

MODULE 2: CIVIL SOCIETY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Aim: To empower participants with a comprehensive understanding of the role of civil society in fostering democratization, enhancing public participation, and promoting accountability. The module seeks to equip participants with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to engage in effective advocacy, counter corruption, and contribute to inclusive, transparent, and impactful civic leadership.

Learning Objectives:

- Explore the critical role of civil society in democratization and public participation.
- Understand and apply tools and strategies for combating corruption.
- Analyze the relationship between civil society, public accountability, and sustainable governance.
- Examine anti-corruption measures and their application at institutional and individual levels.

Skills Objectives:

- Develop practical advocacy techniques to influence policy and public opinion.
- Strengthen leadership skills to foster inclusivity and civic engagement.
- Build expertise in public speaking, teamwork, and effective communication.
- Enhance the ability to critically analyze public policies and advocate for systemic change.

Attitudes Objectives:

- Promote a culture of transparency, accountability, and trust in civic systems.
- Encourage collaborative and inclusive leadership approaches to address societal challenges.
- Foster integrity, responsibility, and a commitment to inclusivity in civic participation.

Methodology

- Lecture/Presentations: 40%



- Discussions/Case Studies: 20%
- Simulations/Games: 10%
- Group/Individual Work: 10%
- Online Tools/Visual Materials: 10%
- Assignments: 10%

2.1 Public Participation in Democracies (History, theory and concepts)

Aim: Explore historical developments and their impacts on democratization through public participation and examine the role of public participation in safeguarding human rights and facilitating democratic transitions.

Objectives:

- Understand the dominant theories, conceptual models, and key concepts in public participation.
- Develop the ability to analyze the interplay between public participation, public opinion, and public policy.
- Foster an appreciation for the role of public participation in creating equitable and inclusive democratic processes.

Discussion topics:

- The concept of public participation: focusing on the history of public disagreement and public participation in policymaking.
- Public participation, civil resistance, public opinion and its impact of democratization, the protection of human rights and democratic ideals.
- Is democratic future possible for countries with troubled past?

2.2: Role of Civil Society in Democratization and Public Participation in Eastern Europe

Aim: To explore the rebirth of civil society in Eastern Europe, its post-Soviet developments, and the practical relationship between democracy, government, and civil society, while equipping participants with tools for effective advocacy.

Objectives:

- Understand the historical developments of civil society in Eastern Europe, focusing on the 1980s and post-Soviet realities in EU's Eastern Partnership countries.
- Analyze the relationship between democracy, government, and civil society through global models and experiences.
- Develop skills in utilizing contemporary advocacy methods and tools for both individual and collective, local, and international initiatives.

Discussion topics:

- What does it mean to be post-Soviet?
- Is Armenia still post-Soviet country or else?
- Developments on post-Soviet space, such as war in Ukraine, etc.

2.3: Challenges of Public Participation (Democratic Backsliding, Shrinking Civic Space)

Aim: To deepen understanding of the challenges to public participation in diverse political regimes and equip participants with tools to analyze and address these challenges in varying social and political contexts.

Objectives:

- Identify and analyze key challenges to public participation, including democratic backsliding, shrinking civic space, and restrictions in hybrid and authoritarian regimes.
- Gain practical skills in applying contemporary tools and empirical methods to evaluate and address public participation challenges.

- Foster critical thinking and an adaptive mindset to address the unique barriers to democratization in different contexts.

Discussion topics:

- Modern challenges to public participation and democratization.
- Methods by authoritarians resulting in democratic backsliding: based on examples of different regions and countries.
- “CSO Meter: A Compass to Conducive Environment and CSO Empowerment”.

2.4 Political Corruption in Armenia

Aim: To understand the impact of corruption as one of the biggest challenges of transitional democracies.

Objectives:

- Define causes and consequences of corruption from historical, social, economic and political perspectives.
- Analyze corruption risks and demonstrations in the political processes of Armenia (election violations, political party financing, abuse of state resources, nepotism, favoritism, etc.)

Discussion topics:

- Historical, cultural, social, economic and political perspectives of corruption.
- Corruption with an “Iceberg” model: Mental modes, Structures, Patterns, Events of Corruption
- “Measuring corruption”

2.5 Anti-corruption: How to counter corruption on individual and institutional levels

Aim: To develop zero tolerance towards corrupt thinking and practices.

Objectives:

- Explore institutional anti-corruption tools (anti-corruption policies and institutions, international tools, etc.)
- Master individual anti-corruption tools/know-how (whistleblowing, anti-corruption activism, etc.)

Discussion topics:

- “Fire in “Collective” nightclub in Romania”, traces of corruption which led to resignation of the government.
- Movie “Heghnar Aghbyur”.
- RA anti-corruption institutions.

2.6 Political Leadership and Participation

Aim: To empower individuals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to understand the roles and responsibilities of political leadership and participation, fostering informed engagement in the political process.

Objectives:

- Define political leadership and outline its key functions and responsibilities in various government systems (e.g., democracy, dictatorship).
- Analyze the impact of different political ideologies on leadership styles and policy decisions.
- Understand the fundamental principles of democratic participation, including voting rights and civic engagement avenues.
- Build confidence in taking on leadership roles and actively participating in groups.

- Reflect on personal leadership and participation strengths and areas for improvement.

Discussion topics:

- Understanding political leadership.
- Impact of main political ideologies on leadership styles and policy decisions.
- Leadership and Accountability.
- Personal leadership types.

2.7 Inclusion and Participation

Aim: To promote understanding, empathy, and cooperation among participants. It aims to simulate political scenarios where inclusivity and active participation are key elements.

Practical game: Participants will be assigned diverse roles, encompassing a range of appearances, abilities, and backgrounds. Positioned at the starting line, they'll embark on a journey forward, responding to thought-provoking statements from the facilitator. This engaging process involves reflective discussions after each statement, exploring the factors influencing their decision to either advance or remain in place.