

As J.K. Rowling so eloquently put it, “words are...our most inexhaustible source of magic.” They are double edged swords, carrying the power to either elucidate or ensnare minds. In a world where words wreak havoc, creating smoke and mirror shows to manipulate the masses, actions speak deafeningly louder. With that said, it is imperative for today’s youth to engage in civics by participating in politics, community services, and activism. The youth have the power to raise awareness, influence policy, and strengthen communities. The future lies with them; every action taken or shirked alters the course of history. If young people maneuver effectively, they can change the world.

With the influx of technology and education, new and upcoming generations have access to more information than ever before, paving the way for social awareness and activism. Social media sets the stage, creating platforms for communities to communicate crises, present opportunities, and promote events. Unlike older generations that lack technological understanding and perspective, young people are able to brief themselves on situations and address a plethora of subjects, ranging from social injustice and upcoming elections to local fundraisers and impending storms. They can potentially garner the attention of millions, using it to amplify marginalized voices, hold politicians accountable, and highlight needs for change in ways that are easy to grasp and comprehend. They can organize crowds virtually and physically to educate, protest, and unify. When taken advantage of, the youth can influence the public and incite affirmative action, all with the simple push of a button.

As a result, political policies can shift. Fresh perspectives drive change; the more informed the youth becomes, the more they deviate from conventionality. They challenge the status quo, doing away with outdated traditional views to push for reformed outlooks that encapsulate modern struggles and situations. In turn, new policies can arise, tackling widespread issues like climate change, gun control, and human rights. This can protect and save lives, fostering healthy social and political environments on a potentially global scale. Young people have the power to represent and advocate for entire communities, thereby shifting public policy, opinion, and participation from passive to active.

Furthermore, these changes can establish communal networks, making people feel seen and heard. If disenfranchised communities saw that they were being fought for and represented in governments, it would empower them to better themselves and strive for a difference. People are more inclined to listen and change when those around them—their role models and community members—are leading the way. At local levels like schools, neighborhoods, and community service institutions, this especially rings true. For example, kids often dismiss the words of adults, finding it hard to relate to them and feel understood. If their youthful peers, however, shared advice and gave guidance, they would be more willing to listen and obey. During volunteering, young people—regardless of their backgrounds—have the opportunity to be brought together for a common cause. This encourages social bonds and personal growth, helping them to develop and learn to set aside differences, acting as a community as opposed to a

heterogeneous jumble of strangers. Even within a family, an older sibling partaking in civic action through community service can leave a lasting impact on their younger siblings. This positive peer pressure can have a rippling effect, inspiring more people to be civic and fulfill their roles as citizens. It can build leadership, instill senses of duty and responsibility, and even create careers for all that engage!

In conclusion, civic engagement from today's youth can bring about favorable, pragmatic changes, benefitting citizens on a large scale. It is fundamental for democracy and social progress, allowing the raising of societal awareness, the influencing of political policy, and the strengthening of the most broken of communities. Over 7,100 languages are spoken globally, but action is the only one that transcends all barriers and is universally understood. If young people united and used their knowledge and power for the greater good through civic action, they could make a difference, one that would echo for years to come.