YOUTH, VOLUNTEERING AND PARTICIPATION

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The discussions in the literature around the relationship between civil society organisations and volunteering have touched upon many different issues, especially in the past 20 years. Some of the discussions focused on addressing the contribution and impact of volunteers in terms of social participation, while others defined civil society in general and volunteering (which is a form of engagement in civil society for the individuals) in particular, as one of the most prominent tools for political participation, especially when representative democracy falls short and/or fails to provide enough space for the voices of individuals to be heard. Especially, for groups with limited opportunities, in the event of failing to find a place in representative democracy, voluntary activities have been defined as a tool and pathway for social participation, or in other words, for taking part in living together. These activities have also been imagined as processes which provide a space for the relevant groups to express their needs and demands, in other words, to voice their demands of political change on establishing ways of living together. In this sense, volunteering has become a particularly prominent means and venue for young people with limited opportunities.[1]

It was considered that the process of volunteering was an important tool and a pathway to overcome the constraints that young people face in the context of both social participation and political participation. Volunteering was envisaged as a part of - a means of - youth work to reach out different youth groups or to enable different youth groups to participate in social life (European Commission and Council of Europe, 2017). On the other hand, it was conceived as a process that provides space for young people, who could not participate as agents in conventional political participation processes, to voice their demands through civil society organisations (LSE Enterprise, 2013).

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[1] The structural problems of representative democracy in terms of the representation of and giving a voice to different citizens are discussed in detail in the relevant literature. For a critical study in the context of gender, see Phillips, 1995. Through advocacy activities, civil society organisations contribute to raising awareness about less visible issues within the mechanisms of representative democracy and to expressing the needs and demands of citizens. Therefore, they influence the decision-making and policy-making processes. The concepts of "political participation" and "political change" mentioned above are used as references to the efforts of CSOs to influence decision-making and policy-making processes.

This paper aims to discuss how the young people who participated in the volunteering survey carried out the practice of volunteering, the meaning(s) they attributed to "volunteering" and the relationship they established between participation and volunteering.[2] The discussion in question consists of three sections. The first section will address the relationship between youth and volunteering within the context of social and political participation. This section aims to discuss how young people consider volunteering as a tool and a pathway within the context of participation in living together. The second section will dwell on the opportunities and constraints of young people in participating in decision-making processes within the civic initiatives where they carry out volunteering activities. In other words, to what extend the structures that are instrumental to young people's participation are open to lending an ear to the voices of young people and/or allowing them to express themselves will be discussed based on the assessments made through the eyes of young people. Finally, what kind of benefits young people gain from the volunteering process will be addressed within the context of the young people's own assessments. Whether volunteering is designed as an empowering process for young people and to what extent it contributes to the development of citizenship competences will also be elaborated in this section.

Participation and volunteering

In the relevant literature and the documents of relevant institutions, the concept of volunteering and its definition are described by accentuating different characteristics. Therefore, it is very difficult to find a single definition of volunteering. The concept of volunteering is described differently by emphasizing or de-emphasizing issues such as the perspective of the institution that provides the relevant definition, its relationship with the welfare regime it operates in, its level of expertise, or whether volunteering is done individually or within a certain organisation. The common characteristics of the definition of volunteering underlined in both the relevant literature and the policy documents is that, it is defined as an activity that enables contribution to social life.[3]

In the past 20 years, numerous initiatives have been launched both throughout Europe and through the United Nations to promote and encourage volunteering activities based on the

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[2]For this discussion, first of all, the survey conducted for the paper in question, focus groups with volunteers and interviews with people working at civil society organisations were used as the main data set. In addition to the data of the survey on volunteers, the studies on youth and participation, which have been carried out both in Turkey and in Europe in the last decade, were also considered as supportive discussions and therefore added to the discussion.

[3] For the discussions on this topic, see European Youth Forum (2012) and DGEAC (2010). For an alternative naming for the concept of volunteering, see Adler, R. P., and Goggin, J. (2005),

aspect of contribution to social life. In order to encourage and increase the volunteering of young people in particular, a number of programs have been implemented in the European context, covering different areas and activities, such as the proclamation of 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering, or the European Voluntary Service.[4]

In parallel with these initiatives, a Eurobarometer survey entitled "Youth on the Move" was commissioned by the General Directorate for Education and Culture of the European Commission in 2011, to understand the participation of young people in volunteering in Europe. According to the Eurobarometer survey, 24% of young Europeans are engaged in voluntary activities (DGC, 2011). However, it is important to bear in mind that this is the average of all European Union countries. Another survey conducted in 2007 indicates that, the percentage of young people participating in volunteering was 24% or more in the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, Belgium, and Finland, compared to 10% or less in Sweden, Spain, Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania (EACEA, 2007).

Young people in Turkey also benefit from some of the programs carried out within the European Union. The participation of young people in civil society activities in Turkey is around 10%, which is far below the EU average (KONDA-CCSS, 2014).[5] However, it should be noted that this is very close to the rate of participation in civic space for all age groups in Turkey. In other words, the fact that participation remains around 10% is not limited to young people, but rather, being a member of or volunteering for civil society organisations remains to be low for all age groups in the society.[6]

Therefore, for future discussions about this study, the contributors to the discussion should keep in mind that the opinions of young people, which correspond to around 10% throughout Turkey, will also be reflected to a certain extent, in a representative manner.

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[4]For official documents related to the European Year of Volunteering, see: https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/european-year-of-volunteering/european-year-of-volunteering-2011-documents/index_en.htm For the document containing early discussions on the European Voluntary Service, see Forsi, S. (1997).

[5] For the discussions about the participation of young people in Turkey, see KONDA-CCSS (Center for Civil Society Studies), 2014; Erdoğan, E. and Uyan-Semerci, P. 2017; For two studies on the impact of volunteering on young people, see: Erdoğan, E. 2012 and Erdoğan, E. 2017.

[6]For membership to associations and foundations in Turkey, see SGB (Department of Strategy Development), 2018.

Based on the volunteering survey elaborated in detail in the book edited by Erdoğan, Uyan-Semerci, Yentürk and Yurttagüler, this paper discusses the extent to which volunteering contributes to the political and social participation and empowerment of young people (Erdoğan et al, 2020).[7] Since the survey in question covers all age groups, it offers the opportunity to have a comparative look at the volunteering practices of young people.

1016 respondents participated in the survey in question, and it was carried out as an online survey. For the purposes of the discussion that will be carried out in this paper, people under the age of 28 years were considered as young people and were assessed accordingly. As for the breakdown of the respondents by age groups, 33% were between the ages of 15-24 years and 12% were between the ages of 25-29 years. 45% of the respondents were young people aged 28 years and under.

First, young people were asked what they understood from the concept of volunteering and why they volunteered, in connection with the relevant understanding. In other words, the aim was to try to understand in what area young people wanted to contribute to "living together" and why they wanted to contribute to it. For young people, the reasons for volunteering also shape the boundaries of the kind of volunteering they envision.

In the focus groups conducted with young people, they were asked to share the story of their relationship with volunteering. The common response shared by the focus group participants was "*I wanted to do something*". What they are basically pointing out is that they wanted to volunteer because of a need to contribute to the society. Another opinion that supports the focus group outcomes comes from the field study conducted with volunteers. The volunteers were presented with a series of statements and they were asked if they thought the statement indicated a benefit of volunteering. 88.1% of volunteers and 92.9% of young people said they considered the statement "Feeling useful" as a benefit.

Another indicator that volunteering is associated with social contribution by young people is the response to the statement, "I would like to volunteer to help where public resources are not sufficient." When respondents were asked if they agreed with the statement in question, 72.2% of young people said they agreed (I agree or I totally agree), while 9.9% said they disagreed (I do not agree or I do not agree at all). The rate of agreeing with the relevant statement is 69.2%

for all age groups and the rate of disagreeing is 11.5%. In other words, where public resources are not sufficient, volunteering to contribute is an understanding that is more prevalent among young people compared to other age groups **(Table 1).**

Table 1: Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following statements: - I would like to volunteer to help where public resources are not sufficient.						
	59 years and over	58 - 44 years	43 - 29 years	28 years and under	No Answer	Total
I do not agree at all	9.2%	5.4%	3.3%	4.3%	8.7%	5.3%
2	8.3%	6.9%	7.2%	5.6%	2.9%	6.2%
3	10.1%	14.4%	14.8%	15.8%	8.7%	14.0%
4	22.9%	25.2%	24.4%	24.5%	21.2%	24.1%
I totally agree.	35.8%	41.6%	44.0%	47.7%	53.8%	45.1%
No Answer	13.8%	6.4%	6.2%	2.0%	4.8%	5.3%
Total %, N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	109	202	209	392	104	1016

At the same time, however, 43.9% of young people responded that they do not agree at all with the statement "Volunteering is only about helping those in need," whereas this rate is 39.6% on average for all age groups. The percentage of young people who said they agreed with the statement is 23.7%; compared to the average of 25.9% for all age groups **(Table 2).** The responses to the statement in question indicate that young people assign a meaning to volunteering that is beyond just providing assistance or services. Moreover, the fact that they differentiate from the average percentage for all age groups can be considered as a clue that, their personal and social expectations from volunteering are also different.

Table 2: Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following statements: - Volunteering is only about helping those in need.						
	59 years and over	58 - 44 years	43 - 29 years	28 years and under	No Answer	Total
I do not agree at all	22.9%	17.8%	24.9%	**26.8%**	26.9%	**24.2%**
2	12.8%	13.9%	13.4%	**17.1%**	18.3%	**15.4%**
3	11.9%	24.8%	18.7%	20.2%	14.4%	19.3%
4	13.8%	12.4%	11.5%	**11.7%**	11.5%	**12.0%**
I totally agree.	13.8%	16.8%	13.9%	**12.0%**	15.4%	**13.9%**
No Answer	24.8%	14.4%	17.7%	12.2%	13.5%	15.3%
Total %. N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	109	202	209	392	104	1016

For the volunteers, volunteering to contribute to living together is not limited to providing assistance or services to others. Young people have defined volunteering as contributing to the "good society" that they "envision".

> "... If you ask what volunteering means to me, I think it's basically about taking action on something that matters to you, or actually, it's like an adventure that you set forth to create change, maybe in an area where you identify a shortcoming and you actually believe that you can change something in this field..."

This contribution is expressed through different statements such as "I wanted to do something", "I wanted to do whatever I could to help", "I wanted to have a voice". This contribution can be defined as contributing in one's field of interest or to a socially or personally important issue. "I wanted to have a voice" is another interesting statement. One of the most important factors in selecting the organisation or field of volunteering for the young people participating in the focus groups was whether it provided a "space for expressing themselves". And "expressing oneself" can be defined as working in a field that interests or concerns the person, or working for one's own personal agenda. Having a voice might mean carrying out activities in one single civil society organisation that works in the field of that particular interest; or it might mean working for the issue in question in different civic initiatives. Expressing oneself, in other words, sharing one's needs and demands in the public sphere, can be for the purpose of structural change or for the purpose of gaining recognition in the public sphere. When asked why they volunteered, one of the participants gave the following answer:

> "I would say, initially I volunteered to defend the rights of my community, this was a personal reason, but then, after you start for personal reasons you then move on to working for groups outside your community as well."

What is interesting is that, while volunteers continue working to get involved and struggle for change, some of them envision volunteering as an area that is outside the realm of politics. Volunteering is defined as political by 38.1% of the volunteers who participated in the survey and by 34% of the young volunteers. However, 42.6% of young people and an average of 35.9% of all age groups stated that they did not agree with the statement "Volunteering is a political stance" **(Table 3).** Whether this understanding involves a demand for change or whether volunteering is perceived only as a philanthropic activity is an issue that needs to be further investigated and discussed.

Table 3: Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following statements: - Volunteering is a political stance.						
	59 years and over	58 - 44 years	43 - 29 years	28 years and under	No Answer	Total
I do not agree at all	18.3%	19.3%	19.1%	**28.8%**	27.9%	**23.7%**
2	10.1%	13.9%	11.0%	**13.8%**	7.7%	**12.2%**
3	12.8%	14.4%	15.3%	15.3%	11.5%	14.5%
4	11.0%	15.8%	19.1%	**13.8%**	10.6%	**14.7%**
I totally agree.	26.6%	21.3%	28.2%	**20.2%**	26.9%	**23.4%**
No Answer	21.1%	15.3%	7.2%	8.2%	15.4%	11.5%
Total %, N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	109	202	209	392	104	1016

Another finding that stands out in the volunteering survey, focus groups and interviews is the general proportion of men and women among the volunteers participating in the study. Of all the volunteers who participated in the survey, 68.4% were women and 30.4% were men. 71.9% of the young people who participated in the survey were women and 26.8% were men. In terms of the organisations for which they volunteer, it is seen that women mainly prefer volunteering for organisations working for children, education/training, gender (women) and youth; whereas men prefer organisations working in the field of education/training, environment, youth and children. In addition, it should be noted that compared to women, men volunteer more on issues related to human rights and politics. It would not be correct to think that, the finding suggesting that activities for providing assistance and services are usually carried out by female volunteers, is specific to this research. Both in this region and in the world, historically, philanthropic activities stand out as a role envisioned for and assigned to women.[8] On the one hand, the relationship between philanthropy and the role assigned to women is related to the narrative that care-giving is the duty of women. On the other hand, the artificial designation of the political sphere and politics to men stems from the fact that the public sphere is associated with men.[9] Therefore, providing assistance and services are considered to take place in the "private sphere" and are associated with care-giving, and therefore are assigned to women. At the same time, this causes the narrative on civic space to be constructed outside of the "political sphere". The fact that both young people and other groups did not agree with the statement "volunteering

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[8]For a historical discussion, see Cavallo, S. (1995); For a discussion on Turkey, see Zihnioğlu, Y. 2003.
[9]On this topic, see Pateman, C., 1989 and Fraser N, 1992.

is a political stance" may be related to how the civic space has been envisioned historically. The reason behind envisioning volunteering as a non-political activity may be related to considering it outside politics and associating it with philanthropy.[10]

Whether volunteering is done by providing services or by expressing a need or a demand for change in the public sphere, the volunteering process is an effort to contribute to an area that "*matters*" to the individual. Therefore, it can be said that volunteering is a pathway or a tool intended to make a social contribution to achieve the envisioned "good society". Especially, in the last 30 years, whereby the functioning and the representing power of representative democracy have been questioned in Turkey and around the world, civil society and volunteering have emerged as fields where individuals can contribute to the social sphere and to living together. Civil society organisations and volunteering are among the rare arenas where young people can exist, especially considering that they are not able to become agents in representative democracy.

Although civil society is the ground where young people take action and participate actively, it is necessary to say that in representative democracy, they participate to the extent the existing constraints allow them. At the very least, it should be noted that the young volunteers who participated in this survey tend to use many of the instruments utilized in representative democracy. However, as can be seen from the data below, there are some differences between other age groups and young people.

When volunteers were asked if they voted or not, it is seen that the average of those who voted is 90.6%. The percentage of voting for young people who volunteered is 89%. The question also provided options to respond as "No, I did not get a chance" and "No, I did not want to". 4.3% of young people answered "No, I did not want to" and among all age groups, they are the group with the highest percentage of "Not wanting to vote".

The percentage of "Membership to a political party", which is a part of representative democracy, is 16.7% on average for all ages. The membership ratio, which is 38.5% for people aged 59 and over, is 7.9% for young people. The percentage of young people who responded as "No, I did not want to" is 83.9%. Young people who are active when it comes to voting and

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[10] Thinking collectively on how the civic space was envisioned historically, the types of activities and the roles attributed to women, can be useful in opening up new discussions.

going to the polls refrain extremely when it comes to becoming a member to a political party that solicits their vote.

One may not be a member of a political party, but still work actively in the electoral campaign of a political party or a candidate, just for the election period. When volunteers who participated in the survey were asked, "Have you ever worked actively in the electoral campaign of a political party or a candidate?", those who said yes is 21.2%. 10.7% of young people and 42.2% of those aged 59 and over worked in an election campaign for a political party or candidate. The average of those who responded "No, I did not want to" is 64.7%. 77.6% of young people and 33.9% of those aged 59 years and over did not want to work for the campaign of a political party or candidate. Given that the respondents are individuals who are already volunteering, they are not unaccustomed to or unfamiliar with volunteering for a campaign. Nevertheless, the fact that they have never worked for a campaign of any political party or candidate is particularly noteworthy. In fact, as the figures indicate, young people have avoided doing so expressly. In particular, after Obama's campaign, there were important discussions about how the campaigns of political parties or candidates could improve thanks to volunteers (Mckenna, E. and Khan, H. 2014). However, the fact that no party or candidate has reached out to them or attracted their attention can be rediscussed through young people's attitude towards institutionalized politics.

Attending a party rally is a more of an outsider role than being a member of a party or working for the party/candidate in question. The average percentage is 39.6% among all age groups, 29.1% among young people, and 59.6%. among people who are 59 years and over. Among young people, 59.2% said "No, I did not want to." The rate of attending rallies, which is much higher compared to membership or working for a candidate, remains extremely low among young people, compared to other age groups.

The reason why young people are more disengaged from political parties and representative democracy compared to people over the age of 59 was not asked specifically in this survey. However, other surveys assessing the context of Turkey and Europe refer to certain points as the main reasons why young people stay away from political parties. Some of these relate to the internal functioning of political parties, and some of them relate to the requirements of political parties (Mycock, A. and Tonge, J., 2012).

The most common criticism against the internal functioning of political parties is the bureaucracy within the parties and the lack or limitation of the young people's right to have a voice. In other words, young people stay away from political parties because they are relatively invisible within the party and their voices are not heard (Kimberlee, R. 2002).[11] Another criticism directed by young people concerns the institutions and processes of representative democracy in general and includes political parties as well. The trust of young people in the institutions of representative democracy and the political parties in it has declined significantly. Young people think that the internal functioning mechanisms are bureaucratic and dysfunctional and they lack the capacity to create change (Mycock, A. and Tonge, J., 2012). Moreover, the limited ability to change or influence the discourse produced by political parties makes it difficult for them to own the discourse and to organise around such discourse or purpose (Sloam, J., 2007).

58.5% of the volunteers on average responded as "yes" to the question: "Have you ever written a petition to the competent municipality or other similar authorities regarding a problem in the city or neighborhood where you live?". The percentage of young people writing a petition to their local government is 40.6%, whereas this percentage is 78.9% for people aged 59 and over. On average 60.4% of the respondents said "yes" to the question: "Have you ever written a petition to the competent municipality or other similar authorities regarding a problem that directly concerned you?". The percentage of young people writing petitions on an issue of self-interest is 46.4%, whereas this percentage is 81.7% for those aged 59 and over.

As can be seen from the percentages, again, it is the mature citizens who resort to writing petitions at a higher rate compared to young people. However, despite this, young people who volunteer make more efforts to contact the local governments, compared to the efforts they make in their relationship with the central government and central government instruments. One of the main reasons for this is that, there is a higher possibility that they can create change when they apply to local governments regarding a personal issue or an issue concerning their local community (Gretschel A., et al. 2014). And indeed, this can be seen from the higher percentage of writing petitions about personal issues.

The percentage of young people who responded as "No, I did not have a chance" to the question "Have you ever written a petition to the competent municipality or other similar authorities

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[11] For a discussion on participation of young people in political parties in Turkey: Erdoğan 2009.

regarding a problem that concerned the city or neighbourhood where you live?" is 33.2%, which is higher than both young people who said "No, I did not want to" and all other age groups who said they did not have a chance. A similar result can be seen in the answer to the question "Have you ever written a petition to the competent municipality or other similar authorities regarding a problem that directly concerned you?". 29.1% of young people responded as "No, I did not have a chance". Of course, young people may not have had a chance for many reasons, but one reason is that young people have poor or limited knowledge of writing petitions (relevant mechanisms and actors) and the process of submitting a petition. Therefore, even if they wanted to, their knowledge and skills in writing or submitting may be limited or inadequate. It is observed that young people who are more distanced to engaging with the central government are actually more inclined to engage with the local government, which is more accessible and closer to them and to their experiences.

Finally, volunteers were asked about their experience of taking action in the public sphere and taking action online.[12] The first question is "Have you ever participated in a manifestation?". The average percentage of those who said yes among volunteers is 57.2%. What is interesting here is that, the group with the highest percentage among those who said yes to this question is those who are aged 59 and over, with 73.4%, and the percentage for young people is 45.4%. Considering that especially most recently taking action in the public sphere is an extremely difficult and restricted practice, perhaps the difference between the percentages can be understood. However, among young people, 15.1% said "No, I did not have a chance", while 38.8% said "No, I did not want to". According to this data, about more than a third of the young people surveyed chose not to participate in manifestations. This information is particularly interesting, considering that the respondents volunteered in fields such as women's rights and human rights, where there are organisations which actively use manifestations as a means of taking action. Moreover, the young people also stated that they did volunteering activities for these organisations. Another issue is that, these young people who are actually taking action by volunteering, do not prefer being engaged in other performative types of taking action in the public sphere. With regard to this situation, it may be useful to talk about and examine in detail the meanings that young people attribute to volunteering.

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[12] The concept of "taking action" is used to refer to all participation-based activities carried out in the public sphere. The use of the term "activism" is specifically avoided here. Because, the term "taking action" does not only include all the actions and meanings that are attributed to activism, such as participating to a protest; but it also encompasses the acts that could be defined under active citizenship, such as submitting petitions.

58.3% of the volunteers answered as "yes" to the question: "Have you ever participated in an online protest?" This ratio is 48.2% among young people and 72.5% among people aged 59 and over. As can be seen from the numbers, the rate of participation in a physical protest in public sphere and in online protests remained approximately the same. However, 73.6% of volunteers, 64% of young people and 84.4% of those aged 59 and over responded as "yes" to the question "Have you ever shared news on social media?". The limited engagement in physical activism in the public sphere or digital activism on online platforms may, without doubt, be related to the increasing number of judicial processes in Turkey in the recent years. However, given that sharing news might also result in similar judicial processes, it does not explain why all volunteers in general and young people in particular share news but do not participate in online protests. What is more, with the news they share, they might be supporting or opposing the discourse generated by the protest in question. More research is needed to further advance this discussion. As this data shows, civil society and volunteering do not come forward as alternatives to representative democracy. Within representative democracy, young people participate in areas where they can exist with their own experiences, thoughts, and preferences. Young volunteers who participated in this research tend to use the available channels of both participatory democracy and representative democracy. However, in the process, they remain disengaged when they cannot exist as agents. In other words, they have a higher tendency to participate in areas where their words and contributions will be valuable and could be expressed safely.

Another issue that needs to be discussed in the relationship between volunteering and participation concerns the type of organisations and fields and groups the volunteers prefer volunteering in. The field selected the most among all is the field of education/training with 64.8%. When we look at the breakdown of those who selected education/training according to age groups, we see that 69.9% of the young people said they worked in the field of education/training. Children are the second field. The average of those who said they worked in the field of children is 48.4%. Among young people, the percentage of those who chose to work in the field of children is 56.6%. The third mostly preferred field of volunteering is youth, with 29%. Among young people, 34.4% said they volunteered in the field of youth work. The other three fields that followed in the ranking for all age groups are: human rights with 25.2% (26.5% among young people) environment with 21.3% (19.4% among young people), and women with 20.8% (15.1% among young people).

As can be seen from these percentages, the top 3 fields young people choose to volunteer the most are education/training, children, and youth. When asked the question "Can you explain the reason why you chose the organisation you volunteer for the most frequently? Which of the following best describes your reasons?"; 51.5% of all volunteers and 51.5% of young people answered the "field of activity". For both all volunteers and young people, field of activity of the relevant organisation played an important role in respondents' choices. Although these three fields are similar and related to one other, children and youth can diverge in terms of their target audience. When we think about the prevalence of schooling, the profile of organisations working in the field of education/training in Turkey, and the activities carried out; we can say that education/training involves the organisation of activities that focus on individuals who are under the age of 18. Moreover, the percentage of responding as "target audience" to the above-mentioned question makes it easier for us to establish a link between education/training and children. 56.7% of all age groups and 63.5% of young people preferred the relevant organisation because of its target audience. The percentage of young people is higher than the percentage of all other groups and percentage for the response "field of activity". Therefore, it can be said that young people prefer to work with children. Two of the other answers provided for this question are "credibility" and "recognition in society". The percentage of those who marked the answer "credibility" is 38.7% among all age groups. This percentage is 39.5% for young people and 27.5% for those aged 59 and over, which is the lowest ratio for this answer. The answer "recognition in society" received 15% on average, while this ratio was 18.6% among young people. The fact that the percentages among young people are higher compared to the overall average for all age groups for these two answers is actually an important indicator, when the meanings attributed to children and education/training in Turkey are considered. Working with children, especially in the field of education/training, is not only generally accepted but also supported. Moreover, organisations working in the field of education/training are seen as more credible and recognized both because of the field in which they operate and because of their high number. Considering that taking action in the civic space is seen as relatively dangerous or as something that should be refrained from due to the current political conjuncture, volunteering for an organisation whose legitimacy is rather accepted in the public sphere may have seen more preferable to young people. Finally, it is worth noting that the fields of education/training and children occupy more space in civil society than other fields. In addition, the majority of organisations operating in both fields are focused on service provision. In other words, rather than demanding structural change, these organisations are established to provide services to those who need them.

Volunteering and taking action to contribute to living together is a rewarding experience per se for the young people. As a member of the society they live in, making the contribution they can make not only brings various benefits to young people but also provides recognition. Moreover, volunteering in civic space is one of the important methods that young people use in youth work. It is discussed in detail in the relevant literature that the process of volunteering contributes greatly to young people and provides them with significant benefits.[13] The topic of benefits will be discussed later in detail. But what should also be noted here is the consequences of young people volunteering for the "other", in other words, not volunteering for themselves.

What is meant by volunteering for themselves is that, young people participate in volunteering activities again for the young people. From this perspective, it is possible to separate the volunteering practices and participation of young people into two categories. One is for young people to participate in volunteering activities for "other individuals", while the other is for young people to volunteer for themselves. When the volunteers were asked what was the field they worked in, only 29% of young people said they worked in the field of youth. In other words, 2/3 of young people are volunteering for others. Therefore, only 1/3 of the persons who speak up for the empowerment, demands, desires, and needs of young people and want change are actually young. Other persons who work in the field of youth and voice out the demands on behalf of young people are not young people themselves. One reason for this may be the fact that the youth organisations in which young people can exist are limited in number. Another reason is that young people lack the resources, means and informatics that are necessary to establish their own organisations. Given the limited opportunities for young people to participate in a representative democracy, the lack of participation opportunities in the civic space also causes the voices of young people to be quite silenced. Moreover, identifying what is "appropriate" for young people, and then enforcing and popularizing those, is becoming more and more commonplace and acceptable. This entire situation creates a barrier for young people to speak up for their own needs and be vocal in the public sphere, and also creates an obstacle to their participation in the social sphere with their own preferences.

The field of providing assistance and services, including education/training and working with children, stands out noticeably in the survey. The number of associations operating in Turkey

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[13]For discussions on volunteering, youth and youth work, see the History of Youth Work series, https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/the-history-of-youth-work-volume-7. Also, for discussions on international youth volunteering, see Williamson, H. and Basarab, T., 2019.

is around 112,000. Among these associations, the number of those who identify themselves as associations focused on rights and advocacy is only 1,498 (slightly over 1%) (Department of Strategy Development, 2018:30). Both in Turkey and around the world, a large percentage of organisations in the civic space work to provide assistance and services. Therefore, volunteering takes place mainly in the field of providing services and assistance. One of the major structural reasons for the high concentration of organisations in this field is the shrinking social welfare state and the takeover of service provision by civil society organisations.

Another reason is related to the role assigned to volunteers. Civil society organisations need significant manpower, especially when providing services and assistance. Meeting this need through volunteers, rather than buying it on the market, is a global practice. In other words, volunteering is sometimes considered as a contribution within organisations, designed to participate in activities without being included in decision-making mechanisms. However, it is important that volunteers have a voice and an awareness on the change created by the organisation they are engaged in, so that they can see the impact they create with their contributions to living together, beyond the micro level, in other words, beyond the individual level and at the social level. Many issues, such as the field of activity of the organisation they volunteer for, the groups it works with, the attitude it adopts and the donors it works with all constitute the values and priorities of the structure they are engaged in. These values and priorities also determine how and what kind of a difference the relevant organisation and the volunteers can make. Therefore, the extent to which volunteers have a voice in the relevant organisation will also determine the nature of the contribution they will make to social change.

In the next section, we will discuss the participation of volunteers in general, and young volunteers in particular, in decision-making mechanisms in the context of their organisations.

Participation within the Organisation

Individuals aiming to contribute to a goal or change by volunteering, can be considered as "civic engagement". Volunteers contribute to short or long-term changes in a certain field or issue, through the organisation they are engaged in and the impact created by the relevant organisation. In addition, the volunteering process allows volunteers to encounter and develop relationships with many different individuals. This situation both empowers social participation in general and provides space for dialogue. Therefore, volunteering stands out as an important process for participation on the one hand, and provides space for empowerment on the other.

The discussion on how volunteers can use this process for empowerment will be addressed in the next section. And in this section, we will discuss to what extent volunteers can exist as "capable" individuals within organised structures.

Volunteering can be defined as actions taken by individuals to contribute to living together and to social sphere in a particular field or a particular organisation. In this process, volunteers commit the different resources they have, such as their time or experience, to the field of their interest. The structuring of the content of volunteering is determined by the field of volunteering and the individual's relationship with the organisation. In other words, the conditions under which a volunteer will participate when committing their resources is shaped individually, depending on each individual, field and organisation. The volunteers are only one of the factors that play a role in determining how they will commit the different resources they have, such as their time, experience, relationships and economic savings. Another factor is the requirements of the field of volunteering. For example, while someone volunteering in a disaster area is expected to contribute within certain safety constraints, the field of culture and art allows the volunteer's voice to be heard more. Organisations, on the other hand, are another factor that determining the nature and depth of a volunteer's participation, both in terms of their administration style and functioning, as well as their values. Considering that volunteers aim to create change by contributing to the organisation they work for; the more knowledge and initiative they have on the overall purpose, strategy, use of resources, activities and functioning of the organisation, the more they can become agents who have a voice, rather than making anonymous contributors. More specifically, one of the determinants of volunteers' participation as capable individuals is closely related to how much they have a voice within the relevant organisation.

In the focus groups carried out within the framework of the study, when asked why they volunteered, one of the responses of the volunteers was to contribute by "doing something".

One of the research questions is how much the volunteer has a voice in determining the volunteering activity, which they generalize as "doing something". The aim of this question is to try to understand whether the activities of the volunteers are determined by others or by the volunteers themselves or whether they are determined collectively. It is also an important indicator in terms of understanding how much of a voice volunteers have in the organisation they work for.

If the activity they will engage in is pre-defined and the volunteers are just informed about it, then the only choice they can make is whether or not to contribute to that activity. However, if the activity is defined together the volunteer, then, it will first be necessary to inform the volunteer about the big picture and explain which areas need contribution in this picture. The next step is for the volunteer to put forward suggestions on the subject that they prefer to contribute or prioritize in accordance with their own skills, experiences, and resources. In this case, they can both choose what they prefer to do and create the activity they prefer to carry out.

CSOs generally consider having pre-defined activities *(task descriptions)* as indicative of a high organisational capacity. Being able to define and plan activities, being able to coordinate volunteers and to receive their contributions in an "efficient" manner, is considered as a highly developed organisational capacity in business (*management*) literature (and understanding). However, it is important to bear in mind that CSOs are not structures that can be evaluated only by market conditions, and that their only mission is not to make profit. Level of efficiency and capacity development defined through market rules narrows down the perspective on the civic space and CSOs. It can be said that the purpose of CSOs is, more or less, to create an impact on a particular issue. In the process of creating an impact, they aim for change in two areas. The first is the effort to achieve the objective of the organisation in the field of activity. For example, an organisation active in the field of violations of children's rights may be aiming to pass relevant laws and implement policies for the best interest of children. Secondly, they may also be aiming to create a change in the volunteers (and/or members). When civic space and CSOs are assessed through the business (management) literature, we see that the change created in individuals is neglected. However, one of the main objectives of CSOs, which arises from being a civic organisation, is to ensure that citizens have a voice and can contribute to living together. In this context, the empowerment of volunteers, giving them a voice and helping them contribute is also an issue that CSOs should consider as an impact. Moreover, it is even more important for young people, whose participation in life as equal and capable citizens is limited for structural and cultural reasons, to be able to contribute without being instrumentalized within the CSOs.

In the survey, the volunteers were asked the question, "Is there a pre-defined description of the volunteering activity that you are currently carrying out?". 78.9% of all respondents and 84.7% of young people answered as "yes" to this question.

In the interviews conducted with coordinators, the availability of a task description was mentioned as an indicator of preparedness and high capacity of the organisation. Task descriptions are considered as the first step towards planning the CSO's own activities on the one hand, and "managing volunteers" on the other. Being able to assign a pre-defined task to the people who apply to volunteer makes it easier to guide and manage them. However, it is important to bear in mind that the fact that if the task is defined in such a way that it cannot be altered or offered an alternative, it may cause the volunteers to provide their contribution in a limited fashion.

The volunteers were asked if they contributed to the development of their task description, or in other words, in determining the framework and the content of the activity. The percentage of those who said yes (48.5%) and no (49.9%) to the question are approximately equal. However, when the answers are grouped according to age, significant differences are seen. According to the age groups, the percentage of those who answered this question positively was 67% for people aged 59 and over, 54.5% for people aged between 58-44 years, 55% for people aged between 43-29 years and 36.7% for people aged 28 and under. As can be seen from these ratios, the age group that contributes the least to the development of the task description are those aged under 28 years **(Table 4).** The high rate of participation in the development of the task description by those who are 28 years and over can be explained by the fact that they are more experienced. Young people having a limited experience in carrying out activities in different fields can, of course, be considered as a restricting factor in their participation. However, as mentioned above, thinking that young people would not come up with suggestions about the content of the contribution they want to offer and how they would offer it when they are provided with space and given the information they need, would be considered as not seeing the value of differences and different experiences.

Table 4: Did you contribute to the development of your volunteering task description?						
	59 years and over	58 - 44 years	43 - 29 years	28 years and under	No Answer	Total
Yes	**67.0%**	54.5%	55.0%	**36.7%**	49.0%	48.5%
No	31.2%	43.1%	44.5%	61.7%	49.0%	49.9%
No Answer	1.8%	2.5%	0.5%	1.5%	1.9%	1.6%
Total %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total (number)	109	202	209	392	104	1016

As mentioned previously, the most frequent field of volunteering is education/training, with an average percentage of 56% among all age groups. Training can be provided in any field as it relates to the CSO's field of activity. As a matter of fact, looking at the survey in general, people volunteer largely in the fields of education/training, children, and youth. Therefore, it can be deduced that the volunteers provide trainings which support the formal education or help children and young people to fulfil their potential by empowering them. Among young volunteers, the activity of "providing education/training" is well above average, with 61.7%. Since young people are already in the education system, since their age is close to the children's age and since they are also involved in the educational system with their peers, they may have preferred the "education/training" activity more, or the CSO may have preferred them for educational activities. Moreover, looking at it from the perspective of both the target audience, the volunteers and the CSOs; this is a very befitting choice in making sure that individuals with the relevant experience carry out the relevant work. In addition, "providing training" is the main activity of many CSOs and it takes time and requires continuity. Therefore, it is one of the areas where volunteers are most needed. What should be addressed here is, to what extent the individuals providing the trainings are knowledgeable about the content and method of the activity they carry out; as well as the project or the functioning of the program they are engaged in. Most often, CSOs need the contribution of volunteers to roll out the training content prepared by experts. However, in this case, volunteers can barely contribute to the content and the method of the relevant training. Furthermore, they might also have limited knowledge about the impact that their organisation wants to create through the relevant training.

When we look at the other activities carried out by volunteers in CSOs, we see that labour-intensive work is often done by young people. Apart from providing training, examples of this include doing office work or translation. Lobbying, providing consultancy or engaging with other institutions (such as municipalities) are seen as the duties undertaken by those aged 28 and over. It can be estimated that these activities require having a certain social network. However, how existing power relations and hierarchy are perceived also plays an important role in older individuals undertaking the duties in question. As a matter of fact, this situation was also expressed by one of the focus group participants. The participant attributed her ability to undertake different activities in the CSO she was engaged in, to the fact that they had a different organisational structure.

"I usually go to the ….. Association to do whatever they ask me to do, but, well, we have this thing, because it is a horizontal organisation, because it is a civil society organisation made up of feminist women, it gives me both confidence, as well as insecurity. There is no hierarchy in any way. For example, they can suddenly tell me to go and attend the meeting with the United Nations...."

As we all know, in many CSOs, the boards of directors are structures whose members are also selected among volunteers and they consist of voluntary individuals. In fact, in some CSOs, it is compulsory for the board of directors to be composed of volunteers. According to the survey, the average percentage of those who said yes to the question "Do you serve on the board of directors?" is 31.1%. When we look at different age groups, the ratio of those aged 28 years and under who answered this question as yes is 15.1%, compared to 55% for those aged 59 years and over. As can be seen from the percentages, approximately one in every six young people who participated in the survey serves on the board of directors, while one in every two people aged 59 years and over serves on the board of directors. The importance of serving on the board of directors is that it is the main decision-making body on matters concerning the CSO determined by law. However, being on the Board of Directors it is not the only way for volunteers to participate in the decisions of the CSO. In this regard, in order to understand the participation of volunteers in the CSOs they are engaged in, we asked the question "When you think about it in general terms, do you participate in the decisions of the CSO you volunteer for?". 49.5% of the group aged 59 years and over answered as "My opinion is asked in all important decisions", while 21.4% of those aged under 28 years gave the same answer **(Table 5).** Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the majority of young people who responded that they participate in the decision-making, are volunteering for youth organisations. In other words, they are volunteering for organisations that are indeed established by young people, whereby young people carry out activities again for other young people. The main limitations on the inclusion of young people in decision-making arise when they are engaged in organisations together with other people who are aged 28 years and over. When they volunteer together with adults, young people's involvement in decision-making decreases. It can even be said that young people are instrumentalized as "labour" when they volunteer not for young people but for others and cannot participate in decision-making either.[14] As a result, the rate of

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[14] To open new discussions about the individuals volunteering for themselves and volunteering for someone else, see Beyazova and Durmuş 2020, in Erdoğan et al. 2020.

those who think they are participating in decision-making is much lower among young people compared to those over the age of 28.[15]

	Table 5: When you think about it in general terms, do you participate in the decisions of the CSO you volunteer for?					
	59 years and over	58 - 44 years	43 - 29 years	28 years and under	No Answer	Total
I do not participate in the making of any important decisions.	8.3%	6.9%	8.6%	8.9%	10.6%	8.6%
2	8.3%	8.9%	7.7%	13.3%	9.6%	10.3%
3	13.8%	22.8%	18.2%	28.6%	19.2%	22.7%
4	20.2%	26.2%	30.6%	27.6%	29.8%	27.4%
My opinion is asked in all important decisions.	**49.5%**	33.7%	34.4%	**21.4%**	29.8%	30.4%
No Answer	0.0%	1.5%	0.5%	0.3%	1.0%	0.6%
Total %, N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	109	202	209	392	104	1016

One of the main motivations of young people for volunteering is to contribute to living together and to be able to make their voices and words heard. Of course, carrying out previously defined activities in the CSO they are engaged in makes an important contribution. However, when they are unable to make their voices heard, their contribution also remains limited. Moreover, representative democracy is currently being criticized for not allowing young people to have a voice (Anderson, B. et al., 2016). In representative democracies, young people cannot be elected as representatives and cannot find settings where they can speak up. CSOs are seen as an alternative means for young people (and other groups with problems in representation) to participate. However, a closer look at the volunteers shows that they have limited contribution, both in terms of their contribution within the CSO and in terms of the impact that the CSO creates (Garner, J.T. and Garner, L.T., 2010).

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[15] As we can also see clearly above, the participation of volunteers in internal functioning of the organisation is one of the ways in which they can express their will and preferences as individuals. Therefore, the importance of providing a space for volunteers who demand to speak out within the organisation should be highlighted. However, it should also be noted that making a generic proposal in this regard is quite challenging given the objectives, structure, capacities and size of the organisations. Some of the volunteer coordinators interviewed for the study mentioned they carried out activities with around 800,000 volunteers (CSO 10), while others said they were working with 600-700 volunteers (CSO 18). In the interviews, coordinators who were in charge of organising the volunteers talked about the difficulties of establishing and maintaining a personal relationship as the number of volunteers increased. As can be understood by looking at the numbers, as the number of volunteers increases, it becomes difficult both to create mechanisms for volunteers to participate in and to reach consensus on objectives and activities. In organisations with a high number of volunteers, the mechanisms to enable volunteers to contribute and participate need to be discussed separately.

Empowerment, Participation and Youth

Volunteering is defined by young people as a process through which they can fulfil their potentials both in terms of contributing to living together and in terms of participating in the internal processes of the organisations. The volunteering process not only enables the participation of individuals in social life, but also provides opportunities and support for the acquisition of skills and competences that will enable or facilitate this participation (Helve and Wallace, 2018).

The relevant literature discusses the acquisition and utilization of skills and competences that enable individuals to make decisions about their own lives, under the concept of empowerment (Elisheva, S., 2004). Empowerment can be defined as the autonomy of the individual to make decisions about his or her own life and the ability to use this autonomy (Bandura, A., 1989). On the one hand, empowerment can be considered as a process experienced by the individual, and on the other, as outcomes, which are actually the benefits gained by the individual in this process (Staples, L. H., 1990). Volunteering can be designed as a process that can help individuals acquire different skills, competences and experiences. Therefore, it can contribute to the empowerment of individuals. Volunteering can provide young people with the skills and competences to help them gain autonomy, especially considering the fact that they have limited socio-economic and political opportunities because they are young.

Both in the focus group discussions and in the survey, Erdoğan, Uyan-Semerci, Yentürk and Yurttagüler study asked the respondents what benefits young people could achieve in the volunteering process (Erdoğan et al, 2020). In the survey, the respondents were asked the following question: "We listed below some of the benefits that people can gain as a result of voluntary activities. Which of these do you think are among the benefits of volunteering?" and they were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with the listed statements. Before moving on to the statements, it should be noted that for all statements, the percentage of young people responding as "It is definitely a benefit" is the highest among all age groups. In other words, compared to the other age groups, young people attach more importance to the contribution of the volunteering process to their empowerment in areas such as developing new relationships, making a social contribution, having a voice in the family and in social life, being respected and acquiring knowledge and skills. A similar result was observed in focus group discussions. Young people cited the benefits they obtained along the volunteering process as an important

reason for continuing the process. Before we go through the items that young people see as benefits, it should be reminded that the statements that are seen as *"personal"* benefits are directly related to the meanings attributed to volunteering (such as opening up space for the young person to fulfil their potential), and the issues and "advantages" (such as facilitating their participation in the workforce) that are associated with them in social life. Therefore, it may be useful to keep in mind not only the positive contribution of each statement seen as a benefit by young people, but also its impact on building the current concept of volunteering.

The learnings of young people throughout the volunteering process, which contribute to their empowerment, can be grouped under several items. The first and most frequently mentioned is the benefits the volunteer obtains in relation to their career. The percentage of respondents among all age groups who agreed with the phrase "Seeing positive effects in work life" (those who said "it is a benefit to a certain extend" or "it is definitely a benefit") is 57.6% compared to 69.9% among young people. Compared to other statements, the percentage of young people responding as "it is a benefit" for this statement is higher than the average of all age groups.

The benefit in question was also defined by the focus group participants as one of the motivations of young people to volunteer. Considering that volunteering is a part of the process of empowering young people, it is good news and also important that volunteering contributes to participation in labour force (which is a great source of anxiety for young people) and that young people actually consider it as a contribution. However, it can be a problem with regards to young people's participation, if volunteering is envisaged as an activity that only contributes to one's career, rather than being considered as contributing to social participation and in particular, political participation. In other words, associating young people with "labour force", without encouraging or enabling their participation in the decisions of the CSOs (and civic initiatives they volunteer for) and in social decisions, can create barriers to the participation of young people. Firstly, reducing volunteering to something that contributes to one's career or reducing volunteers to labour force, does not contribute to young people's participation in social life as individuals who are "capable of making decisions".

Secondly, it might actually cause the volunteers to be seen as "cheap" and/or free labour force, rather than contributing to society or rather than volunteering promoting the empowerment of volunteers. Young people are disadvantaged and experience problems when it comes to participation in labour force. First of all, in Turkey and around the world, youth participation

in labour force is lower compared to the active population.[16] Moreover, when young people first step into the labour market, as they are considered to be inexperienced, they are quickly seen as dispensable labour. Therefore, they are seen as persons who can be employed in low-paid and precarious jobs and who can be the first to be displaced. As a matter of fact, sometimes they continue working below the minimum wage or even for free as interns, in order to build a satisfying résumé. In short, the relationship of young people with the labour market is extremely open to exploitation.

When volunteering becomes an asset that can be used in a résumé or in one's career, it can be accepted as normal for young people to procure for free for long periods of time (Handy, F. et al., 2010). As volunteering is defined through the labour market (i.e. not getting paid for man/hours), it will not be considered as outside the norms when young volunteers are not paid for their labour. However, the problem is not that the individuals who volunteer do not get paid for their labour; but that the individuals in question cannot interfere in the processes and decisions of the civic organisation or CSO to which they contribute. In other words, the problem is that young people who cannot take part or are not involved in processes and decisions, are expected to participate only as labour force and that this is considered as normal.

Another group can be defined as the personal benefits for the volunteers. One of the personal benefits for the volunteers concerns their self-perception. Another one relates to the relationship the volunteers establish with their environment. One of the indicators of personal benefits is related to learning. "Constantly learning new things" is seen as a benefit by 82% of volunteers and by 87.2% of young people. One of the statements asked to the volunteers in the context of the relationships established with the environment is "meeting new people". 88.3% of all age groups and 95.4% of young people see volunteering as an opportunity to develop new relationships and expand their social network and they define it as a benefit.

When we look at the responses from both the survey and the focus groups, we can see that people think volunteering creates encounters with different people, and that in fact these encounters evolve from time to time into deeper relationships. These encounters can enable the volunteers to meet individuals who they consider to be different from themselves and against whom they might have certain biases, without really knowing them. This encountering provides an important opportunity to mutually review the prejudices against one other and to deconstruct

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[16] For comparison, see: OECD Youth Unemployment data
https://data.oecd.org/unemp/youth-unemployment-rate.htm

them (Uyan-Semerci, P., Erdoğan, E. and Sandal-Önal, E., 2017). Meeting new people, on the one hand, can contribute to the expansion of the volunteer's social network. On the other hand, meeting new people can also mean connecting with a social network that can make it easier for the volunteer to access job opportunities. For the young people in particular, building social relations provides them settings where they can both increase their self-confidence and be involved in new solidarity mechanisms (Düzen, E., 2018).

New relationships can enable or facilitate the entry of the volunteer in the labour market. Previous research on youth has shown that while looking for a job, young people also apply for public announcements. However, when asked the question "How did you find your job?", 51% of the same young people answered "through my family, relatives or my community" (KONDA-CCSS, 2014). In other words, meeting new people can also make an important contribution to young people when they look for jobs.

It was asked through separate questions whether volunteering had any impact in the context of the individual's family, community and social relations, and whether it was seen as a benefit. 65.5% of volunteers and 71.4% of young people defined "receiving respect in the society" as a result of volunteering as a benefit. 61.4% of the volunteers and 66.8% of the young people defined the phrase "to be appreciated by your community" as a benefit. With 46.8%, those aged 59 years and over had the lowest percentage of defining this statement as a benefit among all age groups. The 20% difference between young people and volunteers over the age of 59 can help us understand the meaning that young people attribute to volunteering and the contribution of volunteering to their empowerment. Social respect or appreciation in the community has, as it turns out, emerged as a benefit for young people that they wanted to express.

One reason why young people seek "social respect" may be related to the universally generated narrative on youth. The prevailing narrative, which claims that young people are indifferent to both social and political developments, is often expressed in popular culture as well as in academic writing (Cammaerts et al. 2014). There is literature which interprets the reason for young people in representative democracies not going to the polls as "indifference" to political and therefore social developments. Especially in the last 20 years, as an alternative to the literature in question, a discussion which suggests that young people do not participate because they do not have any agency in representative democracy has been put forward by the young people and the actors who work with young people both in academia and in the field. Although new discussions that question and criticize the relevant narrative are being developed, "young

people's irresponsibility, selfishness, lack of interest or apathy to social and political events" is an ongoing narrative that is still generated in the public sphere.

On the other hand, another narrative, which criminalizes young people when they demand something and labels the methods preferred by young people for political participation as illegitimate, is also being generated. For young people who can only find a very restricted space in activism for putting forward demands and making decisions within a representative democracy; expressing their demands in the public and civic space is the only way of gaining a voice and visibility. However, they are accepted when they are sufficiently rehabilitated of their activism in the public sphere, otherwise they can be interpreted as being involved in "youth incidents" or as "deluded youth" (Lüküslü, 2009).

Therefore, young people try to manoeuvre in a space pressed between a binary narration, in which they are described as "indifferent" when they do not go to the polls and as "dangerous" when they voice their demands. In this context, volunteering to contribute to living together and for receiving respect and appreciation for these actions can be a significant breaking point both for young people and the society.

Moreover, the process of volunteering can turn into a process that gives young people recognition for "being young". Young people's contribution to social life while volunteering brings along the acceptance, recognition, and acknowledgment of young people as capable and competent individuals. Of course, civil society organisations and volunteering activities are not the only areas where young people exist and are visible in social life. However, in other areas, the young people are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy, and treated as individuals who are ignored and not listened to. For example, in Turkey (and in similar countries), where even the social welfare state is conceived through the family, young people often become members for whom the decisions are made by others for "their own good". Although the group we call as "young people" is not a homogeneous one, and even though they have value judgements that vary according to their families and social environments; the common problem for different groups of young people is that they are treated as an extension of their families, and not as individuals (Yurttagüler, L. 2014). In other words, they all go through experiences where the family's decisions prevail or are binding, with regards to how they will live, what they will wear, what school they will attend, or even who they will date/marry. The discussion about the family will be addressed in more detail in the next section. However, as can be understood from this brief introduction, young people are individuals who have no power and no voice within

the family. When it comes to work life, young people often start from the lowest echelons of the hierarchy in the workplace. Starting from the internship process, young people are ignored, they earn the lowest salaries, their jobs are precarious, and in some workplaces, they are even ill-treated. The chances for young people to take initiative, be visible and have a voice in the workplace are extremely limited.

However, in the process of volunteering, whether the volunteers are asked for their opinion at different stages and participate directly in the decision-making mechanisms, or whether they just do the job they are asked to do; they have a different position than the one they have in their families or at work. First of all, as mentioned above, volunteering is appreciated and socially recognized. Both the participants in focus groups and the testimonies in interviews with CSOs refer to the importance of treating volunteers "nicely and kindly". In the same interviews (and in the testimonies of young volunteers), it is mentioned that the volunteers are appreciated by underlining the importance and contribution of their work. In short, volunteering turns into a setting where young people can both exist and be acknowledged.

Finally, it may be useful to talk about the benefits volunteers obtain along the process. In the focus groups and interviews with the volunteers, participants were asked to talk about their own volunteering experiences. The participants talked about their own volunteering processes and, in addition to this process, discussed their efforts to recruit new volunteers to the organisation they were engaged in. When we take a close look at the efforts, it can be observed that young people develop and use strategies for both social and political participation. One of the processes through which strategy development can be observed is the volunteer recruitment efforts. In this process, many different avenues are used in order to attract the attention of the group targeted to be recruited as volunteers, such as the facilities and characteristics of the relevant organisation, the field of activity (such as education/training or memory) and the groups the organisation works with (such as children, women, refugees or LGBTI+ individuals). For example, in order to recruit a new volunteer, one volunteer took them to an event of the organisation. Another one said:

> "At first, to make them grow accustomed to CSOs, I start by sending them donation cards for CSOs (laughs) on their birthdays.... "

Choosing priorities and fields according to the motivation of the person in question is also observed as another strategy.

".....through people's values… if I know the person in question, I try to explain to them that they can change something, that they can have an impact through their values. I try to explain it to them by saying, "See, you can also do that, and in fact, by doing that you can achieve these outcomes". For example, if the person in question is a homophobic individual, I can't just tell them to go and work with gay individuals, but for instance, if they like working with children, I guess I can encourage them to volunteer by explaining to them what they can do, by also referring to issues that are sensitive to them… Or for instance, ... maybe you do not want to do something for civil society organisations, you may not want to carry out activities under the name of an organisation. Then you can create your own project. For instance, if you think there aren't enough number of projects working with individuals with Down syndrome, then you can do something about it."

Another distinctive method used by volunteers is making reference to common experiences.

"The strategy I use is to tell them that we are all women, we all have kids, or we are going to have kids in the future. I talk about the experiences of other people, what they go through, things we actually do not know at all..... When you give examples like that, people start picturing these things in their minds, but the method I use the most frequently nowadays is to talk about being a woman, you know, sisterhood and all that (laughs)".

As we can see above, individuals develop and use many different competences in the process of volunteering. During the last decade, the literature on competences, youth and volunteering has developed substantially.[17] In 2018, the Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers) published recommendations promoting lifelong learning. The Council recommended the development of competences in 8 areas. It might be useful to mention 3 of them both in the context of benefits of volunteering, and in the context of participation and youth. "Personal, social and learning to learn competence" is the ability of the individual to reflect upon their own learning process, to manage time and resources effectively and to work with others in a constructive way. This competence includes the ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity, to support one's emotional and physical well-being, and to manage conflict in

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[17] For a collective and youth-friendly study on competences, see the European Commission and the Council of Europe (2017)

an inclusive and supportive context. Another competence is about citizenship. Citizenship competence is the ability to act as responsible citizens, to fully participate in civic and social life, and to understand the "social, economic, legal, political" concepts and structures that we build and live in. As one might guess, the main basis for this competence is participation. This "participation" can take place through representative democracy or through civil society organisations by volunteering. The third competence that can be directly associated with participation is "cultural awareness and expression competence". This competence involves having an understanding of how ideas and meaning are expressed differently in different cultures. On the one hand, the competence in question assists the individual to live together with and have respect for different cultures. On the other hand, it suggests that concepts can be expressed in different forms (especially through art).[18] It would be wrong to argue that these competences would be put into use separately, on the contrary, it is observed that multiple competences are developed and used together (Kiilakoski, T., 2014).

Assessing the answers of the survey through competences can give us a deeper understanding of the benefits that volunteering offers or can offer to young people. First of all, as described above, volunteering provides an important avenue for encountering what is different than oneself. The aim of acquiring cultural awareness and learning to learn competence for the individual is to learn to live together with what is different and manage the potential conflicts or disagreements that may arise in this process in an inclusive manner. When volunteers are engaged in activities with the "target audience" in the field and when they are together with other volunteers in the relevant organisation, they aim at encountering those who are different from them and maintaining this encounter by being attached to certain values. Focus group participants gave examples of different areas where they carried out voluntary activities and talked about their encounters with the "other". They talked about the differences of the target audiences they worked with and even the impact and change that encountering young people from different backgrounds had on them. They stated that they developed experience and skills in working and living with a wide variety of individuals, ranging from migrants, the elderly, young people from different geographies and socio-economic backgrounds, to children.

> "I realized that, I could truly be myself, only when I understood that the life of somebody else was as valuable as mine, in other words, when I started really comprehending others."

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[18] See: Council of the European Union Recommendations, 22 May 2018, "Key Competences for Life Long Learning", https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01)&from=EN

This process, in which they encounter the "other", manage the tension between them (if any) and transform both the space they live in and themselves, can be one of the important competences that young people (and citizens) can develop and use in terms of living together (Lister, R., Middleton, S., and Smith, N., 2002).

Moreover, voluntary activities stand out as a process that is often mentioned and emphasized in youth work and its importance is underlined. The idea that the process will contribute to the empowerment of young people in different areas such as the above-mentioned relations with the labour market and participating in decision-making, and that it will provide experience and competence in different fields, promotes considering it as one of the main issues in youth policy, from local level to the European level. The emphasis of volunteering in youth work can be on meeting different cultures, mentalities and existences, as mentioned above. Again, as mentioned above, the competences gained by young people in the volunteering process can contribute to finding a job and developing themselves. Moreover, especially in this regard, whether there could be a certification system for the skills, knowledge or attitudes that young people acquire or develop during the volunteering process, and if yes, what should be the process of structuring this system, is still being debated (Gaylor, C., et al. 2015).

Another benefit is participation in decision-making processes, which directly corresponds to citizenship competences. Through volunteering and civic initiatives, youth work can support participation in decision-making processes in different areas and at different levels. On the one hand, it can offer assistance that will empower and/or facilitate the participation of young people at different levels within a representative democracy, starting with the local governments. On the other hand, when young people get organised on issues of their own interest or participate in decision-making processes in civic initiatives, it can help them in making their voices heard and in dealing with social exclusion. As mentioned above, one of the reasons that drives young people to volunteer is to contribute to social life, while another is an effort to speak up and voice their demands in the public sphere.

Volunteering contributes to the development of competences and empowerment of young people. On the other hand, unlike family or work, it can be considered as an arena where they can make their voices heard and express themselves.

We can say that as a process, volunteering is an important experience both in terms of the opportunities and competences it provides in the empowerment of young people and in terms of the social networks it creates. However, we need to bear in mind that young people are not a homogeneous group. Looking at the research (and looking at the issue in general) will tell us which young people are volunteering or are able to volunteer, but it will also give us clues as to which young people can benefit from that "arena" for their empowerment during the volunteering process. In this regard, it may be useful to examine the demographic characteristics of young people and the tools that are available or unavailable to them (such as the necessary financial resources and time) when volunteering.

94.4% of young people responded as yes to the question: "Are you currently enrolled in a school/university?". Among the young people (under 28 years of age), the rate of graduation from upper secondary and tertiary education (college, university, master's and doctoral degrees) is 97.2%. According to TURKSTAT data, the schooling rate is 84.2% for upper secondary education and 44.1% for tertiary education.[19] As we can see, the level of education of the young people participating in the volunteering survey is well above the average in Turkey.[20] In addition to the survey data, the young people in the focus groups were asked to provide information about themselves and tell how they became involved in volunteering. When telling their volunteering stories, all of the young people in the focus groups mentioned the role of their schools (the high school or university they graduated from). During the interviews with the CSOs, the interviewees working in the CSOs referred to the role of high schools and universities when they were talking about their own volunteering story[21] and the stories of other individuals who volunteered for the CSO.[22] In fact, within their volunteer coordination teams, some CSOs have people specifically in charge of recruiting volunteers from high schools and universities (CSO 10).

Both the fact that young volunteers come from universities and that CSOs target university students for volunteer recruitment has resulted in more students in general and university students (and graduates) in particular to be engaged in volunteering activities compared to

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[19]Turkey Statistics 2019, Schooling Rate by Level of Education: http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1018
[20]As mentioned by Erdoğan and Uyan-Semerci in the first article of the book, the level of education of all the respondents participating in the volunteering survey is well above the average in Turkey.
[21] The coordinator of CSO 13 was previously a volunteer for CSO 13; the coordinator of CSO 18 used to volunteer for different CSOs and also established an association; the coordinator of CSO 2 used to be a volunteer in university.
[22]Although very limited in number, there are some CSOs that try to recruit volunteers from primary schools and among children. However, according to the results of the interviews, the general trend among CSOs is to recruit especially university students for their voluntary activities.

young people who are working or who are neither working nor in school. This indicates that for young people, volunteering is restricted to opportunities. These opportunities can be discussed under several topics.

The first one concerns young people's access to CSOs or voluntary organisations, where they can volunteer if they are interested in volunteering. In fact, when they want to establish their own civic initiatives or CSOs in a particular area and contribute to living together, have solidarity or have a voice, whether they have the necessary instruments (e.g. university clubs) to be able to structure the processes is one of the determining factors for young people's participation. In terms of both skills and knowledge, young people in the education process have more access to the relevant instruments compared to other young people (who are working or who are neither working nor in school). As the interviews with CSOs indicate, one of the strategies of CSOs for the promotion of the voluntary organisations is to make presentations in universities about their fields and to both raise awareness among young people and to win their support for the CSO. For young people, having access to organisations where they can volunteer and to the networks within these organisations, is a part of their knowledge and skills. One of the important indicators of the role of social networks in volunteering is seen in the answers provided by young people to the question how they became a volunteer.

When asked the question "Which of the following statements best describes how you became a volunteer for the CSO to which you are currently committing the highest amount of your time?", 34.4% of all age groups responded as "Through a friend/relative/someone I know". When we look at the breakdown according to the age groups, with 41.3%, young people had the highest percentage of stating that they became a volunteer "through a friend/relative/someone I know" **(Table 6).**[23]

When telling the story of how they started volunteering, some of the young people who participated the focus groups stated that they got engaged through a friend. They themselves have also tried to recruit new people to organisations they are engaged in and developed different strategies to introduce their friends to the organisations in question. Some of the strategies included offering a process and field of volunteering according to the needs, interests and priorities of the individual in question. When volunteering, young people prefer to

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[23] Another noticeable result from Table 6 is that the generation that comes after young people (those who are aged between 29 and 43 years) use the internet as an instrument for volunteering, while older generations do not use it. Since we do not know which online channels were used by those people who said they reached out to the relevant CSOs "through the internet", this issue will require more examination.

volunteer, at least initially, through someone they know. One of the main reasons for preferring to volunteer through a certain network may be the issue of "trust". In other words, in order to be engaged in the process, potential volunteers first need a reference and prefer it to be among the individuals within their own social network. Of course, there may be many reasons for this need of trust, but an important reason is the existing political climate both in Turkey and around the world. In today's political climate whereby on the one hand, post-truth discourses are being generated and on the other, civic initiatives are considered politically as *threats* by the governments, young people prefer to act by relying on their personal experiences and relationships in the context of social participation.

Table 6: Which of the following statements best describes how you became a volunteer for the CSO to which you are currently committing the highest amount of your time?						
	59 years and over	58 - 44 years	43 - 29 years	28 years and under	No Answer	Total
I was approached by a volunteer or an employee of the CSO	4.6%	9.4%	11.0%	7.7%	7.7%	8.4%
I reached them through a friend/relative/someone I know	**25.7%**	**32.7%**	**24.9%**	**41.3%**	39.4%	**34.4%**
My workplace recommended	0.9%	1.0%	1.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%
I responded to an announcement made by the CSO on visual and written media	9.2%	7.9%	10.0%	10.7%	13.5%	10.1%
I volunteered for the CSO through the Internet	5.5%	7.4%	19.1%	20.9%	13.5%	15.5%
I was a member of the CSO	19.3%	11.4%	6.7%	4.3%	4.8%	7.9%
I am one of the founders of the CSO	**25.7%**	**17.3%**	**17.7%**	**3.8%**	15.4%	**12.9%**
Other	9.2%	10.4%	6.7%	10.2%	4.8%	8.9%
No Answer	0.0%	2.5%	1.9%	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%
Total %, N	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	109	202	209	392	104	1016

Another noteworthy result from **Table 6** is the noticeable difference between young people and other age groups in choosing the statement "I am one of the founders of the CSO". Only 3.8% of young people are among the founders of the CSO where they volunteer, while for other age groups this is 17% or more. Establishing a CSO, especially a structure with a legal entity, requires both financial resources and skills. Moreover, even imagining to establish a civic organisation can only be possible after individuals reach a certain level of awareness. Young people who do not have the relevant equipment remain dependent on existing structures for

getting organised, while other age groups show more entrepreneurial behavior in establishing CSOs.

Another issue that should be mentioned under the topic of opportunities is the current political culture and legal structure referred to in the previous paragraph. The current political culture affirms the participation of young people only in civic initiatives that are engaged in certain activities or that have certain agendas. Moreover, the organisation of young people both in university clubs and in the civic space is hindered or made difficult by the existing legal structure.

The economic self-sufficiency of young people is another issue regarding the opportunities. As one might guess, young people who are university students have better economic conditions than other young people.[24] At least, these economic conditions are provided to young people by their families. Therefore, the opportunities to volunteer are not restricted by economic conditions or office hours. They are able to devote their time to volunteering, instead of earning money. However, we must note that this applies to all age groups participating in the survey. In other words, what stands out is that, those who prefer doing voluntary work have a certain level of economic self-sufficiency. Yet, one of the issues to be considered here is how this economic self-sufficiency is provided to young people, especially to those who are students. When young people who participated in the survey were asked the question "Do you have any social security?", 61% said they had social security provided by their family, 13% said by their employer, 12.2% said by the university and the government. In other age groups, the rate of having social security provided by employers is 64% or more, and having social security provided by family is 13% or less. There is a reverse symmetry between young people and other age groups in terms of social security. In the same survey, when those who are not working were asked where their social security coverage came from, a high percentage of full-time students, those preparing for university entrance exam or KPSS (Public Personnel Selection Exam), and job seekers stated that their social security was covered by their families. This rate is the highest for university students with 70.5%.

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[24]Young university students are not a homogeneous group. The TOG (Community Volunteers Foundation) Impact Study conducted on young university students the foundation works with showed that young people from different socio-economic backgrounds volunteered at TOG (Düzen, E., 2018). Therefore, among the young university students, there are also young people with limited opportunities. However, this is a smaller possibility compared to other groups of young people.

When the social welfare state fails to provide young people with the services they need, they start working, if they can find a job. However, from time to time, even if they work, they can become the "working poor", due to working conditions such as low wages and precarious jobs. Another fact is that young people live on the resources provided by their families during their education, job search process and even in the initial years of their careers. This creates multi-dimensional problems regarding the participation of young people in the civic space. The first one is that they cannot engage in civic initiatives due to economic deficiencies. In order to contribute to remedying this problem, it is observed that CSOs working especially for the empowerment of young people have come up with the solution of reimbursing the basic expenses of young people in relation to the volunteering activities.

In addition to the interviews, during the survey the volunteers who did not have social security coverage were asked the question: "Who usually pays for your expenditures such as transportation, food and communication expenses you incur when you are volunteering?". 28.3% of students, 17.7% of job seekers and 26.5% of those preparing for university entrance exam or KPSS answered as "Usually the CSO I work for". It is seen that these groups, mostly composed of young people, need the resources of their families and the support of the relevant organisation in order to survive and volunteer. Moreover, it is understood from the survey results that, these young people have a higher level of education and are economically more sufficient compared to the average in Turkey.

As we can see, some CSOs have found the solution of covering the basic needs of volunteers. Covering basic needs during volunteering can be a good way of increasing volunteering opportunities for young people. On the other hand, it would not be right to assume that CSO support is the sole determinant of increasing the volunteering and participation of young people. As mentioned above, young people need family support to survive, even when they are employed. Therefore, the attitude of their families plays an important role in making decisions about their lives and determining their preferences. If the provider of the resources that allow the young person to survive, which is the family in this case, does not approve of the young person's volunteering or allows them to volunteer only for certain CSOs, then the young person's preference or will may not play a determining role.

Just to remind you again, when young people were asked about the benefits of volunteering, about 70% agreed with the expressions "gaining recognition, respect and appreciation in society and in my environment". After these statements, they were asked if they considered the

statement "seeing a change in my relationship with my family" as a benefit. 38.4% of all volunteers and 43.6% of young people said they considered this as a benefit. First of all, it should be noted that this statement received the lowest percentage among the statements that young people consider as a benefit. Recognition, respect and benefits that young people think they gain from the society or their environment by volunteering is the lowest when it comes to their families. When young people were asked in the focus groups how their families reacted to their volunteering, they stated that their families did not really understand it, although most families did not directly oppose it. One of the reasons for not understanding is that, families are not familiar with the CSOs. One of the most frequent questions they get asked is "What do you do as a volunteer?" and "Why do you do it?".

" [my parents] ... are like "so what is it that you do actually?" (laughs) ...."

Regardless of their socio-economic status, they mention that their parents have difficulty comprehending it.

"It took a long time for my family to get used to the institutions I work for. And by the way, my family is not a narrow-minded, conservative family."

One of the young people who participated the focus groups said his family supported his voluntary activities and described himself as lucky because of that.

"I think I'm among the lucky ones here. My parents have always been so supportive of me, even like, in high school, during the exam period, my dad would say, "Never mind, do not study, don't you have this thing that you are doing? (laughs), well you haven't been there for a long time, why don't you go there now!" So, I think I am lucky in this sense."

Young people develop various strategies to justify their voluntary activities and try to explain what they do, in a way that is compatible with the values of their families. In this case, however, they mention that their choices are questioned by the families.

".... not only my family or people around me, but people outside also do not do anything, and still, they are critical of what I do. Because for them, it's not worth it (hmm). It gets on my nerves when people react like "Well, instead of doing that, why don't you do

this, for instance, help these people instead?". To me, there's no minor act anyway, I mean, there is need in every field, I'll do one thing, you do another one, and a third person can do something else...."

One of the strategies to justify volunteering is the argument that it can contribute to one's professional career and can help them (or is helping them) earn money. In particular, when negotiating with their families, they use their ability to make money or get specialized in a certain field as a leverage, whereas the children of their parents' friends are still trying to get specialized or make money. But even in cases when they earn money, they say, they have a hard time explaining what they are doing.

Another strategy is to present volunteering as an opportunity to have access to relationships and experiences that one cannot get in everyday life.

> "So, I asked them: what else do you want? You know, to appreciate me as a volunteer, to recognize me, or to appreciate the CSO, ... I mean, what do you want, I even earn money. Imagine, just last year ....., I went to Switzerland, for example, attended a meeting at the United Nations, ... Well, they don't even appreciate that, so I don't really understand, I guess, I mean, if I found a job at the municipality maybe (laughs), if I worked in a normal job, they would think I would be doing more."

Most of the young people initially try to explain to their parents why they volunteer and what they are doing, but after a while they give up because they think their parents do not understand it. In this case, they either choose to not to explain why they volunteer or, to define what they are doing shortly, without providing any substantial details.

> "... I was just slurring over saying, "We're providing trainings, you know, trainings on volunteering, and we are preparing project proposals, and so on," but I've never explained them the details on what I did."

> "I did that slurring over thing too, but I didn't tell them when I started working either. ..... I'm not telling them anything anymore, none of my volunteering activities. So, for 7 months I was doing .... and they would say, "What are you doing on the computer?" and I would reply "Well, you know, searching for murders" (laughs longly) but I would never tell them what kind of news I would be searching, because they don't understand

when I say it ....., you know, they immediately think "Did he get involved in these types of activities again?" So, they don't directly ask much about what I am doing."

The dependence of young people on their families causes them to try to negotiate with them or at least to argue on a wide range of issues regarding volunteering, such as whether they should volunteer or in what field or in what organisation they should volunteer. During this argument, young people develop various strategies to explain, justify or ensure that they are not interfered with. Sometimes they manage to convince their families, and sometimes they have to make compromises with the family on the issues they consider to be important and sometimes they give up on some of their demands, needs or priorities, and sometimes they give up completely.

"..... My parents aren't very supportive either, but I think I've gradually trained them, so after persistently standing up to their reactions, after a long process, my mother is now an ardent refugee rights activist (long laughter) ..... Yes, but sometimes, when I am a little late for instance or when they worry, I still hear them say "You don't like us as much as you like those Syrians" (laughter) and things like that".

It is quite thought-provoking that young people, as individuals with capacity, even have to convince their parents for their choices, or obtain their permission or approval. However, in addition to the benefits of volunteering, even this whole negotiation process with the parents contributes to the empowerment of young people as "capable" individuals.

To conclude...

The participation of young people continues to be discussed as an issue and a problem both in Turkey and around the world. While the economic participation of young people is the most visible and promoted area, there is almost a consensus that economic participation cannot be achieved without political and social participation. From participation in representative democracy to combating social exclusion, new discussions about the political and social participation of young people are being opened, new methods are being developed and new avenues are being created. In the last 20 years, with its positive and negative aspects, volunteering has emerged as a cross-cutting process in all areas of youth participation. On the one hand, volunteering is envisaged as a process that will cope with the invisibility of young people in representative democracy. Volunteering, on the other hand, has been presented and instrumentalized as having the potential to provide new opportunities to facilitate economic

participation. Finally, it is designed as an important mechanism for youth work and combatting social exclusion, as it offers social benefits and possibilities to encounter with the "other". However, in order for all these envisaged contributions to be realized, it is necessary to exhibit such an attitude that young people will not have to struggle at every level of the process while volunteering. More specifically, while young people are volunteering, on the one hand they are negotiating with their families and trying to explain themselves. On the other hand, within CSOs, they have difficulty finding a voice. The last point to be underlined is that, it is necessary to keep in mind that volunteering is a process that provides space to young people to fulfill their potential, and it is not about pleasing others or achieving their goals.

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