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Citi.gen Z+: the citizens of tomorrow

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Abstract

The name of our project is CITI.GEN Z+. The word citi.gen is a combination of citizen and generation, Z is the number of our generation and + refers to all the future ones. We chose this name because it fully expresses our cause, which is to help the members of the new generations become the global citizens of tomorrow. An overview of global challenges of our world, leads to a basic question 'How citizens are we?' and more specific 'How citizens are the next generation'. In those terms, we design a research to measure the impact in attitudes of global problems to our school community. The methodology based on qualitative and quantitative analysis. As expected, results of this project are the change of the youth's mentality on matters that affect everyone's future. We have decided to put together a team of professionals that will help adolescents get through issues they might be faced with and in general aid them in improving their lifestyle. With the passage of time, this "club" will expand and hopefully support all the kids in need. This way, we will create a society where citizens are informed and activated to ameliorate the future.

Keywords

Global citizen; future; change; 17 goals of sustainable development; solutions



Introduction

Undoubtedly, in our day and age, society is dealing with a huge crisis. Our planet is in danger, while at the same time values and ideals are gradually vanished. Unfortunately, the problem is that most people don't seem to be aware of this situation. Citi.gen Z+'s main goal is to ameliorate people's mentality and improve the quality of their lives. Our target is the teenagers as they will in no time be in charge of the future society. Our team wants to push the young citizens of tomorrow to become the best versions of themselves, so that they can be fairly called "global citizens". In order to do so, we have created a project which is closely connected with the 17 goals of sustainable development, since we value them and want to achieve as many as possible. More specifically, we decided to assemble a group of experts that motivate and support children of all ages throughout their journey to becoming the citizens we need for a better future.

What does Global Citizenship mean?

What makes one a good global citizen? One has to fulfill a set of criteria. The ones that we are going to elaborate on are:

- Achieving well-being, since, one has to help oneself before one helps the world.
- Care about the environment and participate in environmental actions.
- Help in reducing poverty and hunger.
- Promote peace, not war.
- Support and fight for gender equality.
- Fight for quality education.

According to the UNESCO "global citizenship is a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. Global citizenship education, in this context, concerns learning to recognize and respect multiple levels of identity and collective identity that transcend individual cultural, religious, ethnic and other differences." [1] The unity of Global Citizenship Education stems from the fact that it requires a lasting approach to the social problems we are facing today.



Facts from all around the globe

Here are presented only a few of the world's most outrageous facts throughout history. Since we would not be able to conduct such a research, the below facts are entirely taken from globally organizations.

Well-Being

According to Carol Diane Ryff (the UNDP Administrator is the Vice-Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), which pools the funds, programs, specialized agencies, departments and offices of the UN system that play a role in sustainable development) [2] well-being is divided into six categories:

1. Self-acceptance
2. Personal growth
3. Purpose in life
4. Positive Relations with others
5. Environmental Mastery
6. Autonomy

It is understood that there are countries that have reached a high level of well-being, but there is another part of our world, where people suffer from unhappiness and bad living conditions.

Well-Being Facts:

- At least 400,000,000 people have no basic healthcare, and 40% lack social protection.
- More than 1/3 of women have experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives.
- 7,000,000 people die every year from exposure to extremely polluted air.

Environment

According to WWF, an independent foundation registered under Swiss law, governed by a Board of Trustees under an International President. In our days, environment is facing a huge crisis [3]. The main environmental problems are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Pollution | 7. Loss of Biodiversity |
| 2. Global Warming | 8. Deforestation |
| 3. Overpopulation | 9. Ocean Acidification |
| 4. Natural resource depletion | 10. Ozone layer Depletion |
| 5. Waste disposal | 11. Acid rain |
| 6. Climate change | 12. Water Pollution |



Environment Facts [4] :

- 1.100.000.000 people lack access to water and 2.400.000.000 don't have adequate sanitation
- Humans now buy 1.000.000 plastic bottles a minute. By 2050, the ocean will contain more plastic by weight than fish.
- 11% of all global greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans are caused by deforestation

Poverty

Most people cannot imagine how many people die due to poverty. Contrary to popular belief, it is all around us, not only at developing countries [5], [6], [7].

Poverty Facts:

- 1/2 of the world's population, lives on less than \$2.50 a day
- 1.300.000.000 live in extreme poverty, less than \$1.25 a day
- 22.000 children die each day due to poverty
- Preventable diseases like pneumonia take the lives of 2.000.000 children a year who are too poor to afford proper treatment

Peace-War

According to "The New York City Tech Ecosystem" study was conducted by HR&A Advisors and commissioned by NY Tech Meet up, the Association for a Better New York, City, and Google [8], the number of casualties every day is shocking and terrifying, while nothing is done to prevent it.

- World War I claimed the lives of 6,000 men a day.
- The two nations most affected were Germany and France, each of which sent into battle 80% of their male population between the ages of 15 and 49.

During World War II:

- 8,000,000 French, Dutch and Belgian citizens became refugees during the summer of 1940.
- Berlin lost around 60,000 of its population to bombing.



- 100,000 mentally and physically disabled Germans were murdered.
- 6,000,000 Jews were murdered in the Holocaust.

Gender Equality

According to Plan International (a development and humanitarian organization that advances children's rights and equality for girl) [9],[10], women and girls around the world face violence and discrimination, regardless of age, background or country. These systematic inequalities violate their human rights and prevent them from reaching their potential.

Gender equality Facts:

- Every year, 12,000,000 girls are married before their 18th birthday. Today they are almost 750,000,000. 1/5 girls become a mother before that age.
- Women earn 77 cents for every dollar that men get for the same work.
- 35% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence.
- The EU employment rate for men of working age was 78% in 2017, exceeding that of women (66.5 %).

Quality education

There is nothing more important than access to quality education [11]. However, not everyone enjoys it and that definitely needs to change.

Education Facts:

- 124,000,000 children across the world are out of school and 250,000,000 are not learning basic skills as a result of poor-quality education.
- Girls are 1.5 times more likely to be completely excluded from primary education.
- 103,000,000 youth worldwide lack basic literacy skills.



Research

Methodology

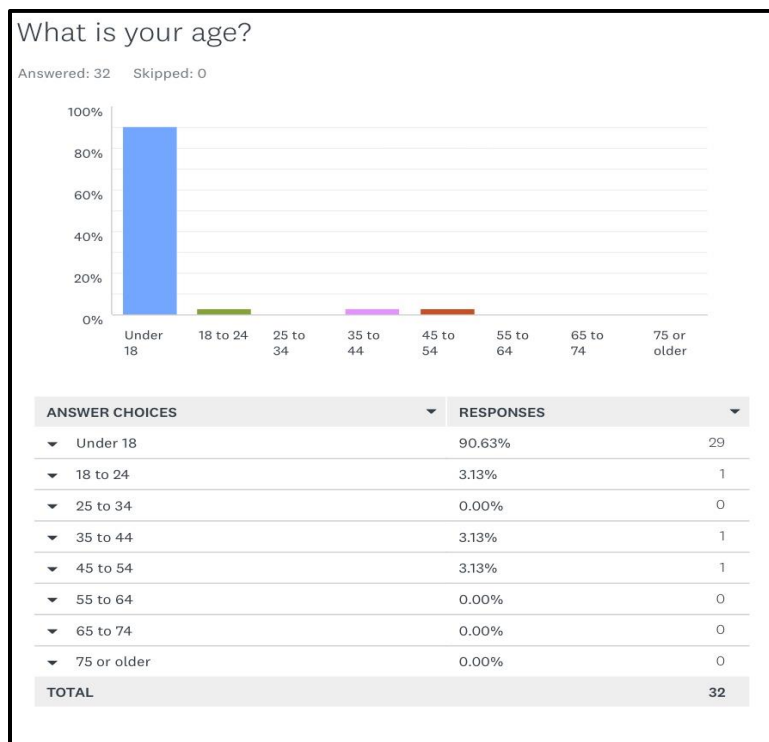
As a team we believe that a global citizen must be informed about all the important issues which are mentioned above and be willing to solve them. Thus, we considered crucial to set up our research in a way that would combine both the ordinary people's and the specialists' point of view. Specifically, we created a questionnaire with which we would be able to understand the average person's opinion on matters that affect everyone's future.

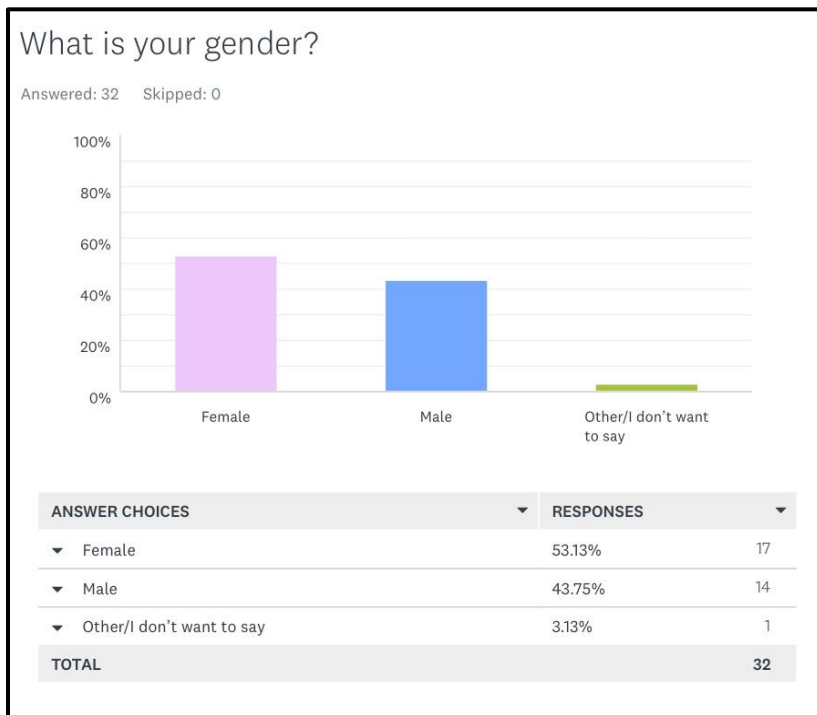
Furthermore, we interviewed a specialist and asked him to give us his opinion on whether he would like to join our club as a teacher and why.

Our questionnaire entitled "ARE YOU A GLOBAL CITIZEN?" consisted of 10 questions and was answered by 31 people from various age groups. The link of the full questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LXXZBFK>

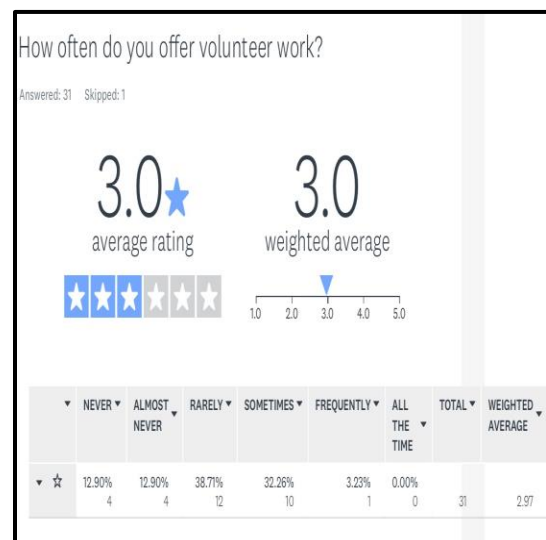
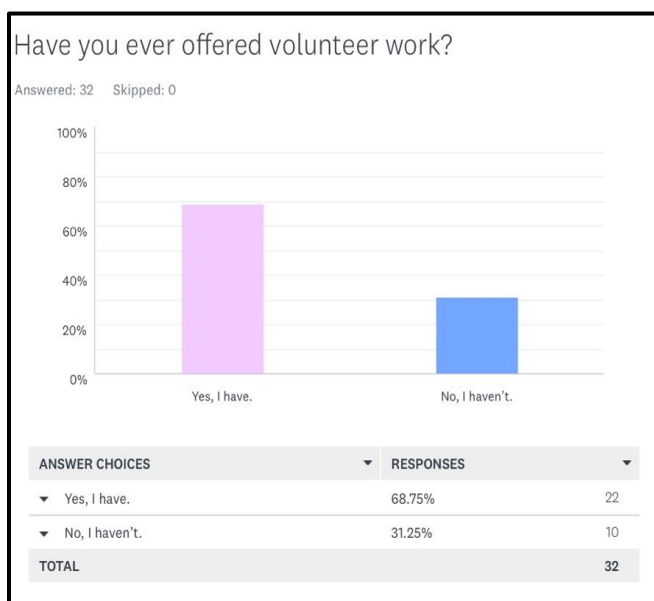
Results

Most participants aged under 18 years old and their gender was about equal of female and male

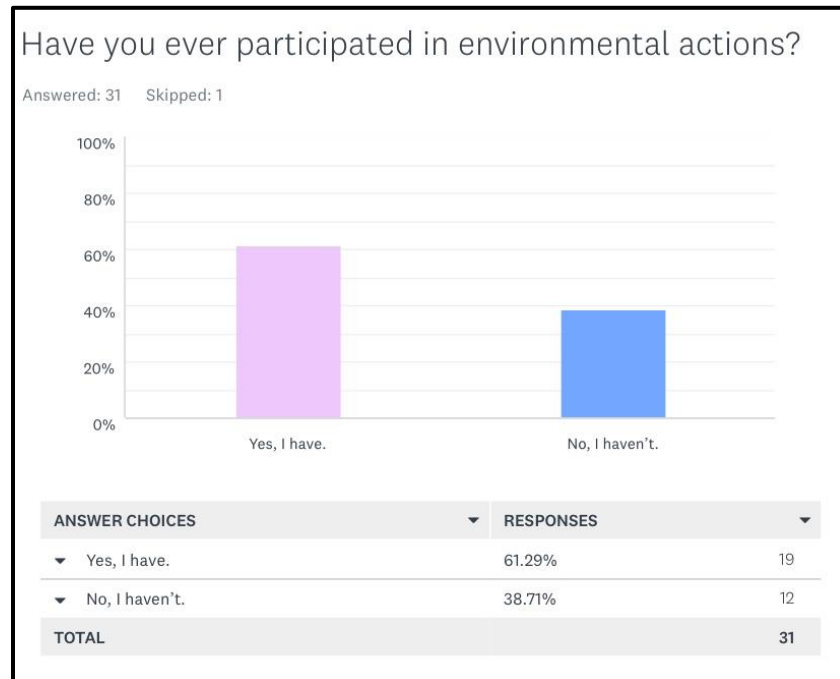




Most of participants offered volunteer work, but not so often, 38,77% answered rarely and 30,26% answered sometimes



It was surprising that there is quite a high-level percentage of participants who have not participated in environmental actions.



By qualitative analysis of the answers of question: 'Q6: In your opinion, what actions need to be done in order to reduce poverty', we could mention that most of them invest in quality education to reduce poverty.

Response A: Offer them jobs/ Reduce unemployment/ provide them with quality education in order to find a job → 11 people

Response B: Lower taxes → 2 people

Response C: Volunteer / Donate (money, food etc.) → 4 people

Response D: Better use of resources → 2 people

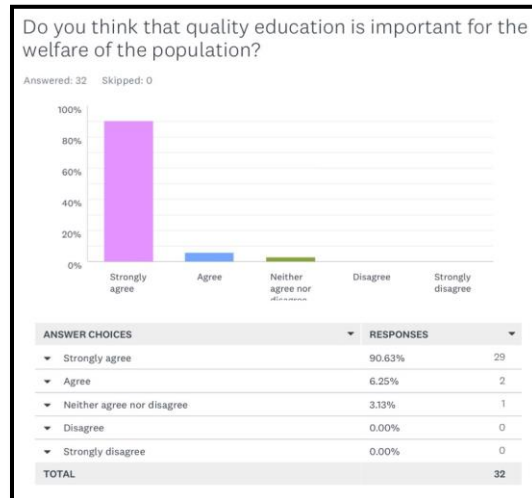
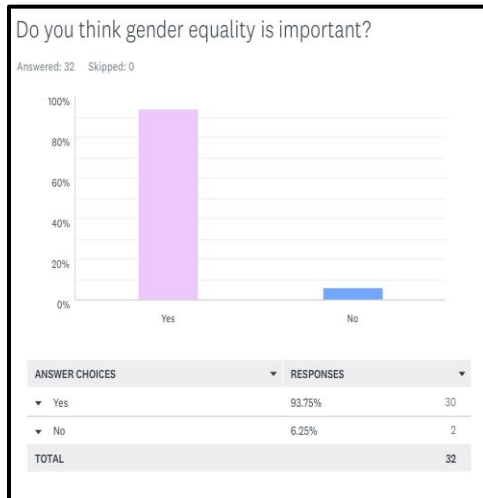
Response E: Global scale actions → 2 people

Response F: Financial help from the government → 2 people



Response H: I don't know/ It can't be reduced →4 people

Attitudes for Gender equality are positive; mostly most of them agree with the sentence that quality education is important for the welfare of the population.



By qualitative analysis of the answers of question: 'Q9: In your opinion, how we can quality of life for people with special needs be improved', most participants take under consideration respect, helpful, education and information.

Response A: Respect them, help them, but at the same time treat them like equals, educate and inform people about their needs →18 people

Response B: Make better constructions for them and adapt public transport to their needs →8 people

Response C: Give them an allowance →2 people

By qualitative analysis of the responses of question: 'Q10: Which do you think are the characteristics of a global citizen and would you consider yourself one', we could highlight that the responses about the characteristics were all very similar (someone who cares about the environment, the war etc. and wants to make this world a better place). Thus, we are only going to talk about the YES/NO percentages for the second part of the question "...would you consider yourself one?".



RESPONSES	ANSWER CHOICES
28 people responded	Yes → 65,2%
3 people skipped the question	No → 34,8%

Interview

Before setting up the group of scientists and experts, our team wanted to get advice from Mr. Panigirakis, an electrical engineer. Below is a part of the interview:

- "Would you join our team for free?"

- "I have 4 kids and work almost all day, so I don't know, if I have the time to help you, as much as I want to. However, I do not think that a scientist needs money to guide the future citizens for a few hours a week. I think the pleasure seen in the eyes of children is worth more than money can buy. Imagine the joy of these people, when the children they offered advice to get their degrees and save the world, without failing to teach the next generations in return. "

- "Can you give us some advice?"

- "I have been practicing this profession for over 25 years. To achieve your goals and dreams you need lots of work and endless will. Stick to a good idea, set up a team and work on it. Even if it doesn't work right away, if you truly believe in it, never give up".

Discussion

Suggestions & measures/steps to be taken

In the end, what action is to be taken? How can we help the next generation of citizens? Drawing on the results of our questionnaire, we made the decision to take immediate action. We have decided to assemble a team of experts specifically for them. This will be a free club for all kids at the center of our city. Members will be divided in groups by age and interests. The assembled



experts once in a while will visit schools that are a little far away and inspire them to join the club and become the best versions of themselves.

Consultancy and support will be offered to children concerning every key part of their lives. There will be more than one gymnast, psychologist, nutritionist, teacher and other specialists. The gymnast will help them work out properly and have a healthy body, which leads to a healthy lifestyle. With useful therapy sessions from the psychologist, children battle anxiety and any other issue that bothers them in their personal lives. The peak of healthy lifestyle will be reached with the nutritionist, who will make suggestions to the younger citizens as to what to eat, so their minds can always be alert. The teacher will help them with their studies whether they do not understand something at school, or they need extra classes. Last but not least, there will be numerous other specialists, who will inform the students about the important problems that occur in our planet, they will encourage them to volunteer and thus *become the global citizens of tomorrow*.

Conclusion

Citi.gen Z+ is a non-profit organization, a student-driven attempt to battle the world's gravest problems. From building the questionnaires to assembling a team of experts, step by step, the next generation of citizens will learn the value of their planet and of their coexistence in it. With the assistance of other people, such as the engineer Mr. Panigyrakis, using their will power, and the above solutions, they hope to be able to minimize these problems in the long run. Until their ideas are spread through all cities, there was created a g-mail account, so that everyone can email their problems, and be sure that there will be an immediate response. It is simple, free and relieving not only being offered a solution, but also talking openly about your problem. Citi.gen Z+ is here to help; the world is in need of a better future.

Acknowledgments



Citi.gen Z+ logo created by our members



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