Youth Power: What can teens teach us about cogeneration?

**Janet Oh**

Hi everyone. Thank you so much for joining us today. I'm Janet Oh, and I am the Senior Director of Innovation at cogenerate, and I am so excited to kick off this conversation exploring what teens can teach us about cogeneration. So some of my most favorite jobs have allowed me the opportunity to work with teens as a summer school teacher to middle schoolers, teaching English at an all boys High School in South Korea and working on community service projects in the Bay Area. So today, what we have in store for you is we'll start off by hearing from our colleagues at Citizen University, Zoe bill and Davis and dava, who run their youth Collaboratory. And they have invited a youth collab alum, yordanos Lemma and Carmina Taylor, who worked together to mobilize high schoolers. And then at the end, we'll have plenty of time for Q and A, which my colleague, Duncan magidson will lead. So please put your questions in the chat as we go along. So before we dive into those great conversations with our guests, I wanted to give you a little context for this work. So for the last year or so, cogenerate and Citizen University have been partnering to dig into the question, how can youngers and olders work together for social good? And as we thought about the team leaders in the youth collab, our goal, or so we thought, was to get teens excited about working alongside older adults to create change. We thought if we could plant the seeds of cross generational collaboration at an early age with the future leaders of our country, we could change the age segregation we often see, and we could equip the next generation of change makers to tap the talents of youngers and olders to solve our social problems and create a better future. But what we discovered surprised us. Teens actually didn't need convincing to work across generations. They already know that to create the change they want to see, they need to partner with adults like teachers, like school administrators, city council members, etc. What they actually need are more opportunities to partner with older generations and frankly, better partnerships, partnerships that require adults and organizations to show up differently. So for now, the question has shifted from if to how. So to give you a sense of what I'm talking about, we created this video together, so let's have a look.he

**Eunice Lin Nichols**

[Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKy9f1npQm8]

**Janet Oh**

What a great video. So now I'd like to welcome two of my favorite work friends, Davis and dava and Zoe villier, who together run citizen University's youth Collaboratory. So welcome Zoe and Davis.

**Davis Endava**

Thank you.

**Janet Oh**

Okay, so Davis, I'm going to start with you, and I'd love if you could tell us a little bit about how citizen University approaches integrating teens into your programs? Yeah, totally.

**Davis Endava**

Thank you for that question, and I'm so excited to be here and be able to be part of this webinar with you at Citizen University, our Youth Collaboratory invites high school sophomores and juniors into a six month civic power curriculum. Them through a blend of in person experiences, virtual sessions, we get to connect with them and integrate what does it mean to create power in our communities and use our power for positive change? This program came about the youth collaboratory that me and Zoe both work on because of the national collaboratory, which is what you saw in the video. The National collaboratory was working as a mutual aid collaborative space. It's a network of civic adult leaders from various fields working together to drive some really positive change. So when we saw that, we asked like, what would it look like to integrate teens into this? What would it look like to expand this, to integrate this voice of the younger generation, which is really powerful and needed and potent? We considered that both the NCC and a teen focused program would need to co create a space that bridges the generations together. And so we started doing that, and it's taken a lot of different things. There's it's one, there's one aspect of, like thinking about creating a space, and a whole other aspect of, what does it look like to actually delve into creating a cogenerational space? And so we do a couple things in it. Um, we try to keep our program really flexible. Is one of the things that we do. We have a solid framework and curriculum, um, but we really try to adapt it based on the feedback from the students and for the current events that are happening in the community. For instance, the last time that we were all together in Seattle, there was a political violence situation that had just happened, and so the students really wanted to step in and think about, what does it look like to talk about this in a way that is potent and powerful, and using the Civic skills of listening and connecting with each other, and so we adjusted our discussions to be able to do that. And that's an example of kind of what we do in the national in the youth collaboratory, we like to take the curriculum and the spaces that we have and shift it to be really supportive, not to integrate teens, but to co create with them in the national collab which is what we just saw in this video. We like to integrate national collaboratory members into the youth collaboratory meetings during the time of the six month program, so we'll invite them in person to the youth collaboratory days before the national collab, and we'll also do that virtually. And then the students attend the National collab the entire day that Friday. As full members, they get to share their perspectives and make commitments of support and like, be full participants in this powerful community, and we don't know how to do it 100% right, right? We're learning all the time, and so we deeply value student feedback. We have feedback forms. We ask after every trip how it was, and we integrate that feedback, and that's why now we have table spots for students to be able to go and sit at any table that they want with any person, and that space is just there and created for them, or other pieces that we do that really ensure that the students feel heard and seen within the national Collaboratory. So those three things, listening flexibility and and supporting them in that National Collaboratory,

**Janet Oh**

thank you. Davis, that was such a thorough explanation. And like as someone who's been able to join you in person, I witnessed all of that, and I loved how you said that you don't always get it right. You're learning, and I do feel like that is what I've also learned about trying to bring youngers and olders together to co create, that it's an art more than science. It's not like 10 easy steps. It's kind of a living, breathing thing that changes with each cohort, with each political moment, all of those things. So Zoey, I would love for you to share what are some of the tensions that you've experienced as you've developed this program over time.

**Zoey Belyea**

Yeah. Thank you. I am really excited by what David shared. And one of the things that she was talking about a little bit at the end is this idea of like, whose space is it? I feel like this is one of the big tensions that we ran into when we first started inviting the young people into the national collaboratory space. Of like, Okay, this. This is an established room full of people who meet together a couple of times a year, adults who are also used to this type of sort of networking space. And while I think citizen university is doing some unique things with the way we use that time, I also think it has some of the habits of a sort of typical professional environment. And when we started inviting the youth collaboratory members in, it was it was simple enough for us to say to them, you are full members. To say to the adults in the room, these young people are full members. And there's a tension between telling someone how they're allowed to show up and creating the context for them to be able to really do that. And I remember, actually, you know, one of the things that's so lucky about the work that Davis and I do is that we get to do it alongside so many youth practitioners. And I remember having a conversation with Mario from changes in the Los Angeles area, and he said to me, you know, we really love to create invitations for young people to join adult spaces, but how often do we create invitations for adults to join youth spaces? And so that was one of the moments when we really saw the opportunity, maybe not to maybe not to diffuse that tension, but at least to put equal energy into both sides of the equation, like if we're going to invite the young people to try to practice being full participants in what has habitually or historically been a sort of an adult space, how can we do the same thing on the other side? How can we invite adults to participate in a youth space? And the same way that we tell the young people like, here's what you might want to wear in order to feel like you can fully participate in this professional environment. Like, what would it look like to tell the adults, like, here's what you might want to wear? Like, let's try a middle part. Y'all like, degree into a teen space, you know? And I mean, that's obviously like a joking example, but I think this idea that there can be ownership on both sides of the relationship feels really important. I also think we saw some some other sparks of tensions trickling up as we were watching that video, like the words I heard both the word intimidation and also inspiration. I think sometimes there can be a tension between like feeling like a person in the room, whether that's by virtue of being younger or older, sort of intimidating in a certain way, intimidating to try to connect with, intimidating to start to interact with. And I think maybe sometimes we can even just rename the feeling of intimidation into a feeling of inspiration like this person is so interesting to me. I'm so curious about what they're up to. I'm going to turn I'm going to tell myself, Okay, I'm feeling intimidated, but actually I'm just really, really inspired by how they are in the world. And I'm going to put myself in a position to expand that sense of inspiration together and find out also, maybe what I can share, yeah, I think those are the those are the big ones that are sitting with me right now, like, how do we define whose face it is, and how do we sort of flip the script on the ways that we internally respond to being in those intergenerational situations in order to find the pathways through

**Janet Oh**

Yeah, I feel like, and we've talked about this before, like the youth, and I think it's more customary for young people to be like, Here's like, let's talk about what to wear, when to be, like, appropriate phone use, or like, all these things are given those tools. But I think also adults need those tools. Like, I think for many adults interacting with teams. I don't know why, but it's scary sometimes. Like, yeah, young kids are very approachable. But then at a certain age, I think teens become scary. And I do feel like this adult training on how to be with teens, like how you want to show up, what questions you might want to ask, what things you might not want to do, like all of those would also be really useful.

**Zoey Belyea**

Yeah, and I think you know so much of our work at Citizen University is thinking about culture really as being upstream of politics or policy, and wanting to be really curious about how we can strengthen civic culture. And when you think about young people, like young people are the bearers of culture in so many ways, young people are on the brink of saying, This is what the culture is going to be like right now, and we're defining that for ourselves. And so I think it can be intimidating for adults to feel like they're on the brink of being irrelevant. And so I think if we can be more honest about some of these. Dynamics and live in them, rather than trying to like, figure out how to cue them away. I think we found in our work that to be a really useful way to start to build relationships. As Eunice said in the video that we watched

**Janet Oh**

awesome, I have so many more questions that I want to get like one other, and maybe I'll save my other questions for later. But Davis, this is for well, for both Davis and Zoe, but at Citizen university, you talk a lot about civic power. So I'm curious if you could tell us a little bit about how does working across generations strengthen civic power in ways that might be overlooked in projects that don't bring don't bring different age groups together. Yeah,

**Davis Endava**

that's such a great question to define civic power and how we think about it first, because I feel like it's important to be all maybe on the same page of that. It's the idea that everyone has an ability and a responsibility to use their voice and resources and ideas for a common good. This idea that we can use our character and our power together to create positive change in our communities, I think there's so many ways I was thinking about this question, and I feel like I could just list different ways of like. It supports, strengthens community connection with from students to other adults in the community. It feels like ideas are able to be expanded. It feels like resources are able to be given to and from students to the olders, but also from older to youngers. These the inspiration you were talking about, Zoe, the this idea of new maybe energy getting put into a project that is, like, maybe becoming stagnant, or like, I have a student right now who is working in the community who is like, I want to do all this research in my community about health, and it's awesome. And then he reached out and realized that so many people in his community were doing stuff about health already, and so then he was able to connect with those people and make a stronger impact, because he was able to create community and collaboration at it. And I think, you know, as I point to all of these examples, and I'm sure there's many more you can point to. Zoey, the thing that really pull that really comes up for me, is this idea that we think of at Citizen University as circulating power. We all have more power than we think, and we have the students write down what those pieces of power are for them, what communities they're connected to, what ideas they have, what are their values? What what brings them up and pulls them up and lifts them up? And also, who are they connected to? And these are practices that we do throughout the youth, collaboratory and and worksheets and stuff. But with them, knowing those pieces of the power that they hold and the connections that they have, they're able to circulate that within the community, to create positive change and ask those questions of other people, because they've already asked them of themselves, and it supports them in supporting other people, even to circulate that power.

**Zoey Belyea**

I would also say something that Davis was saying sparked this for me, like when we when we think about power sharing between teens and adults. You mentioned this at the beginning. Beginning, Janet, like so much of what teens have to do, just by nature of being minors, is create relationships with adults in order to make the changes that they want to make. And it's sort of like a function of their drive to be involved, that they will have to interact with some amount of folks who are older than that. And I think a big part of our frame for power circulation is this idea that, like, you don't have to start from scratch, like, who are the people around you, young people, peers or adults who can help you to get plugged in to the types of movements or opportunities to organize or efforts or research projects or nonprofits or community events that are already happening around the things that you care about. And sometimes maybe there's nothing, and sometimes it is really important to like plant the first seed. But so often, there's a way to act reciprocally, by joining in to the things that are already getting started and adding your insights, your community insights, your. Personal insights, your personal experiences, your passion, into the mix of something that is maybe a little bit beyond day one. And so I think this idea that that when we when we circulate power, we makes it so that fewer people need to start from scratch. And I think that that is a really exciting and sort of relieving thing when our youth collaboratory members can tap into it.

**Janet Oh**

Yeah. I mean, it reminds me of, like, kind of knowing the history of something, or knowing the community of something, knowing that you're part of something bigger. And it requires knowledge of of that, like, bigger tapestry that and so, yeah, pulls it totally directly to older generations.

**Zoey Belyea**

And so often, the people who are the guardians of that history, or who have been in the work for a while need help, right? So it's like, what are we doing to find the meeting place between the thing that that I as a young person want to pour my energy into, and the the place where the space for that energy has already been started to be created so that we can go that much further.

**Janet Oh**

Yes, thank you. Well, I would love for the two of you to dive into an example of this, of what this looks like in the real world, with your Donnas and Carmina. So I'm going to hand it off to Zoey and Davis to do this next part.

**Zoey Belyea**

Awesome. Well, we're just so excited to invite our friend, Janet. Janet invited us her friends, and we were like, can we also bring our friends? Thank you so much. So we are just thrilled to be joined here today by your ganos, who is a youth collaboratory alumni. She was a part of our program starting in 2021 I believe, and has since graduated high school and recently begun her illustrious educational career at USC. But while she was in high school, had the great version of being a partner, a youth and adult partner, with Carmina Taylor, who has also been through several of our programs here at Citizen University. So it just feels really sweet to be here in this conversation with the two of you, and we have talked a little bit about the PowerPoint. The power projects so far in this conversation. And I'll just say for a quick review, that when students are in the youth collaboratory, every single one of them works on a project in their community, and most of the time that requires them to make some amount of relationships, partnerships with adults, as we were saying before. So I would love it your donos, if you just want to start us off talking a little bit about the work that you did both as part of your power project for youth collab in collaboration with Carmina, and maybe you want to talk a little bit about how the two of you worked to share power as you were engaging in that project together.

**Yordanos Lemma**

Yeah, so my power project in high school was expanding and mobilizing the cultural proficiency and equity student ambassadors on my high school and a little bit about that group. It's a group of majority students of color, where we are equipped with the skills to advocate for ourselves through leadership and racial literacy, to hopefully advocate for other people in the future. And my goal with my power project was to increase membership and increase the visibility of the organization in my high school, since it is a county wide organization with multiple different high schools that collaborate with each other and we I wanted to address educational inequities in my specific district, and through that, through this cultural proficiency and equity student ambassadors, we were able to have self advocacy as like the foundational block to educational equity, and that kind of helped us frame what we wanted to do with the group. And carmina's role in this was kind of being my mentor in trying to help expand this group, and she was able to help me reach connections outside of the high school with whether it was doing belonging surveys with University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education or collaborating with legislators in Harrisburg, and she was able to maneuver different scenarios for us. So then we could learn to advocate for ourselves even more, and then use those skills to advocate for other people.

**Zoey Belyea**

And that's such a great description, and so happy free to be sharing that experience with us. I wonder, karmina, if you want to jump in and just talk a little bit about what it was like collaborating with not only yordanos, but all the young people that you do this work with. And how do you approach the concept of power within these roles? Like yordanos is talking about the whole purpose of the project being. Self advocacy. So how do you think about power in that equation as an older person trying to support that effort?

**Carmina Taylor**

Well, from what the students have told me, I think it's the spirit in which I presented and how I brought their opportunities to advocate and relationship building and having those conversations and listening to them, I have to just take a two second moment. My heart is curling up because I'm looking at your dinos, and I had her as a sophomore, and these last three years have been absolutely incredible. And to hear her and and to have the confidence to express all the things that she gained through that journey is just a testament to how you build relationships with young people. I was myself. I don't know how else to describe it in terms of my passion for the work, my passion to educate, my passion to give back became a reciprocal relationship, where the students and I just we clicked, we synergized. I listened to what they wanted to express, and I found ways to to help them execute it. And I think the more that they saw that I supported them, the more that they saw that I was willing to do whatever it took to make it happen and be there for them. It just it just kept expanding. And you know, each of the we have eight school districts in our county that are part of this program. And one of the other benefits of your done is was meeting students from other school systems and other adults leading those school systems. And so that's like what Davis was saying about civic power, and we all ended up having the same type of mindset of working together to improve their schools, but to represent their county and to find commonalities. Each of my school districts have distinct, different geographics and socioeconomic status, but one thing that they always connected with was the conversation on the issues and engaging with one another. So I just think about pouring into young people with everything that you have, and fruits are born from the from that pouring in. And again, I just have, like, a second mom kind of moment when I look at her, I'm still, like, dealing with separation anxiety that she's at USC, but I'm holding a ladle, just knowing that what I hope that what I poured in will continue. And then it's another thing. One of the other things that I did, which was a relationship building, is I went to all the high school graduations of my seniors this year, and again, with your Donis and some of her classmates, I looked at them as they crossed the field in their school. And she is a young woman now ready to lead the world, lead her country, lead her school system. And there's nothing greater than seeing that growth and seeing that you know, you helped develop and our village was extended. I think that's another thing that I gained a greater respect, is that young people need to be able to have a village that's outside of their friends, that's outside of their family, that's outside of their school system, because that makes them a whole person, to have different perspectives and different types of offerings from different backgrounds. So that's what I think ends up happening, is that people felt my spirit, we vibed and we focused on what they wanted to achieve, and I supported their vision. Yeah.

**Zoey Belyea**

Well, the the highlights for me from what you're sharing, I really like a spirit of listening, which has already come up before. I think this idea that, like young people are the experts on what they want and need, and we can just listen. I I love this way you're calling in the idea of just being yourself. Like Eunice, in that video, is talking about relationship building. And like, what, how does anyone build any relationship, other than through listening and being yourself, and like being willing to share yourself and your spirit and your passion and your joy, and like having that be a two way street. And this work, I think, really feels important, and then this idea of both, like commitment and also expanding the realm of what's possible because you're doing the work together. Carmina, there's a question in the chat. I wonder if you can just say a quick word about your role, like, what was the work that brought you into relationship with your Donna some of these other students?

**Carmina Taylor**

Yeah, so I, I am a civil rights advocate, a racial justice advocate, and I'm exceptionally passionate about education. National Equity, and I started as a local NAACP branch president, and I went to the White House for a Department of Education Summit. I went into a civil rights session, and I was so moved by the Civil Rights session that I came back to my state and I said, we have to promote educational equity in all of our school systems. And I went to a school district that had 80% students of color, and that was the only school district in the county that did that. And I felt that if that one school district developed an educational equity policy, then that wouldn't give excuses for the other school districts to attach race to it, because Educational Equity isn't about race, it's about access. So I just got really no so i The superintendent, I gave him no choice but to work with me. I said, I you know, this is the school. And then it expanded from that you your Donna. Your Donna's School is one of the school districts that we pilot this program. So my work in the community since I was 16, led to the moment of wanting to expand a county wide effort, and that's what brought partnerships in. And again, it was me, from what I am told that my spirit is infectious and that that I'm just telling what other people have told me, This is who I am, but I now see what sometimes other people see. I used to not see it, but I am passionate about this work, and you know, if I could take a moment you're done is in and share. One of the things that your Donna said to me that really touched me in the beginning of our collaborative work is that she said that she couldn't envision anyone else but me to work with her, to put out what she wanted to do. And I was just like, Oh my goodness. And then the back end of that is when her parents, her own mother and father, said that they recognized that I was a second mom to her, and they were so appreciative so that front end and to the back end. And then her little brother, he's about the cutest thing ever. He's a sophomore, and he said, Well, I can really feel that you're going to advocate for me. And so now I'm part of the family. I'm part of her Ethiopian family. I went to her graduation party with Ethiopian garb, and they just I was in, I was in with her extended family. So it's definitely about being committed to the work being committed to the students, to the young people, and them seeing your your genuine and authentic nature in doing and supporting them

**Davis Endava**

does that. Thank you. Carmina, yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I hear in the chat somebody said, somebody reflected to you that what they heard in your share is love, this deep sense of love and commitment, and I see that in both you and your donos. I want to ask you a question too, of like, you know, sometimes, sometimes it's scary. It seems like you and Carmina have had such a powerful connective relationship over your time and built this deep love. But sometimes working alongside older and younger people can be kind of scary, at least at first. We heard the word intimidating right earlier in the in the video. And inspiring, Carmina, you're so inspiring, and those being attention. And so I'm wondering Giordano's What helped you, like, kind of step up and work together with Carmina, or start that relationship and develop a successful project together.

Yeah, so I think the first I was, I would say, in the beginning of joining the citizens University, youth collaboratory, I was very intimidated by being in the meetings with the National Civic collaboratory, and like being in the room with adults and older people. And I think what's helped me a lot with developing my relationship with Carmina, both our personal and like professional relationship, is getting rid of, like my preconceived notions about older people. I think a lot of times young people can be very intimidated, like you said about forming a relationship with an older person, because of whether we see them as figures of authority or we think that they might not understand the world like we do. And it's important to recognize that even though we do have our differences, and we do have, like, just differences in general, we still can know each other on a personal level, and Carmine and I, we've been able to connect on so many different things, and we've been able to understand what makes us a. US, and I think that's what's helped me so much in becoming closer to Carmina, and not every relationship you have with an older person and doing work has to be as close as we are. But I think that has definitely helped us in trying to make sure that my power project and other projects that I led in my high school were successful, and we were able to just have such casual talks and such genuine connection that has really helped me become the person I am today.

**Carmina Taylor**

Someone asked, I'm sorry, Daisy, can I just say something real quick? Somebody asked you, Donna said question in there. But you know, we did. We did have challenges like, as we got deeper into our project, and we got to be really like cohesive and cohesion, the topics that she wanted to address, the way that she wanted to execute, some of the activities were not necessarily well received in the beginning by her school system. And so, you know, not giving up, but finding other ways to get things done, or redrawing the plan. You know, when you when you're working together. And I, quite honestly, now that I think about it, because I'm more seasoned than her and dealing with people, I helped her navigate how to tactfully deal with people when you're angry or disappointed. You know what I mean? That's very important when you have that cogeneration kind of relationship, because there's things that she hasn't been confronted with professionally or in school systems than I have, and I have to sometimes write your downness. I have to say, hold up. I did that quick dial. I asked her to rethink things. I asked her to, you know, reflect and go back. So, you know, we've been successful because we've been cohesive, but we had to work through obstacles sometimes, because it wasn't always an easy path to get things done. So that's a benefit of my experience.

**Davis Endava**

I feel like what I'm both of you is like, your honest, your sense of like, oh, like, we I want to know you, Carmina, and Carmina know me as a human, as a full human, and not it like, Oh, I'm using this, or like, I want that, or whatever. And then Carmina, you speaking to like, this happened so many times in power projects, right? Like, oh, I want to do this. And then there's like a wall, or something happens, and it's hard, and that like learning, and what we're talking about earlier, like power circulating of ideas and understanding of how to navigate situations. And like you being able to do that with you at honest and you're honest. You being like, I really have this idea, and I want to move it forward, and that, like being supportive. Um, yeah. Zoey, did you have something you wanted to say too?

**Zoey Belyea**

Well, I was just gonna say also, and I think Duncan's gonna jump in here to to bring in some questions from the group as well. But just the idea that cogenerate, I think, is so great at, at reminding us of, like, the the idea that younger than elders both have wisdom and energy, and that, like, maybe, like, Carmina is describing a situation in which there's a there's a roadblock, and Carmina has a sense of how to go around it, right? You've experienced this before, and so you're like, I actually already have the game plan. But the other thing that happens sometimes is that there's a roadblock. And older folks can be like, Yeah, I never, never, never will work. Hasn't ever worked. Never will work. And young people can be like, No, I think there's a new way to think about it, right? And so like both things, the two way street, that I think comes into these conversations so often, is really being sparked and reminded, to me, there's more questions and more to get into. I think Duncan is going to jump in here to lead us there.

**Duncan Magidson**

Thank you so much, Zoey, and I'm so glad that you brought that up, because there's lots of conversation about that idea in the chat, what we sometimes call cross mentorship. But you know this idea that there is wisdom and experience and knowledge to be gained in both directions? I think that's so vital in me too. It's such a great demonstration of that. Hi everybody. I'm Duncan. I'm going to be just coming going through any questions that we got from the audience. I've been so delighted to listen to the conversation. So far, we've already gotten a couple, but please continue adding to the chat or the Q and A box. The first question we got, I'm glad we got this, because it's probably the most common question we get asked. This is from Dave, and it's about this question of recruitment, or finding ways to bring younger people into most generational spaces. I think all of you are going to have insight into this. But what strategies have you found really effective in creating spaces where younger and older people are inclined to come together? How can you build those kinds of spaces where you. You can find teenagers and young adults to work alongside older people, and any of you can jump in.

**Zoey Belyea**

Well, I would love to hear from your donos of like, what incentivizes you to join a program like this? Like you this. I know you did youth collaboratory and you did a couple of other things, like, what are the what are the things that really call you into joining?

**Yordanos Lemma**

I think so I remember after covid being like, I really want to channel what I'm passionate about into actual, tangible work. And I think that is what mostly inspired me, because young people today, I feel like we have so much access to just information in general, and we've been able to see what's happening across the world and in our country specifically, so much more vividly. And I was like, Oh, what are some ways I can actually turn my passions into something usable and actionable in the world. And I was doing research on citizens University, for example, and other organizations that could help me through that. And I think that's what really incentivized me. And the thing with citizens University is we, during our youth collaboratory trips we were talking about, we were interweaving issues that were happening at the time to what civic power was, and I think that's what helped me a lot to understand how I can use my power and make some change in my school district. Yeah, yeah,

**Zoey Belyea**

relevant and practical more than theoretical. Does that feel like kind of what you're saying? Yeah,

**Yordanos Lemma**

exactly, because I feel like and I've been seeing it a lot in my college courses right now. A lot of the things that we're talking about in my classes are very theoretical. And I think something that I appreciated from organizations like citizens university is that we actually were practical, and we were taking like these theories and using them in the real world.

**Duncan Magidson**

Thank you, Yordanos. I feel like Carmina might have some insight here. You can, you can feel free to pass but I'm curious.

**Carmina Taylor**

It's just that I'm listening to your Donna's, and this is really about their mindset. And I didn't want, I'm like, I usually talk a lot, so I'm this is weird for me to step back, but I think it's important. But one thing I'll say is that, depending on the setting, you have to ask people where the young people are. You know what I mean? Like you have to find where they are or where they're not. And it takes certain people to have that energy and enthusiasm to want to bring young people with them, and I depend on people like because I work in school systems, I depend on the teachers and the principals that really know where kids may want To be and and offer opportunities for them to engage, and those are the students that I also want to attract, because I want them to be exposed to something beyond their academic so just finding some nuances in terms of who and where we could reach kids that need support the most do as well, besides the kids that are high functioning, high performing and brilliant, like your Don is, unlike all the other kids, too, want to help everyone.

**Duncan Magidson**

Yeah, we got another question here from Larry, and this one's specifically for yordanos, and it goes back to this question about intimidation, and Larry asked it very eloquently about people's institutional affiliations, but I think it's an interesting question, when you're in those kinds of adult spaces, is it helpful for you to kind of know the ways that adults you know what their jobs are, what kind of titles they have, so that increased intimidation, does it? Does it? Lessen it and in general, what did you find in those spaces? Especially thinking about citizen University was helpful for you in connecting with the adults.

**Yordanos Lemma**

Yeah, so I was actually waiting for this question because I was thinking back when my first time, sophomore year, sitting in the room with, like, the National Civic collaboratory and being like, Oh my gosh. Like, these people are doing so many things like beyond me that I couldn't even imagine, like, was people that people were doing this in the world. And like, I just had no idea that this was happening. And it did intimidate me at first, and it still does a little bit, because it's like, Oh, wow. Like they're doing all this amazing, amazing work. And like, I'm just like, a young person here, and I think now I've been able to kind of like, get rid of that mindset a little bit and be like, how can they help me? And how can they contribute to like, my success in my work, and I've been trying a lot throughout high school to really see the lessons that I can learn from those older people, and specifically with Carmina, she talked about earlier about like, her helping me and being a mentor. And I think every single roadblock that I encountered in high school with my school district, I was able to learn a huge lesson. And really understanding, like, the politics of like, administration and like trying to, like, get work done has really, really helped me having an older person on my side and showing me how to navigate these spaces.

**Duncan Magidson**

Thank you so much. And I encourage folks to add more questions here. Sandra, I see you have your hand up. You just want to add something to the chat of the Q and A that's the best way to get through here. But I have a question maybe for Zoey and Davis, which is thinking a little bit about this premise that we started this this webinar, with, which is that youth are really eager to work across generations, but don't always have the resources to do so you two are thinking a lot about power, and I'm curious to hear your reflections on how true that rings to you, for the youth in the collaboratory, for youth you've seen outside the collaboratory, and what sources of power teenagers have with and without older adults. And maybe we can start with Davis,

**Davis Endava**

yeah. Um, that's a really good question. I think I think that it is hard to make a blanket statement about what is true and what is not true about students and adults or olders and youngers being able to or wanting to or having the resources to connect with each other. I think that the students in the youngers that we work with are very excited, and as yodanos was speaking to, like, maybe a little bit intimidated, and something that we do before we go into the national collaboratory is we sit down and we're like, all right? Like, there's a ton of people out there, and they're people, and they're cool, and they're more than the work that they do, and the work that they do is really cool, too. And how do we connect with them as people and in that way, like we're supporting the youth with the resources of, how do we network in a way that's really like creating these bonds of affection and connection and trust, and so that we can create a world that that we want to live in, and we can use our power to co create a world of like love and trust and affection. We can only do that when we start with those pieces of those pieces of connection, like what Kamina and yordanos are doing. Their center point is love, and their center point is excitement about the things that yordanos is doing, and we can create a world from that. I think that kind of maybe answers a piece of that first part of the question, and then with the sources of power, I think, can you, can you speak to that second part of the question again so I can actually answer it?

**Duncan Magidson**

We could, but I don't remember exactly what I was saying. I think you, I think you gave a really great response, Davis, and I'm actually really excited to get to this question from Eunice. Eunice has a question for your danos. She says, now that you're situated in college and part of an educational system that is primarily designed for young people, what are some things that USC or other universities could do to make cogenerate, cogenerational collaboration more accessible and intentional in the design of your college experience,

**Yordanos Lemma**

I would say when so I'm like, I've been, like, attending a whole bunch of events that USC has on campus, whether it's for like, my career, or for Like, just getting to know the campus in general. And I think something that would help make cogenerational collaboration a little bit more accessible and intentional is having the professors and other faculty members actually in the room during those events. I feel like a lot of the time the events don't really include them, because I understand, like, professors, very focused on their research, very focused on teaching their classes, but I think if we were able to have some more engagement with them in those, like, more casual settings, and I think an example that's popping up to me right now is my university, they have something called peaks, and professors and. It's a hiking club with a different Professor each hike, and it's you just get to know them. And I think it's such a cool opportunity that they have that on campus, because getting to know the faculty here and getting to know the professors here on a personal level helps so much more with like the intimidation factor and like them. Even though they're figures of authority, they're still people, and they were young people at one point too. So we can still connect with them, and we can still contribute to co generational collaboration, if that makes sense,

**Duncan Magidson**

that's an important point. Go ahead, Carmina,

**Carmina Taylor**

it does. I'm just beaming. I'm just beaming. She's awesome. She rocks

**Duncan Magidson**

absolutely and appreciate Yordanos just started at USC a couple weeks ago. So really appreciate you kind of bring your thoughts together in that short amount of time, giving a really insightful response on kind of the way we tend to separate older and younger. I think we had one time for one more quick question, and I want to invite Janet, because I think this might be her question that she just added to our document.

**Janet Oh**

Yeah, I wanted to ask about the importance of like together time and a part time. So when I was visiting the youth collab, I saw that you intentionally had time for the youth to just be with peers and have like youth only time and then they integrated with the older generations through the National collapse. I was just wondering if you could speak to that, that importance of like together and apart, and is that actually important to have both?

**Zoey Belyea**

Yeah, and I would just add a, add a small point, which is that we also make sure that there's time when the adults have time together where the youth club aren't there. And so I think this, this idea of creating intention around the time that we share. I think for me, just personally, it's less about like we got to force ourselves to be together and then take a break. More involved. We have this opportunity to, like, really intentionally create the type of space that doesn't happen supernaturally in our culture, in this moment and American life, very often, in very many places. And of course, we're looking to learn from the places where it does happen supernaturally, but, but I think for a lot of our participants, it is sort of a unique dynamic. We want to be really intentional about that dynamic and that space, and want to build it in a way that is is thoughtful and welcoming and is like has the the right hand holds in the right places for people to be able to engage together and to start with relationships and to ask good questions, and to flip the script on intimidation versus inspiration. And like, who's giving advice to who and um. And also, I think it's important for particularly our young people, to have some time to, like, debrief, be able to reflect together. And I think when, when we are trying to be not only intentional but explicit about the value of spending this cogenerational time together, one of the ways that we sort of like cement that priority inside of ourselves is by talking about it together. And so I think having that the time and space to sort of talk about, how was that? How is that different? How is that helpful? How is that challenging? I think, helps everyone to sort of process the time that we did spend together as a value, and not only as like an accident or a fluke.

Thank you.

**Duncan Magidson**

Thank you so much. Thank thanks so much to all of you for being here, and that's both to the panelists and to Janet and to everyone in the audience. I just want to do a couple things to wrap up here. First is, I'm going to launch a quick poll that's just asking you, after attending this session, are you inspired to include more older and younger people in your life? And then I want to highlight a couple of resources that you're going to include imminently in the follow up email we send after this event. It's going to include the recording of this but we're really excited to have a couple of resources that we hope will be helpful in your own collaboration across generations. We have new blog posts about five ways to make your collaboration with teens a success, and that video we saw at the beginning. We've published a discussion guide that you can use in your intergenerational collaborations to get conversations going and to start some of the relationship building that we've talked about on this call. Um, so fill out the rest of that poll and think that's it. Once again. Thanks so much for being here, and I hope to see you at a future event.