

Green and Digital Futures: Enabling Youth For ‘Just Transitions’

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This policy brief is published within the framework of the project “[Protest and Engagement, from the Global to the Local: Mapping the Forms of Youth Participation in Europe](#)” conducted by the Albert Hirschman Centre (AHCD) at the Geneva Graduate Institute¹. The brief draws upon the insights generated during the international policy workshop entitled “Enabling the Youth for Just Transitions”, which was organized in the context of the project in collaboration with UNRISD on 9 March 2023.

Executive Summary

The policy brief *Green and Digital Futures: Enabling Youth for 'Just Transitions'* addresses the growing role of youth movements in advocating for “just transitions” amidst the challenges posed by digital and environmental transformations. This summary provides an overview of the key points discussed in the brief.

- **Youth Mobilization for Just Transitions:** Youth movements, both within Europe and globally, are increasingly centering their activities and discourses around “just transitions,” which encompass digital transformations, green transitions, and the fight against inequality. They advocate for equitable opportunities in the digital economy and challenge the gig economy's norms. In the sphere of the green transition, movements such as “Fridays for Future” have shifted the spotlight towards the interconnected issues of climate change and equitable resource distribution. These movements emphasize the need to address both challenges in tandem to create a sustainable and just future. Despite their activism, youth voices are often excluded from shaping these transitions.
- **How Inequality Affects Youth:** The issue of inequality in relation to the major shifts occurring in the labour market and environmental domains has been a subject of considerable attention through youth mobilization and activism, both prior to and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergence of the digital gig economy has introduced a range of temporary and non-standard employment opportunities, amplifying economic disparities exacerbated by youth unemployment, a significant catalyst for youth inequality. Alongside this, the increasing costs of living act as barriers to accessing housing and education, while a lack of meaningful engagement and political participation opportunities for young individuals exacerbates feelings of disempowerment. Amidst these challenges, innovative

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initiatives such as the "Change your City!" campaign in Geneva have emerged to amplify youth involvement and participation. These efforts seek to foster an environment where youth perspectives are integrated into the shaping of fair and sustainable transitions, ultimately aiming to address the multifaceted aspects of inequality inherent in these evolving domains.

- **What is the "Just Transition"?** Rooted in the recognition that transformational shifts can have profound impacts on individuals, communities, and societies, the idea of "just transitions" seeks to ensure that these changes are not only environmentally sustainable but also socially equitable. Initially gaining prominence within the labour movement, the concept of just transitions aimed to address the potential displacement and job losses that often accompany shifts towards more sustainable practices. As the environmental movement gained traction, the concept evolved to encompass broader social considerations, including the rights of marginalized communities, and vulnerable workers who might bear the brunt of transition-related disruptions. The core principle of just transitions revolves around the belief that the burden of change should not fall disproportionately on certain groups, especially those who have historically been marginalized or disadvantaged. It emphasizes the importance of comprehensive planning, stakeholder engagement, and policy frameworks that account for both environmental goals and social justice addressing systemic inequalities.
- **Supporting Youth for Just Transitions. Key takeaways:** Democracy has been under threat, with authoritarianism rising and young people disengaging. Youth discontent with political elites and institutions has been increasing. Democratizing the economy through active youth participation and strengthening democratic processes are not only essential components of achieving just transitions but also integral to the agenda of youth activism. By involving young people in shaping economic policies and decisions, and by fostering transparent and inclusive democratic mechanisms, we can pave the way for equitable and sustainable transformations. Youth can be a driving force for transformative action. Democratic innovations like mini-publics and social audits offer avenues for youth participation. Breaking down silos between climate and labour movements can also lead to more comprehensive and effective advocacy for just transitions. Overall, this policy brief emphasizes the importance of including youth perspectives in shaping equitable and sustainable transitions and highlights the need to strengthen democracy by amplifying youth voices and fostering their engagement.

1. Introduction: Youth Mobilization for Just Transitions

Youth movements are increasingly embracing the powerful concept of "just transitions" as a central pillar in their mobilization efforts. These movements are engaged across three intertwined domains: digital transitions (including the emergence of the gig economy), environmental/green transformation, and the fight against inequality.

In the context of digital transition, youth movements advocate for actions that prioritize equitable opportunities, especially as artificial intelligence and digitalization reshape labour markets and the broader economic landscape. They ardently advocate accessible education and digital skills training programs, ensuring inclusivity as the job landscape evolves. Simultaneously, focusing on the gig economy, youth activists employ the 'decent work' and just transitions framework to challenge existing norms. They fervently support heightened labour protections, fair wages, and comprehensive benefits, advocating for the rights of gig workers who often face precarious conditions. Through these endeavours, they strive to reform the digital gig economy, promoting the dignity and stability of workers and thereby addressing the economic disparities inherent in the system.

In the realm of environmental/green transition, youth movements harness the principles of social justice and just transitions to confront the pressing issue of climate change and its disproportionate impact on marginalized communities. They ardently advocate for urgent actions designed to shield these communities from vulnerabilities posed by environmental challenges. Significantly, in these contexts, "Fridays for Future" has emerged as a formidable force in propelling climate change and the fight against inequality to the forefront of global agendas. Through unwavering protests, strikes, and advocacy efforts, Fridays for Future has effectively captured global attention. By linking climate action with social equity and consistently demanding climate action, they have compelled governments, institutions, and the public to confront the urgency of addressing climate change and its unequal impact on vulnerable communities. Climate action and just transition with jobs, human and labour rights, and social protection are critical elements of a sustainable path that addresses historical inequalities.

However, the voices and perspectives of youth are not always heard in the planning and execution of just transitions, closely tied to digital and environmental transformations. Recognizing that young people will inherit and shape the world we leave behind, they should play a more influential role in shaping a better future.

This policy brief aims to unpack the concept of just transitions, revealing its policy components and its intersection with the inequality affecting youth across diverse contexts. It underscores the importance of supporting youth in just transitions within an evolving landscape where labour and climate justice movements become increasingly intertwined. It emphasizes the pivotal role youth can play in shaping an institutional democratic space that is prone to just transitions.

This policy brief draws upon key findings from the project "Protest and Engagement, from the Global to the Local: Mapping the Forms of Youth Participation in Europe," conducted by the Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy.² Focusing on four countries (Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain), this project explores the intersection of youth forms of mobilization and participation with local

² For more information about the project and its activities, please refer to:
<https://www.graduateinstitute.ch/research-centres/albert-hirschman-centre-democracy/protest-and-engagement-global-local-mapping>

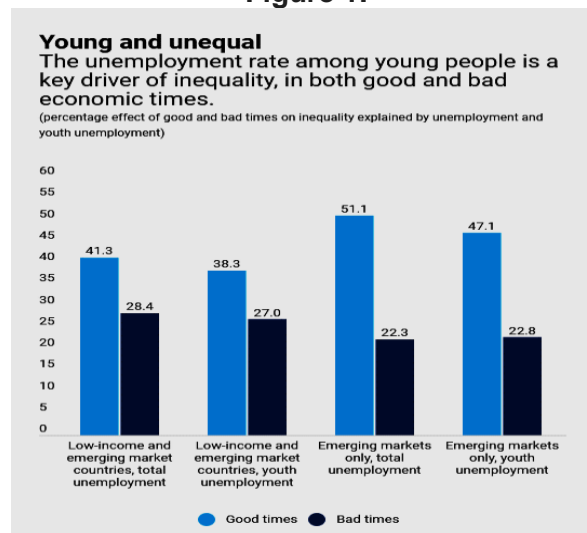
democratic innovations, mechanisms, and participatory arenas (Zarembek and Welp, 2020) with the aim to shed light on the conditions that foster institutional and political settings that are more open and responsive to youth demands (Bullon-Cassis, 2022).

2. How Inequality Affects Youth

In recent times, a surge of youth mobilization has unfolded globally, including in Switzerland, France, Spain, and Italy. These movements center around labour and environmental issues, while also addressing inequality and precarious livelihoods. Various factors have contributed to youth inequality and precarity in these countries and beyond. These include the disproportionate impact of climate change on young people and their communities, the rise of temporary and non-standard jobs within the digital gig economy, resulting in fewer secure and well-paying positions, escalating living costs that hinder access to housing, education, and essentials, and a lack of avenues for youth engagement in decision-making, fostering feelings of disempowerment and discontent. The latter has prompted innovative projects in certain cities, such as Geneva. A campaign named "Change your City!" running until April 18, 2021, encouraged youths and young adults to share their ideas (via the engage.ch website), where participants can also interact with others' proposals. The campaign aims to bolster youth involvement by providing them with a platform to express their ideas and partake in the implementation of the most promising suggestions.

Economic and labour market inequalities, coupled with the importance of unemployment as key inequality driver (as depicted in figure 1), emerge as pivotal factors impacting youth on a global scale, as well as in the countries investigated within the context of the project "Protest and Engagement, from the Global to the Local: Mapping the Forms of Youth Participation in Europe." As a case in point, the Paris Administration has acknowledged the significant labour-related hurdles confronting young residents of the city. This acknowledgment spurred the creation of a novel institution in central Paris known as "Quartier Jeunes," providing guidance and support to individuals aged 16 to 30, assisting them in navigating employment prospects and avenues for professional growth. In contrast, Spain lacks an extensive tradition of youth participation due to its prolonged period of dictatorship and a top-down transitional process, resulting in diminished civic education, political involvement, and political capital. A trend toward heightened youth political engagement began to manifest with the anti-austerity movement in 2011, gaining further momentum through environmental advocacy. A distinct facet of the youth landscape in Spain relates to the formidable challenges young individuals face, particularly in Southern European countries such as in Italy, when striving to access employment opportunities and housing. Young people shoulder the brunt of unemployment and precarity, rendering them the most susceptible to these challenges.

Figure 1.



(Source: Hacibedel and Muthoora, 2020)

It is important to note that youth inequality is not an isolated or novel occurrence. Over the decades, young people have been ensnared in a cycle of successive crises, yielding a challenging present and an uncertain future. Youth were disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis on different fronts (Youth Partnership, 2022; EYF, 2021). A triple shock, consisting of education cuts, job losses, and huge barriers to enter the labour market, were felt across the world albeit with some differences. The incomes of young workers have declined disproportionately compared to the adult population. Economists have written extensively about the relationship between economic inequality and intergenerational social mobility, demonstrating that in countries with greater income inequality, a greater fraction of economic advantage and disadvantage is passed on between parents and their offspring (Milanovic, 2019; Andrews and Leigh, 2009). Poverty combines with economic inequality to generate 'traps of disadvantage' that push and maintain the poorest and most marginalized people at the bottom (Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, 2021).

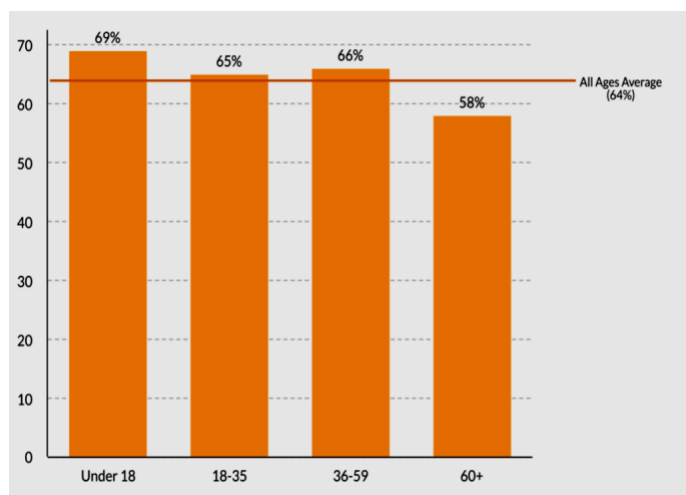
With the rise of youth activism advocating for fairer, more inclusive, and forward-looking prospects in their communities, the urgency to address the diverse array of challenges faced by young individuals has never been more pronounced. These challenges encompass the implications of the *digital and green transitions* for youth, as well as other drivers of change, forming a complex web of factors that reshape how young people live, work, and mobilize. While these changes offer numerous opportunities for growth and innovation, they also come at a cost that translates into emerging inequalities.

The digital transition is expected to have an especially negative impact on young people, with inequalities in skills further exacerbating existing socio-economic disparities. While Millennials and Generation Z are frequently referred to as 'digital natives', the majority of them may not have enough job-relevant digital skills to take up the work on offer (Eynon, 2020; Youth Partnership Report, 2020). Interestingly, the pandemic has already exposed the size of the digital gap, with four out of ten Europeans lacking basic digital skills (Cedefop, 2021). In a study published by

WorldSkills and OECD (2019), 56 percent of young people stated that they know what they want to do for work in the future, but do not feel supported by their education system, and 44 percent are concerned that their skills or knowledge will not be in demand in the future. Estimates for the net impact of the digital transition on employment numbers, as well as their sectoral and geographical distribution, vary widely (Arntz et al., 2016; ILO, 2019a, 2019b; Kucera et al., 2020), yet labour market imbalances and skills mismatches are long-standing concerns. When other labour market aspects are taken into account, the picture becomes bleak, with more than one in every five (22.4 percent) young people aged 15–24 being neither in employment, education, or training (NEET) (ITU, 2021; ILO and SIDA, 2020). Prospects for the future are particularly concerning when one considers how technology and new business models in the growing digital gig economy are disrupting employment relationships and workers' rights (Mexi, 2020a). Young workers in the gig economy, in particular, are disproportionately disadvantaged as a result of short-term contracts, fewer rights protection, and weaker unionization, trapping them in precarity and uncertainty (Bonvin et al, 2023; Barford et al., 2021). Labour market imbalances and skill mismatches are detrimental to job chances and sustainable livelihoods in future digital economies, posing a risk not only to young workers but also to the resilience of our economies and social cohesion (Mexi, 2020b; George, 2016; Antonucci and Hamilton, 2014).

The younger generation is facing growing challenges in navigating the environmental transition. Research indicates a rising prevalence of "eco-anxiety," especially among young individuals. The UNDP's Peoples' Climate Vote,³ the most extensive survey on public attitudes toward climate change, conducted in 2021, highlighted that nearly 70 percent of those under 18 consider climate change a global emergency (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Public Belief in the Climate Emergency, by Age Group



(Source: UNDP and University of Oxford, *Peoples' Climate Vote: Results, 2021*)

Moreover, a recent study of 10,000 young people aged 16–25 years in ten countries found that young people were worried about climate change (59 percent very or extremely worried, 84 percent at least moderately worried). Over 50 percent felt sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless, and guilty. Over 45 percent reported that their feelings about climate change negatively

³ For more detailed information about the survey, please refer to: <https://www.undp.org/publications/peoples-climate-vote>

affected their daily life and functioning, and many stated a high number of negative thoughts about climate change (Marks et al., 2021). Globally, young people, particularly students, have long been key actors of mass mobilizations and social movements demanding progressive change, with research⁴ indicating that both patterns of radicalization and demobilization are emerging in the post-pandemic era. One of the most well-known examples of youth mobilization in Italy, France, Spain and Switzerland is the Fridays for Future movement. This movement, which was inspired by Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, has seen young people take to the streets every Friday to demand action on climate change. Another example is the Youth Strike for Climate movement, which was launched in France in 2019. This movement has seen young people from all over the world go on strike from school to demand action on climate change. High turnover rates in youth-led movements such as Fridays for Future or connected movements (such as Youth for Climate) are explained, partly, by disillusionment with institutional responses. Young people have been vocal about climate change owing to a real feeling of intergenerational injustice, instability and uncertainty (Barford et al., 2021). Concurrently, young people have been systematically excluded from policy decisions that are driving the green transition (EESC Opinion, 2023; Ingaruca, 2022). The greening of economies has the potential to be a new and sustainable force for prosperity, but if not carefully managed and young people's needs and priorities, as well as their potential to contribute creative solutions, are ignored (Castán Broto, 2022), economic disruptions could lead to worker disillusionment, a worsening of already-existing disparities, and the creation of new ones.

Each generation has indeed been shaped by significant events, crises, and transitions throughout history. However, what sets today's young people apart is their encounter with a multitude of simultaneous transformations and intricate social dynamics (Fazey et al., 2018). These circumstances necessitate novel approaches and proactive measures (King, 2020). Moreover, youth currently comprise over a quarter of the world's population, making them the largest youth cohort in history (UN World Youth Report, 2020). Although young people are a significant and valued component of society, they frequently fall through the cracks. Young people live in a world where extreme economic inequality has increased significantly limiting their capacity to bring about the change, they are aspiring for (Ahmed, 2022; Berkhout, 2021; Georgieva, 2020), as well as a world where climate change poses an imminent threat to the planet's survival (UN Security Council, 2021). Because of the three factors of a large youth population, concurrent transformations and existential shifts, and severe inequality, making our time's big transitions *just* is more important than ever. We will all reap a 'demographic dividend' and lay the foundations for a fairer world if we harness the potential and abilities of today's youth to overcome the myriad injustices they face (Msangi, 2022).

The young people who are mobilizing in these contexts are not only calling for policies that will create a more sustainable and just future. They are also calling for a more democratic and inclusive society, where young people have a voice in *just transition* policymaking processes.

⁴ See, in particular, AHCD-led project [Protest and Engagement, from the Global to the Local: Mapping the Forms of Youth Participation In Europe](#)

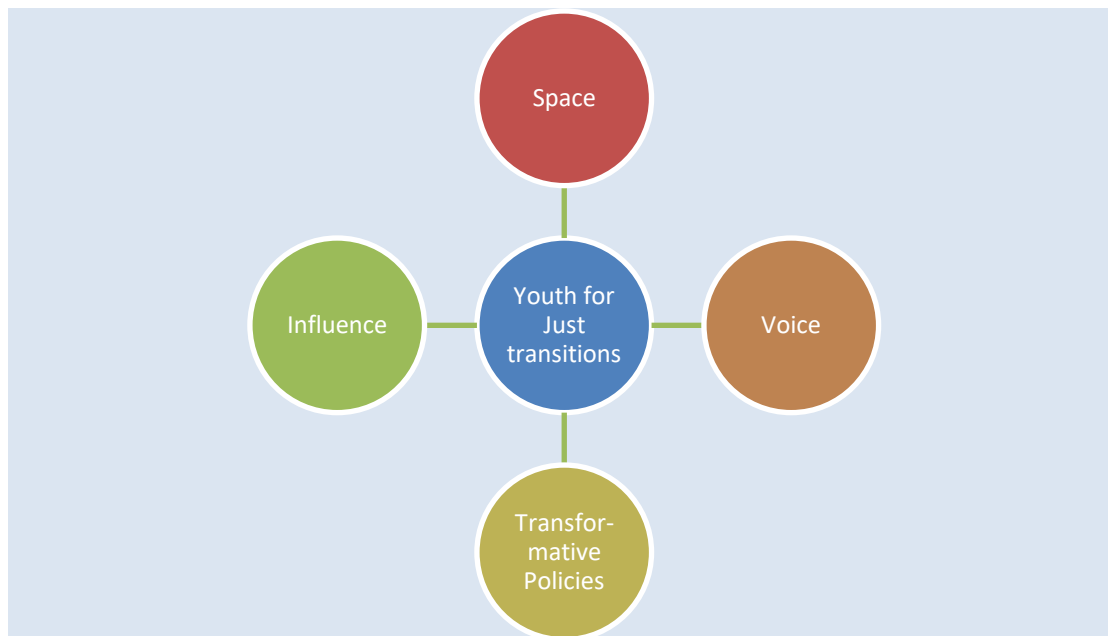
3. What is the “Just Transition”?

The term "just transition" is a normatively strong concept that connects the social, digital, and environmental justice agendas. It encompasses efforts to steer the digital and green transformations while ensuring the future and livelihoods of *all*, particularly disadvantaged groups and communities, with the goal of achieving both social justice objectives and sustainable development (Eurofound, 2023; Muench et al, 2022; ILO, 2016). In this context, a transition will be just if the policies implemented benefit the entire society rather than simply putting the burden on the least privileged. It can be sustainable in the long-term, if it is successful in addressing the underlying inequalities that pervade our societies. And, in order for the transition to be viable, it must be supported and wanted by all groups and segments of society, which can only be achieved through processes of civil and social dialogue that support inclusive policymaking.

A Just Transition, therefore, entails a range of policies, from improving education, livelihood, and employment prospects to mitigating the effects of environmental degradation and digital disruption, and allowing citizens to participate in decisions and deliberations that affect them (EU Council Recommendation, 2022; Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, 2022; OECD, 2017). Enabling youth for just transitions requires in this respect democratizing the economy based on youth participation, opening new horizons for participatory and deliberative democracy, expanding civic spaces, and enhancing young people's skills for democratic participation (Community of Democracies, Institute for Security Studies, and Brookings, 2017). Rather than simply compensating the 'losers' of change, efforts for youth-centred just transitions seek to restructure institutions for social equity, rethink work for a just and sustainable future (Culot and Wiese, 2022), and upskill or reskill youths for their effective participation in the green policy making processes (ILO, 2022), so that many more young people can participate in, and determine, the outcomes of the unfolding shifts of our time. Ultimately, shaping a just transition is a matter of both fairness and justice, as well as participation and democracy.

Crucially, just transitions that engage youth cannot be realized unless young people are given a *voice* and *space* (structures and procedures for forming and expressing opinions) to contribute to decisions and policies that seek equity across the board. At the same time, engagement entails far more than simply having a voice. It is about being informed and having an *influence* in decisions and matters that affect one's life – in the workplace, in the community, and in the broader public sphere. Finally, enabling youth for just transitions require *transformative policies* that are bold enough to lift the barriers that prevent young people, particularly young women, from attaining their full potential- (figure 3).

Figure 3. Enabling youth for just transitions – key elements



(Source: Author's figure)

4. Supporting Youth for Just Transitions: Why it matters

Attacks on democracy (Lutringer, 2017), human rights defenders, journalists, activists, and young civil society organizations have occurred all around the world. According to the Democracy Index for 2022, over a third of the world's population is subject to authoritarian rule, with only 8% enjoying full democracy (Table 1). Economic inequality and labour market precarity driving populist politics (Mexi, 2020c), intensifying political polarization, as well as external influence from great power politics and state-led weakening of political institutions that support the democratic system, such as peaceful power transitions or free and fair elections (International IDEA, 2021), are all considered as factors contributing to democratic retreat or fatigue (Carothers and Press, 2022).

Table 1. Democracy Index 2022, by regime type

	No. of countries	% of countries	% of world population
Full democracies	24	14.4	8.0
Flawed democracies	48	28.7	37.3
Hybrid regimes	36	21.6	17.9

Authoritarian regimes	59	35.3	36.9
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Source: Democracy Index 2022, EUI

There are also alarming signs regarding young people's attitudes toward democracy: pre-pandemic, studies demonstrated a decline in young people's satisfaction with democracy (see, for example, Gallup, 2019). Younger generations have grown more unsatisfied with democracy relative to how previous generations felt at similar periods of life, according to a University of Cambridge study that used data from 160 nations between 1973 and 2020 (Foa et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have intensified institutional discontent. According to a Eurofound study (2021), satisfaction with democracy among adults aged 18-34 dropped across all EU countries between July 2020 and March 2021. Higher rates of youth unemployment and income disparity have made it harder for younger people to establish their own lives, which has increased their "dissatisfaction" with how well democracy responds to their needs. Moreover, evidence suggests that many of the youngest generation – who are skeptical of the functioning of democracies – would approach politics differently, some working for a positive vision but bypassing the institutions, others pushed to political extremes (Zagorski et al, 2019), and a majority disengaged and disenchanted (European Alternatives, 2020).

The literature has identified factors in political disengagement among young people (Giugni and Grasso, 2020) and in their general distrust of public institutions (OECD, 2022). Youth representation, when included, is perceived by young people to be tokenistic and used as a public relations exercise, and young people's voices are not considered and taken into account when decisions are made. Furthermore, evidence from the project *'Protest and engagement, from the global to the local: mapping the forms of youth participation in Europe'* indicates that young people have difficulties finding spaces to cultivate and exercise their voices, recognising that learning through dialogue with others was crucial but difficult to find. In the labour market, data suggests that young are underrepresented in formal social dialogue structures, as well as in critical processes including the design and implementation of policies affecting them (Mexi, 2023).

5. Conclusion and Key Takeaways

As we navigate the complexities of climate change and digital transformation, youth represent a powerful force for transformative action (MacLeod, 2020). The youth-led climate movement has demonstrated their ability to mobilize and raise awareness about environmental issues, compelling governments and organizations to take action (Stokke, 2018). By engaging in protests, advocacy, and innovative solutions, young people have become vocal advocates for change. Yet, various barriers exist for youth to actively participate in shaping a just transition. The following are some key conclusions and takeaways.

1. *Representation and genuine participation are critical for ensuring that youth concerns are heard and addressed in leveraging just transitions*

In the early 2000s, many youth movements lamented such things as having a vote, but no voice (Borge and Mochmann, 2019). The response to the diminishing of our democratic space must include more than just its defence. We must strive to broaden our democratic space, by opening it to youth, expanding rights and opportunities for representation in public and social dialogue, and creating a supportive and enabling environment for young people in civil society organisations. And so, it is crucial to increase young people's opportunities to participate in the design, implementation, and monitoring processes of policies and programmes, as well as implement policy objectives or commitments pertinent to them—in short, delivering policies *with* them *for* them.

Several key preconditions may determine the effectiveness of efforts to incorporate youth-related concerns in shaping just transitions.

- *Strong (political) will* on the part of all parties - governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector - to prioritize youth issues and engage in meaningful dialogue with young people to discuss youth realities and prospects; Redeveloping programs alongside young people to create more inclusive spaces that reach out and include those facing significant barriers and exclusion.
- *Increased capacity* of political and social dialogue institutions, as well as political parties, employer and worker organizations that deliver with and for young people, by improving and expanding existing modalities for dialogue, cooperation, and partnerships with youth-led organizations, movements, and networks;
- *Clear standards* for governments and social partners to assess and monitor how they engage young people in effective and efficient collaboration;
- *Sufficient resources* and the existence of *strong youth structures*, such as youth advisory boards or committees as well as networks of and for young people within political and social partner entities to provide a channel for listening to young people and reinforcing their engagement with the work of policymakers and social partners while ensuring systematic attention to youth issues.

In short, injecting a youth perspective requires increasing the ability of all actors in the political terrain and the world of work to collaborate, and rectifying deficiencies in reaching young people and creating space for genuine participation transforming youthful needs and priorities for just transitions into long-standing and sustained engagement rather than despondency.

2. The more 'democratic innovations' embrace the perspectives and the political action of young people, the more young people will be active and able to use their voice to make just transitions youth responsive

With young people increasingly dissatisfied with and alienated from political elites, the need for new avenues of political engagement has become more critical. Despite the powerful worldwide dynamics of democratic retreat, many positive cases of such engagement have emerged in recent years, frequently in the form of "democratic innovations." Indeed, many observers see a new ethos of citizen engagement via several projects or experiments of democratic innovations defining efforts to counter democratic erosion.

Examples of democratic innovations include *selection-based mini-publics*, which are forums where participants are chosen at random to discuss particular policy issues. This sortition template is considered as the gold standard of participation in the Western countries where it is used, since it is based on highly sophisticated techniques of stratified selection to assure representation from diverse sectors of society (Young and Godfrey, 2022). The literature also reveals various other sorts of democratic innovations, such as "open participation," which is common in Latin American countries and differs from sortition-based participation (European Democracy Hub, 2022). These initiatives frequently combine formally facilitated deliberation with more informal types of open citizen debate, and they foresee several cumulative rounds of participation at different levels of decision-making. Social audits have also become popular; they involve a participatory public hearing in which a large number of citizens have a fairly structured opportunity to review local politicians (ibid).

These innovations should not be idealized as many of them have struggled to last over time or have been hijacked by political interests. Even though they are far from being panaceas (Devaney et al, 2020), the diversity and ingenuity of these participatory forms makes them intriguing at a time when young people's trust in established institutions and political authorities is waning. These democratic innovations could reinvigorate young people's engagement with politics in the long term -- something to take into account when considering alternate strategies to harness the transformative energy and optimism that youth can provide to revitalize our democracies and make them more just, representative, and responsive (Scott, 2019). Governments, cities/communities, and organizations should invest in initiatives that support youth-led democratic innovations by leveraging resources, building bridges between generations, and fruitful connections with youth-led grassroots activism and global movements.

3. Our democracies have a strong interest in investing in young people practicing democracy at school, work, in civil society organisations, and in other settings

Young people themselves are calling for more and better political and civic education to prepare them for participating equally in politics since otherwise more privileged young people are more likely to learn more political skills, further reinforcing political representation inequities (Mayanja, 2022). Evidence from the project *'Protest and engagement, from the global to the local: mapping the forms of youth participation in Europe'* (see also Liou and Literat, 2020) suggests that young people who are already involved in activist and advocacy work for environmental and labour causes recognize the importance of other young mentors and activists in learning how to practice democracy on the ground. This included both brief interactions and connections (hearing their tales, tips, and guidance) and more in-depth mentorship with a focus on everyday activism. Importantly, young activists who valued reciprocity, horizontal relationships with adult mentors, and listening appeared to also value the combination of personal activist involvement with a desire

to engage in formal institutions as the ideal vision of citizenship and democratic renewal in the face of navigating the green and digital transitions.

4. Breaking down silos may offer a unique opportunity for better understanding the nexus between climate change, labour, and youth challenges as well as its impact on critical areas linked to just transition

In recent years, young people have mobilized in unprecedented numbers on the issue of climate justice (UNICEF, 2022). Evidence suggests that a new wave of young activism is gaining traction, driven by a desire to bridge the climate and labour movements, with economic justice at its core. Many young climate justice activists have now found themselves in the labour movement; for example, the Labour Network for Sustainability in the US (First-Arai, 2022). Young workers and youth climate activists have formed significant coalitions to advocate for both decent and sustainable work, as well as environmental sustainability. Findings from the project "Protest and Engagement, from the Global to the Local: Mapping the Forms of Youth Participation in Europe," indicate a growing connection between climate and labour concerns among the youth. In France, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland, climate and labour issues are becoming closely intertwined with social justice, with the concept of 'just transition' becoming increasingly central to youth demands. For instance, in Lyon, Youth for Climate has partnered with workers' movements like Confederation Paysanne, which represents countryside workers, to protest specific projects. Overcoming insularity and breaking down the existing "system of silos" that hinder meaningful exchanges between labour and climate movements, while also providing an opportunity for mutual reinforcement, could be a promising approach for young people to better comprehend and effectively address the links between the intersecting transitions – digital and environmental – and the injustices they confront.

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