

# ENHANCING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

## Impact on Civic Engagement

CYLC inspires and prepares students to become more aware of what is happening in their community, get more informed about community issues, and get involved in movement building for community change. Through their participation in CYLC, students had opportunities to:

- Research issues affecting their community and local policies related to those issues.
- Reach out to community organizations to learn about their work and how to get involved.
- Organize community events, such as community meetings, informational workshops (e.g., know your rights), and cultural celebrations.
- Get involved in issue campaigns and do outreach to the community about those issues.

## CYLC STUDENTS IN ACTION!

**Created a Know Your Rights Workshop for a family reunification event.**

**Led a project to create a low-income immigration legal clinic.**

**Restored landscapes into natural preserves to encourage a greater biodiversity.**

**Created events and workshops to support the undocumented community with mental health.**

**Organized students to create a school garden and increase access to fresh and organic produce.**

**Helped those recently incarcerated get support as they come home.**

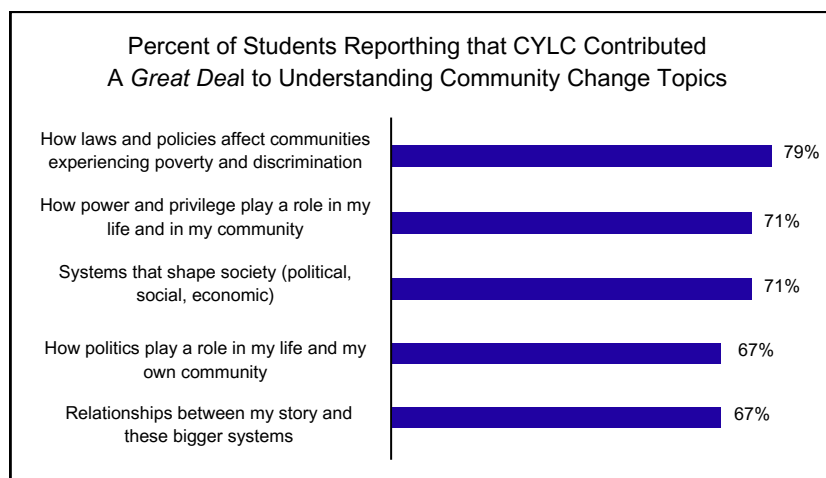
**Researched then contacted city workers to get fair and safe housing for families living in inhumane conditions.**

## Impact on Understanding of Community Issues

CYLC students increased their understanding of policies and systems that impact:

- Poverty, employment, wages
- Housing and homelessness
- Immigration/immigrant right
- Health/mental health
- Food security
- Policing and how the war on drugs disproportionately affects communities of color
- Issues affecting formerly incarcerated individuals and their families
- Gender inequality, gender-based violence
- Educational equity
- Environmental justice, reducing pollution

Over 95% of students reported that CYLC contributed to their understanding of key community change topics, with the majority of these (over 65%) reporting the program contributed a great deal to their understanding of these topics.



*The system that is in place is hard to change unless we get involved...the more I am aware of which policies affect me and my community, the better I can get involved.*

*I am more aware of how community members experiencing poverty are often unable to receive help or resources because they make just above the financial limit allowed for certain programs, yet all their income is barely enough to survive.*

*Working with the community garden, I understand that there is a displacement of POC and that the people displaced face disadvantages such as the lack of access of food, land, and resources to help them thrive.*

CYLC creates a safe space for students to connect their stories and life experiences – with poverty, racism, the criminal legal system, the health care system – to these bigger systems. They report developing a greater consciousness of **“how these systems are not in favor of us,”** were **“created to suppress communities of color”** and how **“power and privilege play a role in our health.”**

## Impact on Belief in Capabilities to Create Change

Through CYLC, students gained greater insight into what needs to change on their communities along with opportunities to actually make changes. In turn, these opportunities allow students to:

- Recognize what they have to contribute.
- Deepen their organizing and leadership skills.
- Work with others to have a positive impact on their communities.

CYLC contributes to students' identities as a change agent and their beliefs in their own capabilities to change the things they see that are wrong or unjust in their communities.

*The program has taught me that I have to be a part of decision making and my voice matters when it comes to our community's needs.*

*CYLC has empowered me with a sense of agency, reinforcing my belief in the positive impact I can make as a catalyst for change.*

*Overall, I feel like community organizing and leading can be a path that I see myself on. I believe that I am capable of making change whether big or small.*

*Being part of a cohort of justice-minded students, and seeing how we all made our contribution, however modest, gave me a sense that change is possible and that I like my colleagues have a role to play in enacting that change.*

*This program has significantly contributed to shaping my identity as a change agent. Through learning, collaboration, and impactful experiences, I've gained the skills needed to address issues of injustice in my community.*