

“It doesn’t matter to me”

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This is what my upperclassman said about how he feels about the election. Even though elections are a crucial pillar of a well-functioning democracy, an “It doesn’t matter to me” mindset has been growing in the hearts of our generation.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, voter turnout was alarmingly low among the younger generation. Only 43% of people in their teens voted, and even fewer, with just 36%, of those in their 20s exercised their right to vote. To put this into perspective, this is roughly half the voter turnout compared to those in their 60s.

Another survey shows that “lack of interest” was the top reason young people didn’t vote. Consequently, politicians have often overlooked issues that directly impact our generation, as evidenced by the stagnation of the education budget for over two decades. So, what can we do to combat this growing “it doesn’t matter to me” mindset among our generation? To answer this question, I first want to talk about something seemingly unrelated.

You’ve probably heard something close to this in one of your classes, “To learn effectively, you need to output what you have learned”. This method of learning has been implemented in KOSEN classes and has proven to be very effective as our students have a 99% employment rate upon graduation. So, if it works so well, why don’t we apply it to political education as well?

One way to do this is by creating opportunities for students to meet politicians face-to-face. In today’s traditional media landscape, it’s rare to see any in-depth coverage of politicians beyond scripted speeches or gossip and scandals. This can make it challenging for us citizens to see politicians as real people working for our benefit. Now Imagine having the chance to ask questions directly to the people who make decisions about our future. This kind of engagement can make politics feel less distant and more relevant to our lives

Another way to do this is to integrate politics into our curriculum. Let’s look at Sweden as an example. Sweden has a very high voter turnout at 82% among young people. This is a result of schools actively teaching about the ideologies, policies, and claims made by each political party.

Integrating political education into our curriculum not only informs us about the political landscape but also helps us to make informed choices when it comes to voting. It equips us with the knowledge we need to engage in meaningful discussions and debates about the future of our country.

In conclusion, we can’t afford to let the “It doesn’t matter to me” mindset continue to grow. Our generation’s participation in elections is vital for a healthy democracy. By creating opportunities to meet politicians face-to-face and integrating political education into our schools, we can make politics more relatable and ensure our voices

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are heard. Let's remember, it does matter, and it matters to all of us. Thank you.