Civic Education

Knowledge is Power. An educated citizenry is more likely to exercise their rights and engage in local political processes.

What We Do

Civic education instills individuals with democratic principles, ethics, an understanding of how democratic institutions function, and their rights and responsibilities to engage in the political system.

Pact’s civic education programs focus on engaging individuals to become informed and active citizens. Through Pact’s programs, citizens are inculcated with values such as tolerance, equality and justice important to nurturing a healthy and vibrant civil society. As a result of increased knowledge and capacity, citizens often engage at a higher rate in their communities and are more likely to participate in activities such as elections.

For example, citizens may be unaccustomed to voting, how their electoral system functions, how to become a candidate for elective office, forming advocacy and public-interest groups to influence political outcomes in a consensus-building political system, and creating voluntary civil society organizations to meet societal needs not met by government or the private sector.

How We Work

Pact builds civic education components into many of its civil society programs to ensure that citizens understand their rights and responsibilities under their country’s laws. We work with schools and student associations as well as adult networks and vulnerable groups to empower individuals who lack the awareness or skills through an emphasis on education, networking, and mentoring.

Pact also sponsors research on the status of civic education in countries where it
operates. For example, the Office for a Democratic Belarus, a Pact partner located in Brussels, carried out an overview of the civic education sector in Belarus. The study described the types of civic education carried out by civil society organizations and revealed the small percentage of Belarusians impacted by civic education programs. The research concludes with recommendations aimed to improve the both the quality and quantity of civic education.

Our tools and strategies connect people with their public servants and civil society organizations, establish quality standards for civic education programming, make civic education programs more accessible to the public and vulnerable groups, and give citizens a voice and responsibility in their local political process.

**Why it’s Effective**

Pact’s emphasis on capacity building cultivates the sustainable transfer of knowledge and encourages collaborative efforts between civil society organizations, individuals and government. Citizens strengthen their civic awareness and knowledge, exercise their civic responsibilities and thereby become actively engaged in their society’s governance processes.

**For More Information**

Marc Cassidy  
Governance Director  
mccassidy@pactworld.org

Pact is an international, nonprofit organization with forty years of experience. Our vision is: a world where those who are poor and marginalized exercise their voice, build their own solutions, and take ownership over their future.

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**CASE IN POINT: ETHIOPIA & ZIMBABWE**

Pact’s Strengthening Civic Education in Primary Schools (SCEPS) project enables children across Ethiopia to engage as citizens of the future through the creation and mentoring of scouting groups and student councils and development of civic education materials which foster students’ self-esteem, teach them to exercise their civic responsibilities, strengthen their civic awareness, and promote peace and tolerance.

510 schools covering 9 regions are participating.

36,161 scouts participating in school and community service activities.

In Zimbabwe, Pact’s RIGHTS program supported civil society efforts to increase community awareness of the country’s political processes and keep communities informed of and discuss the constitution making process, ongoing violence, and elections roadmap.

31,702 people participated in civic education programs.

26,784 individuals received voter education in preparation for the elections.