

City of Vancouver's citizenU project
Final Evaluation Report – February, 2014

Evaluation by:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Vancouver's citizenU project, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), was a three-year city-wide initiative aimed at engaging and training youth as leaders in anti-racism, anti-discrimination and intercultural community-building policy and practice. The target group was approximately 2,000 males and females, ages 15 to 20, from 56 partner sites across the city. A particular emphasis was on engaging youth from more marginalized ethno-cultural communities.

McCreary Centre Society carried out an independent evaluation of citizenU between May, 2011 and November, 2013. The evaluation consisted of a mixed-methods approach of quantitative methods (self-report youth surveys) and qualitative methods (focus groups and interviews with youth participants, site facilitators, and City of Vancouver Staff).

The goal of the evaluation was to assess the degree to which youths' participation in citizenU increased their understanding and awareness of racism and discrimination, and increased their civic engagement, community connectedness and leadership skills to ultimately reduce racism and discrimination in their community. The evaluation also assessed the extent to which taking part in citizenU improved participants' emotional health (sense of self-efficacy, hope for the future) and access to needed community supports and services.

Evaluation findings indicated that the expected outcomes of the program were achieved. Specifically, results showed that participants had greater knowledge of discrimination and skills to address it; increased skills in leadership, public-speaking, communication, project-planning and implementation; increased knowledge of Canadian government systems and of youths' rights and responsibilities living in Canada; improved mental health; greater sense of connection to their community; and enhanced inter-cultural networks. Additionally, most youth reported at the end of their participation cycle that their involvement in citizenU led to reductions in discrimination and bullying toward others.

Results indicated that citizenU had positive effects beyond youth participants, including impacts on participants' families and peers, and on participating host sites.

Evaluation participants also discussed project challenges and lessons learned that could help guide future anti-discrimination initiatives and increase their likelihood of success.

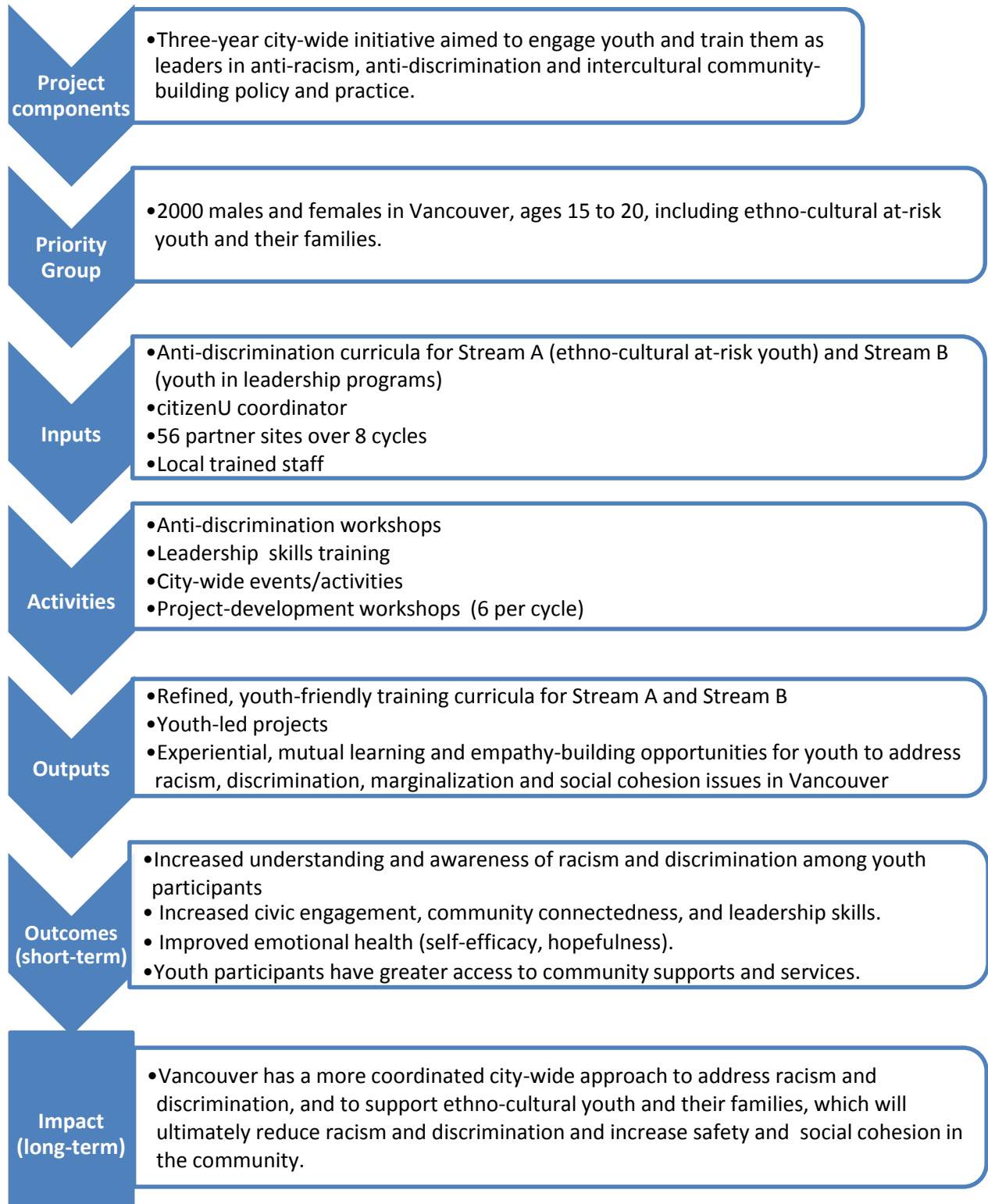
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Note: The organization of this report has been changed at the request of the Social Policy Division at the City of Vancouver. The content remains consistent with the original findings of the McCreary Centre Society's independent evaluation of the citizenU project.

INTRODUCTION

citizenU logic model



Project description

The City of Vancouver's citizenU project, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), was a three-year city-wide initiative. It was aimed at engaging and training youth as leaders in anti-racism, anti-discrimination and intercultural community-building policy and practice.

The project consisted of eight overlapping cycles (cohorts), with each cycle lasting approximately nine months. citizenU was an iterative action research initiative, in that evaluation results, participants' feedback and lessons learned from earlier cycles helped to inform and shape later cycles.

The target group was approximately 2,000 males and females, ages 15 to 20, from 56 partner sites across the city. A particular emphasis was on engaging youth from more marginalized ethno-cultural communities. The project had two streams, with Stream A comprised of ethno-cultural marginalized youth who had little or no leadership experience, and Stream B consisting of youth in existing leadership programs.

Activities included anti-discrimination workshops, leadership skills training, and citizenship education (months 1-3; Phase 1); intercultural city-wide events and activities where youth from both streams had an opportunity to meet and interact with one another (months 4-6; Phase 2); and project-development workshops to support and train participants in developing their youth-led projects (months 7-9; Phase 3). Upon completion of their program cycle, participants implemented their youth-led projects and had the opportunity to participate in the mentorship of youth in subsequent cycles.

Project coordinators anticipated a decreasing number of participants from Phase 1 to Phase 3, and the project was structured accordingly.

The shorter-term goals of the project were to increase participants' understanding and awareness of racism and discrimination; enhance their civic engagement and community connectedness; and improve their leadership skills. The longer-term goals were to increase knowledge and enhance the practice of anti-racism, anti-discrimination and intercultural leadership development education in Vancouver; to have a more coordinated city-wide approach to address racism and discrimination; and to ultimately reduce racism and discrimination and increase safety and social cohesion in Vancouver.

Reporting information (provided by City of Vancouver)

- 54 sites took part in citizenU, across eight cohorts.
- There were 893 primary participants and 1480 secondary participants, for a total of 2373 individuals who took part.
- 26 citywide events and activities were developed and hosted.
- To date, 30 youth-led projects have been planned by graduating youth participants.

Summary of evaluation methodology

McCreary Centre Society carried out an independent evaluation of the citizenU initiative between May, 2011 and November, 2013. The evaluation consisted of a mixed-methods approach of quantitative and qualitative data.

McCreary developed three youth surveys in consultation with the City of Vancouver. Participants completed the first self-report survey when they started taking part in the project (Time 1, baseline measure; 440 surveys were completed). They completed a similar survey (Time 2; 288 surveys) upon completion of Phase 1 of the project (training sessions and education), and a final survey at the end of their nine-month participation cycle (i.e., after the project development workshops; Time 3; 164 surveys were completed).

Repeated-measures analyses involved comparing a young person's responses at each time-point in order to assess changes over time. Therefore, they only included youth who completed surveys at multiple time-points. Other measures were included to supplement the repeated measures analyses, and in anticipation that the number of youth completing all three surveys would be relatively low due to the expected reduction of participants by Phase 3.

Specifically, youth were asked directly on each survey how much they felt their involvement in citizenU contributed to changes in various areas of their lives. These analyses included all youth who completed a survey, and not only those who completed surveys at multiple time-points. In addition, qualitative information was collected from youth focus groups (23 youth), interviews with seven site facilitators, and a focus group with City of Vancouver staff. As well, information was extracted from written reports that participating sites submitted to the City of Vancouver.

More information about the methodology is included in Appendix A.

YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Among youth who completed a Time 1 survey, 62% were female, 36% were male, and the remaining 2% identified as transgender or a gender not included among the list of options (e.g., bi-gender, gender transient). Participants ranged in age from 14 to 21 or older, and they were most commonly 16 years old.

Most participants (57%) had not been born in Canada, and 37% had lived in Canada for five years or less.

Participants came from a variety of ethnic or cultural backgrounds, and the most common was East Asian (48%), followed by Southeast Asian (18%) and/or European (15%).

The majority of youth spoke a language other than English at home sometimes (32%) or most of the time (53%), whereas 15% spoke only English at home.

See Appendix B for more details about the participants.

INPUTS, ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS

Youth participants, facilitators, and City of Vancouver staff provided feedback about the initiative as a whole, as well as the various activities and events, and other logistic details connected to the planning and implementation of citizenU.

Focus group participants noted that their involvement in citizenU was a unique experience because young people, rather than adults, assumed leadership roles. They appreciated that youths' voices were heard. Participants also said that this project was longer than others they had taken part in, which enabled them to learn more and develop a more in-depth understanding of the issues. They added that the program covered a lot of ground on the topic of discrimination, ranging from historic to current issues.

Youth felt the material and curriculum were well-organized and had good flow. They added that the city-wide events were very relevant to learning about discrimination, and all components of the initiative fit well together. City of Vancouver staff felt that a strength of the initiative was the flexibility to refine the curriculum as needed, based on issues that arose and input from participants and facilitators. They also pointed out that the initiative's focus not only on anti-racism but on a wide range of anti-discrimination issues increased participants' awareness in many areas. Site staff appreciated the facilitator training and expressed a desire for even more training around managing potential triggers and heated debates.

When asked about the project-development workshops, youth said it was satisfying to start a project and to see it through to its completion. They also liked working as part of a group and hearing others' ideas. However, youth and facilitators felt that more training and support with project planning and budgeting would have been beneficial because participants were given a lot of responsibility which they were not equipped to handle, due to not having the necessary skills or experience to successfully plan a project. Another idea from City staff was to provide training on different levels of youth engagement so that site facilitators would know how to support youth participants while simultaneously giving them the opportunity to lead.

Youth voiced satisfaction with citizenU overall, and facilitators expressed interest in being involved in this type of initiative again. The vast majority of youth (e.g., 97% who completed a Time 3 survey) indicated they would recommend the program to their friends, and many of the focus group participants already had. Survey respondents explained that others should have the opportunity to learn what they had learned about discrimination and how to reduce it. They also stated that involvement in the project is a good way for young people to make new friends, learn new skills, gain experience with project development, and to get involved in the community. The minority who indicated they would not recommend citizenU to friends explained that the time commitment could be an issue for some people.

See Appendix C for evaluation participants' detailed feedback about each phase of the initiative (i.e., anti-discrimination training, city-wide events, and project development workshops), as well as their thoughts on keeping youth engaged. See Appendix D for City of Vancouver staff's reflections on successes and challenges of the initiative, and lessons learned.

"I learned so many ways of dealing with discrimination that I never would have thought of."

"The training was so informative and helpful!"

"I liked collaborating with others to expand creative ideas for community projects."

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

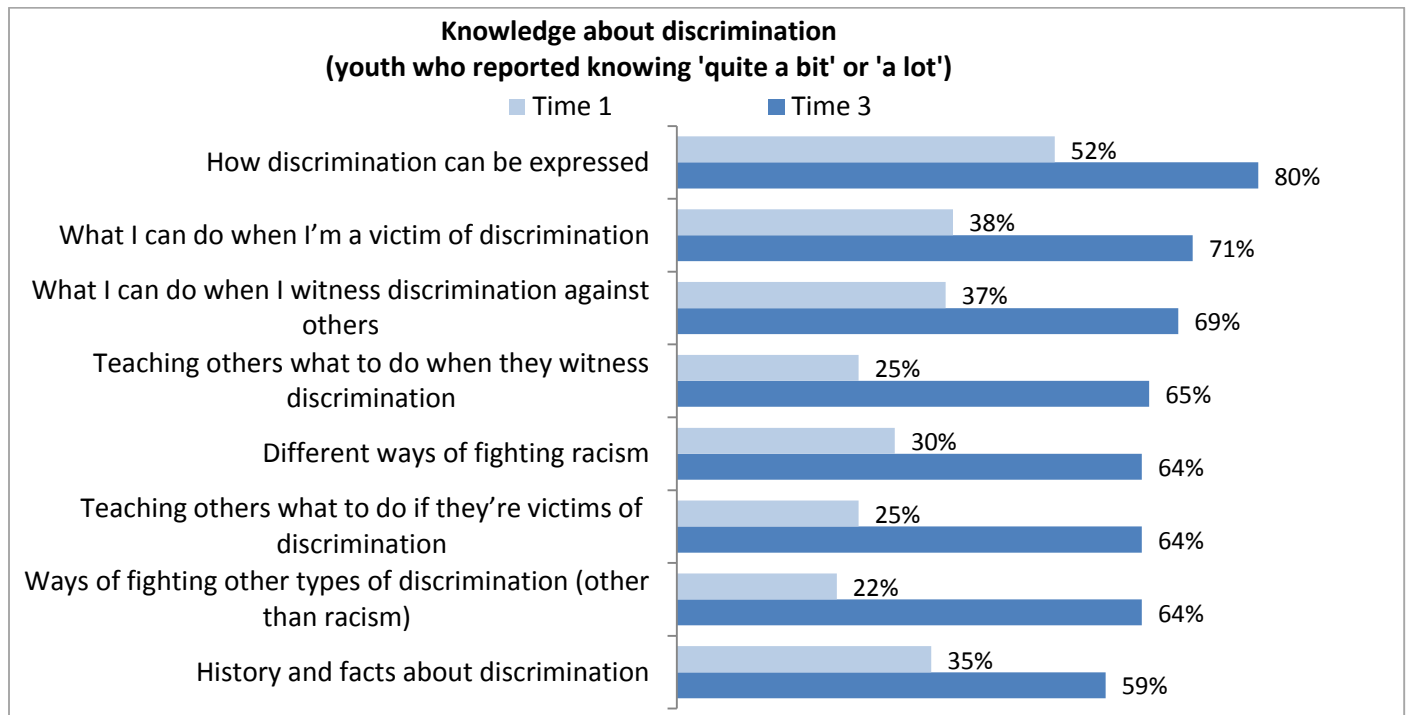
Statistical analyses assessed if there were changes in participants’ knowledge, attitudes, actions, and social-emotional functioning over the course of their involvement in citizenU. Repeated-measures analyses involved comparing a young person’s responses at each time-point, and as such they only included youth who completed surveys at multiple time-points. All changes over time illustrated in graphs are statistically significant unless otherwise noted.

Given the decrease in participants by Phase 3, the repeated-measures analyses that could be conducted with Time 3 data (in conjunction with earlier time-points) were limited because of a relatively small sample size. In anticipation of this, to supplement the repeated-measures analyses youth were asked directly on each survey how much they felt their involvement in citizenU contributed to changes in various areas. In addition, evaluation participants who took part in focus groups and interviews talked about the effects that citizenU had on youths’ lives.

Knowledge and skills pertaining to discrimination

At all three time-points, youth were asked about their knowledge pertaining to various aspects of discrimination. At Time 1, less than half indicated knowing ‘quite a bit’ or ‘a lot’ about most aspects of discrimination, such as ways of tackling racism and other forms of discrimination; what to do if they witnessed discrimination against others; and what to do if they were victims of discrimination.

However, as illustrated in the next graph, participants’ knowledge increased from Time 1 to later time-points. By Time 3, most youth indicated having ‘quite a bit’ or ‘a lot’ of knowledge in every domain.



“[citizenU] has given me the knowledge and confidence I needed to try to make a difference when I witness discrimination.”

Similarly, facilitators reported that citizenU had significantly increased youths' awareness of discrimination. They said that the information provided by the program, coupled with the stories that youth shared about their own experiences, had a powerful impact on participants. Facilitators said that the project increased awareness and knowledge not only among youth participants but also among facilitators. Some explained that they had become more aware of problems within Vancouver and different forms of discrimination as a result of the initiative.

By the end of their participation cycle (Time 3), 56% of youth indicated knowing how to reduce discrimination in their community, compared to only 21% at the start of their involvement (Time 1). They had a number of ideas to reduce discrimination, including increasing awareness about discrimination; educating people on how to deal with discrimination; speaking out when discrimination occurs; lobbying for equality; promoting anti-discrimination events; having more anti-discrimination programs like citizenU; and assuming a leadership role in the community to combat discrimination.

Moreover, 86% of youth at both Time 2 and Time 3 (with similar rates for males and females) reported that the citizenU training had made a difference in what they would do if they witnessed discrimination. Most participants explained that this training had taught them invaluable knowledge about discrimination, and that their new knowledge and awareness led to an increased sense of responsibility to address discrimination.

Many youth planned to educate their family and friends about discrimination and what they could do to address it, to ultimately reduce discrimination in their community.

Most youth felt that they had developed the skills and confidence to address discrimination in their daily lives. However, some were unsure if they would actually intervene if they witnessed discrimination, due to fear or shyness.

How citizenU training made a difference in what youth would do if they witnessed discrimination (Time 2 and Time 3 surveys)

"The training really made me feel the responsibility to deal with discrimination and realize how serious it actually is."

"I always thought I should stand up for what I believe, but I didn't know how to take actions. However, citizenU taught me ways of raising my voice and opinion."

"When friends [make discriminatory] jokes I immediately feel the need to speak out and tell them how inappropriate it is."

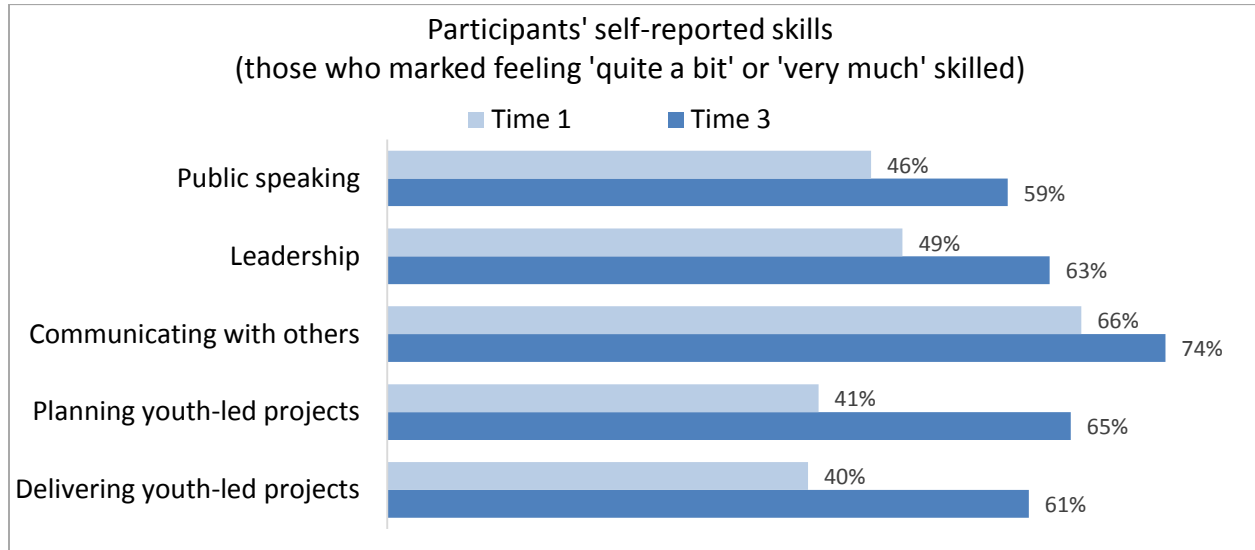
"I didn't know anything about discrimination before I came to citizenU, but now I feel very confident that I will do something if I witness or am the victim of discrimination!"

"The training has made me feel more validation in feeling strongly against subtle discrimination and therefore has made me more likely to interfere if I witness discrimination."

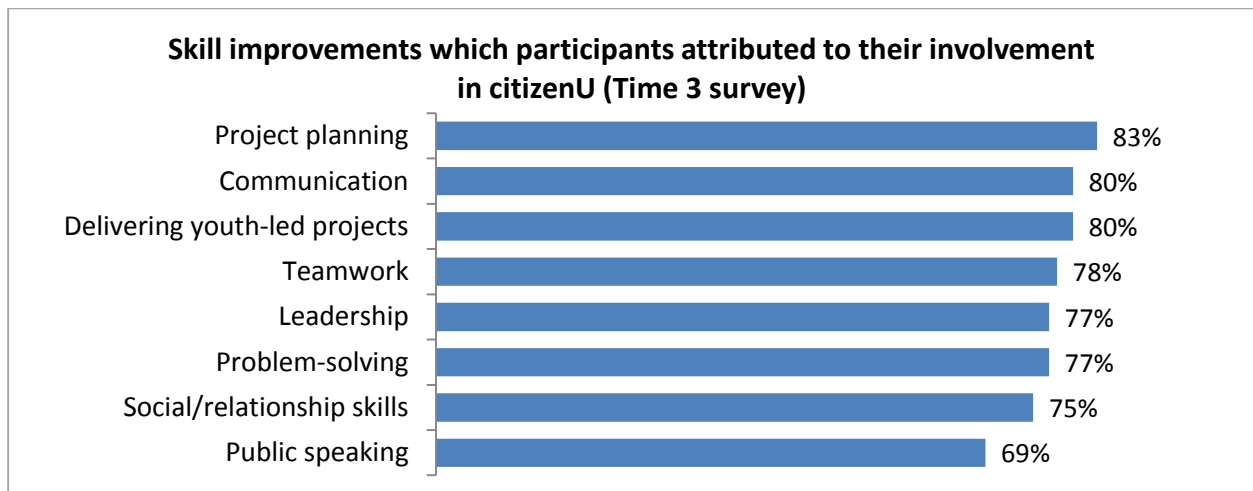
"It made me realize that staying silent isn't the best way to go, and making the bully realize how wrong they are is right."

Development of other skills

In addition to gaining skills in how to address discrimination, results indicated skill improvements in other areas. Specifically, youth felt more skilled at later time-points than at Time 1 in taking a leadership role, communicating with others, speaking in public, and planning and delivering youth-led projects.



Further, youth were directly asked at Time 3 how much their involvement in citizenU led to improvements in their skills. Consistent with the repeated measures findings (comparisons across time), the majority of participants reported a number of skill improvements at Time 3 which they attributed to their involvement in citizenU. Findings were comparable for males and females.



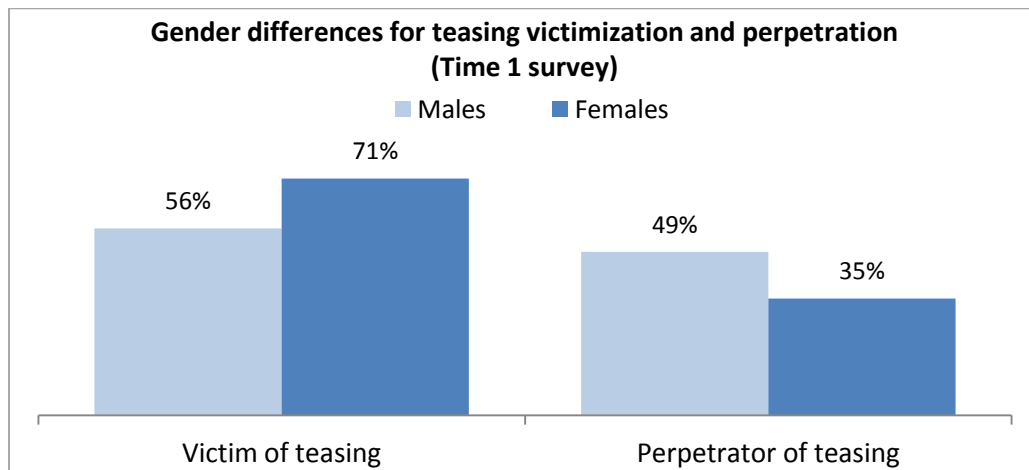
“citizenU is helpful for learning many life skills.”

Bullying and discrimination experiences

Bullying

At Time 1, a number of youth had been the victims of teasing (67%), social exclusion (50%), physical assault (15%), and/or cyber-bullying (20%) in the past six months. Females were more likely than males to have been teased (71% vs. 56%) or socially excluded (56% vs. 37%). Rates of bullying victimization were comparable by Time 3.

Youth were also asked if they had bullied others in the past six months (i.e., if they had been perpetrators). At Time 1, males and females reported comparable rates of socially excluding (29%), assaulting (7%), and cyber-bullying (6%) others. However, males were more likely than females to have teased others.



As was the case with bullying victimization, rates of teasing and excluding others were similar at Time 1 and Time 3.

Discrimination

Youth also reported on their experience with being discriminated against in the past six months. At Time 1, they were most commonly discriminated against because of their physical appearance (31%), age (28%), race or ethnicity (25%), and being seen as different (30%).

Females were more likely than males to report discrimination due to their age (35% vs. 13%), physical appearance (37% vs. 17%), gender/sex (24% vs. 6%), their social group or clique (26% vs. 11%), their socioeconomic status (19% vs. 11%), and being seen as different (35% vs. 19%).

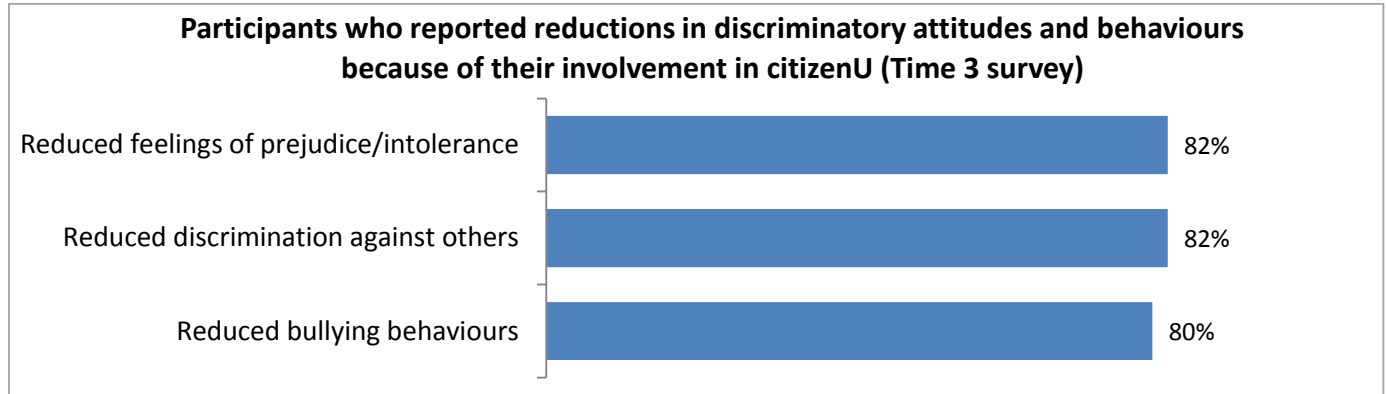
Rates of discrimination were generally similar at Time 1 and Time 3. However, perceived discrimination due to physical appearance and being seen as different were lower at Time 3 but only for females.

Participants also reported on whether they had discriminated against others in the past six months. At Time 1, they most commonly indicated discriminating against others based on the person’s physical appearance (18%), social group they belonged to (13%), being perceived as

different (10%), their age (9%), and an addiction they may have had (8%). These rates were comparable for males and females, and across time-points.

Direct feedback at Time 3

Although repeated measures analyses (to assess changes over time) indicated that rates of bullying perpetration and discrimination were similar at Time 1 and Time 3, youth provided direct feedback at Time 3 that their involvement in citizenU helped to decrease not only their feelings of prejudice and intolerance toward others, but also their discriminatory and bullying behaviours. Rates were similar for males and females.



In response to open-ended survey questions, participants explained that citizenU helped them realize how prevalent and serious discrimination is, and many changed their behaviours as a result. In the focus groups, youth added that they had developed greater respect for others and more sympathy for victims of discrimination as a result of watching scenarios about the “isms.” They also said they had developed more self-awareness in terms of their own thoughts and actions when it came to discrimination, and were less judgmental and more sympathetic toward others.

“Because of citizenU, I am no longer racist or discriminating.”

Safety

Participants rated their feelings of safety in Vancouver, the neighborhood they lived, their school (among those attending school), and at home. The majority of youth felt safe in all areas, but males generally felt safer than females (although they felt equally safe at school and at home). For example, 81% of males at Time 1 felt safe overall in Vancouver, compared to 73% of females, and 80% of males felt safe going on public transit in Vancouver, compared to 68% of females.

Males and females felt safer going on public transit at Time 3 than at Time 1. There were no other changes over time in feelings of safety.

Youth were also asked at Time 2 and Time 3 how often they felt safe taking part in citizenU. The vast majority of males and females (97%) felt safe often or always, and the rest sometimes felt safe (none indicated never or rarely feeling safe).

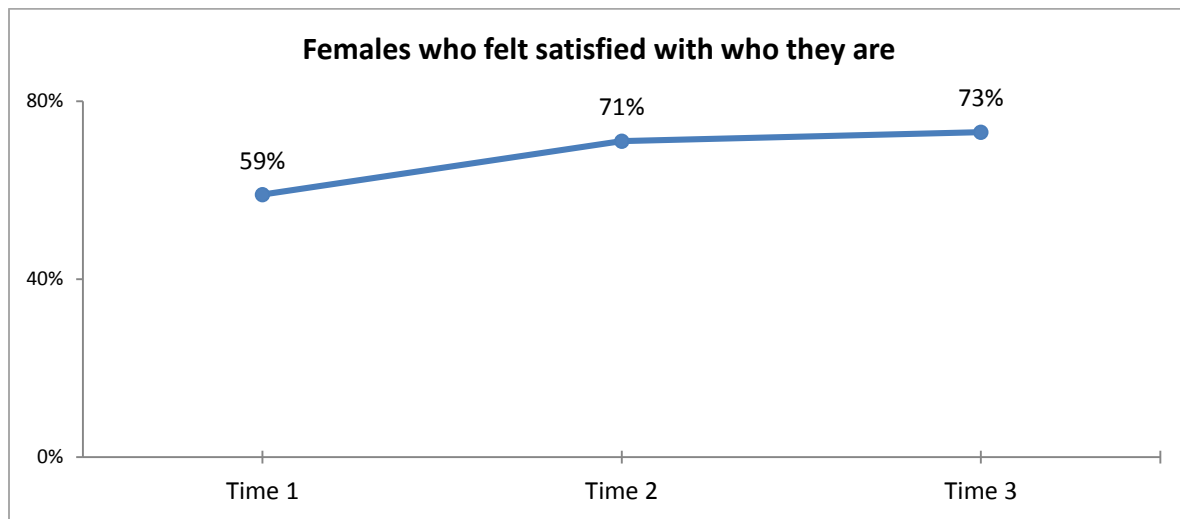
“What I liked most about citizenU was the secure, non-judgmental environment.”

Mental and emotional health

Self-confidence

Youth reported relatively high levels of self-confidence at Time 1, meaning that most felt satisfied with themselves overall (61%), felt as competent as their peers (74%), usually felt good about themselves (61%), and felt they had a number of good qualities (72%).

Females were less likely than males to feel satisfied with themselves at Time 1. However, there were no gender differences at later time-points because females', but not males', self-confidence increased from Time 1 to Time 2.



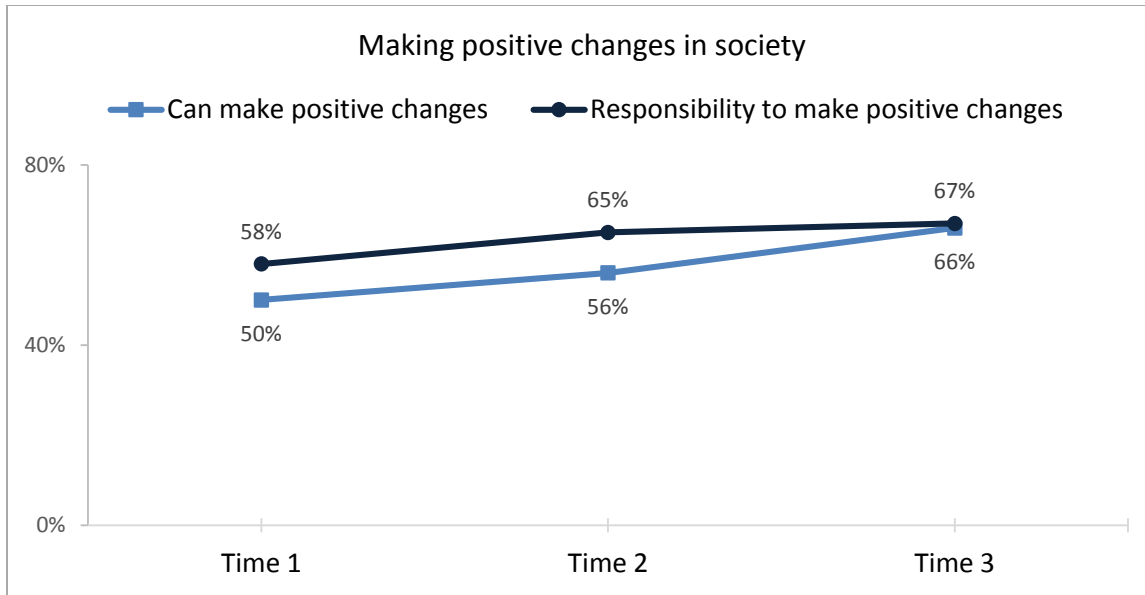
Note: The difference between Time 2 and Time 3 is not statistically significant.

Some focus group participants who were English Language Learners added that their involvement in citizenU helped to boost their confidence and to feel more secure speaking English in public.

“My confidence increased and I learned how to deal with public speaking.”

Self-efficacy

At Time 1, 58% of youth felt they had a responsibility to make positive changes in society, yet a smaller percentage (50%) felt they had an ability to do so. Both rates increased over time, but there was a greater increase in perceptions of the ability to make positive changes. As a result, participants' sense of responsibility and sense of their ability to make changes were comparable by Time 3.



Note: The difference at Time 3 is not statistically significant.

In line with this finding, City of Vancouver staff commented that many participants developed an increased sense of agency because of their involvement in citizenU. They explained that youth came to realize that young people do have the ability to make change, which they learned because citizenU was very youth focused and participants played a part in developing the initiative. City staff felt that participants’ sense of agency also increased because the initiative involved transparency and openness, and created a safe space to talk honestly about important topics so that youth could understand the issues and then act on them.

“I now feel like I can make a difference in the world.”

Hopefulness

Most youth were hopeful about their future at all time-points. For example, at Time 1 the majority looked forward to the future with hope and enthusiasm (76%); looked forward to more good times than bad (72%); and had great faith in the future (70%). Rates were comparable for males and females.

Youth were also asked where they saw themselves in five years. Common responses included having a job, being in school, and engaged in their community. Females were more likely than males to anticipate having a job (75% vs. 65%; Time 1 survey), attending school (71% vs. 60%), being involved in the community (56% vs. 37%), and being involved in local government (19% vs. 8%). Rates were comparable across time-points.

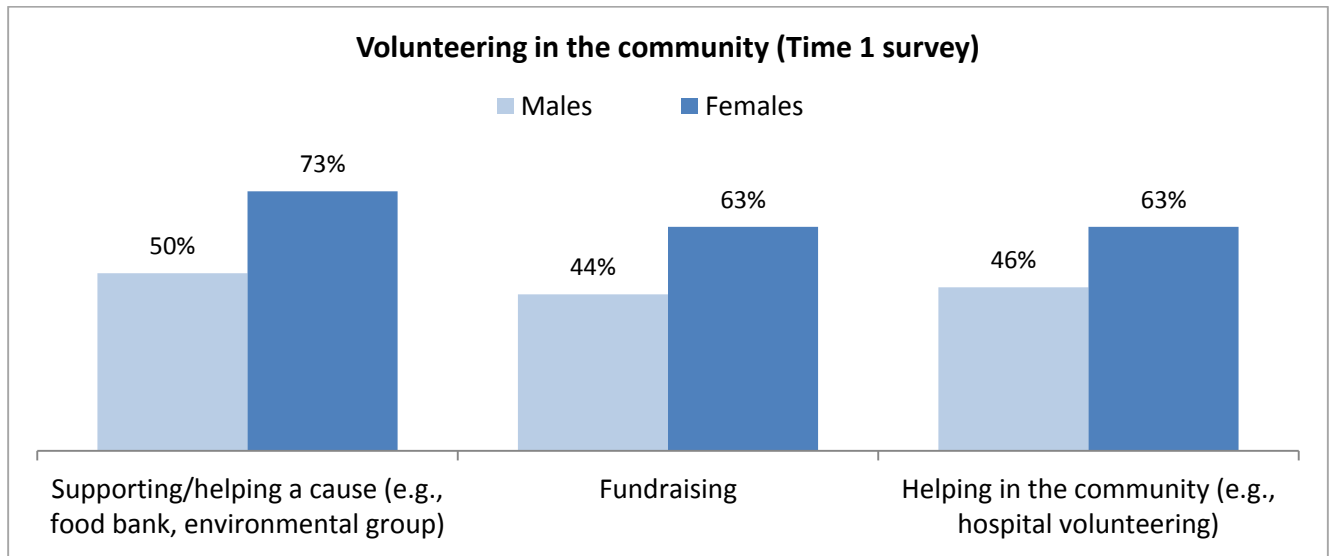
Direct feedback about mental health at Time 3

At Time 3, youth were asked directly whether their involvement in citizenU contributed to changes in their mental and emotional health. Most participants reported improvements in their overall mood (75%), hope for their future (78%), and self-esteem (71%) which they attributed to citizenU. Males and females reported similar rates of improvements.

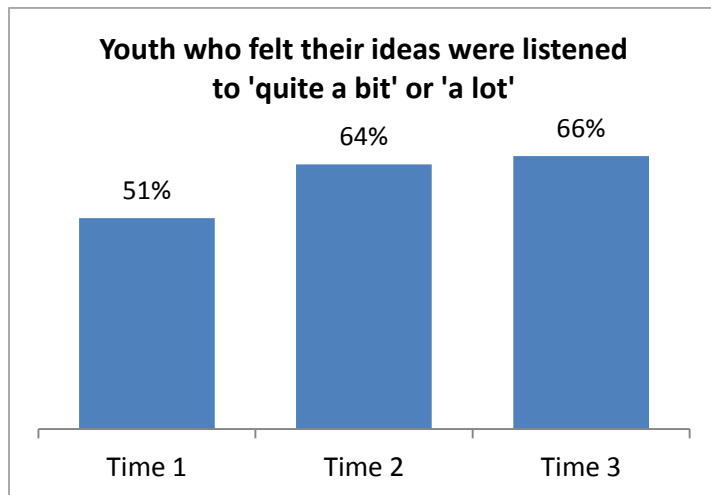
Engagement in the community

Volunteering

At Time 1, youth reported having volunteered in the community in various ways in the past six months. Females were more likely than males to volunteer, with the exception of helping neighbours or relatives, where males and females reported similar rates (51%). There were no changes in rates of volunteering over time.



Across all time-points, the majority of males and females felt that the activities they were engaged in were meaningful (around 78% felt this way 'quite a bit' or 'a lot'). However, they were more likely at later time-points than at Time 1 to feel that their ideas were listened to and acted upon in their activities.

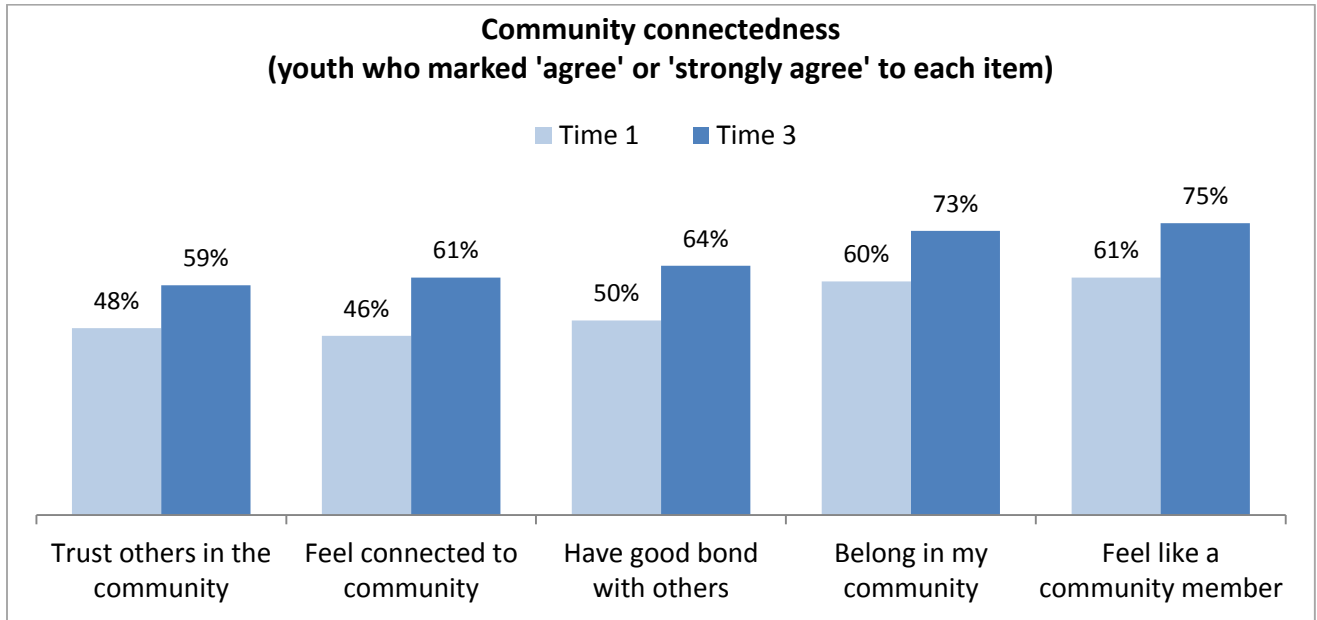


Note: The difference between Time 2 and Time 3 is not statistically significant.

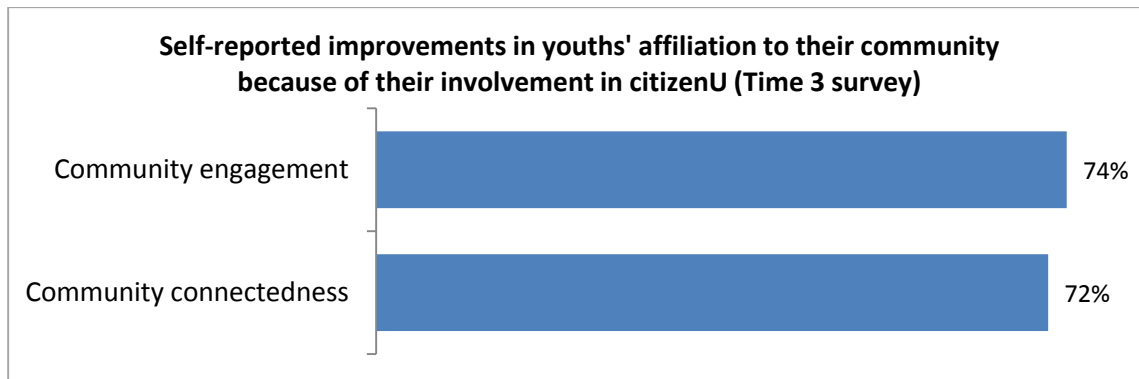
“citizenU has changed my level of engagement with my community and the city.”

Community connectedness

Youth were asked about their sense of belonging and connection to their community. As illustrated in the graph, rates increased from Time 1 to later time-points.



Additionally, most participants who completed a Time 3 survey reported increased engagement in their community and an increased sense of community connectedness, which they directly attributed to their involvement in citizenU.



Youth who took part in focus groups also said they felt more involved and engaged in the community as a result of citizenU. Many attributed the city-wide events and the project-planning stage to their increased sense of community engagement because it helped them to meet many people from Vancouver whom they would have otherwise never met. Some youth described a sense of connection to the “citizenU community” and that the initiative provided them with meaningful activities and events to take part in. Some added that they were motivated to take part in future programs and events in their community.

Similarly, facilitators felt that citizenU encouraged youth to become more involved in their community and to feel more connected to their community. One staff explained that a reason youth felt more connected was that they constantly interacted with different groups of youth, which expanded their connections and networks and which made them feel like an important part of the community. Some facilitators reported that more youth now participated in community events hosted by their organization.

Additionally, facilitators explained that planning the youth-led projects helped participants to feel more connected to the community in which their project took place, which was not always the same community in which the site organization was located. For example, all youth attending citizenU training at one community organization had planned a project in a different community, which led to the creation of new connections and partnerships in this other community.

“citizenU makes me feel connected to the community.”

Government

Youth were asked on the surveys about their knowledge and engagement in government. Participants were more likely at later time-points than at Time 1 to know how Canadian government systems work (33% at Time 1 vs. 47% at Time 3) and to know about their rights and responsibilities living in Canada (46% at Time 1 vs. 62% at Time 3).

At Time 3, one in four youth indicated having been involved in meetings or discussions with local government officials since starting citizenU.

When asked in the focus groups about their engagement in local government, some youth did not note increased engagement because of the initiative, aside from going to City Hall to take part in the project-planning workshops. However, others voiced appreciation that the program gave them an opportunity to meet people at different levels of government and that their organization now had better connections with local government officials as a result of citizenU.

“I learned more about the rights of people in Canada and can use this knowledge to stand up for people.”

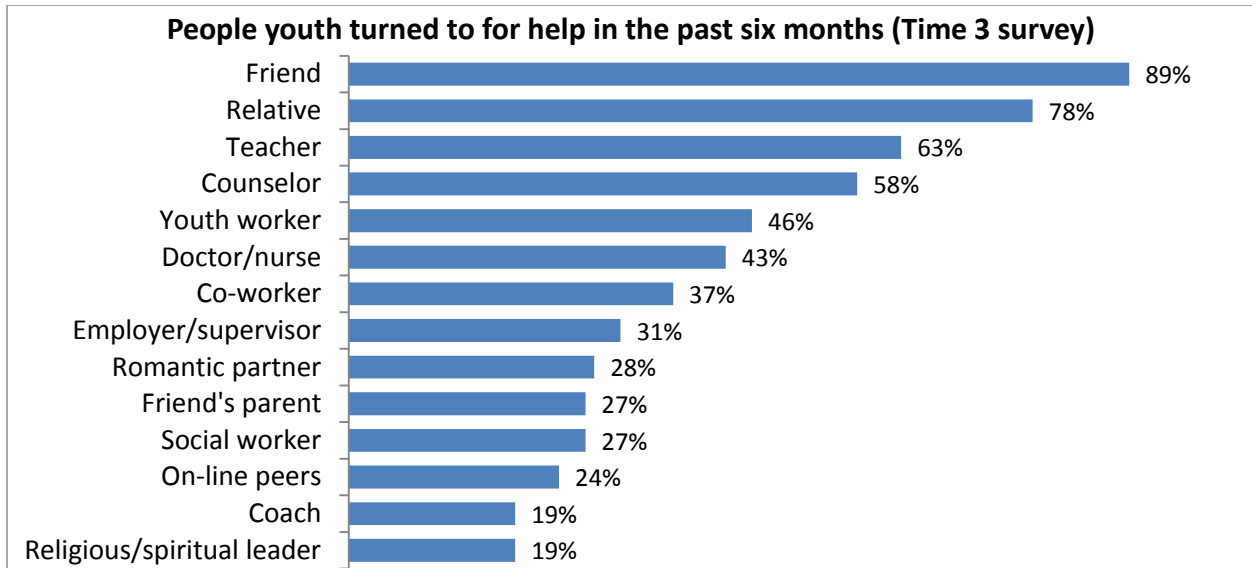
Supports and services

Most youth reported that they would feel comfortable turning to another young person, an adult in their family, or an adult outside their family if faced with a serious problem. Females were more likely than males to feel comfortable turning to a peer at Time 1 (88% vs. 80%). Rates were similar at all time-points.

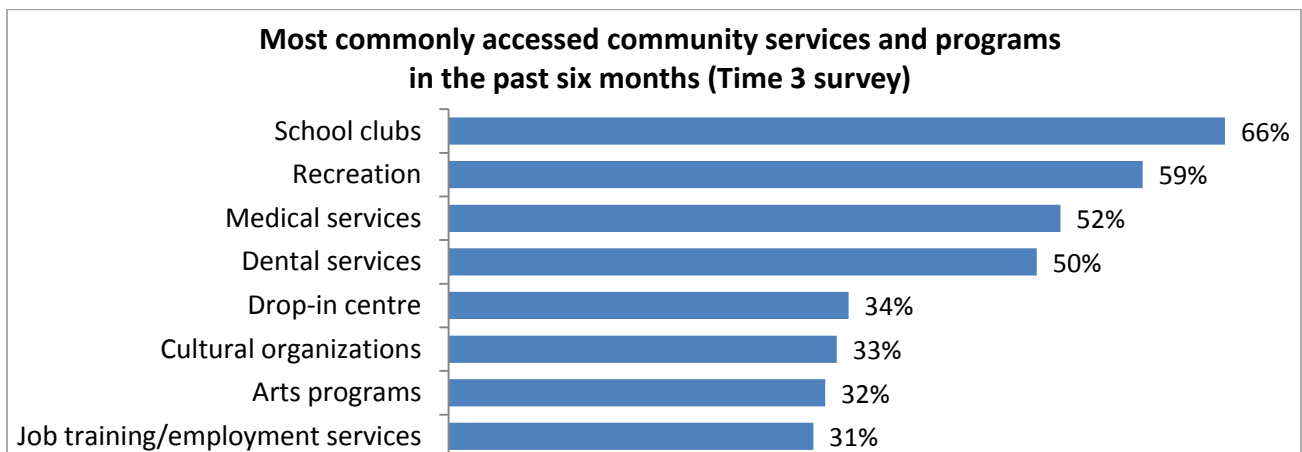
In addition to indicating who they would feel comfortable turning to, youth indicated whom they actually approached for help. At all time-points, they most commonly turned to their friends, relatives and teachers. The vast majority of youth who turned to others for support found the assistance helpful across all time-points.

City of Vancouver staff noticed that youth participants came to rely on one another for support, and many were still connected to each other after the initiative ended. They added that youth

took the initiative to build their own peer networks as their confidence increased and their opportunities and interests expanded. City staff also said that some youth were still approaching project staff after the project ended to ask for more information about certain community issues.



Youth were also asked about services and programs they had accessed in their community in the past six months. Across time-points, participants most commonly accessed medical services, dental services, recreation programs, and school clubs. Most youth who accessed community services and programs found them helpful.



Although the repeated-measures analyses did not indicate increases in accessing services over time, 68% of participants directly reported at Time 3 that their participation in citizenU did increase their access to community services and supports.

Many youth who took part in focus groups, as well as facilitators, felt that involvement in citizenU increased participants' awareness of various services and supports in the community. Facilitators explained that youth were not only given a list of different organizations within their community, but the city-wide events exposed them to supports and services that were available. One facilitator mentioned an event that took place at the public library which involved youth

learning about an RCMP officer who was designated to deal specifically with issues of youth bullying.

However, a number of youth stated that although the initiative increased participants' awareness of services and supports, it did not increase the likelihood that young people would access them. Participants felt that citizenU could have done more to help youth in this area, such as by organizing a one-day session about available services and supports, with various agencies talking about the services they offer and providing details about how to access them. Other youth suggested that there could be sessions at high schools about the various services available in the community. Another suggestion was to have an online database available to youth, with details and contact information on a variety of youth services, groups and programs in Vancouver.

Intercultural networks

Facilitators felt that youth had greater exposure to people of different cultural backgrounds during later phases of the project when participants interacted with youth from other organizations, and they appreciated that citizenU encouraged youth from different sites to mingle during these later phases. Youth agreed that some of the citizenU city-wide events encouraged them to interact with youth from other sites whose cultural backgrounds were different from their own. They said that icebreaker games were effective at encouraging youth to meet new people, and thought that an icebreaker at the Yaletown Roundhouse event was particularly successful in this regard.

Some youth suggested that offering more events in which participants could easily interact would help to further facilitate the development of intercultural networks and friendships. Similarly, facilitators recommended that the initiative provide even more opportunities for participating groups to meet and discuss issues with one another. They felt that having more workshops and events with other groups would allow for more exposure to diverse experiences and worldviews, and increase opportunities for making inter-organizational connections.

Seventy-two percent of youth who completed a Time 3 survey indicated that they had more friends from different cultural backgrounds as a result of the initiative. When asked to explain, some stated that they developed deeper connections with one another when they had the opportunity to plan a project together. Focus group participants added that working with peers from different cultural backgrounds was not the same as simply meeting them at events. They felt that working together led to a greater understanding of different cultures and to the development of more genuine relationships.

"I have met people from cultural backgrounds that I don't normally talk to."

INDICATIONS OF POTENTIAL LONG-TERM IMPACTS

Evaluation participants talked about citizenU having positive effects not only on youth participants but also on their families and peers; host sites; and the larger community. These may be indications of potential long-term impacts of the initiative.

Impact on participants' families and peers

Facilitators felt that citizenU not only taught youth about discrimination and how to address it, but also gave them the tools to educate their friends and families on forms of discrimination and to “spread the word within the community.”

Many youth said they have educated their family members about racism and other forms of discrimination, based on the knowledge and skills they learned through citizenU. Some explained that their family members now saw them as more informed, and as a result were more open to discussing the issues and shifting discriminatory attitudes they had previously held. Other youth said they no longer tolerated their siblings making discriminatory remarks against others and now explained to them why it was wrong. Similarly, facilitators reported that citizenU helped to spark healthy debates about issues of discrimination between youth and their families, which resulted in youths' families becoming more aware of the issues. One facilitator's suggestion was for citizenU to create information documents for caregivers and other family members that covered issues pertaining to discrimination which could help youth share what they learned through citizenU.

A facilitator also recounted that due to participants' increased awareness of discrimination, they now drew attention to discriminatory jokes or comments made by other youth in the organization who had not taken part in citizenU. Participants explained that they now realized that acts of discrimination, including discriminatory jokes and stereotypes, should not be normalized. They added that with increased knowledge came greater courage to intervene when they witnessed discrimination.

“citizenU has affected my friends and my siblings.”

Impact on host sites

Youth at some sites did not think that citizenU had an impact on their organization because it was one of many programs that the agency was involved in. However, youth at other sites felt their participation in citizenU and their presence at city-wide events had given their organization more exposure and community connections. Youth at one site added that their organization's website traffic increased after larger citizenU events in which they participated, and that attendance at their organization's events was more diverse because of their connection to citizenU.

Youth at another site said that their organization did not have a youth group or youth programming before citizenU, whereas now they will be increasing their programs for youth and recruiting more young people as a result of citizenU. Participants added that the organization now consults with young people about future programs that youth may benefit from.

Facilitators and other host-site staff agreed that citizenU had a positive impact on their organizations. For example, they remarked that the initiative sparked interest within their

organizations to include youth voice in program planning and delivery, and to focus on meaningful youth engagement and youth leadership programming. Some also stated that they learned more strategies for effectively and meaningfully engaging youth. A few facilitators hoped that some citizenU participants from their site would serve on the organization's Board of Directors, and hopefully influence change in policies and practice as a result of what they had learned through the initiative.

Also, even though many organizations had been addressing discrimination in their programming before getting involved in citizenU, facilitators said that this initiative provided youth and staff with even more knowledge and tools to address discrimination. Many explained that the initiative encouraged them to incorporate diversity and anti-discrimination training into their own programs, and has provided them with greater awareness of how to be more inclusive as an agency. Most host sites indicated that they were incorporating aspects of citizenU's anti-discrimination curriculum and activities into their current and future programs, and some were adapting the curriculum to reach different groups (e.g., children ages 6 to 12; staff members).

Further, host sites reported in their Sustainability and Legacy Reports that they felt better equipped to support youth in planning and delivering community projects because of the experience and skills that staff had acquired through citizenU. In fact, a number of agencies were in the process of helping youth to plan new projects that focused on anti-discrimination and inclusion. Other host sites commented that their future youth-led projects and events would focus on anti-discrimination.

Host sites added that some youth who graduated from citizenU have independently pursued additional initiatives using the skills and experience they had gained through the project. Through this process, youth have expanded their social networks and have connected with other organizations. This has had the effect of extending the reach of citizenU to other networks and agencies.

Many host sites also felt that citizenU helped them to connect with youth in Vancouver who had not previously been involved with their agency, and to form partnerships with organizations they had not partnered with before. As a result, they were connecting with diverse groups in the community and expanding their inter-cultural networks.

City of Vancouver staff agreed that citizenU had a significant impact on host sites because it created opportunities for diverse connections and networks. They said that host organizations started collaborating more, not only in the context of citizenU but also on other projects, and some were applying for funding together. City staff also felt that involvement in the initiative helped to build capacity within host organizations. For example, it allowed some agencies to see their own role in addressing inequity and discrimination. Staff from these agencies also learned new skills, which contributed to organizational capacity.

“citizenU has been a great experience for our organization... We have developed friendships and enriched our social, academic and career networks.”

“citizenU encourages not just the youth, but also staff and volunteers to think about how to create healthy, safe, inclusive communities.”

“Participating in citizenU has strengthened our partnership with the City of Vancouver and our capacity to build community across cultures, faiths and generations.”

“We should encourage governments and organizations to make more programs like citizenU.”

Impact on City of Vancouver’s Social Policy Department

City of Vancouver staff felt that citizenU fostered capacity within their department to address discrimination on a systemic level. They also said that other City initiatives and other departments took notice of citizenU and recognized that being part of the initiative provided City staff with valuable skills that equipped them to work on other projects and in other settings. Additionally, some City staff members said that being part of citizenU was personally fulfilling and that it provided them with a number of unique opportunities.

City staff were hoping that the outcomes of citizenU would help to shape policy and that senior government officials would see the value in using the anti-discrimination curriculum to make changes. City staff felt that the citizenU curriculum could play a role in effecting change, particularly given the current political interest in reducing bullying.

“citizenU pushed the understanding of what was possible to do in government.”

Impact on the larger community

In terms of citizenU’s impact on the larger community, youth and staff felt there would likely be gradual and subtle changes rather than immediately noticeable ones. Youth remarked that they have told their friends and classmates at school not to make discriminatory comments, which may eventually help to decrease discrimination in the community. They added that the events they were planning may also make a difference in the community. For example, a participant explained that one youth-led project was pairing ESL youth with other youth in the community to help increase their sense of connection and belonging to the community. This participant was hopeful that this type of project could lead to systemic changes over time.

Participants and staff from another site explained that their community was close-knit and leery of outsiders, which made it difficult for change to take place. However, they noted that some of their community members and elders attended citizenU events, and although it was perhaps too soon to notice changes in their community, these changes might happen gradually.

City of Vancouver staff felt that the initiative taught people tools to respond effectively to discrimination, which could ultimately lead to reduced discrimination in the community. They had observed and heard about some “webbing out” as a result of the initiative, and added that the extent of the benefits to the larger community was not yet clear. City staff added that there may be a delayed effect of the project and they deemed it important to follow-up with participants and host organizations longitudinally (e.g., in 5-10 years) to gain a better understanding of the impact of citizenU. City staff also likened citizenU to an inoculation that was injected into the community, which may need to occur again if its effects wear off in time.

“citizenU is cultivating an entire generation of young leaders who are challenging social norms and is raising a new culture of youth engaging in their communities.” – Host site

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation findings suggest that citizenU engaged a diverse group of youth, as reflected in the age range of participants; range of years they had lived in Canada; most speaking a language other than English at home at least sometimes; and participants identifying with various cultural backgrounds.

Some participants wished that the program had more of a focus on Aboriginal issues, including dealing with institutionalized discrimination against Aboriginal peoples. Similarly, some City of Vancouver staff said that a greater emphasis could have been placed on how to challenge systemic oppression. If citizenU or a similar initiative were to take place again, it would be important to address systemic discrimination against Aboriginal peoples.

Evaluation findings indicated improvements for youth participants in a range of domains, including greater knowledge of discrimination and skills to address it; increased skills in other areas such as leadership, public-speaking, communication, project-planning and implementation; increased knowledge of Canadian government systems and of youths' rights and responsibilities living in Canada; improved mental health (hopefulness, mood, self-esteem); greater sense of connection to their community; and enhanced inter-cultural networks. Survey findings also indicated an increase over time in participants' perceptions of their ability to make positive changes in society.

Additionally, although repeated-measures analyses (tracking changes over time) did not indicate reductions in discrimination and bullying toward others from Time 1 to Time 3, most youth directly reported at Time 3 that their participation in citizenU led to reductions in these areas. These decreases were consistent with participants' survey responses to open-ended questions and what youth said during focus groups.

The repeated-measures analyses may not have detected decreases in bullying perpetration and discrimination because of insufficient statistical power due to the relatively small number of youth who completed both a Time 1 and Time 3 survey. Given that a decrease in participants over time had been anticipated, the repeated-measures methodology was supplemented with questions on the final survey that directly asked youth about changes in their lives because of their involvement in citizenU. Moreover, the mixed-methods approach that integrated the quantitative survey data with qualitative information was an effective way of collecting information and feedback from a number of sources to get a fuller picture of the impacts of the program.

Evaluation results indicated that citizenU had positive effects beyond youth participants, including impacts on participants' families. There were challenges engaging families in both the initiative and the evaluation, but many youth said they were able to educate their families about discrimination and to have open conversations with them about reducing discriminatory behaviours. Findings also suggested positive impacts on host sites, including greater capacity among staff and increased inter-agency partnerships and networks.

Not only did evaluation findings indicate improvements over time, but participants and site facilitators expressed great satisfaction with their involvement in citizenU. Most reported that they would recommend citizenU to others, and facilitators were interested in being involved in this type of initiative again.

Youth and site staff also had suggestions that would build on the initiative's strengths to make it even stronger. For example, site staff appreciated the facilitator training and expressed a desire for even more training around managing potential triggers and heated debates. Further, youth and facilitators overwhelmingly suggested more training around project development and implementation. Another idea from City staff was to provide training on different levels of youth engagement so that site facilitators would know how to support youth participants while simultaneously giving them the opportunity to lead. City of Vancouver staff also shared lessons learned that could help guide future anti-discrimination initiatives and increase their likelihood of success (Appendix D).

In sum, the evaluation results indicated that citizenU met its goals of increasing participants' understanding and awareness of racism and discrimination; increasing their civic engagement, community connectedness and leadership skills; and improving their emotional health. The initiative exceeded its goals in the sense that participants reported not only changes in their knowledge and attitudes about discrimination but also changes in their discriminatory behaviours (reduced discrimination against others). There were also positive impacts among support staff (e.g., increased skills) as well as greater capacity within and across agencies to effect change in the community.

APPENDICES

- **Appendix A: Methodology**
- **Appendix B: Participant Details**
- **Appendix C: Feedback about the Initiative**
- **Appendix D: Successes, Challenges and Lessons Learned**

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Youth surveys

The surveys were created by amalgamating a number of measures with good psychometric properties and that have been used successfully with youth in the past (i.e., items from other McCreary surveys). Surveys were first piloted with a subset of youth and were modified based on youths’ feedback and suggestions before they were distributed to all participants (see the table on page 7 for more information about the survey topics).

Youth filled out the surveys at their program site. The initial plan had been for all participants to complete an online survey on the City’s secure server. However, not all agencies were able to offer youth a computer and internet access to complete the survey. As a result, agencies had the option of distributing paper-and-pencil surveys to participants, which increased the survey-completion rate. However, the rate was still relatively low, with around half of all primary participants completing a Time 1 survey (440/893 = 49%). One explanation for this relatively low response rate was that the surveys were offered only in English, which could have posed problems for participants who were English Language Learners. The surveys were also relatively long, which could have created obstacles for youth with learning disabilities or other challenges.

Youth were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their survey responses were confidential and would not be used in any way that could lead to them being personally identified. Their name and other identifying information was not included on the surveys. Instead, each youth was assigned a unique participant identification number so that each youth’s survey data could be compared across time-points.

A total of 224 youth completed both a Time 1 and Time 2 survey; 97 youth completed both a Time 1 and Time 3 survey; and 65 youth completed all three surveys.

SURVEY TOPICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity Questions: Age, gender, ethnicity, born in Canada, years lived in Canada, languages spoken at home, sexual orientation, health, currently in school, currently working.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and awareness of racism and discrimination: Knowledge of history and facts about discrimination; of what to do if witnessing or experiencing discrimination; of how to teach anti-discrimination; and of how to reduce discrimination in the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills to address and reduce racism and discrimination: Leadership skills, communication skills, sharing ideas, public speaking skills, working as part of a team, and planning and delivering youth-led projects. Knowing what to do if they witness discrimination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences with bullying: Being excluded, teased, harassed, cyber-bullied, and experience as a bully in these areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination: Experiences being discriminated against based on race, physical appearance, sexual orientation, age, gender, SES, disability, social group, addiction, being different. Also, being the perpetrator of discrimination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement: Volunteering, meaningfulness of activities, community connectedness. Involvement in meetings/discussions with local government officials.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of safety: Feeling safe in the neighborhood and at school (if attending school).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional health: Hopefulness, self-esteem; Self-efficacy; Where youth see themselves in 5 years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community supports and services: Who youth would feel comfortable turning to if faced with a problem; who they have turned to and how helpful the support was; community services they accessed.

Case studies

McCreary carried out case studies with five sites that took part in citizenU. The purpose was to collect more in-depth feedback about how the project was carried out and the impact of the initiative on participants, their families, the agency, and the larger community.

McCreary researchers facilitated five focus groups with youth participants (each focus group was carried out separately by site). McCreary also conducted individual interviews (either in person or on the phone) with staff from these five agencies. Youth and staff were interviewed separately, but their thoughts and feedback were integrated into this report so that their experiences could be more easily compared.

A total of 23 youth (16 females, 7 males) and 7 staff members (facilitators) from five agencies took part. The agencies represented both earlier and later cycles of the initiative.

The initial intent was for participants' parents or other caregivers to also take part in interviews to canvass their thoughts on the initiative and its impacts. However, no family members voiced an interest in taking part. In an attempt to solicit any feedback from caregivers, a brief caregiver survey was developed, and copies were distributed at citizenU events which caregivers sometimes attended (e.g., the graduation ceremonies). However, no completed surveys were returned. Most youth participants who took part in focus groups had not expected that their parents would complete surveys or agree to be interviewed, and identified cultural factors or language barriers as reasons.

Note: McCreary's Youth Advisory and Action Council (YAC) was involved in Cycle 5 of citizenU, however they were not included in the case studies in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest with McCreary's role as the evaluator of the initiative. Further, McCreary staff who supported the YAC in Cycle 5 were not involved in the evaluation of citizenU. Likewise, McCreary researchers involved in the evaluation focused solely on this role and had no involvement in supporting the youth or in other project roles.

Focus group with City of Vancouver staff

At the end of the initiative (Fall 2013), McCreary facilitated a two-hour focus group with five City of Vancouver staff who were involved in citizenU. The purpose was to canvass their thoughts about the initiative, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

City of Vancouver documents

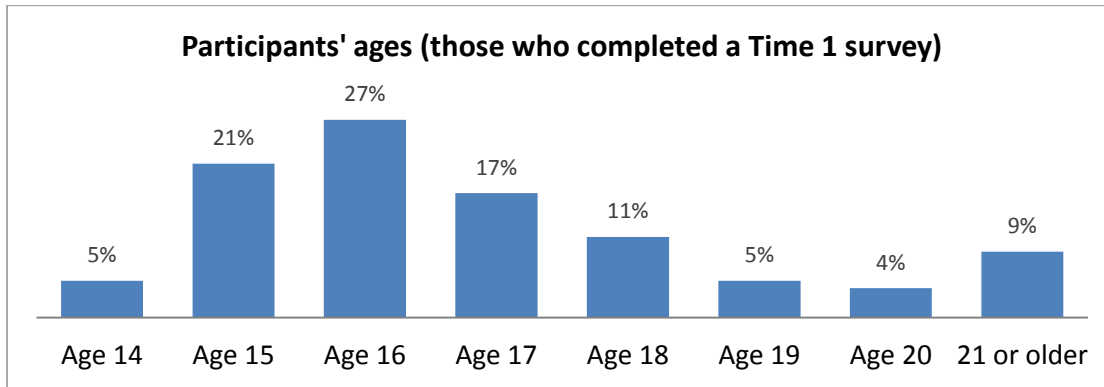
Information was extracted from the Sustainability and Legacy Reports which citizenU host sites submitted to the City of Vancouver three months after completion of their participation cycle. Information was also taken from notes from the "Over to U: citizenU Wrap-up Dialogues" that took place October 15th and 23rd, 2013.

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT DETAILS

This section contains more background information about the primary participants who completed evaluation surveys. The reported percentages in this section were comparable across all three time-points.

Age

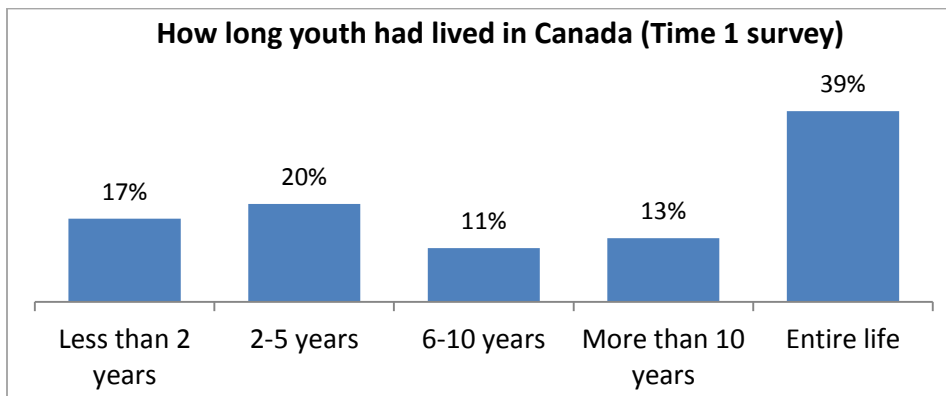
Participants ranged in age from 14 to 21 or older, and they were most commonly 16 years old.



Note: Percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Cultural diversity

Most participants (57%) had not been born in Canada, and 37% had lived in Canada for five years or less. City of Vancouver staff felt that citizenU gave newer immigrants and refugees a “language” with which to talk openly about their experiences of discrimination, in a safe and supportive atmosphere.



Participants came from a variety of ethnic or cultural backgrounds, and the most common was East Asian.

Background	
East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.)	48%
Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, etc.)	18%
European (British, Dutch, Italian, etc.)	15%
South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)	7%
West Asian (Afghani, Iranian, Arab, etc.)	6%
Latin American (South American, Central American)	5%
Aboriginal/First Nations	3%
African (Ethiopian, Moroccan, Kenyan, etc.)	3%
Other	6%

Note: Youth could select more than one background

The majority of youth spoke a language other than English at home sometimes (32%) or most of the time (53%), whereas 15% spoke only English at home.

Many facilitators and focus group participants commented that youth at their site were predominantly of the same cultural background and most had known each other before taking part in citizenU. Some facilitators felt that citizenU could have recruited participants with more diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. However, one facilitator remarked that although her particular group was ethnically homogeneous, the group was diverse in other ways, including the traditions they practiced and their socio-economic backgrounds.

City of Vancouver staff felt that a success of citizenU was its accessibility to a diversity of youth, including youth with diverse experiences, personalities and strengths. They remarked that the significant amount of outreach that the initiative undertook enabled many youth to participate who would have been unable to take part otherwise.

Sexual orientation

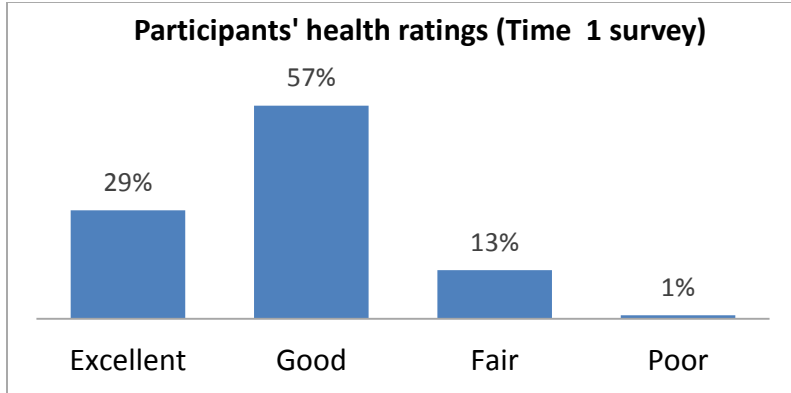
The majority of participants (73%) identified as completely heterosexual, while 14% identified as mostly heterosexual, 4% as bisexual, 2% as mostly homosexual, and 1% as completely homosexual. Three percent were questioning who they were attracted to, and the remaining 3% indicated a sexual orientation not included in the list of options (e.g., asexual, pansexual).

School and work

The majority of youth were currently in school, with 74% in high school and 14% in college or university. Around one in four participants (26%) were currently working, with those attending high school less likely to be working (14%) than those in college/university (60%) or those not in school (60%).

Health

Most youth reported that their health was good or excellent, as opposed to fair or poor. Males were more likely than females to report having ‘excellent’ health, whereas females were more likely to indicate that their health was ‘good.’



Twenty percent of participants reported having at least one limiting health condition, including a mental health condition (9%), long-term illness (5%), learning disability (4%), being overweight or underweight (4%), and/or a physical disability (2%). Among those with a limiting health condition, 50% reported that their condition was never noticeable by others, whereas 44% reported that it was sometimes noticeable, and 6% indicated that their condition was always noticeable.

APPENDIX C: FEEDBACK ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

This Appendix includes evaluation participants' feedback about each phase of the initiative, specifically the anti-discrimination training, city-wide events, and project development workshops. It also includes their thoughts on keeping youth engaged and other feedback.

PHASES OF THE INITIATIVE

Anti-discrimination training

Many facilitators described the anti-discrimination training (Phase 1 of citizenU) as their favourite part for both themselves and the youth. They said it was very powerful to see the youth genuinely interested in learning, and were amazed at how engaged they were. Youth described the training sessions as a “great learning experience” in that they learned about discrimination and all the “isms,” and how to appropriately address discrimination in their own lives. Youth remarked that having an opportunity to hear other participants' viewpoints enabled them to learn even more, and many felt that youth at their site had become markedly closer as a result of the training sessions.

City of Vancouver staff said that a strength of the initiative was the flexibility to refine the curriculum as needed, based on issues that arose and input from participants and facilitators. They also pointed out that the initiative's focus not only on anti-racism but on a wide range of anti-discrimination issues increased participants' awareness in many areas. However, some City staff would have liked for the curriculum to have focused more on systemic issues, including government structure, how policies are developed, and how to address and challenge systemic oppression, rather than mostly on interpersonal issues. They acknowledged that more time would have been needed to address these topics in greater detail, and that the curriculum did provide foundational knowledge about systemic issues.

When youth were asked what they liked most about the training sessions, those in the focus groups listed the games, role-playing scenarios, and debates as their highlights. Those who completed surveys identified the temperature game and A.R.T. training (Anti-Discrimination Response Training) as activities they particularly enjoyed. Youth explained that the activities and games were both fun and educational.

Youth in the focus groups added that the role-playing provided them with more tools to confront discrimination, and suggested having even more role plays so that participants could feel more comfortable addressing discrimination when it occurred. They explained that they knew what they were supposed to do when faced with discrimination but were not always confident to act on it, and that practicing more through role-plays would help when actually confronted with discrimination.

Youths' survey responses also indicated that they enjoyed having open conversations about discrimination in a safe environment. They felt that the atmosphere was friendly and they appreciated the skilled facilitators. Many also liked the guest speakers, videos, and skits. Additionally, many youth appreciated the good food, meeting new people, and being able to socialize and have fun.

Some facilitators identified the binder that staff were given to work from as what they liked most. They felt it was a good resource for facilitators to rely on while also allowing them the flexibility

to add anything they felt was missing. Facilitators were eager for the training binder to be available online for quick reference.

Other facilitators remarked that the response cards were an invaluable learning tool because they taught youth how to address discrimination. Facilitators also felt that the guest speakers had an immense impact on the youth, and recommended having even more speakers come in to discuss their struggles with all forms of discrimination. One facilitator suggested inviting a guest speaker specifically to discuss ageism because she felt that youth at her site did not see this form of discrimination as damaging and did not take it seriously.

Facilitators also felt that the videos included useful scenarios, and the visuals were very effective in keeping youth engaged. However, some youth at one site felt that a specific black-and-white film was too long. They suggested editing this film to make it shorter, rather than removing it from the curriculum altogether, or finding a colour version of the same film.

Facilitators also liked the games and activities, and identified the Temperature Game as leading to particularly good discussions. They appreciated having group discussions and debates and felt that these were an important and necessary part of the curriculum. One facilitator stated that the most heated discussions at her site revolved around gender and sexuality. These discussions revealed that many youth lacked knowledge about gender stereotypes and homophobia, and the training sessions and ensuing discussions helped youth gain more awareness and sensitivity around these issues.

When asked what they liked least about this phase of the project, some facilitators said that occasionally the discussions became too heated and brought out frustration and anger, and participants would leave the sessions without experiencing a resolution. Some youth also mentioned that the sessions could become unruly at times, particularly when the groups were larger, and it was difficult for one facilitator to command control of the group and to complete all modules within the allotted time. Some youth felt that larger groups might benefit from having two facilitators rather than one. City of Vancouver staff clarified that most groups did have two facilitators, as stipulated in their contract. Other youth mentioned that implementing a talking stick helped to keep their group on track and to ensure that participants listened to one another during discussions.

Some facilitators wished they had received better training to deal with heated debates and with how to allow participants to reach a resolution or to facilitate respectful closure before the end of the session. They also said that some of the curriculum topics were emotionally intense, and they could have benefitted from more training around managing triggers. However, facilitators greatly valued the training sessions and wished that training meetings had continued throughout the cycle. They felt that these meetings would have allowed them to discuss challenges as they arose, and for staff from different groups to exchange stories and tactics. Even talking to different facilitators at the events and projects had given them many tools to deal with issues, and they wished this type of interaction occurred more regularly and especially during the anti-discrimination training phase.

City of Vancouver staff were pleased that the training sessions were inter-generational and diverse, and included youth, front-line workers and senior managers. Although the varying levels of expertise were sometimes a challenge to navigate, City staff felt that the safe space that was created contributed to the success of the training process. City staff said that the training allowed agency staff to learn important skills and adapt them successfully within their

organizations to best meet the needs of youth they worked with. They felt that this outcome was one of the greatest strengths of the program.

City-wide events

Facilitators liked that youth were encouraged to interact with participants from other sites during the city-wide events. Some pointed out, however, that youth tended to interact mostly with peers they already knew. One explanation was that some events took place in neighborhoods which were too far a commute for youth living in other areas (e.g., Surrey). As a result, participants who lived near each other, and who tended to know one another from school, typically took part in the same events and interacted with one another. They did not have an opportunity to meet other youth who lived in different neighborhoods who were unable to commute to the event. City staff pointed out that participants and facilitators were given transit tickets for all events. However, a suggestion from facilitators was for citizenU to organize transportation to the events so that youth could attend who would otherwise be unable to go.

Both youth and facilitators commonly identified the bus tour as their favourite city-wide event. One facilitator felt that the bus tour helped to challenge youths' stereotypes about people living in the Downtown Eastside and made them aware of various social issues in Vancouver. Another facilitator remarked that it should be integrated into every high school's social studies curriculum. Similarly, youth described the bus tour as an "eye opener" for learning about the City's history, and recommended that this event take place again in the future. City of Vancouver staff said that there have been requests to offer the bus tour more widely, and they were looking into opportunities for involving youth in planning the tour.

When asked about aspects of the city-wide events they liked the least and for any suggestions, all youth at one site said that they liked everything about all the events they attended, including the food. These youth expressed gratitude to citizenU staff and the City of Vancouver for organizing the events. Some participants felt that interactive events were more memorable and exciting than events that were lecture-based and overly serious, and suggested offering more interactive city-wide events. Another suggestion was to ensure that all events were well organized and clearly structured. For example, there should be a clear agenda and timeline, and there should not be excessive amounts of free time which could lead to disengagement.

Facilitators said that the dates of some events were changed too often or were announced to participants at the last minute, which made it difficult to encourage youth to attend and to coordinate transportation. They would have liked to have heard more about the events in advance, such as through an event email list, so that they had ample time to discuss attendance with the youth and arrange for them to get there. Facilitators also felt that citizenU could take more advantage of social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) to advertise the events.

In terms of scheduling the events, facilitators said that some events took place at night, which made it difficult for a number of youth to attend. Facilitators suggested that the events take place earlier in the day, and to try holding events outdoors in the summertime, rather than indoors. A few youth said they would have preferred for events to take place during the week rather than on weekends.

Project-development workshops

Facilitators who were interviewed had attended most of the project-development workshops with the youth. They appreciated that these sessions took place at City Hall given its accessibility on public transit, which made it easy for youth to attend. They also liked that youth were given

more responsibility during this phase, and the freedom to make decisions about their own projects. Facilitators enjoyed the brainstorming sessions and hearing youths' project ideas.

Youth noted improvements in their team-work and project-planning skills, as well as conflict-resolution skills, because of their involvement in this phase of the project. They explained that participants had diverse perspectives which were often passionately expressed, which forced them to hone their skills in resolving conflicts, ensuring everyone's voice was heard, and in making decisions as a cohesive group. Youth came to appreciate how complex it was to organize an event, and some were still in the process of learning how to do so as part of a team.

When asked what they liked most about the project-development workshops, youth said it was satisfying to start a project and to see it through to its completion. They also liked working as part of a group and hearing others' ideas. Youth also liked meeting and working with new people from other sites. However, those in earlier cycles admitted that although the idea was to work on a project with people from other sites, they tended to work among themselves because it was more comfortable and felt easier in terms of coordinating and attending meetings.

Youth said they would have liked to learn more about event planning and specifically budgeting because they were inexperienced in this area. Facilitators echoed youths' views and felt that youth struggled with planning their projects because they were given too much responsibility which they were not equipped to handle, due to not having the necessary skills or experience to successfully plan a project. Further, many of the facilitators said they did not have prior experience with project planning so could not offer the youth all the help they needed. These facilitators wished there had been more training for both youth and facilitators on how to plan group projects.

An idea that came from both youth and facilitators was for them to be shown examples of how to set realistic project goals and develop a budget. Youth suggested that participants could learn about planning a budget by being presented with examples of budgets from previous successful projects. Facilitators said that some adult support staff with experience in project planning could circulate among the groups to provide youth with the guidance and mentorship they needed. Some youth also suggested that participants from earlier cycles who graduated from the project could return to mentor current participants and share their knowledge and experience.

City of Vancouver staff explained that participants in each cycle organized themselves in different ways, from collaborating on a single larger project to developing up to six smaller ones. Facilitators saw many benefits to working together on a single project. As well as allowing the youth to make more connections with other youth and their community, it was easier to keep youth engaged in a larger group and to pool resources to implement project plans. However, facilitators also described some drawbacks to working as a larger group. For example, when assigning jobs, youth were less inclined to take responsibility for group tasks.

One suggestion was to have more training at the beginning of this phase to emphasize the importance of everyone taking responsibility for the project, and working together to complete tasks. City of Vancouver staff suggested that perhaps an additional and more advanced stage of citizenU could have involved training youth and facilitators not only in project development but also in project management. They explained that participants tended to have difficulty implementing their projects and that partner agencies did not always have the capacity to mentor and support youth in this area.

When youth were asked what they liked least about the project-planning phase, many felt that six weeks was not enough time for planning an entire event, and would have liked more time to do so. They quickly realized that a lot had to be accomplished in each planning session, and missing even one meeting meant that the rest of the group made many decisions without them. Both youth and facilitators suggested that project planning begin earlier in the nine-month participation cycle.

Another suggestion was to have an online forum during the project-planning phase so that participants who missed planning sessions could still be involved by receiving updates and responding through social media. However, some youth commented that interacting online was not as effective as face-to-face exchanges, and could impede the development of more meaningful relationships among participants.

Youth and facilitators pointed out that the number of youth who attended the youth-led events tended to be low, and often only those involved in the planning showed up. Some facilitators felt that social media networks could have been used more in order to inform youth of the upcoming events that their peers were planning and delivering.

City of Vancouver staff noted that the youth-led projects were similar to one another. They explained that all the projects consisted of events that focused on addressing different forms of discrimination, and none involved training others on approaches to address discrimination and to tackle it systemically. They acknowledged that these latter types of projects would have been difficult for participants to implement successfully and that more training and education on ways to make systemic changes would have likely been needed.

MORE FEEDBACK

What participants liked most

When asked what they liked most about citizenU overall, focus group participants and adult support staff provided a wide range of answers. Many identified the anti-discrimination training as the most useful and educational phase of the initiative. They explained that the discussions that took place and the information that youth gained led to the greatest changes in participants' outlook. Some facilitators felt that the citizenU anti-discrimination material should be part of the mandatory high school curriculum because of the positive impact the initiative can have on youth and their families.

A facilitator from an organization that already completed its participation cycle felt that the final project-development phase was the most useful part because youth were able to apply what they had learned, to take action, and educate the community.

Participants at another site said that being introduced to other youth groups in the city was what they liked most because it enabled them to connect and partner with different organizations and become involved in new youth projects and programs.

Youth who completed a Time 3 survey overwhelmingly stated that they appreciated meeting new people from diverse backgrounds and the opportunity to expand their social networks. Many also appreciated learning about discrimination, taking part in the intercultural city-wide events and activities, and planning their own projects.

Who might benefit most

When asked who benefited most from the program, some facilitators and youth remarked that the program was especially empowering to new immigrant youth because citizenU could help them meet people and feel more connected to their community. Some focus group participants felt that marginalized cultural groups benefited from taking part, including Aboriginal youth who may not usually feel welcome participating in non-Aboriginal projects. However, some participants wished the program had taught better skills to deal with institutionalized discrimination against Aboriginal peoples.

A few participants felt that youth who experienced bullying particularly benefited from citizenU because they learned through the program that they were not to blame, as well as effective ways of responding to bullying.

Both youth and facilitators felt that youth benefited most if they actively participated and were engaged from beginning to end, to witness the delivery of their project. Some facilitators said that involvement in the first phase allowed youth within a site to not only learn about discrimination and how to address it, but also to bond with one another and to build meaningful relationships. One facilitator said that youth at her organization became much closer and formed a solid social group as a result of their involvement in Phase 1.

A facilitator also noted that as a result of youth spending time together working toward common goals, they had a greater sense of social responsibility even when socializing outside of citizenU. She described how before the program their discussions had often centered on superficial topics, whereas after the citizenU training they talked more about issues they saw on the news or taking place in the world, or situations they felt were unjust.

What participants liked least

When asked on the surveys what they liked least, many youth indicated there was nothing they disliked. Some felt that certain lessons and activities in the training sessions were too long and could be condensed. A few participants suggested more ice-breaker games during the training sessions so that youth would feel more comfortable sharing their ideas with the group. However, others felt that the icebreakers could have been shorter to take up less time. Some youth who met on Saturday mornings wished the meeting time was later in the day, and others suggested finding a time-slot for citizenU training and events that would not conflict with their school schedule. A number of youth also wished there had been more time allotted to planning their projects.

When focus group participants were asked what they liked least about the initiative, a few youth replied that some of the events were not as enjoyable as they could have been because the facilitator talked too much or the event was too long (7-8 hours). Some youth also pointed out that participants with reading or other learning challenges might feel overwhelmed by the amount of reading and writing involved in the curriculum and evaluation surveys.

Some facilitators felt that more money and time was needed to complete citizenU administrative work and reporting requirements. City staff commented that they had to spend a considerable amount of time chasing up reports and other documents from host sites. They added that high levels of staff turnover at some sites created a barrier to completing the reports. Facilitators suggested that more reminders in advance of deadlines would have helped to ensure that paperwork was completed and submitted on time.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Many participants felt that more advertising of citizenU would have been beneficial because the program was not as well-known as it could have been. One suggestion was to advertise on Canada's Citizenship and Immigration website. Another idea was to advertise and talk about the initiative in high schools. Facilitators felt that citizenU should have a more active presence on the internet and social media when it came to promoting the project and recruiting youth. Facilitators at some sites pointed out that recruiting participants was likely easier for organizations that already had strong youth participation, such as community groups and religious groups, as opposed to agencies without existing recruitment pools or youth programs in place.

A few facilitators in earlier cycles felt that the initiative could focus more on recruiting participants from diverse cultural or ethnic backgrounds. However, the City of Vancouver explained that in later cycles citizenU actively recruited organizations serving ethno-cultural youth-at-risk. Some youth suggested that the initiative should offer a translator at the outset in case youth were not comfortable interacting in English. They felt that if youth felt more supported in their first language, it might encourage them to take part and stay engaged in the initiative.

Facilitators said that among youth who started the citizenU training, only a small number were consistently engaged, and others took part sporadically to complete volunteer hours. Facilitators said that it was challenging for the few youth who were consistently involved to do most of the work for the group.

However, some City of Vancouver staff felt that a strength of the initiative was the inherent flexibility that allowed youth to get engaged at the level they were at, as well as to start when they felt ready and to leave when they wanted. They also pointed out that a number of youth who stopped taking part in citizenU did so because their involvement in the project opened doors for them to become involved in other community initiatives which they chose to pursue. Further, a City staff member said they had expected and planned for the level of attrition that occurred by the final project-development phase. They did acknowledge though that it would have been ideal if more youth had attended the youth-led events. Another City staff member said that it would have been informative to get a better sense of the reasons youth disengaged from the initiative, so that the City could know what might have helped more young people to stay engaged.

Many youth said that a challenging aspect of taking part and staying involved in the program was fitting citizenU events and meetings around their other commitments such as school and work. Facilitators also felt that some youth were reluctant to attend training sessions or events that took place on weekends or indoors during the summer because youth often had other plans.

Some focus group participants said that having their participation count toward volunteer hours helped them stay engaged because those hours were needed to graduate from high school. Many also appreciated receiving a certificate for their participation. They added that receiving bus tickets and location maps to commute to events, as well as food at the events, were factors that motivated them to stay engaged.

Facilitators and youth involved in earlier cycles of citizenU said that a major challenge for keeping youth engaged was the large time lag between the three phases. Facilitators said that

participants did not hear from citizenU for a significant amount of time after the end of each phase, and some youth asked them when the initiative would start up again. Facilitators stated that most youth felt disconnected from the project after the first phase. Youth added that many participants felt that the program was over or were not motivated to resume participating after a long break. Facilitators also pointed out that issuing the first round of certificates after Phase 1 (anti-discrimination training) led many youth to stop participating because they thought the project had ended. In light of this experience, some facilitators suggested that certificates be issued at a graduation ceremony only after youth completed their youth-led projects. City of Vancouver staff explained that this suggestion was put into practice after Cycle 2.

Facilitators in earlier cycles recommended having no gaps between each phase, or having city-wide events throughout the nine-month participation cycle. Further, youth and facilitators felt that holding inter-agency activities in Phase 1, and continuing these activities throughout the initiative, would enable youth at different sites to make connections with one another early on and would motivate them to attend future events and reconnect with their peers later in the cycle. Also, facilitators suggested that having consistent contact with a citizenU (City of Vancouver) staff member across all phases of the project would have helped participants to stay engaged. City of Vancouver staff added that more advanced planning of the initiative as a whole, rather than planning one phase after the previous one ended, would have likely made for a smoother transition between phases and could have lowered the attrition rate.

Many youth and facilitators, as well as City staff, felt that more information and more advanced notice about events would have helped to keep participants engaged. However, City staff also pointed out that a strength of the initiative was the flexibility which allowed agencies to put on events with little advanced notice, and for events to change at the last minute. City staff identified this decentralized process as advantageous for the agencies who were putting on events, but also a challenge for the City when it came to coordinating citizenU, as well as for youth and facilitators in terms of making plans to attend the events.

Many youth again suggested sharing information through social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, text messages) to communicate information about upcoming events. However, some youth cautioned that other forms of communication should also be used, such as posting flyers at youth centres and word-of-mouth, because not all youth owned a cell phone or had regular access to the internet.

Another suggestion proposed by youth was to have graduates from the program return to talk with new participants about the projects they had planned, about their overall experience in citizenU, and the benefits of being involved. City of Vancouver staff said that this suggestion was put into practice in a small way by having youth alumni give input and feedback to the youth about their projects.

Moving forward

Most youth (91% on the Time 3 survey) planned on staying involved in citizenU even after their participation cycle ended. One reason was that they enjoyed being meaningfully engaged in a project and making new friends from different cultural backgrounds. Other reasons included a desire to ensure the sustainability of their youth-led projects; wanting to support their community; a desire to mentor others in the program; and wanting to complete an internship through citizenU. Those who did not plan on staying involved most commonly indicated conflicting responsibilities and commitments, such as school and work, as their reasons.

Participants in the focus groups proposed staying involved by returning to talk about their projects with new participants; acting as mentors to participants during the project-planning phase; volunteering at a citizenU event to help others and to gain work experience; and/or completing a summer internship through citizenU. Another suggestion was for the City to follow-up with citizenU alumni to give them opportunities to lead future projects.

One facilitator mentioned that a youth at her site had the opportunity to be an intern at citizenU, which helped the youth to gain invaluable skills and self-confidence. This facilitator was moved by how much the youth had grown from this experience. Youth and staff felt that offering more internships would be beneficial to even more young people.

Facilitators were interested in being involved in this type of initiative again, and in taking on a similar role. One also suggested that the program should be developed into a model for other programs to adopt outside of Vancouver. City of Vancouver staff said that another city within Metro Vancouver was in fact exploring ways of implementing citizenU.

City staff added that it was difficult to convey to youth that the end of their project cycle, and the end of the overall initiative, did not mean that their work in addressing discrimination should necessarily end. They explained that the challenge was to create closure for participants while simultaneously sending a message that there was an opportunity for them to do more in the community. They also felt it was important to send the message that youth could now effect change by supporting one another rather than relying on citizenU staff. City staff suggested that a youth advisory committee could play a role in advising the City on how closure should be handled, given that these youth had completed the program themselves.

APPENDIX D: SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

City of Vancouver staff identified a number of program successes and strengths, which have been mentioned throughout this report. For example, they felt that the City's openness to experimenting and the flexibility to modify the initiative as it unfolded was key to its success. They said that the interim evaluation reports were useful in helping them to see what was going well and what needed to be changed while the program was still running.

City staff also saw the facilitator training as a success because staff at host sites learned important skills that they brought back and applied within their organizations. Further, they felt that citizenU helped to build capacity within individuals (e.g., increased skills to address discrimination; greater sense of agency), as well as within and across organizations (e.g., greater networking and partnership opportunities).

City staff also identified challenges and lessons learned. For instance, they said that the project was significantly more staff-intensive and time-consuming than had been anticipated, including administrative work and funders' reporting requirements. However, they appreciated that funders gave them flexibility in this area whenever possible. They also said that having to issue subcontract partners rather than issuing grants created another level of complexity, as did the centralization of the contracting process across the City of Vancouver organization which happened during the project.

City staff explained that the overlapping cycles and the number of cycles created logistical and planning challenges. They added that containing it all within three years was taxing and did not allow for much time to reflect and plan in advance. Given the amount of work that was involved, City staff felt they were not always able to provide participants and host agencies with the support they needed. They said that if they were to coordinate citizenU again, the cycles would not overlap, so that time and energy could be devoted exclusively to one cycle before having to start the next. They explained that this structure might help to ensure that participants stay engaged from one phase to the next because citizenU staff would have more time to stay connected with each site and with participants.

City staff also pointed out that it takes time to do outreach in communities where they had no previously established relationships. An idea was to build more time into the beginning of each cycle to establish a working relationship with each participating organization and to prepare them for the work they would be doing with youth participants. For example, the first three months of the cycle could be devoted to working with staff at each agency to teach them the skills necessary to support participants through each phase of the initiative. The next six months would entail site staff applying their new skills to working with citizenU participants. City staff felt that working with sites at the start would likely reduce the intensive amount of coordination and support that the City would need to provide later on. City staff also felt that advanced preparation of forms and templates for the sites—such as templates for invoices and permission slips for trips (for the city-wide events)—would lessen the City's work later on.

If citizenU were to be carried out again, City staff said they would be clearer with participants at the outset about what youth could expect from the program and about the program's goals and expectations for participants. It was suggested that the City could host a large get-together at the start where they would explain this information to participants. This way, all participants would receive the same information directly from the City, rather than leaving it up to individual site facilitators to convey, which had varied levels of success.

Another challenge identified by City staff involved differing views among organizations on working with youth, and specifically the amount of support that adults should provide on youth-led projects. City staff felt that there could have been more discussion and training with facilitators around different levels of youth engagement, to strike an appropriate balance between supporting youth and giving them the opportunity to lead.

The involvement of youth participants' families was more challenging than City staff had anticipated. They attributed this challenge to a number of factors, including the participation of many newcomer youth whose caregivers spoke little English and who were busy with other responsibilities, including looking for work. City staff also pointed out that not all youth wanted to involve their families, such as marginalized youth with complicated family relationships, and those connected to LGBTQ groups who may not have been ready to include their families. City staff said that because of these issues, it may have been unrealistic for them to expect the involvement of family. They added that it could have been useful for the initiative to focus more on teaching youth skills to engage their families and people in authority in conversations about discrimination.

City staff identified the high level of partnership and collaboration as a major success of the project (i.e., among local government, project partners, host agencies). However, they felt it was challenging to get schools more engaged, although added that the school board did not have the capacity to be responsive in this way. Major funding cuts also created barriers at the school board level. City staff wondered how to shift provincial policy so that citizenU anti-discrimination material could be incorporated into the classroom curriculum. They felt that involving schools in this capacity could increase the likelihood of creating systemic change.

When asked if they would coordinate citizenU again if they had the opportunity, some felt that other agencies may be better suited for this role. However, other City staff, as well as site facilitators, said that the City of Vancouver running citizenU helped to legitimize it.

If they did coordinate citizenU again, City staff agreed that it would look different. For example, in addition to changing the structure of the program (e.g., no overlapping cycles), a suggestion was to incorporate current, systemic issues and events into the initiative. Doing so could enable participants to not only gain awareness of these issues and events but also to get involved in them in order to contribute to change.

City staff said that despite the challenges they had experienced, and although citizenU would not look the same if they coordinated it again, the initiative had been worth doing because of its successes in addressing discrimination and in building capacity among individuals and agencies.