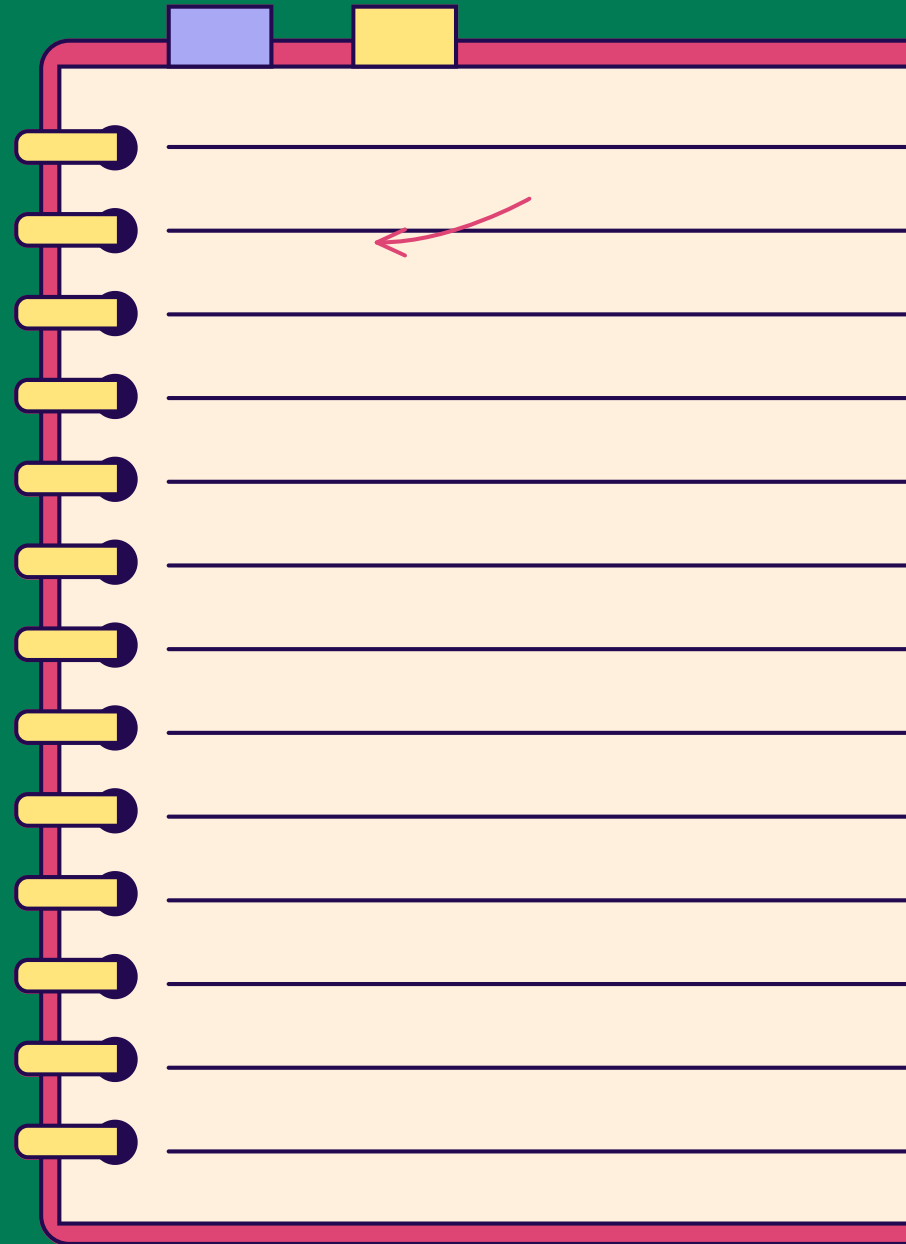


MODULE 14 - ONLINE CIVIC LIFE

CHAPTER 1

BE AN ENGAGED CITIZEN



INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains what it means to be an engaged citizen and why it is important to actively participate in society. It explores different forms of engagement, whether local or online, and shows how digital tools can facilitate citizen participation. Concrete examples are presented in the next chapter.

1 BEING AN ENGAGED CITIZEN

WHAT IS THIS ?

An engaged citizen is a person who **actively participates in the life of his community and society** in general. He is involved in actions aimed at **improving collective well-being, defending causes or promoting values such as social justice, solidarity and ecology.**

Being an engaged citizen also means being informed, taking a stand and contributing to initiatives, large or small, that have a **positive impact on the lives of others.** This reflects a desire to strengthen social ties and participate in the development of a more equitable and sustainable future.

THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Community involvement:** participate in associations or NGOs that work on social, environmental or cultural causes.
- **Political engagement:** getting involved in election campaigns, voting.
- **Activist engagement:** mobilisation for specific causes, such as human rights.
- **Volunteering:** offering your time and skills to projects or people in need
- **Educational engagement:** raising awareness among others about important issues, for example by leading workshops or giving lectures.

1 BE AN ENGAGED CITIZEN

WHY GET INVOLVED AS A CITIZEN?

Getting involved in your community helps create a more supportive, welcoming and vibrant environment. By taking part in concrete actions, you can meet the needs of residents, build relationships with others and improve everyone's lives. It also allows you to better understand what is happening around you and contribute to decisions that affect your daily life.

SOME CONCRETE ACTIONS TO GET INVOLVED:

PARTICIPATE IN NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

Attending meetings organized by the municipality or residents allows you to learn about current projects, express your concerns and propose ideas to improve the local living environment. These exchanges promote collective decision-making and strengthen the feeling of belonging to the community.

JOIN OR CREATE AN ASSOCIATION

Getting involved in an association allows you to actively contribute to a cause that has a direct impact on society, such as helping vulnerable people, protecting the environment or animating local life. Creating your own association is also a way to respond to a specific need and to unite people who share the same values.

VOLUNTEERING

Giving your time to help others, whether in a retirement home, a food bank or a shelter, is a concrete way to support people in difficulty. Volunteering also allows you to develop skills, build social ties and contribute to collective well-being.

SHARE USEFUL INFORMATION

Raising awareness among residents about issues that concern them, such as social welfare systems, municipal services or local events, helps improve communication and solidarity within the community. This can be done by word of mouth, through posters, or by relaying information on media accessible to all.

ORGANIZE COMMUNITY EVENTS

Setting up local meetings, such as workshops, solidarity collections or neighborhood parties, helps to strengthen cohesion between residents. These events are also an opportunity to promote local talents and resources, and to encourage mutual aid and sharing within the neighborhood.



2 BEING AN ONLINE CITIZEN

WHY GET INVOLVED ONLINE?

Today, thanks to digital tools, it is possible to **get involved online**.

Online engagement can have **many benefits**, as it allows people to actively participate in civic life, even with a busy schedule, by supporting local or global causes without the constraints of location or time. Digital tools make it easier to access information, exchange with other engaged people, make their voices heard on a large scale and contribute to local decisions through online consultations. Donation and volunteering platforms also make it possible to provide assistance remotely, making mutual aid more accessible to all.



2 BEING AN ONLINE CITIZEN

SOME CONCRETE ACTIONS TO GET INVOLVED ONLINE:

SIGN PETITIONS ONLINE

You can support causes you care about by signing petitions on websites designed specifically for this purpose. It only takes a few minutes, and your signature can help bring important issues to the attention of decision-makers.

PARTICIPATE IN FUNDRAISERS

If a project or cause touches you, you can make an online donation to help fund this initiative. Sites make it easy to contribute to solidarity projects in just a few clicks.

SHARE INFORMATION ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

By sharing articles, videos or posts on social media, you help raise awareness among your friends and family about important topics. This helps get the message out to more people.

VOLUNTEER ONLINE

Even if you can't travel, you can help online. For example, you can offer your skills to translate documents, help answer questions or give advice on forums. This helps associations or projects remotely.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS ON THE INTERNET

If you have concerns or ideas, you can write directly to your political representatives. Many elected officials have social media pages or contact forms on their websites where you can ask questions or share your suggestions.



Go to Chapter 2, which explains concretely how to get involved online!