

UCLA

**Community Engagement and Social Change Minor Capstone
Papers**

Title

Youth-led Civic Engagement: Participation in Changeist and Socio-emotional and Civic Development

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3bm9z7vc>

Author

Shaffer, Amelia

Publication Date

2025-07-28

**Youth-Led Civic Engagement: Participation in Changeist and Socio-Emotional and Civic
Development**

Amelia Shaffer

University of California, Los Angeles

Community Engagement and Social Change 191BX, Capstone Research Seminar

Dr. Douglas Barrera

June 10, 2025

Abstract

Research has consistently shown that participation in civic engagement can yield numerous benefits for both individuals involved and the community as a whole. This research seeks to further explore the effects of youth civic engagement in specific relation to the participants of the Los Angeles community organization Changeist. The central research question asks how does participation in youth-led civic engagement programs influence empathy, self-advocacy, and the ability to understand diverse perspectives among youth ages 11-26? To answer this question, I utilized a 25-question online survey that included a mix of both 5-point Likert scales and long-form response questions, which was answered by 21 Changeist participants. The results of the survey show that participation in Changeist has led to positive results across all three outcome variables: empathy, self-advocacy, and the ability to understand diverse perspectives. The data likewise identifies Changeist's emphasis on including diverse identities and exposing participants to communities beyond their own as a primary facilitator of these positive effects. This research underscores the importance of civic engagement on young people's socio-emotional and civic development.

Introduction

My research project seeks to understand the effect of youth-led civic engagement on different outcomes related to one's socio-emotional and civic development. To do so, I partnered with the Los Angeles community organization Changeist, which encourages young people to "learn a common civic language, engage in dialogue, and build community to investigate local and national challenges" (Changeist, n.d.). My research question particularly asks, how does participation in youth-led civic engagement programs influence empathy, self-advocacy, and the ability to understand diverse perspectives among youth ages 11-26?

This topic is critical as young people today are growing up in a complex, dynamic, and diverse socio-political landscape, but are oftentimes not provided with the necessary tools to navigate such an environment. With democracy under attack, basic human rights being seized from countless groups, and polarization running rampant across the country, young people need to be educated in strategies to not only promote their well-being but also encourage justice. Civic engagement is a powerful tool to cultivate such skills, fostering values such as empathy, self-agency, and the ability to understand other perspectives, which all contribute to informing one's socio-emotional and civic development.

Additionally, my research question addresses an issue caused by an imbalance of structural power by focusing on youth civic engagement, which fundamentally counteracts the systems in place that are designed to marginalize the youth population. Youth civic engagement provides an outlet for young people to fight for causes that they are passionate about and stand up for issues that may directly impact them as a population. Young people do not have representation as they cannot vote, adults often dismiss their concerns as illegitimate, and they are often overlooked as valuable members of society, thus positioning them at the subordinate end of the systemic power structures. This marginalization is only exacerbated for youth of color, who experience additional forms of inequality and injustice that further force them to the outskirts of systems of power. Additionally, preventing young people from becoming civically engaged ensures that their concerns are not addressed and that they do not develop into active citizens as adults, thus maintaining the conventional power structures.

Therefore, as my research focuses on the benefits of youth civic engagement, it is challenging the systems that perpetually marginalize youth to the sidelines of civic activity. Even more so, by emphasizing the positive impacts of youth civic engagement on cultivating empathy,

advocacy, and an appreciation for diversity, my research is likewise confronting the systems that curtail these values to keep certain groups in power.

Overall, this research will explore the effects of youth-led civic engagement on the development of empathy, the ability to understand diverse perspectives, and self-advocacy in specific relation to the participants of civic-engagement-focused community organization Changeist. I hypothesize that participation in Changeist leads to an increased empathetic orientation, a greater understanding of diverse perspectives and experiences, and stronger levels of self-advocacy for participants. This paper will first explore the existing and relevant literature related to civic engagement and these three outcome variables, and will then provide a comprehensive description of the methods utilized for data collection. Then, I will describe the results for each outcome variable, followed by a detailed discussion and analysis of said results. I will then conclude the paper by making recommendations for action to my community partner, Changeist, and summarizing my findings and their importance.

Literature Review

There is a considerable body of literature that attests to the various benefits of youth participation in civic engagement, ranging from improved mental health outcomes to greater academic achievement to less interaction with the justice system (Chan et al., 2014; Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, n.d.). Current research also underscores the role of civic engagement in the development of young people's empathy, with students involved in service learning and community engagement maintaining higher levels of compassion, altruism, and social competence (Scott & Graham, 2015). By teaching young people about social inequalities, diversity, and community leadership, civic engagement can help to foster an empathetic perspective in adolescents. The impact of civic engagement on empathy can

be seen as students progress into young adulthood as well, with numerous studies highlighting that incorporating civic and community engagement into college curricula in fields such as healthcare and engineering can help students in those fields develop a more empathetic orientation toward their work in the future (Plessas et al., 2024; Abu-Mulaweh et al., 2022).

Additionally, participation in civic engagement has been shown to positively influence one's understanding of diverse perspectives and experiences. By promoting a greater connection to one's community and engagement with those outside of one's immediate circle, civic engagement can facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity and various experiences of others (Karakos, 2015). Civic engagement likewise raises youth's awareness of various social inequalities and is oftentimes directed towards promoting social good, thus highlighting the ways in which civic engagement can contribute to a broader social understanding (Parker et al., 2010). This broader social understanding may help young people understand their own positioning within society, thus reinforcing the diversity of experiences that make up a community and perhaps contributing to an increased appreciation for these differences (Hayes, 2023). Civic participation likewise facilitates collaboration with others toward a common goal, which necessitates an understanding of others' experiences to identify avenues for mutual interest (Parker et al., 2010). Research shows that through its role in promoting a broader social understanding and facilitating collaboration, civic engagement can aid in developing one's awareness and understanding of perspectives other than one's own.

However, while the relationship between youth civic engagement and the previous two outcome variables has been adequately researched, there is limited research regarding the correlation between youth civic engagement and self-advocacy. Self-advocacy, as I define it for my research, is one's ability to take personal agency to advocate for their needs, both directly or

indirectly. For instance, it may entail advocating for the necessary individual support one needs in the classroom or advocating for their community's interests as a whole. Previous research has shown that participation in civic engagement can lead to outcomes such as increased self-esteem and self-efficacy, two traits that may be considered relevant to self-advocacy (Hayes, 2023). Additionally, some research has likewise focused on the levels of self-advocacy and civic engagement of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, finding that participation in civic engagement programs resulted in significant improvements in their empowerment, which can lead to greater self-determination, a trait that is critical for self-advocacy (Best et al., 2024). Moreover, as young people participate in civic engagement programs that aim to promote a common social good, they realize their rightful place as active, participatory community members, therefore combatting the idea that young people are unable to produce change, and thus perhaps increasing their self-advocacy (Chan et al., 2014; Parker et al., 2010). Nonetheless, there remains a substantial gap in the existing literature regarding the correlation between youth civic engagement and self-advocacy, and more research is needed to further explore this relationship.

Finally, there is an important distinction between youth-led civic engagement and youth participation in civic engagement, with existing research not majorly distinguishing between the two. Therefore, it is unclear whether numerous of the positive outcomes shown through civic engagement research can be attributed to the programs being youth-led. Research does show, however, that youth leadership in civic engagement programs can produce countless positive outcomes such as aiding in identity formation, building community, and even promoting economic mobility by encouraging the development of critical employability skills (Jones, 2008). Other research highlights that allowing young people to direct decision-making and lead

initiatives is not only beneficial to the young individuals involved but can also benefit the community at large (Ministry of Youth Development, n.d.). Therefore, as youth leadership is extraordinarily beneficial, it is likely that youth-led civic engagement programs – programs that are already known to produce various positive outcomes – will yield further meaningful results.

Methods

To gather my data, I utilized a mixed-methods approach. I created an online survey via Google Forms with both 5-point Likert scales and long-form response questions regarding the participants' self-assessment of their levels of empathy, self-advocacy, and ability to understand diverse perspectives before and after their participation with Changeist. Because many Changeist participants are under 18 years old, I ensured that all participants' parents signed a parental consent form before they participated in the survey. The survey began with general demographic questions relating to one's age, gender expression, and racial identity, and then asked about the duration of the participant's involvement with Changeist. This section was preceded by 6 questions related to empathy development, 10 questions related to the ability to understand diverse perspectives, and 5 questions related to self-advocacy development.

In order to assess empathy development, I included questions relating to being aware of others' struggles, feeling emotionally impacted by said struggles, paying attention to how one's actions affect others, and whether respondents actively try to help others. All of these questions utilized 5-point Likert scales ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," and were framed with respect to how the participants felt before and after Changeist involvement by beginning with the phrase "Since I began participating in Changeist..." I then included a long-form question pertaining to if/how the participant's sense of empathy changed since participating in Changeist.

Then, to assess participants' ability to understand diverse perspectives, I first asked what types of diversity they had been exposed to through Changeist, with options including racial/ethnic diversity, socioeconomic diversity, religious diversity, diversity of gender/gender expression, cultural diversity, and diversity of beliefs or opinions. I then employed a 5-point "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" scale for whether participants, since joining Changeist, find it easier to understand diverse experiences and perspectives, feel more comfortable engaging with people who have different experiences and perspectives, and more frequently seek out other perspectives before forming their own opinions. I also asked how participants react when engaging with someone who has a different viewpoint than their own, both before and after joining Changeist, with four options ranging from "I avoided these conversations completely" to "I was open to hearing their perspectives and changing my original beliefs based on what they said." Finally, I used a long-form question to ask if/how participants' ability to understand perspectives other than their own changed since participating in Changeist.

Finally, to collect data on participants' self-advocacy development, I utilized the same 5-point Likert scale of "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for whether, since participating in Changeist, participants feel more confident advocating for their personal needs, more comfortable speaking up for issues that matter to them, and more equipped to successfully represent their concerns to others. I then used a long-form question to ask if/how participants' ability to advocate for themselves changed since their participation in Changeist. The questions I chose to assess self-advocacy development were specifically informed by the holes in previous research. While previous research has focused on outcomes such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, my research utilized measures that I believed to be more explicitly related to self-advocacy.

I chose this mixed-methods approach with an emphasis on quantitative data because I believed that participants would be more inclined to answer Likert scale questions rather than long-format questions for convenience purposes. Additionally, data from the “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” scales would also presumably be more efficient to analyze, and would present easily interpretable assessments of all my outcome variables. However, I still viewed long-format questions as valuable, so I made sure to include them but limited their overall prevalence in the survey.

I collected these survey responses in person at a Changeist event in East Los Angeles, where I circulated a QR code for participants to scan that led them to the online survey. The sample of my data is diverse, with 21 participants. 61.9% of survey respondents identified as women, 23.8% identified as men, 19% identified as cisgender, and 4.8% identified as transgender. Additionally, 65% of respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino, 25% identified as Black, 15% identified as Asian, and 5% identified as White. The age range was 12 to 21 years old, with 16 years old serving as the most commonly reported age, with eight respondents. Almost half of the respondents indicated that the duration of their participation with Changeist has been six months to one year, with the second most popular response being one to two years.

In order to analyze my data, I first reviewed the bar and pie charts that Google Forms automatically produces from survey responses, as this was an easily interpretable representation of the data. These visual representations of the results allowed me to search for patterns and general characteristics of the data in response to the outcome variables. In reviewing the questions with Likert scales, responses of “agree” or “strongly agree” indicated that there was a positive relationship between that outcome variable and participation in Changeist. Responses of “neutral” indicated no relationship, and “disagree” or “strongly disagree” indicated a negative

relationship. To analyze the open-ended questions, I coded each response into relevant categories based on the emerging themes. I then searched for quotes that were both representative of the responses as a whole and that provided refined and articulate insight into participant experiences. I also utilized these short responses to understand how exactly Changeist was producing the results indicated by the closed-ended questions.

Results

Empathy

Firstly, the results indicate that Changeist participants experience empathy development through the program, with the majority of survey respondents indicating increased emotional awareness and consideration of others. For example, as displayed in Figure 1, 85.7% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Since I began participating in Changeist, I feel more emotionally impacted by the struggles that others face.” Additionally, 80.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they have become more aware of others’ struggles since participating in Changeist, and 95.2% agreed or strongly agreed that they pay more attention to how their actions impact others since participating in Changeist. Over 66% of respondents noted that they more actively try to help others since participating in Changeist, and 57.1% marked “yes” to whether their overall sense of empathy has changed since their participation in the program. On all four Likert scale questions, 0% of respondents marked “strongly disagree” or “disagree,” no more than 20% of respondents remained neutral, and “strongly agree” was consistently chosen more than “agree.”

Since I began participating in Changeist, I feel more emotionally impacted by the struggles that others face.

 [Copy chart](#)

21 responses

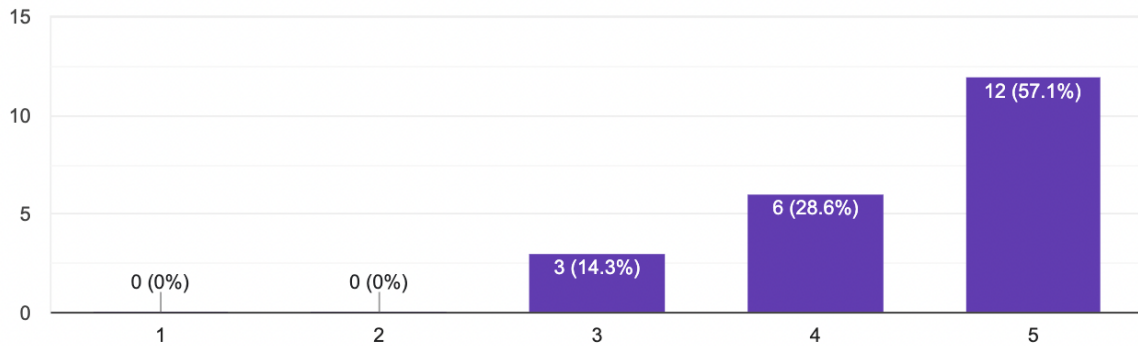


Figure 1. *Percentage of survey respondents noting increased emotional investment in others' struggles.*

Moreover, the open-ended question produced similar results, with the majority of responses indicating that participants have learned how to put themselves in others' shoes to understand their experiences, thus becoming more emotionally invested and responsive to struggles outside of their own. Sentiments about becoming more aware of communities beyond one's own and the struggles that they might face dominated the rhetoric of this section's responses. Phrases such as "more conscious of the world around me," "exposed to the struggles everyone else faces," and "more aware of situations that I never knew of," appeared in the short answer responses, signaling the ways in which Changeist promotes participants' development of empathy.

Ability to Understand Diverse Perspectives

The results likewise suggest that Changeist aids in participants' ability to understand diverse perspectives. Participants report Changeist exposing them to a wide range of diversity,

with racial/ethnic diversity, cultural diversity, socioeconomic diversity, and diversity of opinion or beliefs being the most reported areas of exposure. As shown in Figure 2, 85.7% of participants reported that since joining Changeist, they now find it easier to understand experiences different than their own, with the remaining 14.3% being neutral and 0% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Similar results were produced when asked if participants find it easier to understand perspectives different from their own, however, 28.6% of participants remained neutral on the topic, perhaps suggesting that Changeist participants have found it easier to understand different experiences compared to different perspectives.

Since I began participating in Changeist, I find it easier to understand experiences different from my own.

 [Copy chart](#)

21 responses

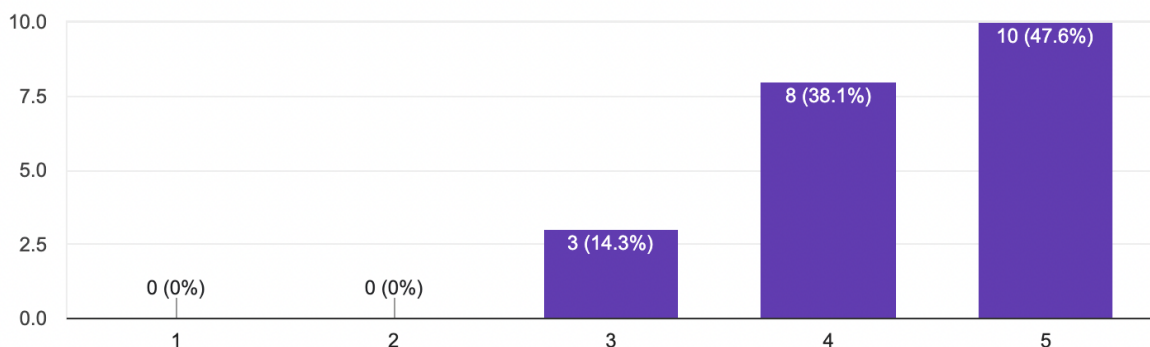


Figure 2. *Percentage of survey respondents noting increased ability to understand diverse experiences.*

Moreover, when asked if participants feel more comfortable engaging with people who have different perspectives since joining Changeist, 85.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. However, this was the first question in which “strongly agree” was not the most popular

answer, with eight participants reporting that they strongly agreed and ten responding “agree.” This question likewise elicited the first “disagree” response seen in the survey, with two respondents disagreeing with the statement. Similarly, when asked if participants have felt more comfortable engaging with people who are different from them since joining Changeist, one participant marked “strongly disagree,” while six participants marked “agree,” and 14 marked “strongly agree.”

Furthermore, there was likewise a clear shift shown in the data on how Changeist has influenced the ways that participants approach engaging with someone who has a different viewpoint than their own. Before Changeist, some participants reported that they felt uncomfortable in these conversations, some avoided these conversations completely, and many were open to hearing others’ perspectives but refused to alter their beliefs. As shown below in Figure 3, since joining Changeist, 57.1% of participants have become open to hearing others’ perspectives and changing their original beliefs based on what they say, and 0% of participants feel uncomfortable during these conversations or avoid them completely. Similarly, 80.9% of respondents noted that since participating in Changeist, they more frequently seek out other perspectives before forming their opinion on certain issues. Additionally, as a whole, 61.9% of participants noted that their ability to understand perspectives other than their own had changed since participating in Changeist.

BEFORE CHANGEIST - How did you react when engaging with someone who had a different viewpoint than your own?

[Copy chart](#)

21 responses



NOW - How do you react when engaging with someone who has a different viewpoint than your own?

[Copy chart](#)

21 responses



Figure 3. Representation of how survey respondents approached conversations with those who hold different perspectives, both before and after joining Changeist.

The responses from the open-ended question in this section are congruent with these results, with participants reflecting on their increased willingness to understand others' perspectives. Responses included sentiments such as being more open-minded, more willing to hear others out, and no longer immediately dismissing those they disagreed with. Some respondents likewise reflected on how being exposed to different identities and communities

through Changeist helped facilitate them becoming more receptive to other perspectives, noting how others' unique lived experiences might shape their opinions and beliefs into what they are.

Self-Advocacy

Finally, the results support the hypothesis that Changeist aids in the development of participants' self-advocacy. As shown in Figure 4, 85.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that since participating in Changeist, they have become more comfortable speaking up for issues that mattered to them, 76.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more confident advocating for their personal needs, and 85.7% now feel more equipped to successfully represent their concerns to others. Additionally, 0% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with these statements, illustrating the profound impact that Changeist has had on measures related to self-advocacy. This self-advocacy development is further illustrated by 81% of respondents answering "yes" to whether their sense of self-advocacy has changed since participating in Changeist.

Since I began participating in Changeist, I feel more comfortable speaking up for issues that matter to me. [Copy chart](#)

21 responses

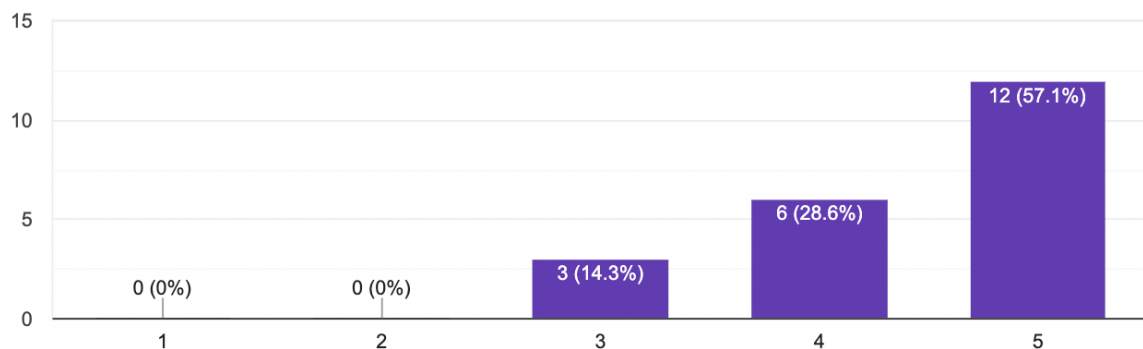


Figure 4. *Percentage of survey respondents who note increased comfort in engaging in advocacy for matters important to them.*

The open-ended questions elicited responses that reinforce these results, with participants expressing their increased comfort and confidence in their own voice. Some respondents likewise remarked how watching others' engagement in the program inspired them to speak up not only for matters relevant to themselves, but for others' too. Participants likewise utilized phrases such as "safe space" and noted feeling "supported," providing a glimpse into how exactly participating in Changeist might foster these results.

Discussion

These results help to confirm the hypothesis that Changeist positively affects the development of its participants' empathy, ability to understand diverse perspectives, and self-advocacy. Not only do they reinforce what previous literature has demonstrated about the profound benefits of civic engagement on youth development across a variety of socio-emotional and civic development factors, but they likewise provide insight into how these effects may be produced.

The data collected regarding empathy development echoes the previous literature related to civic engagement and youth empathy, and provides insight into specific dimensions of empathy development that Changeist participants experienced such as "feeling more emotionally impacted by the struggles that others face," "paying more attention to how [one's] actions might impact others," and "more actively trying to help others." These results reinforce the idea that participation in youth-led civic engagement programs can have positive effects on young people's empathy by not only making them more aware of the experiences and struggles of others but also causing them to be more emotionally invested in the experiences of others. The open-ended responses likewise provided insight into how this impact on empathy development

might be facilitated. By encouraging participants to explore communities other than their own, Changeist helps encourage participants to become more emotionally invested in community struggles beyond those that they are personally impacted by. These results support my hypothesis that participation in Changeist contributes to increased empathy in participants. This is important as childhood development of empathy has been shown to decrease violence, anger, and antisocial behavior while also increasing social responsibility, affective reasoning, and helping behaviors (Scott & Graham, 2015).

Furthermore, the data produced regarding the ability to understand diverse perspectives likewise emphasizes the main themes of extant literature by underscoring the positive correlation between participating in youth civic engagement and understanding perspectives and experiences different from one's own. Interestingly, the results suggest that finding it easier to understand others does not necessarily correlate to being more comfortable engaging with them, as the survey questions which revolved around understanding different experiences and perspectives received more positive responses of "agree" or "strongly agree" than the questions which centered around comfortability engaging with others of different experiences and perspectives. Nonetheless, most, if not all, respondents indicated the positive effect Changeist has had on both their understanding and comfort level engaging with others of different experiences and perspectives, thus supporting my hypothesis. Additionally, the results show that Changeist had an extremely positive effect on how participants approach engaging with others who have different viewpoints, leading them to be more comfortable and open-minded in these encounters. Both the qualitative and quantitative data indicate that this shift may be due to a variety of factors, with the most likely cause being the exposure to a wide array of diversity and other communities' struggles. This is important as polarization dominates today's society, and

open-mindedness toward others with different viewpoints is critical in order to mitigate many of the consequences of said polarization.

The data likewise helps to address the hole in current literature regarding the correlation between youth civic engagement and self-advocacy by including survey questions more explicitly tied to measures of self-advocacy, such as confidence advocating for personal needs and the ability to successfully represent one's concerns to others. As all of the questions I included to measure self-advocacy produced answers of "agree" or "strongly agree," signifying a positive relationship, the results support the hypothesis that participation in Changeist can positively influence participants' development of self-advocacy. The results suggest that this effect might be facilitated through the act of participating in a community of peers who are relatable, supportive, and inspiring. The data also implies that the development of self-advocacy is also due to feeling more prepared and knowledgeable about how to engage in advocacy, not only for themselves but for others as well. Many respondents included specific examples in their answers of times in their schools or communities in which they engaged in self-advocacy, thus suggesting how Changeist not only helps to cultivate these skills but likewise inspires participants to turn these skills into action outside of the program.

A leading takeaway from the survey data is that Changeist's emphasis on including diverse identities and exposing participants to communities beyond their own is extremely beneficial to participants and is a primary facilitator of all of the positive effects outlined above. Survey respondents repeatedly linked their greater senses of empathy, understanding of diverse perspectives, and self-advocacy to their increased exposure to other communities, highlighting how becoming aware of and understanding different lived experiences can positively impact one's socio-emotional and civic development.

This leads me to my first recommendation for Changeist, which is to identify strategies to maintain or increase participants' meaningful engagement with diversity. This can take many shapes, but one idea is to regularly facilitate discussion groups that intentionally combine members from different backgrounds so that each member can draw from their unique lived experiences, thus exposing all group members to a wide variety of perspectives and experiences that inform their conversations. These structured discussions can range, but whether simply reflecting on the day's activities or exploring large-scale social issues, each participant will have the opportunity to learn from one another's unique cultural capital on themes ranging from power to identity to inequality.

Furthermore, another recommendation and area for further research for Changeist would be to investigate what specific activities within their programming are contributing the most to the development of these three outcome variables. Because Changeist demonstrated that these three outcomes – empathy, ability to understand diverse perspectives, and self-advocacy – were significant enough to be the main focus of my research, perhaps they would be interested in identifying which programs have the largest impact on these traits to ensure that they are emphasizing said programs for maximum impact. This can be broadened by exploring what programs in general Changeist participants find most beneficial to ensure that participants are receiving the most out of their experience.

I also recommend that Changeist further explore the specific benefits that stem from their program being youth-led, as my research did not explicitly dive into this aspect of their program. As my literature review revealed that the dimension of youth leadership might provide further positive outcomes when coupled with community engagement, it would be interesting for Changeist to further investigate how their youth-led structure helps to facilitate the positive

effects of their program on participants. They do not necessarily have to explore this in relation to the same three outcome variables described in this research, and can just more broadly research the impact of their youth-led framework. For example, they may want to ask How does the youth-led structure inform participant experiences? What specific participant-facing benefits result from the youth-led structure? What additional advantages does the youth-led organizational structure produce?

Finally, I recommend that Changeist utilize the data from this research to demonstrate its impact and highlight its significance within the community. During a time when programs related to diversity and equity are being attacked, funding for non-profit organizations is being pulled, and anything related to the promotion of social justice is being threatened, it is imperative for organizations like Changeist to be able to legitimize themselves by directly pointing to their impact within the community. By providing both quantitative and qualitative data, my research underscores the extremely positive impact that Changeist has had on participants and can thus be utilized to substantiate its role within the community, request funding, or secure any other resources related to the organization's needs.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this research underscore how participation in civic engagement programming such as Changeist can positively impact young people's development of empathy, ability to understand diverse perspectives, and self-advocacy. The data showed that Changeist participants experienced positive results across all three outcome variables, elucidating the imperative role that civic engagement plays in youth's socio-emotional and civic development. The data further emphasized the role that exposure to diversity and learning about communities

other than one's own played in producing these results, thus reinforcing how important it is for young people to be immersed in diverse environments.

This research is important because it emphasizes the value of youth-led civic engagement programs like Changeist. It shows how participating in such programs empowers young people to become active, caring community members with the skills and knowledge on how to take action for matters that they are passionate about. Changeist not only helps expand its participants' sense of empathy, self-advocacy, and cross-community awareness and understanding, but it likewise encourages them to use these skills to learn about the world around them, address social inequality, and stand up for justice. By highlighting the profound impacts of youth-led civic engagement on youth development, this research actively challenges the systemic power structures that suppress youth voices and belittle their presence as valid and contributing community members. Overall, this research reinforces the importance of youth-led civic engagement by demonstrating how it helps youth, such as Changeist participants, become empathetic, open-minded, and agency-taking community members.

Works Cited

- Abu-Mulaweh, N., Oakes, W., & Hess, J. (2022). Empathy development in community-engagement course. *2022 ASEE Annual Conference & Exposition Proceedings*. <https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2--40841>
- Best, M., Johnston, A., Demissie, S., Kim, J., Mendiratta Khanna, R., Fulton, K., Hardy, A., Cheung, C., Kunzier, T., Hughes, O., Burke, M. M., & Rossetti, Z. (2024). Conducting a pilot evaluation of a civic-engagement program for youth with disabilities. *Developmental Disabilities Network Journal*, 4(2), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.59620/2694-1104.1086>
- Changeist. (n.d.). *About*. Retrieved June 8, 2025, from <https://www.changeist.org/>
- Chan, W. Y., Ou, S. R., & Reynolds, A. J. (2014). Adolescent civic engagement and adult outcomes: an examination among urban racial minorities. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 43(11), 1829–1843. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-014-0136-5>
- Hayes, M. A. (2023). *The association between civic engagement via participatory art and adolescents' self-esteem and self-efficacy* (Publication No. 1678) [Master's thesis, Illinois State University]. Illinois State University Institutional Repository. <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd/1678>
- Jones, K. R. (2008). Influences of youth leadership within a community-based context. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 7(3), 246–264. <https://doi.org/10.12806/V7/I3/RF9>
- Karakos, H. L. (2015). *Understanding civic engagement among youth in diverse contexts* (Doctoral dissertation). Vanderbilt University. <https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/bitstreams/bb5f774a-5bed-4c2b-b1eb-cf3b4c2b3cf4/download>

Ministry of Youth Development. (n.d.). *Youth participation in decision-making*. New Zealand

Ministry of Youth Development. Retrieved February 21, 2025, from

<https://www.myd.govt.nz/working-with-young-people/youth-participation-in-decision-making/index.html>

Parker, J. S., Dale, T. M., & Wilkins, K.-A. G. (2010). Civic engagement in adolescents:

Engendering civic awareness through a university youth program. *Journal of Youth Development*, 5(1), 15–May. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jyd.2010.226>

Plessas, A., Paisi, M., Ahmed, N., Brookes, Z., Burns, L., & Witton, R. (2024). The impact of community engaged healthcare education on undergraduate students' empathy and their views towards social accountability; a mixed methods systematic review. *BMC Medical Education*, 24(1), 1490. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-024-06367-1>

Scott, K. E., & Graham, J. A. (2015). Service-learning: Implications for empathy and community engagement in elementary school children. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 38(4), 354–372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053825915592889>