15 and the Swedish government has an expressed ambition to invest in youth as a central target group of aid and development work.

According to the Swedish Youth policy a youth perspective is to permeate every policy area, including development politics, but according to LSU a lot of organisations still lack the knowledge and tools to transform the perspective into practices. They perceive a lack of political will that limits the possibilities for youth in Sweden to create change and access common challenges in cooperation with youth from other parts of the world.

LSU's biggest critic is the reduction of *real possibilities* of participation and *financial support* for participation. The closure of both ZENIT (see 2.1.) and the Youth Fond (Ungdomsfonden) as well as the reduction of public financial support to youth organisations serve as examples of this perceived reduction.

The Youth Fond was administrated by LSU and Forum Syd between 1999 and 2010. The fond was financed by SIDA and was a cooperation between Forum Syds competence on development cooperation and LSU:s competence on youth issues. The fond offered coaching and financial support to young people within the civil society for e.g. information campaigns or global cooperation project with counterparts in the South or the East. The organisations was through the fond offered support in rights based applications, courses on mutual partnerships, encouraged to join and create global youth networks, project management for development collaborations and information campaigns as well as education on youth as actors and agents.

In 2007 LSU together with The Swedish Red Cross Youth published the report [Fyra feta förslag för en fräsch biståndspolitik](#) (Four great proposals for a fresh aid policy) to enlight the Swedish aid policy from a youth perspective and make improvement suggestions. Their proposals where that 1) a youth perspective is to permeate all Swedish aid, 2) to institute a frame organisation for youth aid, 3) to decrease the level of the youth organisations "own contribution" and 4) that the Swedish government actively should promote a youth perspective in the multilateral aid.

The follow up in *Ungdomsperspektiv i utvecklingssamarbete* in short shows that: in 2011 the youth perspective is more present in Swedish aid but according to LSU still not mainstreamed. There are frame organisations for aid with a child- and youth perspective but none of them are run by youth or use the competence of young people's own organisations. Youth organisations still have to finance 10 percent cash when applying for financial aid and are not allowed to count voluntary work as own contribution. The government and the Minister for International Development Cooperation seem to promote the youth perspective relatively well, e.g. by supporting the aid project [Tackling Poverty Together](#) and by highlighting the youth perspective in relation to the Millennium Goals.

4.2. Is there any report/survey investigating young people's participation in campaigns regarding global climate change/global warming, development aid or human rights? What are the main outcomes?

See 4.3.

4.3. Is there any report/survey investigating young people's participation in non-governmental organisations active in the domains of global climate change/global warming, development aid or human rights? What are the main outcomes?

There are no available surveys on these specific topics but the National Board for Youth Affairs is a government agency that collects information on young people's commitments in organisations and politics in general. The report [Youth Today 2012](#) (*Ung idag*) shows that around 30% of the Swedish youth in the ages 16-25 are members of some kind of youth organisation. 3,5% are committed in the youth organisation of a political party.

In the survey [Youth With Attitude](#) (*Unga med attityd, 2007*) people in the ages 16-29 are asked what political actions they *performed* or *would consider performing*. The most common ways to commit to political action are shown to be voting (97%), sign petitions (95%) and appeal an authority decision (85%). A majority are, or would consider, to be a member of a political party, participate in a boycott or legal demonstration, contact politicians, do voluntary work, wear signs and symbols or write letters to the editor of newspapers.

When asked about the most [important society issues](#) youth between 16-25 rank education (1), employment (2), health care (3) and environment (4) in top. Gender equality is listed as number six, while other global issues like energy issues (11) and aid (16) are less prioritised out of the 17 presented issues.

71% of the respondents in the report [Youth Today 2012](#) have participated in at least one of the 14 political activities mentioned in the survey. The most common activity was to support a case on the internet (e.g. by "liking" it) – 50% of the 16–25-years-olds claimed to have done that during the last 12 months. This activity is to be followed by signing a petition (31%), purchasing certain products because of political, ethical or environmental reasons (31%), donate money to an organisation (22%) or chat, debate or comment on politics online (17%).

Young men are, compared to young women, much more inclined to debate or comment politics online (22% among males and 11% among females) while women are more inclined to conscious consumption (35% among females and 11% among males). The commitment is in general a lot higher among young people with well-educated parents.

The report [Focus 10](#) (*Fokus 10 – en analys av ungas inflytande*) from the National Board on Youth Affairs focuses on youth influence. It shows that young people tend to be less committed to "traditional and parliamentary political engagement" than previous generations, but at the same time young people in Sweden tend to be more engaged in "creative politics" beyond the national borders. And there are more young people today showing interest in political issues such as globalization and global justice, engaging in e.g. online activism or political consumption. The private lifestyle and political consumption seems to be a

way of individual political engagement. But these groups largely seem to be the same groups that tend to engage themselves in parliamentary politics or organisations.

According to the European Social Survey 2002/2003 Sweden is the one country in Europe with the highest amount of young people committing to different kinds on political consumption. 65% of the swedes between 20-29 claim to have actively purchased a product due to political, environmental or ethical reasons during the last year (boycott) and around 40 percent have boycotted a product for the same reasons.

Another example of young people's confluence between politics and patterns in everyday life is vegetarianism and veganism (Miljöspiegeln 2001). The Swedish survey [Consumption and societal issues](#) - a survey of the habits and opinions of the Swedish population (2009) for the project [Sustainable Citizenship \(Det hållbara medborgarskapet: Barriärer och möjligheter\)](#) suggests that 6 percent of youth aged between 18-29 have not eaten meat at all and 6 percent have eaten no fish in the past 12 months.

In *Focus 10* the researchers also highlight the anti-globalization demonstrations around the world, where young people express their political interest by being physically present at the European Summit (as the one in Gothenburg in 2001), NATO, and World Trade Organization meetings. Aside from the turn toward global political issues and the use of alternative forms of citizen involvement in politics, researchers have noted another trend: Youth "who had actual experience of political participation tended, overwhelmingly, to have participated in local community actions or campaigns", e.g. local activism against racism, consumer waste, and sub-culture groups for animal liberation that have been found in Sweden and elsewhere.

Although the increased global and local political orientations of young citizens may seem to be divergent trends, researchers have four important characteristics in common: (1) they depict shifting **arenas** and **targets** of involvement; (2) the **networks of mobilization** reveal a distinct character; (3) the **regularity** with which people are involved differs from engagement in traditional politics, and (4) the **style** of these new involvements is distinct. Young citizens in Sweden and elsewhere have, therefore, been taking advantage of the opportunities available in democratic societies to create non-hierarchical organizational structures that allow for innovation, diversity, spontaneous actions, and inclusion. Participation in these forms of politics emphasizes the importance of spontaneity, irregularity, easy exit, and the possibility of shifting-in and shifting-out of engagements. Since it is easy to be engaged, it is possible to mobilize large groups of citizens with relative ease. An important question is, therefore, whether this sort of mobilization can be effectively sustained. Can it keep its supporters over time?

For more details to the studies mentioned above please refer to [Focus 10](#) (chiefly part 3, chapter 13-15)