



Impact of Action Civics

Report on Spring 2017 Focus Group Sessions

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Executive Summary

Generation Citizen's (GC's) vision is of a country of young people working to collectively strengthen our American democracy. To achieve this vision, our mission is to work to ensure that every student in the United States receives an effective action civics education, which provides them with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in our democracy as active citizens.

As such, we teach and inspire students to 1) identify and explore a community issue and its root causes, 2) think strategically and deliberately about how to alleviate the community problem (by developing knowledge of institutions at play, deeper analytical thought processes, and tools to collaborate with members of the community or government officials, among other lessons), and 3) affect change through interacting with local decision makers and influencing legislation or other means, focused largely on local government.

Our ultimate program goals focus on encouraging and enhancing students' civic behavior in the long term. Our current measurement tools, utilized foremost to help us develop and refine our programming, are focused on assessing immediate-term outcomes, particularly how students' civic skills, knowledge, and dispositions change from the beginning to the end of their GC semesters. This analysis is published annually in an Impact Progress Report.

However, we have a limited understanding of our impact after our students complete the program. Accordingly, in Spring 2017, we conducted focus groups in New York and Rhode Island designed to help us better understand the program's effect on students after they leave the classroom, and to identify student commitment to future engagement. These focus groups provided us with a new lens into students' experiences as well as better visibility for possible development of an alumni engagement framework, and for the viability of longitudinal evaluation.

Highlights of Findings

We found that in the areas of civic knowledge and attitude, students were positively impacted in the near-term. Many components of project based learning - content proficiency, critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving, and public speaking - resonated strongly with students and stood out from their experiences. Furthermore, students described a process of identity development they went through during GC, from seeing themselves as consumers of information and unengaged bystanders, to producers with agency who could make a difference. However, evidence of a subsequent change in students' behavior - the leap to sustained active and engaged citizenship - was tenuous in our focus groups.

On GC's Impact

- **Overall, students experienced significant personal and intellectual growth due to GC:**
Students particularly valued the experience of collaborating through consensus-building and ongoing teamwork. They also highlighted working with peers and thinking strategically as important aspects of their GC classroom experiences. Students commented on growth in their ability to communicate effectively and identified this as an instrumental tool for success and problem solving. They frequently described gains in their sense of civic self-efficacy – better understanding the process of making change on issues they cared about and recognizing the value of stepping out of their comfort zones.

Students were moved by the power of breaking previously perceived boundaries and limits, and their self-

esteem and confidence grew as they engaged in activities they wouldn't have engaged in otherwise. They valued these new experiences, whether it was speaking to adults at Civics Day or calling a councilmember's office, as they offered students the opportunity to exhibit courage and take risks and, often to their surprise, succeed.

- **Interacting professionally with adults and witnessing a community of civically minded youth at Civics Day¹ was both validating and powerful:** It was clear that attending Civics Day was a significant and valued opportunity for development for those who attended. While not all students do attend Civics Day, those who were unable to did not report negative repercussions of their lack of ability to participate.
- **Students' understanding of effective long-term civic behavior varied:** GC ultimately aims to inspire young people to become more active and engaged, but the specific behaviors we intend to cultivate in the long-term are not clear to students. When asked how they would engage in the long-term, students' responses ranged from knowing which steps to take to solve a problem to offering broadly diverse contributions a person can make to one's community. "Action" meant different things for students of different ages, which might be a reflection of the scale of their own classroom projects. Older students (11th grade) tended to take action on broader community issues whereas younger students (8th-9th grade) tended to focus on actions at the hyper-local school level.

On Affiliation with Generation Citizen, the Organization

- **Students would recommend participating in the program to a peer, but none had pursued an ongoing relationship with GC:** Despite their recommendation of the program, they hadn't deepened their ties with GC by applying to our Student Leadership Board ("SLB")² or Community Change Fellowship ("CCF")³ programs. We look forward to exploring the rationale for this lack of follow up in more detail.
- **When considering future opportunities for engagement, students expressed interest in continuing skill development sparked by GC classes:** Students were curious about opportunities for personal skill development, suggesting both a sense of maturity in their eagerness to set goals and take responsibility for their continued learning, and self-awareness of their learning and of skills they had begun cultivating during their classes. It is possible that this interest stems from what they reportedly most appreciated in the classroom such as debate,

¹ Civics Day is a culminating activity where students present their action plans and preliminary outcomes to public officials, fellow GC classes, and other community members. Judges for this "civics fair" have included governors, commissioners of education, and members of Congress. All students participate in preparations for the event but, due largely to space capacity constraints, 3-6 students from each classroom attend Civics Day in person.

² GC's Student Leadership Board (SLB) is a team of middle-and-high school program alumni that supports our efforts to learn from our students' experiences, continue developing students as civic leaders, and elevate student voice in the democracy education field.

³ The Community Change Fellowship (CCF) is an internship opportunity for high-performing GC high school alumni to continue their community engagement after the semester in a professional political environment. Fellows work in local advocacy, political, and elected officials' offices and receive weekly professional development from GC staff over the course of their summer as Fellows.

collaboration, and public speaking. Students expressed interest in GC offering ongoing professional development resources and internship opportunities.

- **Students would be likely to respond to communication requests from GC if the organization continues to maintain contact with them beyond the program in order to build a relationship with alumni:** Social media (Facebook, Twitter) was the most popularly suggested outreach method among older students; emails and phone calls were appealing to younger students.

Summary of Recommendations

In our Classrooms

As the organization engages in differentiating its curriculum for middle- and high-school students, materials should also reinforce students' understanding of the purpose and process of civic participation beyond their projects. GC might accordingly develop a rubric to help operationalize these expectations, ideally in training and teaching of our Democracy Coaches and teachers, as to what specifically the type of long-term civic behaviors we hope to inspire, beyond just voting.

- GC should consider ways to enhance opportunities for students to present to and interact with peers, and specifically adults beyond their classrooms. GC should also think creatively about how to offer the energy and value of the Civics Day experience to more students or to those who aren't able to attend.

Beyond our Classrooms

- As we enunciate more robust definitions of our program's long-term behavior goals, these should be explicitly incorporated into GC's internal and external communications. Although staff and partners appear to be largely aligned on these definitions informally, more clearly articulated parameters will result in less ambiguity and can help drive more focused programming.
- Develop a more purposeful alumni strategy in order to expand opportunities for students' continued engagement with GC beyond their in-class programs, to build on their affiliation with the organization beyond their classrooms, and to increase the likelihood that they will engage in future GC evaluation and communication. We can do this by:
 - Expanding the scope of and recruitment for the SLB and CCF programs;
 - Creating systems and a structure for communicating post-program with students; and
 - Developing alumni activities and programming which speak directly to students' personal development of the political behaviors we encourage them to exhibit in the long-term.
- Facilitate more focus groups across different regions and school partners, including those where GC courses are taught across multiple grades and class subjects, to support further learning about the actual impact of GC's programming on students.

Background

Generation Citizen (GC) partners directly with schools to help them implement a comprehensive, high-quality action civics education program.

- Our Democracy Coach program is our historical model, relying on skilled college volunteers to support teachers in facilitating the often-new discipline and pedagogy of Action Civics. Democracy Coaches bring capacity to strengthen each class' advocacy research and community outreach and also serve as extra helping hands when orchestrating the many moving parts of small group work as classes are taking action.
- Our Teacher-Led program is our newer model for training and supporting teachers in implementing an Action Civics curriculum themselves. The goal of this model is to help individual schools build in-house capacity to lead effective Action Civics programming themselves through multi-year, staged partnerships in which schools gradually take ownership of institutionalizing Action Civics throughout their campuses.

Our evaluation strategy for both models is anchored by pre- and post-semester student surveys to assess gain in students' civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic motivation, as well as mid- and end-of-semester surveys of teachers and Democracy Coaches to better inform our understanding of the program's impact.

Quantitative and qualitative data from nine years of programming have consistently demonstrated student growth in each of the aforementioned civic learning categories. These categories have been identified by researchers as the indicators most likely to predict students' long-term civic engagement. For this project, we aspired to explore the broader impact GC was having on students, and to gauge the lasting impact of the program on students now months to years removed from its direct influence.

Methodology

School selection criteria was based on the history and strength of our relationships with partners. We sought teachers who had worked with the program for at least two years and, when we could, schools where program alumni would still be attending school on the same campus, for ease of access. We ultimately collaborated with two schools (one in New York, one in Rhode Island) in which we have worked closely with the teachers (and in which districts granted IRB approval of the project). This strong partnership minimized administrative issues, as student groups were recruited and assembled with the support of partner teachers and principals.

The participating teachers were the only ones in their schools who had hosted GC.). In several cases, the selected students had participated in the program for multiple semesters, an anomaly in GC as most students only participate for one semester in our general programming. As a result, these students are likely more familiar with GC's pedagogy than typical students, which could suggest that any effects observed may be an overestimate of the regular effect of participating in one semester of GC. All minors received parent/guardian consent to participate.

The study design was centered around 45-60-minute conversations with four groups of 3-5 students at a time, for a total of 14 students across the conversations. More than 75% of students in the public schools selected qualified for free lunch and the ethnic makeup was mostly students of Hispanic descent. One school partner is an all-girls 6-12 grade school in New York, the other a co-ed middle-school in Rhode Island. The meetings took place on campus and after school in New York and in the morning during school hours in Rhode Island.

Focus groups were facilitated by Yasmine Mahdavi, on GC's Measurement & Evaluation team. A

member of the GC local site staff was also present for note taking - Nora Howe in New York and Molly Cohen in Rhode Island. Data were collected by audio recording and note-taking. (Questions guiding the conversation are included in the appendix.) Due to time constraints, the facilitator did not ask all questions in some of the focus groups.

Below is the name of the group, location of school, and date and description of students in each group.

Name: NY Group 1
Location of School: New York, New York
Date: May 23, 2017

- Three female 11th grade students
- Participated in GC as 11th graders during Fall 2016 in AP US Government & Politics class
- GC project: Gentrification outside of the school

Name: NY Group 2
Location: New York, New York
Date: May 30, 2017

- Three female 9th grade students
- Participated in GC as 8th graders during Fall 2015/Spring 2016 in History class
- GC projects: Access to healthy food (outside of school), LGBTQ homelessness (outside of school), and bullying (inside of school)

Name: RI Group 1
Location: Providence, Rhode Island
Date: June 1, 2017

- Two male and three female 8th grade students
- Participated in GC as 8th graders during Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 in Current Events class
- GC projects: Racism, improving teacher pay, teen suicide (improve mental health curriculum in school), police brutality, domestic violence

Name: RI Group 2
Location: Providence, Rhode Island
Date: June 1, 2017

- Two male and one female 8th grade students
- Participated in GC as 6th graders during Fall 2014/Spring 2015 in Social Studies class
- GC project: Bullying (inside of school)

Results

Below are summaries of our findings on GC's impact according to students. Overall, each student interviewed found value in the program, and the themes below reflect patterns that stood out among the groups' responses. It is interesting to note, however, that in their reflections, younger students' lessons focused more on content, skills, and experiences gained in relation to their specific focus issue and

project, while older students were more likely to contextualize their action within the skills and strategies of change-making, more broadly.

1. **GC had a positive impact in the near-term on a range of students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.** Students reflected on the program as one instrumental in supporting their academic and personal growth, and they particularly appreciated engaging in project-based learning. Their gains were most pronounced in the following competencies:

- **Community Engagement and Personal Empowerment:** Students admitted that prior to GC, they were not as aware of or compelled to engage with local issues. In one student's words, "when we started the Generation Citizen program, we all kind of went in saying what we wanted to do, but it was more like international or national issues, like abortion or... human trafficking and Syrian refugees, but we never thought to think of, or we never at first did think of local issues that affect us daily, because we don't really ever talk about that."

Many hadn't felt personal responsibility for local civic engagement because they had not valued their unique perspectives, with one student noting that she "wasn't aware that so many people weren't aware of certain problems that I was aware of." During the program, they began to recognize the importance engaging with local matters and how they could influence them. As one student reported, "with all the different committees in the GC class [during the action part of the semester], you notice all the different aspects that come into making a change in your community." A peer shared that "after Generation Citizen, I've understood how to solve the problems in my community... not to just say 'I don't like it' but to actually do something and feel like I can do something." Another student chimed in that the most important thing about her experience was learning that "at the end of the day, it's not only like realizing the problem, but it's realizing that you actually can do something."

Students not only had more confidence in knowing ways to effect change; they were also more inclined to get involved themselves. One student volunteered at local precinct toy drive and reflected that "even though it was a minor role, it was still a way that I could assist my community, and it was a way I could assist the youth, which is the future of the community. So I feel like... without Generation Citizen, I would not be open to doing minor things in my community that could benefit it in the long run." This new civic awareness was empowering for the students; some believed it changed their outlook, calling it "eye-opening."

- **Critical Thinking:** While working on their projects, students realized that to truly understand and broach challenges issues, they needed to think deeply, gather information effectively, and strategize carefully. Students learned how to search for information from new sources "like phone calling" and became convinced of the necessity of this rigorous research, with one student explaining that "in Generation Citizen... you find your problem and then you ask, you go to the root, the root cause, of why is this happening? So when I see things outside in my community or I see things on the news, I ask why."

By the end of the program, students better appreciated the complexity of their focus issues and the scope of the work they needed to do to understand and take action on it, "not only to raise awareness." In one participant's words, "although we didn't fully meet our goal... we were able to inform ourselves more about gentrification [focus issue] and other issues. We

were able to learn all these new ideas and how to address a problem when we're older." Another added, "Generation Citizen taught us all the steps for problem solving... I could definitely attack any problem that's in our community."

- **Collaboration and Communication:** Many students cited that working together on something important was unique and much enjoyed, citing most frequently the memories of working to collectively choose a focus issue and the teamwork required to smartly and thoughtfully tackle it. They recalled having to compromise and to listen carefully as they worked together, which was a relatively new experience. "You had to put your mind together with your classmates, instead of always relying on the coach [or teacher] for you," remarked one student in an observation of how GC had prepared her to take action. Their collaboration within GC showed them "the power of being in a community and working together."

As a product of working with their classmates and engaging with others in their communities, students also reported feeling more "prepared" and confident "not only communicating with my peers, but with outside people." This path to self-discovery, recognizing that effective communication can lead to success, was important to them and a profound realization for their personal and future professional growth.

- **Growth in Self-Esteem:** Students reported facing new challenges and experiences, such as calling councilmembers' offices or making a presentation at Civics Day, with an increased willingness to "[step] out of your comfort zone." Shared one student about her Civics Day experience, "when I got in front of the judges the first time I was so scared, but now, two years later, it's like something easy that I can do. I'm not scared, and instead of them asking me questions, sometimes, I go ahead and ask them questions." Students repeatedly described a changed sense of their own aptitudes, many citing their first exposure to public speaking as pivotal while others focused on broader realizations - "I can make a change at any age and any time. Because if I try hard enough, and keep going, then that change can actually happen."

2. **Presenting their projects was a powerful experience in students' development of self-efficacy.** Civics Day is instrumental in facilitating students' interactions with engaged, professional adults, and students identified it as one of the most memorable GC events. "Going in front of people and presenting [your project], and having people actually understand what you've thought about and actually like your idea and actually think about implementing it" proved validating and suggests the power of students presenting their thoughts to others (whether at Civics Day or within the scope of a project's progress). Within this opportunity for public presentation, students valued the chance to engage with strangers.

One student reflected on her anxiety before Civics Day because she "had never talked to different, like to other people that I never knew before... And now I know that I can talk to other people without getting that nervous." Civics Day not only created a forum for student presentations or for collective celebration, but most importantly it created an implicit community of like-minded youth for students in attendance. Students were delighted to know other schools participated in similar GC programming.

3. **Students embraced new behaviors and cultivated the skills of and attitudes for civic**

engagement without reflecting on or embracing the language themselves. Students valued similar experiences engaging in the action civics process (issue identification, consensus-building, research, strategizing, working in small groups), but their actual understanding of long-term civic engagement differed widely. We saw the most difference between younger (8th and 9th grade) and older (11th grade) students when we asked what “active and engaged citizen” means. Responses ranged from not being able to define the term at all (8th-9th grade students) to reporting and demonstrating that active and engaged citizens had knowledge and know-how to take action on an issue (11th grade).

Yet, at the same time students reported instances of themselves and their peers already exhibiting the behaviors of active and engaged citizenship. After their GC semesters, a group of 11th grade students organized a walk-out at their school in protest of a governmental policy and contacted news media to report on it. In sharing this story, one reflected that during GC, “I was a part of the phone call committee, so I feel like if I was not a part of this committee, never would I ever have called New York 1 [local news station], or told other people “yeah, you should call!”

Eleventh grade students also assembled a “social justice club” which discussed national and international issues and coordinated students’ participation in local political events. Younger students created and joined a student council at their school, demonstrating a much more localized response to community participation.

Regardless of their understanding of long-term civic engagement, students realized that age is not a barrier to action. One reflected that “it doesn’t matter how old you are, that you can create change, even if you are young, because when I was in sixth grade I didn’t really think it was possible that I could create so much change. But when we created the student council, afterwards, I was like ‘hmm, maybe I can actually do something bigger, maybe it doesn’t matter how old I am, I can make change’.”

We believe that the embodiment of active citizenship is more important than knowing the definition, but there is a power to students being able to name their experiences accurately and to connect their community action projects explicitly to the roles and responsibilities of citizenship. This observation offers us the opportunity to better define how we aspire students behave in the near- and long-term.

- 4. Students enjoyed the program but by and large had no ongoing relationship with the organization. Were they to develop a sustained relationship, they were largely desirous of continued skill development.** All participating students would recommend GC to peers, however none had an ongoing relationship with GC, even in sites where limited summer or continued student programming (such as the Student Leadership Board or Community Change Fellowship) were available. This underscores our awareness of the need for a robust system to identify and cultivate relationships with students who want to continue to engage with us.

Personal skill development was extremely important to these students; they were particularly interested in honing skills which were introduced in GC, such as debate and public speaking. They also noted an interest in internships and advocacy work. When asked if how they would like to attend future GC hosted events, almost all said they prefer to attend with friends.

Students still want to be around their peers and are influenced from each other's validation. This can also be a learning opportunity as we think about GC's influence on school culture.

On maintaining future contact, all said they were likely to respond to GC in varying ways but the most effective would be through social media connection. In-person connections seem to resonate well - coming to the school, making a pitch - though Facebook and Twitter were mentioned as the most viable options; email or snail mail may work for some but not others. Although the responses varied, our major learning was of the need for a sustained and continued personal connection between GC and its alumni.

Conclusions

The purpose of conducting these focus groups was to help us better understand the program's near-term impact and to determine ways to promote students' affinity with the organization for future engagement and program evaluation.

We found that in the areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, most students remembered and were positively impacted by many parts of project-based learning - content proficiency, critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, and public speaking, most notably. Further, they described undergoing an important process of personal growth - from identifying as consumers of information and effectively unengaged bystanders to producers with agency who could make a difference - even though this transformation varied by age and experience.

Our findings about differences between middle-and high-school students align with quantitative analyses of programmatic impact that have also found differences in impact between age groups (Cohen, Littenberg-Tobias, Ridley-Kerr, Pope, Stolte, & Wong, pending) and reinforces our belief that while it is possible to adapt the Generation Citizen curriculum to other age groups (e.g., elementary school students; Cipparone & Cohen, 2015), that does require age-appropriate modifications.

As has been noted in academic literature, knowledge is the easiest component to change, and behavior is the most difficult. Changes in behavior likely occur after knowledge is gained and attitudes have changed. The focus groups revealed that GC is having an impact on the first two prerequisites among students, and the opportunity exists to further strengthen and evaluate our impact on the latter.⁴ Students' leaps from project participation to active and engaged citizenship was demonstrated sporadically, such as in the organization of a school walk-out and participation in a local march, but extended civic action was not yet consistent among students.⁵

The difficulty to observe behavioral change is not particular to GC, as others in the field struggle in this area. We grapple with two simultaneous challenges: that we would like to see behavioral change (the hardest change to achieve) while at the same time overcoming the washout effect (that greatest observed impact is immediately after a program, and its effect diminishes over time). Some of the behaviors

⁴ A note of caution, as noted earlier the effect on our results are likely to be stronger in these focus groups as the participants had more than one GC class. Most of our students only have one semester - a ten-week course - with GC.

⁵ By civic action, we mean an engagement in the community demonstrated by, either but not limited to, attending community meetings, writing letters or blogs, contacting public officials, collaborating with other to solve community issues.

which we are most interested in observing for example, such as voter turnout, are long-term behaviors which we can't observe in the near-term because our students are not eligible to vote when we teach them.

Recommendations

The recommendations below will help us continue to refine our programming, to better calibrate our behavioral expectations of middle- and high- school students, and to strengthen our ties with our alumni.

In our Classrooms

- **Curriculum:** As the organization refines and differentiates its curriculum for middle-and high-school students, course materials should facilitate students' understanding of the purpose and process of the program beyond their projects. We should articulate how expectations for and behaviors of civic engagement evolve as students grow by reviewing existing research and implementing it in our revised curriculum.^{6,7} Accordingly, it is also crucial that our educators (Democracy Coaches and Teachers) are well-versed on the subject. This may include developing a rubric to help operationalize these expectations in their trainings and teaching.
- **Project Presentation and Public Speaking:** We must think creatively about more ways to support students in presenting or interacting with adults beyond their classrooms, and to ensure that this engagement is afforded all students in the program. Beginning this year, we will enhance our tracking of classes' visits by guest speakers, participation in beyond-the-classroom events, and attendance at Civics Day to hold ourselves accountable for supporting students on this aim. Additionally, we can further find ways to support students' (preparation for and) presentations by using new toolkits or rubrics to assess their public speaking and persuasive strategic communication. We will pilot out use of one such resource, the Measure of Youth Policy Arguments (MYPA) developed by researchers at the CU Boulder, UC Denver, and Rowan University, at select Civics Days this fall.
- **Community Building through Civics Day:** Collective experiences like Civics Day can build stronger civically-engaged communities by deepening students' ties to speaking out on issues that matter to them as well as building their connections to like-minded peers and collaborative community members. However, the challenge of balancing breadth (as many classes in the same place as possible) with fewer students from each class participating, has impeded this in the past. In lieu of seeking new revenue streams to increase this capacity, this year will we work to encourage partners to organize smaller school- or district-based community Civics Day events, as well as to consider and develop other opportunities to connect students with civically engaged mentors.

Beyond our Classrooms

- **Incorporate GC's vision of active and engaged citizenry explicitly in internal and external communication:** Although we currently evaluate our students' growth using recognized scales

⁶ Carlson, C. Authentic Youth Civic Engagement A Guide for Municipal Leaders. Retrieved from <http://cdn.4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/authentic-youth-engagement-gid-jul101.pdf>.

⁷ Yohalem, N., Wilson-Ahlstrom, A., Pittman, K. (October 2004). The Forum for Youth Investment. Out-of-School Time and Civic Engagement. Retrieved from <http://forumfyi.org/files/OSTPC8.pdf>.

of active and engaged citizenship,^{8,9} we need to better norm internally and enunciate externally how we would like our students to politically behave in the long-term. Clearly articulated parameters will result in less ambiguity for students and more robust thought leadership and programming for the organization.

- **Develop an intentional and purposeful alumni strategy:** Focusing on this opportunity will include systematizing our collection of student contact information (across current or new platforms), expanding the scope or at least awareness of our current alumni programs (the Student Leadership Board and Community Change Fellowship), creating a formal structure for communicating post-programming with students, and developing more programming opportunities for alumni, specifically aligned with the political behaviors, skills, and attitudes our program intends to cultivate in them in the near- and long-term.
- **Facilitate more focus groups across different regions and school partners:** We should include in this pool sites where GC courses are taught across multiple grades and classes to enhance our learning of changes in students' takeaways across academic disciplines and years. Future studies may additionally help us explore how or if GC is instrumental in the way civic engagement unfolds in schools beyond our participating classes' walls.

These focus groups shed much light on areas we had not studied before. From our annual evaluation efforts, we have regularly observed development of students' civic knowledge, skills and dispositions; however, this project afforded us the opportunity to collect more evidence of the potential and power of this work to transcend the classroom.

We wish to thank everyone involved in the development and execution of this project, including our research partners at Glass Frog Solutions, our teacher and administrative allies at our focus schools, multiple members of the GC staff who supported elements of this project, and GC's National Board for their encouragement of our exploration of longitudinal impact, of which this study is a preliminary step. In the words of one GC student alumnus, "If Generation Citizen taught me one thing, it's that it starts with you, but because it starts with you does not mean that it's only you."

⁸ Bobek, D. L., Zaff, J. F., Li, Y., & Lerner, R. M. (2009) Active and Engaged Citizenship. Retrieved from [https://cyfar.org/sites/default/files/Active%20and%20Engaged%20Citizenship%20\(All%20Youth\)%20\(Bobek\)_1.pdf](https://cyfar.org/sites/default/files/Active%20and%20Engaged%20Citizenship%20(All%20Youth)%20(Bobek)_1.pdf).

⁹ Zaff, J., Boyd, M., Li, Y. & Lerner R. M. (May 15, 2009). Active and engaged citizenship: multi-group and longitudinal factorial analysis of an integrated construct of civic engagement. Retrieved from

Appendix

Below is the list of questions asked during the focus groups.

Background

1. What grade are you currently in?
2. What grade were you in when you participated in Generation Citizen?
3. In what subject was your Generation Citizen class?
4. What issue did you and your class work on?
 - a. [follow-up] What was your goal, and how did you take action?
 - b. [follow-up] What role did you play in the project?
5. How would you describe your GC experience to a friend?

Generation Citizen's Impact on Students

We're interested in learning the ways in which Generation Citizen has impacted its students.

6. What do you remember the most about Generation Citizen?
 - a. [follow-up] Why was X most memorable?
7. Did you attend Civics Day at the end of the semester?
 - a. [follow-up] If not, why not? Did you want to attend?
 - b. [follow-up] If not, what did you hear about it?
 - c. [follow-up] If yes, what do you remember most about Civics Day?
 - d. [follow-up] If yes, how did you feel before and after Civics Day?
8. What do you think was the most important thing you learned in your Generation Citizen class?
 - a. [follow-up] Why do you think that's important?
9. What do you think was the most important skill you developed during your Generation Citizen class?
 - a. [follow-up] Why do you think that's important?
10. Have you been able to use some of the things you learned in Generation Citizen outside of class?
 - a. [follow-up] If yes, can you share an example?
11. During your Generation Citizen class, you worked on an issue with your classmates that was concerning to you. Do you think Generation Citizen prepared you to take action on other topics that affect you or your community?
 - a. [follow-up] What does taking action mean to you now?
 - b. [follow-up] What might be standing in the way of you taking action?
12. What was the most important thing you learned about being an active and engaged citizen?
13. How has participating in Generation Citizen impacted you?
 - a. [follow-up] How has it changed what you do or your choices in school, if at all? (If so, provide examples.)
 - b. [follow-up] How has it changed what you do or your choices outside of school, if at all? (If so, provide examples.)
 - c. [follow-up] How has it changed how you gather or think about the news or current events?
 - d. [follow-up] How has it changed how you communicate your opinions and thoughts about matters that affect your community?
 - e. [follow-up] How has it changed how you interact with people who may have different points of view, if at all?
 - f. [follow-up] How has it changed your attitude towards our government, if at all?

- g. [follow-up] How has it changed your academic or career plans, if at all?

Organization Allegiance and Maintaining Future Contact

- 14. Thinking back to your experiences in your Generation Citizen class, would you recommend the program to your friends? Why or why not?
- 15. Generation Citizen is considering offering events and activities to students who took a Generation Citizen class. Which of the following would you find most interesting?
 - a. Opportunities to volunteer in your school or community
 - b. Opportunities to volunteer in political campaigns
 - c. Opportunities to meet elected or government officials
 - d. Opportunities to learn more about specific school or community issues, such as your focus issue
 - e. Opportunities to stay engaged in advocacy or lobbying work (like signing petitions, participating in protests, or speaking at community meetings)
 - f. Opportunities to continue to develop personal skills (like public speaking, leadership, debate, collaboration)
 - g. Opportunity to learn about internships
 - h. What events would you attend?
 - i. Would you be most interested in going to events alone, as part of a group, or with your class?
- 16. We are interested in keeping in contact with students who have participated in the program. Thinking about one year from today, if Generation Citizen wanted to contact you, how likely would you be to respond to outreach like this?
- 17. How could we make it more likely that you or your peers respond to GC's communication? And if we did reach out, what would be the best way to contact you? Email? Call on your cell phone? House phone? Text message? A letter in the mail? Other?