

Joint Statement / 共同声明

NextGen Democracy: Asia-Pacific Youth Leadership Program | Tokyo | February 2026

Title / タイトル

Policy Action Recommendations for Enhancing the Quality of Youth Political Participation in Asia

アジアにおける若者の政治参加の質を高めるための政策行動提言

Signatories / 署名

Participants of the program | Hosted by JCIE Democracy for the Future Project

Chikako KODAMA, Ph.D Candidate at Graduate
School of Law, Hitotsubashi University

Gyeong-jong MO, Member of the National Assembly
of the Republic of Korea, The Democratic Party of
Korea

R.A. Yashinta Sekarwangi MEGA, Member of
Regional Representative Council of the Republic of
Indonesia

Thanisara RUANGDEJ, CEO and Co-founder of
WeVis, Thailand

Sohee YANG, Founder, YOUNAN Movement, Co-
founder/CEO, VALID, Republic of Korea

Rui AOYAMA, Master's student at Hitotsubashi
University Graduate School of Law

Momoka ASANO, High School Student, Japan Youth
Council

Yuki ARAI, Student at Kanagawa University

Taketo ASHITOMI, Core Member of Japan Youth
Council

Kaori DAN, Student at Kanagawa University

Takashi IWATA, CEO of HammerBird, Senior
Researcher at Keio Research Institute at SFC

Yuki MUROHASHI, Representative Director of Japan
Youth Council

Ayaka SASAKI, Student at International Christian
University

Shelley SINGH, General Affairs Department
Employee at Sato Sangyo

Yuta TAKAHASHI, Representative Director of
Association Katawara

Hibiki TERASHIMA, High School Student, Member of
Japan Youth Council

Lindsay YAMAGISHI, Core Member of Japan Youth
Council

Tomofumi YOSHIDA, Director of Ekklesia, General
Incorporated Association

Ryo TAINAKA, Program officer, JCIE (NexGenDem26
Coordinator)

Note: This statement reflects participants' views and does not necessarily represent official positions of institutions.

1. Purpose / 目的

We provide actionable recommendations to improve the quality of youth political participation in Asia, with a focus on empowering youth political proactiveness, civic learning in and beyond school and creating spaces for deliberation. By sharing the following action agenda for policymakers, educators, civic actors and ourselves, we are committed to convert youth interest into sustained participation and democratic resilience in Asia.

2. Targets and calls to action / ターゲットと呼びかけ先

(These are the audiences this statement calls on to take action)

Potential Targets

Young people / students (incl. unaffiliated youth) Policymakers & parliaments Schools / universities
 Central/Local governments Civil society & youth organizations Media & influencers Digital platforms

Primary Targets

Young people / students (incl. unaffiliated youth)
 Policymakers & parliaments
 Schools / universities
 Central/Local governments
 Civil society & youth organizations

Among the many stakeholders involved, we have identified the five primary targets of this action plan; those with the highest level of direct stake in the issue, with clear roles and responsibilities to implement and lead to tangible impact.

3. Shared message “Joint vision and problem recognition”) / 共同メッセージ

Joint vision:

Democracy for youth means to have civic ownership. Dialogue is an essential element for the decision-making process.

Joint problem recognition:

1. While many young people have interest in politics, they are unable to translate their personal values and issues into political will.
2. Even when they do generate political will, they face psychological obstacles to expressing it and technical obstacles, such as not being aware of available communication channels.

To resolve these challenges, we will focus on empowering youth political proactiveness, civic learning in and beyond school, and creating spaces for deliberation.

4. Common action agenda / 共同アクション

Pillar 1, Empowering youth political proactiveness

Challenge to address

- Among Asian youth, political discussion is sometimes regarded as a sensitive topic and even perceived as socially risky. It leads many young people to avoid political engagement to minimize conflict, emotional strain, and stereotyping.
- The absence of safe and accessible spaces and entry points prevents young people from turning political concern into meaningful participation without the risk of judgment, polarization, or backlash.

Shared Recommended Actions

- Design and activate step-by-step, safe, and constructive spaces for dialogue on political and social issues that engage not only students but also teachers, educators, and other stakeholders within schools and educational institutions
- Create an online/face-to-face platform that provides access to both supporting and opposing viewpoints to avoid one-sided discussions. This process will leverage AI and technology to facilitate the creation and sharing of diverse opinions
- Enable youth to see themselves as political actor, reframe political participation as every day and collective, not elite or heroic. Highlight diverse forms of political action, including community care, dialogue, and agenda-setting. Also, ensure decision-making table to be more inclusive by bringing diverse youth to the table.

Pillar 2, Civic learning in and beyond school

Challenge to address

Democratic communication within schools is often difficult due to slow decision-making, busy teachers, and the oppressive environment within schools. Outside of schools, there are also no official channels for young people to express their views to local assemblies, the National Diet, and society. Plans and strategies are needed to overcome these situations both inside and outside of schools.

Shared Recommended Actions

- Develop a curriculum whether inside or outside of school that empowers youth to analyze issues concerning school, community and society and voice their opinion publicly.
- Make the curriculum available to offer a framework for private schools and local governments.
- Encourage students and teachers to engage in problem-solving alongside local and national assemblies as easily as participating in extracurricular clubs, remaining unaffected by school hierarchy or the information gap between rural and urban areas.

Pillar 3, Creating spaces for deliberation

Challenge to address

Dialogue across differences is widely valued, yet high-quality deliberation is rare. Many discussions remain in echo chambers, and key barriers include safety concerns, information asymmetry, fear of conflict, and harmful communication, especially in digital environments.

Shared Recommended Actions

- Create repeatable, facilitated deliberation spaces: Establish regular, structured dialogue forums (online/offline) with clear ground rules, and a common fact base.
- Create a safe condition by developing or improving a legal framework for protecting freedom of speech.

※The country-specific priority actions are provided in the Annex for reference.

5. Contact / コンタクト先

Secretariat: Democracy for the Future Project, Japan Center for International Exchange

JCIE serves as the secretariat and convener of this program. In its capacity, JCIE will support the follow-up of this statement by convening dialogues, connecting participants with relevant stakeholders, including members of the Japanese Diet's cross-party caucus on universal values and other members, sharing the statement through its networks, and facilitating light follow-up exchanges where feasible.

Email: jcie_secretariat@jcie.jp