

INFORMING POLICY AND PRACTICE

Policy Brief Series No. 2022-1



CULTIVATING AND STRENGTHENING iGen's CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

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HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ **BSU iGeneration (*iGen*) has good perceptions of global citizenship.**
- ✓ **BSU *iGen* students global citizenship is manifested only through ownership of Philippine passport, knowledge of foreign languages (Spanish, Korean, Hangul, and Nihongo) besides English, access to internet and gadgets, and awareness of global concerns.**
- ✓ **There is lack of internationalization awareness and exposure among BSU *iGen* students.**
- ✓ **BSU *iGen* students have average knowledge in civic engagement; there is a slight lag in civic engagement skills and experiences. Most of their civic engagements are made possible by their subject NSTP.**
- ✓ **The BSU administration ought to plan, and lay out specific student activities that will realize its goal of internationalization, and ensure that all its students are aware of such for their active participation**
- ✓ **Social Science Teachers ought to consider according students more meaningful activities that will familiarize them with societal concerns and encourage them to be actively address such.**



INTRODUCTION

Today's generation, according to Rosen (2010), is labelled as iGeneration. He explained that the "i" denotes "both the types of mobile technologies being heralded by children and adolescents (iPhone, iPod, Wii, iTunes) plus the fact that these technologies are mostly 'individualized' in the way they are used".

In addition, he also described the *iGen* as "children and teens born in the new millennium and are defined by their technology and media use, their love of electronics communication, and their need to multitask." The iGeneration (*iGen*) or otherwise known as Generation Z are believed to be catalysts of societal change due to their number and their exposure to local, national and global issues via the internet and various social media sites.

Thus, it is interesting to explore how the *iGen* actively participate in civic engagements and in the process also develop among themselves a sense of global citizenship. Global Citizenship, according to IDEAS (n.d.) "is a way of living that recognizes that our world is an increasingly complex web of connections and interdependence. Global Citizenship nurtures personal respect and respect for others, wherever they live.

It encourages individuals to think deeply and critically about what is equitable and just, and what will minimize harm to our planet."

Educational institutions such as Benguet State University play a crucial role in molding students who are aware of societal issues and take measures to address or contribute solutions. Hence, the curriculum of the institution ought to provide the knowledge and experiences that will produce not only globally competitive graduates but also globally concerned individuals.

Specifically, the study's objectives were to explore BSU *iGen*'s perceptions of global citizenship; to discover manifestations of global citizenship among BSU *iGen*; and to explore BSU *iGen*'s civic engagement.



METHODOLOGY

Mixed convergent design was utilized in the study combining qualitative (student essays) and quantitative research (survey) design. A self-report questionnaire utilizing Likert Scales on the different areas of civic engagement was designed, tested for reliability and validity, and administered to 1,548 first and second year tertiary students for the school year 2019 - 2020. Data Gathering was done from August 2019 to April 2020. Informed consent was utilized in the conduct of the research covering (1) confidentiality, (2) non-maleficence, (3) beneficence through increase self-awareness on civic engagement involvement, (4) voluntary participation and withdrawal and (5) their contribution in the study's recommendation for policy and program recommendations. Course credit points were also given to participants for their engagement.



FINDINGS

BSU iGen's perception of global citizenship

Most BSU iGen students perceived global citizenship as being one with the world and being aware of the global world. The iGens also thought that global citizenship is the belief to engage people of different colors, nationalities, and ethnicities to make a change for the world. They also regard global citizenship as taking an active role in the community.

The global citizenship of the iGeneration are seen in their ownership of passports, but it has to be noted that only 7% of the respondent have passports and only 3% went for international travels. They are also knowledgeable on foreign languages like Spanish, Korean, Hangul, and Nihongo apart from English. Other manifestations of global citizenship include their utilization of social media sites especially Facebook in their daily living to maintain relationships, to meet new people, to communicate information, to express their beliefs, and to ease boredom and their awareness of global concerns due to their access to social media sites and their Social Sciences subjects.

In their musings, the participants responded:

"Global citizenship is being respectful to cultural diversity and human rights, and awareness and care for global issues."

"Global citizenship means that everyone is part of the world we live in."

The iGen students are able to familiarize themselves with a number of global concerns because these ones are seen from the news, social media sites and are also discussed in their subjects in BSU.

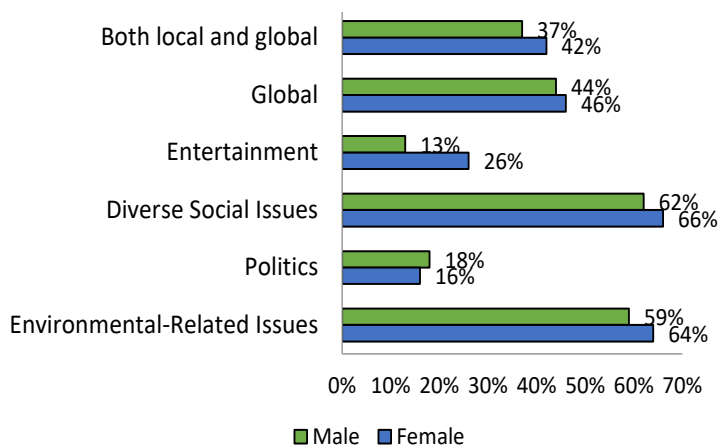
The global issues that the iGen students are most familiar with are:

- Climate Change
- Overpopulation
- Malnutrition
- Sustainable Agriculture
- Pollution
- Prevention of HIV/AIDS
- Lack of Equality
- Women's Rights
- Global Pandemic
- Poverty
- Regional Conflict
- Food Security
- Deforestation
- Child Labor
- Extreme Poverty
- Water Scarcity

One of the identified subjects where these issues are being mentioned is The Contemporary World. A significant number of BSU iGen students remarked that this general education subject is essential because it helps students become global citizens in the sense that it enables them to be conscious of global problems, and also fosters their interest in the present issues of today's society. They shared that issues such as poverty, malnutrition, overpopulation, war and discrimination not only in the Philippines are discussed in this subject; occurrences in other parts of the world like poverty, malnutrition, overpopulation, war, and discrimination are also presented to students.

These findings negate the common observation of the study's researchers that BSU's iGen have an *"I don't care"* attitude. It appears that these students look disinterested with discussions of topics, concerns, or issues about the society, but they are aware and have a certain level of understanding of these issues. These findings also display that BSU iGen students possess a worthy understanding of global citizenship.

Content of Social Media Posts by the iGen students



Majority of their social media posts are about diverse social issues and environmental related ones. This informs us that BSU *iGen* students are aware of the concerns or issues in the locality, in the region, in the country, or even abroad (as evidenced also that their posts are both local and global).

BSU *iGen* students Civic Engagement

About 47% of the students (n=1548) participated voluntarily in helping solve a community problem. The reasons for volunteering are the like to enhance their worldview and well-being including values inculcated by family and community's traditions of local bayanihan, influence of peers or community institutions and organization, and personal growth.

For civic engagement knowledge, the strengths of the *iGen* are knowledge on importance of community participation, self-identity and active citizenship, and responsible citizenship. The weaknesses are cosmopolitan citizenship, representation and accountability, collaboration and inclusivity and current affairs.

Also in terms of civic engagement experience and skills, self-rating for the components are lower compared to the components of knowledge.

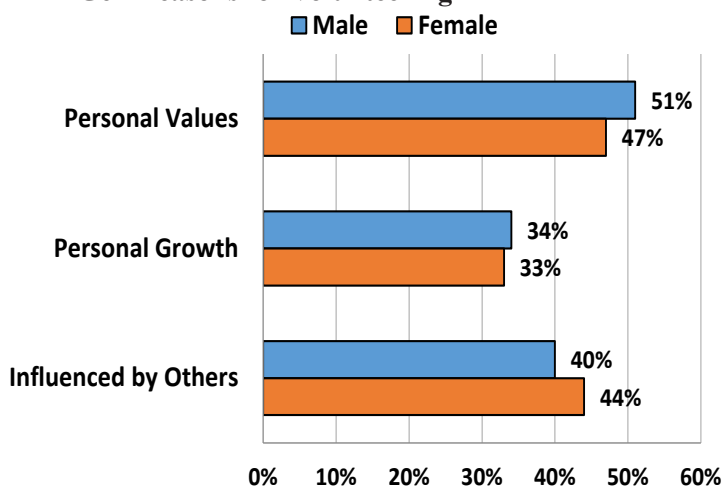
The self-ratings for the experience and skills in civic engagement are lower compared to the knowledge of it.

Many of the identified activities were environmental in nature. These activities include clean-and-green programs of the community, clean-up programs, and tree planting in watershed areas. Other local activities are classified as community services such as road repair, *Sangguniang Kabataan* (SK) volunteer services, packing of relief goods, volunteer community organizer, and volunteering in barangay medical programs. A few mentioned participation in religious outreach programs like volunteering as a Sunday school teacher,

serving as staff in feeding programs, donating in orphanages, engaging in rescue operations, being a blood donor, or participating in school mural paintings.

It should also be noted that around 62% of the respondents (both males and females) have experienced a leadership position mostly in their school organizations and some in their community organizations. This involvement had a significant impact on their civic engagement as leadership expectations and roles play a part in distinguishing their actions towards community contribution for the general welfare.

iGen Reasons for Volunteering



DISCUSSION

BSU *iGen* students have good comprehension of global citizenship. Their perceptions vividly reflect their compassion for humanity. Moreover, they showcase an inclusive attitude, and are conscious that they are capable of causing transformation in today's society. The findings also vividly indicate that BSU *iGen* students are not yet fully molded to become global Filipinos or global citizens. They are only knowledgeable of issues because they encountered them in their Social Sciences subjects and frequent browsing of various social media sites. Although there are shallow manifestations of a cosmopolitan citizen among BSU *iGen* students, these manifestations are essential starting points from where they can further build or enhance global citizenship.

Similarly, the *iGen* students do not fully realize their sense of civic engagement. They are somehow exposed to civic engagement because of their National Service Training Program (NSTP), so they know what civic engagement and volunteerism are. However, they still need further nurturing in terms of skills and experience.



CALL TO ACTION



The BSU Administration ought to plan and layout specific student activities that will help realize its internationalization goal in order to realize its vision of being an international University. They need to ensure that all students are aware of these activities for their active participation. In this way, strengthening of the global citizenship of students is manifested.



Faculty members handling the subject The Contemporary World ought to devote ample time for the unit on Global Citizenship. By doing so, there is greater possibility that the *iGen* students' sense of being "one with the world" will increase thereby enabling them to understand better what global citizenship is and its manifestations.



Faculty members teaching the subject The Contemporary World should give more meaningful activities that will provide students opportunities to discover how beautiful diversity is, and how we can exist as one people amidst diversity.



Faculty members teaching NSTP should continue providing *iGen* students more meaningful civic engagement activities, while at the same time explaining the rationale and end goals of these activities.



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*Other cited references are available in the paper research paper of Dolipas, M. B., Ngina K. C., & Sabado, G. A. 2020



ABOUT THE MATERIAL

Informing Policy and Practice is published quarterly by the Institute of Social Research and Development of Benguet State University in collaboration with Research and Extension Publications Office. It synthesizes findings from research and development activities, or presents results of quick survey and opinion poll on social, economic and policy issues and concerns affecting the Cordillera region. It also distills key messages and provides recommendations for the information and consideration of decision and policy-makers.

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