

Make Change Happen: Strategies and recommendations for change projects in schools

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Since young people are confronting increasing uncertainty, Civics and Citizenship Education (CCE) matters now more than ever. It is vital in fostering young people's willingness and ability to participate positively and peacefully in local, state and national civic life, as empathetic, internationally minded and globally aware members of communities.

The ways that students participate in schools as active citizens varies widely. Some schools might only give a week or two of class time to Civics and Citizenship, while others have more expansive coverage, or even dedicated courses. Some schools have student representative councils or interest-clubs where students actively participate in advocacy and change – but is every opportunity for learning being taken? How can we support teachers, often teaching out of field, to incorporate active citizenship into the learning experiences that young people are choosing to engage in?

Important learning in CCE is occurring inside and outside the classroom. Authentic, influential student leadership and representative structures have emerged, at the same time as school administrators have devalued and deprioritised CCE within the timetable.

Civics and Citizenship learning can be rigorous, rewarding and effective whether it is occurring in a classroom, in a homeroom, as a lunchtime club or through the school's student leadership or SRC. Social Education Victoria's Make Change Happen project is intended to support teachers who are working with students on change projects inside and outside the classroom.

Adam Brodie-McKenzie is a. After winning a fellowship to study at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2016 to research how to empower young new citizens, he is now completing a Doctorate of Education at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, concentrating on the relationship between Civics and Citizenship Education and student agency. Adam is part of the executive of Social Education Victoria, where his focus is building teacher capacity and communities relating to student agency and civics and citizenship education.

Laura Newman is the Executive Officer of Social Education Victoria. After working as a humanities and media teacher and a Learning Specialist in Student Agency, Laura shifted her focus to teacher development and professional learning. For a time, she coordinated the national schools' program for Oxfam Australia. Laura has taught as part of the M-Teach at the University of Melbourne. She is interested in student agency, literacy and active citizenship.