

# Sara Čabarkapa

## Country Residing

Montenegro

## Gender

Woman

## Date of Birth

06/13/1995

## Nationality

Montenegro

## Do you live in Podgorica?

Yes

## Organisation

Centre for Civic Education

## Position at Organisation

Active Citizenship Program Coordinator

## Short Biography:

Sara Čabarkapa is a civic activist from Montenegro working at the intersection of democratic governance, civic participation, and human rights in the Western Balkans. She currently serves as Active Citizenship Programme Coordinator at the Centre for Civic Education (CCE), where she leads initiatives aimed at strengthening citizen engagement, democratic culture, and institutional accountability.

Her work focuses on promoting civic participation in decision-making, combating hate speech, safeguarding freedom of expression, and addressing historical revisionism through research, advocacy, and education. She coordinates multi-stakeholder programmes involving civil society organisations, schools, local governments, and national institutions. She has contributed to policy guidelines and publications supporting inclusive and participatory governance at the local level.

Previously, she worked with the British Council and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), where she supported programmes on parliamentary cooperation, electoral

integrity, interfaith dialogue, anti-corruption, and political party development. Her experience spans both national and regional initiatives, including cross-border dialogue and youth-led policy discussions across the Western Balkans and Europe.

Sara holds a Bachelor's and Specialist degree in English Language and is completing a Master's degree in Communication and Media, with a research focus on hate speech in Montenegrin media. She is an alumna of the International Baccalaureate Programme at Bromsgrove School in the United Kingdom. As a Swedish Institute scholar, she completed the Young Professionals Programme in E-government at Linköping University.

She is a member of several regional youth and expert networks and is committed to empowering young people to actively shape democratic, inclusive, and resilient societies.

**What issue/s are you working to solve and why are you passionate about these issues?**

Through my work at the Centre for Civic Education, I focus on strengthening active citizenship by building connections between individuals, civil society organisations, schools, and public institutions. My work aims to ensure that citizens are not only informed about their rights, but also empowered and motivated to participate meaningfully in democratic processes at both the local and national level. I work on initiatives that promote civic education, inclusive decision-making, and institutional accountability, with a particular focus on engaging young people and underrepresented groups. Alongside this, I contribute to research and advocacy addressing hate speech and threats to freedom of expression, challenges that undermine social cohesion, distort public discourse, and disproportionately silence marginalised voices.

I am deeply passionate about these issues because I come from a post-conflict society where the past continues to shape present-day divisions. I have witnessed how the denial of war crimes, polarising political narratives, and weak accountability mechanisms erode public trust, hinder reconciliation, and weaken democratic resilience.

These experiences have reinforced my belief that democracy is not sustained by institutions alone, but by informed, engaged, and courageous citizens who are willing to confront difficult truths, defend fundamental rights, and actively participate in shaping their societies.

**Explain and describe how you are working to solve these issues.**

I work to address weak civic participation, the spread of hate speech and historical revisionism, and limited accountability in democratic decision-making by combining practical programme delivery, applied research, and direct engagement with citizens and institutions.

To respond to low levels of democratic participation, particularly among young people, I design and deliver civic participation initiatives with schools, local communities, civil society organisations, and public authorities. Through trainings, workshops, and public discussions, they gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to engage in democratic processes and participate in decisions that affect their lives.

To counter hate speech and historical revisionism in public and online spaces, I conduct research on hate speech, freedom of expression, and historical revisionism, identifying harmful narratives and informing reports and policy recommendations used in advocacy efforts.

I also work to reduce the gap between citizens and decision-makers by organising roundtables and consultations. I have contributed to developing practical guidelines to enhance citizen participation in local decision-making, supporting more inclusive and transparent governance.

By integrating education, research, and institutional cooperation, my work strengthens democratic culture and empowers young people to actively shape more inclusive societies in Montenegro and the Western Balkans.

**If possible, give an estimate of the number of people who have been positively impacted by the actions described above and explain how these people have been impacted.**

Through the programmes and initiatives I have coordinated and contributed to, I estimate that over 2,000 people have been directly and indirectly positively impacted over the past several years.

Directly, more than 600 participants, primarily young people, students, educators, and civil society activists, have taken part in trainings, workshops, public discussions, and civic education activities that I helped design or deliver. These participants gained practical knowledge on civic rights, democratic participation, freedom of expression, and ways to engage with local and national institutions. Many reported increased confidence to participate in public debates, initiate community actions,

and contribute to decision-making processes within their schools, communities, or organisations.

Indirectly, my work has reached an estimated 1,500 additional people through public advocacy activities, cooperation with institutions and municipalities, and media engagement. For example, practical guidelines for enhancing citizen participation in local decision-making have been adopted by local governments and civil society organisations, leading to improved consultation practices and expanded opportunities for citizen input at the local level.

Together, these efforts have strengthened civic awareness, encouraged active participation, and supported more inclusive and accountable decision-making processes.

**What makes your work innovative/unique?**

My work focuses on transforming young people from passive observers into active participants in democratic processes. Rather than limiting youth engagement to awareness-raising or symbolic consultation, I design programmes that equip young people with practical skills, provide safe spaces for dialogue, and create direct opportunities to engage with decision-makers at both local and national levels.

A core innovation of my approach is bridging spaces that are usually disconnected. I work within schools, youth organisations, and civil society, while at the same time opening institutional spaces that young people rarely have access to. By facilitating structured dialogue between young people, local authorities, and public institutions, I help ensure that youth perspectives are not only heard, but meaningfully considered within decision-making processes.

Through interactive workshops and research-informed advocacy, I equip young participants with the tools to recognise harmful narratives, engage critically in public discourse, and defend democratic values in both digital and offline environments.

Working in a post-conflict context further shapes this approach. By encouraging young people to critically engage with the past while actively shaping the future, my work empowers them to become informed, resilient, and responsible democratic leaders capable of challenging exclusionary narratives and contributing to more inclusive societies.

**Why do you wish to attend the One Young World Summit 2026, specifically through the Capital City of Podgorica Scholarship?**

I wish to attend the One Young World Summit 2026 to engage with a global network of young leaders working on democratic participation, human rights, and social cohesion, and to bring these insights directly back to my work in Montenegro and the Western Balkans. One Young World offers a unique platform to exchange practical solutions, learn from diverse global contexts, and build partnerships that can strengthen local impact and long-term change.

Applying through the Capital City of Podgorica Scholarship is especially meaningful to me, as I am from Podgorica and my personal and professional journey is closely tied to the city. In my role as Active Citizenship Programme Coordinator at the Centre for Civic Education, I work directly with young people, schools, civil society organisations, and local institutions in Podgorica to strengthen civic engagement and democratic culture. Many of the challenges I address, such as youth disengagement, hate speech, and limited participation in decision-making are most visible at the local level, where trust between citizens and institutions is built.

Attending the Summit through this scholarship would allow me to represent Podgorica as a city of young people committed to democratic values, inclusion, and dialogue. The knowledge, skills, and global connections gained at One Young World would be translated into concrete local programmes and advocacy efforts, further strengthening youth participation and contributing to more inclusive and resilient governance in Podgorica.

**Please outline how you would use the One Young World Summit and membership to the Ambassador Community to create measurable impact upon returning to Podgorica.**

I would use the One Young World Summit and the Ambassador Community as a starting point to create a long-term youth civic leadership pipeline in Podgorica, linking global ideas with local action. Rather than focusing on one-off activities, my goal is to use One Young World values for sustainable youth engagement at the city level.

Upon returning from the Summit, I would launch a One Young World Podgorica Youth Group, an informal but structured group of 20–25 young people from diverse backgrounds, including students, activists, and young professionals. Over a six-month period, the group would meet regularly to explore key Summit themes such as democracy and youth participation, and adapt global best practices to local challenges by co-designing civic initiatives. Impact would be measured through participation rates and the number of initiatives developed by participants.

With support from the Ambassador Community, I would connect the Youth Circle with international peers through virtual exchanges, strengthening participants' leadership and advocacy skills. The group would also implement one collective civic action project, such as a public dialogue, local consultation, or awareness campaign, reaching at least 500 residents of Podgorica both online and offline.

Following this pilot phase, the model would be refined into a replicable toolkit and shared with youth organisations and municipalities, supporting the creation of similar Youth Circles and a growing network of locally rooted, globally connected young leaders across Montenegro.

**Please provide any links to websites, blogs or social media accounts that you believe are relevant to your application. If you have received any awards, please provide the links to those below**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sara-%C4%8Dabarkapa-0bbbb5236/?originalSubdomain=me>

<https://cgo-cce.org/2026/01/17/digitalna-prava-u-crnoj-gori/>