What is my involvement profile?

During this activity, students will discover different ways to get involved. They will also be encouraged to reflect on the interests and motivations that would lead them to get involved.

A BIT OF THEORY

Involvement can be defined as no longer being a spectator in your social environment. It also means being right in the action and taking part in defending a cause or idea.

Different forms of involvement

There are many reasons for getting actively involved in one’s community and many ways to do it. We can support a cause or an organization, defend ideas that are important to us, etc. Whatever the reason, getting involved is a good way to integrate into society and to become one of its valued members.

Involvement to promote democratic life

You don’t have to support a specific political party to get involved in democratic life. There are nonpartisan forms of involvement, where you don’t need to take a stand. For example, you can simply be an advocate for the active exercise of citizenship. As a matter of fact, one form of involvement is to work to promote active participation in democratic life and to encourage behaviours like critical thinking, openness to the world and the desire to act and to help change things.
There are different ways to get involved in a nonpartisan way:

- Encouraging discussions on current political issues among friends and family
- Organizing activities to promote citizen participation and democracy
- Taking part in activities on democracy (conferences, debates, etc.)
- Helping to organize the polls and working at the polls

Also, when we’re young, political involvement also includes preparing our own citizenship. Many activities have been developed to offer civic education to young people: discussion groups, mock parliaments, international exchanges, etc.

**Involvement for a specific cause**

Getting involved with an organization to defend a cause is another way to be heard. Opinion groups are great places to defend rights or certain groups of people, or to promote causes and ideas.

Getting involved with an organization can be as simple as becoming a member. It is a good way to familiarize yourself with organizations and how they work, before taking on bigger responsibilities.

You can also choose to volunteer. This means agreeing to do tasks, without getting paid, at specific events or times, or on a more regular basis.

Advocacy work is another way to get involved. This means participating in awareness-raising or training activities, distributing information material, organizing activities or protesting to the authorities in partnership with an organization.

**Student involvement**

Being part of your school’s political institutions as early as high school is, of course, a great way to get to know democratic life, while also being actively involved in the operations of a micro-society—the school environment. The student council is an excellent starting point for your political involvement. This experience can help you develop a sense of responsibility, autonomy, critical thinking, a sense of belonging and creativity.

At the college and university levels, this type of involvement can continue in student associations or student federation activities. This type of participation will have an impact on promoting students’ interests and on improving the overall education system.
Involvement with a Candidate during the Elections

Getting involved in a political party is another form of political activism. Since each political party unites people with a similar philosophy and goals, the decision to get involved with a party must be based on shared values. It is therefore a partisan commitment. Others may get involved because they feel an affinity with candidates they trust or respect, or simply out of friendship.

As soon as you are 16 years old, you can join a candidate or political party during an election campaign to do the following:

- Hand out advertising material
- Hang up posters
- Convince people you know to vote for the party’s candidate
- Go door-to-door
- Represent a party at a polling station on polling day

If you’re interested in participating in the election campaign of a candidate in your electoral division, it is preferable to start by going to meet the team you want to support. You can do this by visiting the party’s office in your area.
1. Present the different types of involvement to the students. Explain that all citizens, young and old, can play an active role in their community.

2. Make up teams of three to four people and invite them to spend 15 minutes thinking about ways to get involved in the community.

3. Distribute sticky notes on which the members of each team must write the result of their thought process. Ask them to write one idea on how to get involved per sticky note.

4. Collect the sticky notes and keep them for later.

5. Distribute the activity sheet. Ask the students to individually answer the questionnaire to find out what their involvement profile is.

6. Start a discussion on the profiles obtained:
   • Is the profile you got from the questionnaire a good reflection of you? Why?

7. On a board or large cardboard divided into four columns, write the different profiles (the philanthropist, the communicator, the scholar, the advocate). Go back over the sticky notes presenting the various ways of getting involved proposed at the start of the activity. Read them out loud and, with the students, try to match them with a profile.

8. Referring to the board or large cardboard, question the students:
   • Are you interested in the different ways of getting involved that fit under your profile?
   • Are there other activities, other causes or other organizations in which you would like to get involved?
What is my involvement profile?

If I were to get involved, what form of involvement would most likely interest me? What type of mission would suit me best and which of my qualities would be of value? Answer the following questions to find out what your engagement profile could be.

In no way does this questionnaire claim to provide a comprehensive portrait. Instead, its purpose is to get you thinking about the many courses of action available to you.

1. When hesitating between two products you want to buy, what criteria do you usually use to make a decision?
   - a. Origin: you prefer local or fair trade products
   - b. Best value for the money: you always know the best deals
   - c. Originality: you love to have things that stand out from everyone else’s
   - d. Convenience and practicality

2. There are only four jobs left on Earth. Which do you choose?
   - a. Scientist
   - b. Doctor
   - c. Journalist
   - d. Artist

3. In a team, you are usually the person who...
   - a. acts as the spokesperson
   - b. distributes tasks fairly according to each person’s talents
   - c. steps in when tension or conflicts arise between team members
   - d. finds good ideas to solve problems

4. On a film set, who would you like to be?
   - a. Director
   - b. Camera operator
   - c. Hero of the story
   - d. It doesn’t matter, as long as I’m useful
5. In your opinion, which of your personality traits is most appreciated?
   a) Your resourcefulness and know-how
   b) Your kindness and good listening skills
   c) Your loyalty and commitment
   d) Your leadership and sense of responsibility

6. Breaking news: a major earthquake has just hit a developing country.
   What thoughts are going through your mind right now?
   a) You are worried about the families and everything they are leaving behind.
   b) You are thinking of organizing a huge fundraising campaign to help the victims.
   c) You wonder what could be done to avoid another catastrophe like this one.
   d) You want to know more and be up-to-date on the latest developments. You consult websites and other media.

7. Choose one of the following types of story.
   a) Adventure story
   b) Historical account
   c) Life story
   d) Police story

8. Which of the following people who have made a mark on history inspires you most?
   a) Albert Einstein
   b) Martin Luther King Jr.
   c) Nelson Mandela
   d) Mother Teresa

9. What do you prefer among the following options?
   a) Communicating
   b) Defending
   c) Creating
   d) Helping
If you earned more money than was needed for you and your family, what would you do?

- **a** You would donate large sums to one or more causes to help children or less fortunate people.
- **b** You would start your own business and offer jobs to people.
- **c** You would invest in research on revolutionary technologies or medications.
- **d** You would travel around the world to provide humanitarian assistance.

**INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

Circle your answers in the following table. Then add up your points for each column and find out what your engagement profile is!

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Profile 1</th>
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<th>Profile 3</th>
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Total: __________  __________  __________  __________
Profile 1  The philanthropist

Your friends are lucky to have a person like you by their side! You wear your heart on your sleeve and are someone people can always depend on. Involvement activities that call on human relations and allow you to experience quality moments with others particularly appeal to you—and with reason, because you are a person who’s dedicated to helping, listening and, most importantly, bringing a bright light into people’s lives. Why not use your human relations skills to get involved and make a difference in the world around you?

**Ideas for getting involved:**
- Give some of your time to volunteer activities like homework assistance, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Breakfast Clubs, support centres, etc.
- Participate in awareness-raising activities on literacy, preventing certain diseases, eliminating poverty, fighting against drug abuse, etc.
- Visit elderly people who live alone or sick children
- Help set up collective kitchens in your community

Profile 2  The communicator

Able and witty, you set yourself apart thanks to your leadership and energetic personality. You are comfortable in front of an audience and you know how to get attention to voice your opinion. Why not use your communication skills to get involved in your community? This will give you an opportunity to help move a cause or project forward and to meet inspiring people. With your ability to communicate, involvement is a good way to make your mark, while also having the satisfaction of contributing to improving your community.

**Ideas for getting involved:**
- Become a member of an organization’s board of directors
- Run for a student council or other association
- Organize a mobilizing event like a career fair, sporting event, cultural event or reunion
- Participate in the activities of a political party’s youth wing
- Start a business project, like a services cooperative
- Host a program on a community or student television or radio network
- Take part in debates or forums on democracy
Profile 3  The scholar

Thanks to your great knowledge, you are able to find original solutions to problems. You are the go-to person for great ideas! Challenges don’t scare you. In fact, you see them as an opportunity to learn or a challenge to meet by demonstrating how innovative you can be. Did you know that your specialized knowledge in certain fields can get recognized through your involvement? The world of involvement is filled with opportunities to share your knowledge, to innovate and to broaden your knowledge.

Ideas for getting involved:
- Take part in a fundraising activity (organizations are always looking for brilliant ideas!)
- Share your experience in a specific area by providing facilitation or becoming a guide in a neighbourhood club or centre
- Participate in committees that discuss issues like new green technologies or the fight against climate change
- Offer your services to a community organization by putting to use your accounting, computer, graphic design, writing or other skills
- Participate in events like forums, conferences, symposiums or public consultations

Profile 4  The advocate

Whether you have your mind set on social justice, sustainable development, protecting human rights or eradicating poverty, you can do great things in the name of a cause that’s important to you. You are a person of conviction. It is important for you to connect with passionate people who share your values. It wouldn’t be surprising if getting involved was already on your agenda! If not, don’t hesitate to take that little step forward. You have all the necessary qualities to step up and advance a cause.

Ideas for getting involved:
- Advocate for a cause by joining a committed organization
- Participate in politically committed events, demonstrations or networking evenings
- Post on social media, comment on the news and share your ideas on discussion forums
- Do volunteer work abroad
- Express your commitment through the arts (paintings, songs, movies, etc.)