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DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP ALUMNI REPORT



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Democracy and Citizenship Alumni Report

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- *I am more than I was before. I am proud of the experience I got from the course Democracy and Citizenship.*
- *This course encouraged me to spend more time on civic engagement, university affairs and advocate in the interests of students.*

Alumni of the course, *Democracy and Citizenship*

Background

A 2010 assessment – conducted through USAID’s Increased Trust in the Electoral Process (ITEP) project, implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) – reviewed the status of civic education at the university level in Tbilisi. The study found that, in the majority of cases, civic education was not a part of university curriculum. Based on these findings, IFES launched a project with local and international scholars to create a civic education course for university students. The course that resulted, *Democracy and Citizenship*, was piloted in the September 2011 at four universities in Tbilisi. In January 2012, the project expanded to include six new universities partners and in 2013 eight new partners were added. Presently 22 universities throughout Georgia offer the course to their students. Since the pilot project more than 3,000 students have taken the *Democracy and Citizenship* course.

Number of students who completed the course over three years of implementation and expansion

Academic Year 2011 - 2012: Number of IFES partner universities: 6 Tbilisi based partner universities			
Academic Year 2011-2012	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Total for Year
Number of Students who completed the course	406	489	895
Number of Females	261	313	574
Number of Males	145	176	321
Academic Year 2012 - 2013: Number of IFES partner universities: 14 partner universities across Georgia			
Academic Year 2012-2013	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Total for Year
Number of Students who completed the course	776	918	1694
Number of Females	525	546	1071
Number of Males	251	372	623
Academic Year 2013 - 2014: (Data for fall 2013 semester only) Number of IFES partner universities: 22 partner universities across Georgia			
Academic Year 2013-2014	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Total for Year
Number of Students who completed the course	507	665	1172

Number of Females	319	417	736
Number of Males	188	248	436
Grand Totals over 3 Years	Total number of males: 1380	Total number of females: 2381	Grand Total of Students: 3761

Course Design

The course was designed using a three-pronged approach to develop students' knowledge, skills and dispositions. To provide the necessary foundational knowledge, the course and textbook were structured around four main content areas:

- Section I – Systems of Public Administration
- Section II – Human Rights
- Section III – Civil Society
- Section IV – Democracy and Citizen Participation

The development of skills associated with effective civic engagement is best achieved when students can apply content inside and outside the classroom in authentic contexts. Course professors were trained on interactive teaching methods to stimulate this development. The final component of the course is a student action project. The goal of the assignment is for students to identify issues in Georgian society that they care about. From there, they perform research on their topic and relate it to course content. Ultimately, students are challenged to devise an action plan to address their chosen issue. Through this exercise, it is expected that students will develop the knowledge and skills required to be an active citizen.

Course professors receive extensive training and support from IFES prior to and during the implementation of the course. The majority of the professors who teach the course attend a five-day summer training. Throughout the year professors are also supported by IFES through consultations, meetings and workshops. In June of 2012, a teacher's manual was introduced and is now a standard part of course training and implementation. The manual provides guiding questions for each section of the textbook and detailed lesson plans for each week of class. All lessons corresponded directly with course materials and the goals of building effective democratic citizenship in Georgia. Course professors are urged to follow the text and teacher's manual, although the use of additional strategies and resources is also encouraged. All professors are encouraged to implement the student action project as it is designed. Full implementation of the project requires research that spans the semester and culminates in actions identified by the students to help address a particular issue of their choosing. Students also present their research, a plan of action and reflections on the learning experience in a paper and presentation to their peers. Program evaluations over two years have confirmed that when students experienced the project as it was designed, they are more likely to experience gains in skills and dispositions associated with effective civic engagement and knowledge of advocacy processes.

Research Design

The primary goal of research on *Democracy and Citizenship* is to understand how the course impacted the development of students' knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with effective civic participation in a democracy. Several evaluations (2011, 2012 and 2013) have been conducted to assess the impact of the course on students while they are enrolled in the course and at course completion. Areas of knowledge were assessed based on the course themes of government, human rights, civil society and citizen participation. Skills and dispositions were determined using the 1994 National Standards for Civic Education, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Assessment in Civics and themes developed by the National Council for the Social Studies. The data from these evaluations strongly support findings that students made gains in knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with effective civic engagement as a result of participating in the course.

Displays of knowledge and skills associated with a course should be expected during the period students are enrolled in the course, and while the results here are positive, an essential measure of the program's impact is what students are doing with the knowledge and skills obtained a year or two after completing the course. Successful implementation of the course over two years has provided an opportunity to evaluate the impact of the course on alumni. Therefore the goal of this evaluation is to answer those questions by focusing on alumni who took the course during the first two years of implementation.

Twenty-seven course alumni participated in the alumni evaluation. Data was collected through a combination of focus groups and individual interviews with alumni. Five focus group sessions were held with twenty students: thirteen females and seven males. Interviews were also conducted with seven students: four males and three females. The alumni who participated had all completed the course at least one year prior and represented universities from Tbilisi, Zugdidi, Telavi and Batumi. Analysis of data across focus groups and the interview data revealed that despite differences of region, gender, year at school, area of study or age, the course positively impacted the students while they were enrolled, in their current circumstances and in the visions they have for their future as citizens of Georgia.

Findings

The overwhelming majority of the alumni were eager to participate in the evaluation due to their positive experiences with the course and a sense of gratitude for the experience. Many of the students expressed sentiments such as: "IFES has played a great part in the development of my education so I feel it is my duty to come here and share my experiences," and "telling others about my experience can help you explain the way you are helping Georgian students." One student even framed her participation in the evaluation as part of her civic duty to give back to the course and organization that was helping her country become more democratic.

The focus groups and interviews were all conducted based on a semi-structured format. Topics that were addressed with all groups were aspects of the course that were personally most impactful; the benefits derived from the course and the student action project; changes in attitudes or behaviors as a result of the course; actions today related to course themes; and concepts of democratic citizenship. Findings related to each of these areas are presented in this section.

What was most important about the course for you?

Responses to this question were characterized as referencing the course structure or as knowledge and insights obtained from the course. In this first category, the majority of the students spoke about the practical classroom activities that allowed them to apply theory in order to develop deeper understandings, make connections to the course themes and build skills. One student explained that the interactive teaching methods “helped them to remember course material better.” Another student explained the value of the class activities, noting that “[t]he activities made us be active or listen, to be silent, or to defend our position or share our own ideas. So I learned many skills.”

In terms of valuable knowledge obtained from the course, most of the alumni cited learning about active citizenship, citizen responsibilities and human rights as the topics most important to them.

Learning about human rights appears to be the topic that was most impactful to the alumni. This was true not only due to their broadening understanding of what human rights encompass, but also due to changes in their own beliefs and attitudes. The alumni talked about the evolution of their understanding of human rights and Georgian society related to persons with disabilities, homeless people, gender issues and rights of sexual minorities.

- *I'm really ashamed to say that before, I thought that people with disabilities didn't have any function in their lives and they can be hardly integrated into the society. Today I am sure that their opportunities are limitless and they are equal members of the society.*
- *Before I felt pity for them I was saying, "oh poor them, look how miserable they are" but later I understood that they are completely same people and have same rights as everybody else and they are equal members of the society.*
- *This course and understanding of democracy helped me to evolve, if we talk about concrete examples I can talk about gender stereotypes that do not exist for me anymore and I had different attitudes towards this before.*

Shifts in students' understandings and attitudes regarding human rights are associated with two experiences in the course. The first is the coverage of this topic in the course text and class activities. While this learning was cited as being valuable, the students who experienced the greatest changes in their understandings attributed it to the student action project.

- *The project I did was about prisoner torture...I went beyond the research required for this course...I engaged in the protests as part of my citizen responsibility. I became more active and decided to state my opinion.*
- *Learning about human rights was very important. The project was about the use of hate speech and how language can violate the rights of minorities, ethnic and sexual. So we prepared a protest action with posters in the university yard.*
- *The action project was most important to me. I became friends with persons with disabilities and now have relationships with these people that are important to me.*

- *I didn't have the chance to participate in such activities before visiting homeless children. We realized that we have some obligations towards these children that they are also part of our society. All the members of the groups admitted we wouldn't do this outside of the course.*

Other common areas that alumni cited as being important to them are concepts of active citizenship and the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. Students regularly shared comments such as: "I realized I could have a real impact, my role as a person, as a member of the society is much bigger and more important than I thought before." As the student above described new understandings about homeless children, many of the alumni recognized that they had obligations to protect the rights of others in society and also that "citizens have a responsibility to follow the laws."

Benefits of the Student Action Project

- *Thanks to this project I became way much more active, self-confident and also I realized that if some group of people wants to achieve something there is no limit for them.*
- *Also the best thing about the project is that it doesn't finish after five months; you are active after it is over as well.*

The alumni shared perceptions of their experiences with the student action project that validate findings from previous evaluations. Many alumni see the action project as the transformative experience of the course. The alumni affirmed that through the action project they gained valuable knowledge about issues in Georgian society; increased understandings of course themes; developed valuable skills; and experienced personal changes in how they view themselves and others in Georgia.

The alumni credit the project experience with helping them develop valuable skills that can serve them academically, professionally and as engaged actors in their communities. One student explained, "We became way much more self-confident, we learned how to communicate with public officials, we learned the principles of group work, role distribution, etc." Another alumni said, "Now I understand I have to get to the right people and how to impress them in order to get their support," and added, "We learned to analyze the problem from different perspectives." Other skills regularly cited by the alumni were teamwork, organization, patience, research and effectively expressing one's views.

Changes in attitudes or behaviors related to the course.

- *I was very shy before and now I'm like a volcano. I am sure that I can do anything; I became more outgoing, brave, and active.*
- *Without the course I might not have been motivated to work on improving these issues. We might have just discussed them but not acted on them.*
- *Before I was mostly focused on myself, who am I, what do I want to achieve, who will help me achieving my goals and after the course I started thinking more about helping other people.*

The above quotes reflect the views among the alumni that they are not the same people as they were prior to taking the course. The differences they see extend to changes in actions and behaviors at their universities, in their communities and with friends and family. Some of the alumni feel that their very

nature was awakened by the course. Among the personal changes students described themselves as being braver, more confident and aware, and feeling a sense of duty in society. One young woman explained that she came from a very traditional society where women and young people weren't seen as having important things to say, but after taking the course she said, "I realize that I should talk when I see things that are wrong and problems in society. Now I realize that if I want to do something it is my rights and I have the opportunity to...I am a citizen, I have duties"

The alumni felt a responsibility to be leaders and role models in their communities. Some explained that the changes they experienced were evident to others and they were able to affect change as a result of this. "In the beginning they [her parents] were skeptical about what I was doing and they didn't know much about democracy ... they saw the effect on me and they began to understand the importance of what I was doing and they began to support me," one student averred. Others took a more proactive approach in facilitating change in others. A young woman convinced her parents that they should vote, and another explained, "Before the elections I met a lot of people who felt hopeless and I convinced them that they had a responsibility to participate in the elections." After researching the importance of individuals in maintaining a healthy democracy, a young man from Telavi felt a sense of responsibility as he realized, "I should get educated, I should share my opinion with my friends because I am the only one who has the opportunity to have this course and read about democracy. I think I can really share and teach them. If I share and they would share, sooner or later what my project was about will be real in society." One young woman felt it was important to be a role model even if she is not sure that others are watching or what affect it might have if they are. She offered, "Sometimes I take garbage with me because there is nowhere to throw it out, so I take it with me to find a garbage can and I think maybe others will see me doing this and they might do the same thing." Regardless of the approach, this sense of responsibility to be leaders or role models was present among most of the alumni across gender, area of study or geographic region.

Actions taken since the course

Students changed their behaviors and attitudes in many important ways. For many this led to paying closer attention to current events and societal issues. As discussed above, many changed their attitudes towards other members of society, and others felt a sense of duty that previously had been absent. For the overwhelming majority, the changes manifested in the actions the alumni have engaged in since they took the course. Below, four students share some of the concrete actions they took during and after the course:

- *I have met with representatives from the ministries to talk about issues of security at the border with South Ossetia.*
- *As a result of our project we realized how important it was to assist blind people to get an education, we continued our work at the university. We maintain a library for the blind.*
- *Now I am a member of an NGO organizing public lectures on social issues. We are trying to inform people beyond just the social sciences.*
- *I created a Junior University where university students give trainings to younger students on gender stereotypes and gender equality.*

The four themes of the course seek to educate students on the rights of all citizens, and the role of citizens, government and civil society in improving and maintaining democratic societies. The scope of actions taken by the alumni strongly indicates that they understand there are multiple ways to participate and have a voice in their society. The alumni feel empowered to act in their society to advance causes, ensure equal protection of individual rights and strengthen democratic practices. In some instances alumni have joined existing organizations, however in most cases it is the alumni who are taking the initiative to act and volunteer their time and resources to make change.

Below is a list of the actions alumni have taken since the course and/or are currently engaged in:

- Several have served as election observers
- Joined young diplomats club at the university
- Served as a chairperson at district elections
- Interned at the NGO Partnership for Safe Roads working to improve services for persons with disabilities
- Began mediation club at the university
- Organized events to raise awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities
- Conduct trainings on gender stereotypes and equality trainings for young people
- Volunteer at library for the blind based at the university (outgrowth of student action project)
- Participated in prisoner rights protests
- Become a member of a NGO, organizing lectures as a volunteer
- Continued research based on student action project and wrote a paper for publication
- Provide civic education trainings to young people
- Created a park in their community and volunteered time and money to work on the park and pay for trees and supplies, partnered with an organization on the project
- Fundraise for orphanages
- Continue to monitor data related to project, plan to try again to get initiative passed and start a shelter for unwed pregnant women
- Attend meetings and lectures on social and political issues
- Interact with representatives and lobby for reforms in education
- Started NGO to work on educational and human rights issues, raise awareness, work on inclusion of persons with disabilities, raise awareness of new laws on local self-government
- Conducted awareness campaign organizing lectures about the rights of persons with disabilities
- Participated in movement for multiparty democracy and project about integrating minorities in government
- Continue to monitor the impact from the project of people buying tickets to use the city buses
- Volunteered to assist others in need during snow storms (bring food and supplies to people)
- Volunteer with the Red Cross to assist families in need and homeless persons
- Participated in a conference that covered gender topics
- Started an NGO to educate journalists about issues and terminology related to persons with disabilities

One of the most striking features of the actions the alumni are engaged in is the voluntary nature of their work, as volunteerism has not been a common activity in Georgian society. A student explained, "This concept is not a very developed idea." Yet almost all of the 27 alumni described acts of volunteerism when discussing actions connected to the course. Many students continued to take actions directly related to their student action project. One examples of this was students at Tbilisi State

University who sought funding for library resources for blind students as part of their student action project. It is now two years since they received the initial funding and were enrolled in the course, yet these course alumni are still volunteering their time to staff the library and seek out additional funding to sustain the project after they graduate. Two young women from Georgian Technical University who had sought passage of a law to assist unwed mothers in order to discourage women from seeking abortions, had been disappointed with the negative reception from government officials to their plans when they met with them as part of their student action project. Currently the women continue to monitor the data in order to build a case to lobby for their cause again. A young man from Tbilisi was so motivated to learn more after conducting research on the conditions of inmates for his project that he has continued to research the conditions and took an active part in protests regarding the treatment of prisoners. These are exciting examples of how the alumni are building on the work they did in the course. Equally encouraging is the civic engagement among the alumni that is not directly related to their student action project, but are actions they have been inspired to take since the course.

One young woman told me, "All that I have done, I have done since the course! I think it is because of the course," and another explained, "I want to say the course had a big impact on me and gave me knowledge and skills that I use in other projects as well. Being active opens doors for you." Based on the alumni experience it appears that the knowledge and experiences obtained in the course have inspired them to continue being active in their communities. Even alumni who felt they were already inclined to be active, believed the course was important in their development. "I loved helping people before the course but the course made me realize that I have to convince others that they should be active as well in order to make changes in society and achieve goals," one student said. Another young man explained, "It's like stairs, this course. I was on the stairs already but the course is another step."

Conceptions of Citizenship

- *I realized my role in building a democratic society. I realized that every word from us, every step from citizens stepped up to improving life of democratic processes is very important.*
- *The most important for me is that an active citizen is not just a status, he has interest and opportunities to reach its goals.*
- *The most important lesson that I learned throughout the course and my activities is that you don't have to be a public official to change something.*

The alumni voiced clear visions of what kind of citizen they have become and how they hope to enact these conceptions in the future. Student comments and actions were analyzed based on identified civic dispositions from the National Standards for Civics and the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Civics framework. These include:

- Recognizing the need for individual's to take personal, political and economic responsibilities as citizens
- Respecting individual worth and human dignity
- Respect for and trust in institutions of authority; respect for the rule of law
- Tolerance of divergent views and lifestyles
- A sense of being able to affect change in one's community

- A sense of civic responsibility as seen by promoting a healthy functioning of a constitutional democracy and participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner

Conceptions of citizenship expressed among the alumni reflect all of these qualities, but the most prominent are: 1) The recognition of the responsibility for citizens to take action; 2) Respect for individual worth and human dignity; 3) A sense of being able to affect change in one's community; and 4) A sense of civic responsibility.

Recognition of the responsibility for citizens to take action

- *In the process it became more clear what active citizenship is and the obligations of citizens and their duties towards other.*
- *Before we were more frightened of some things, we didn't know how to deal with it, we thought it wasn't our business and now we know everything that happens around us is our business and we need to fight for it.*
- *In the scope of the course we learned that in Western countries citizens are members of different and various organizations and associations ... and advocating for their interests through the organizations they belong to. After some years I have grown to this kind of citizen.*

Respect for individual worth and human dignity

- *I study finance, others study other subjects. Not everyone can work on protecting peoples' rights. But so what that I study finance? I realized that besides my profession my main profession is being a citizen and it's my duty to care about other people's rights, especially for those who can't defend themselves.*
- *We should care about those around us and our community, not just ourselves. I might not be gaining financially but I gain from knowing I am helping them.*
- *If the rights of one person are protected we are improving the rights for all. I want to use my law degree to protect civil rights.*

A sense of being able to affect change in one's society

- *What was important is that five people made the change. We were five people in the group for the action project and we managed to change something in people's lives.*
- *Before it was easy to be active but it was difficult achieving results. After taking the course, I feel certain successful results can be achieved.*
- *I am a living example of a person who wasn't a member of NGO or any governmental institution but could contact any high official member at the government and organizations when needed. Before the course I had no idea I would have so many opportunities and such a big outreach to reach my goals.*

A sense of civic responsibility

- *Each one of us should put one brick to developing and building democracy in their country.*
- *People should realize they need to always be active in society and current issues and should express views so we don't become people who are apathetic.*
- *I hate politics, I will never work in government but I will do my best to control it. I want to have a business and I want to help my country be employing people but I will oversee [government] with elections, monitoring, advocating, being part of the budget process and protecting my own rights. If everybody stood up for their rights and protected them it would be a much better country.*

The quotes above make clear that the alumni possess many of the dispositions associated with a healthy democratic citizenry. The alumni also hold clear conceptions of what kind of citizen each currently is and hopes to be in the future. These conceptions were analyzed by applying a framework of democratic citizenship developed by education scholars Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne.¹ Application of this model provides insight into which type of citizen the alumni are. The framework identifies three broad categories of citizenship: 1) The personally-responsible citizen; 2) The participatory citizen; and 3) The justice-oriented citizen. According to this framework, the personally-responsible citizen serves his or her community through actions such as obeying laws, working and volunteering in times of need. The participatory citizen is defined as an individual who believes that to solve problems and improve society individuals must be active participants who are willing and able to navigate established systems and community structures. The final classification, the justice-oriented citizen, relates to individuals who believe that improvement to society must come through questioning, challenging and ultimately changing established structures that perpetuate inequalities.

The alumni recognize that living in a democracy brings benefits to the individual, particularly in the areas of individual rights and reaching goals. One young man stated that what was important to him was to “be a good husband and father, do his job well and pay his taxes,” while a young woman explained, “You shouldn’t keep quiet about things that you think are important. You need to speak out. If you keep it to yourself you won’t make a change.” These sentiments, and many others highlighted throughout this report, represent the personally-responsible citizen. These individuals understand that they must take actions in their daily lives to achieve the benefits of a healthy democracy. Most of the alumni expressed conceptions that moved beyond this view to a vision that required citizens to be active in addressing community needs through more formal or organized approaches. As illustrated through their words and actions, the alumni clearly represent the participatory citizen. The scope of actions taken by the alumni and the passion with which they described their work and the use of personal resources demonstrate the depth of understanding and commitment they have toward this conception of democratic citizenship. The final type of citizen described by Westheimer and Kahne is the justice-oriented citizen. To be this type of citizen requires a high degree of understanding of and commitment to human rights and equality for all. Many of the alumni have achieved this understanding and are taking actions to ensure that the rights of all are protected and equality is a hallmark of Georgian society. Two examples are:

¹ Westheimer, J. & Kahne, J. (2004). “What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy.” *American Educational Research Journal*, 41, (2), 237-269

- *I decided to protect others' rights, so I decided to become an observer at the elections and I was ready to sacrifice my own vote as I couldn't vote, in order to protect others' votes. I realized how much it meant for everyone who took their time, went to the polling place and voted that they were sure their vote was safe and protected.*
- *When you read about the democratic principles that we are all equal and then we helped the homeless children, we are living this principle. You feel that you have done something and you are implementing that principle in your society.*

To state only that the alumni reflect the qualities and have taken actions associated with all three types of citizenship identified by Westheimer and Kahne is to diminish the true significance of these findings. To fully appreciate the qualities exhibited among the alumni it is important to understand the context in which these individuals grew up and currently live in. Alumni regularly referenced cultural or societal conditions that appear to limit civic action in Georgia. Comments such as, "Georgians aren't aware or sensitive to the problems around them," "Georgians are used to watching and criticizing, but not taking actions themselves" and "People in Georgia don't know their rights. They need to be more involved to learn about this and what's going on around them," were regularly expressed. One young man went so far as to state, "Society wasn't ready for this course, but in the process it became more clear what active citizenship is and the obligations of citizens and their duties towards others." Despite the conditions the alumni cited in Georgia, they see the course as being instrumental in changing their understandings of what is possible and what kind of citizen they are.

Another significant finding related to context is the transformation among females. Georgia is a society oriented towards traditional notions of family and gender roles. As a result women are underrepresented in politics and business. Yet evidence was abundant among the female alumni that they envision a different role for themselves. Focus group participation was skewed towards women by an almost two-to-one ratio, demonstrating the active commitment among many female alumni to participate in the research. Female alumni also expressed understandings that they are challenging past assumptions about their role in society. As the young woman from Batumi explained, she grew up in a setting where females were not expected to be vocal about political or societal issues but now she asserts, "I realize that I should talk when I see things that are wrong and problems in society. Now I realize that if I want to do something it is my right." Another young woman who served as an election observer now has plans to become a certified observer for elections and continue this work. She vigorously stated that marriage will not change her commitment. The females are serving as role models in their families, among friend and in their communities. Some were instrumental in changing family members actions towards civic engagement by educating their families and encouraging them to vote. In another family, attitudes towards their daughter's education and professional pursuits became more positive when they witnessed changes in her as a result of the course. Many of the women were active in educating friends about societal issues and encouraging them to become engaged, while others chose to directly educate others through formal workshops or organizing lectures. Being a role model and leader also meant starting NGOs, creating organizations within universities, advocating for women's rights and monitoring and speaking out on public issues. These young women are confident, skilled and active. The above-mentioned sentiment shared by one female student ("I was very shy before and now I'm like a volcano!") sums up the attitude expressed by most of the female alumni who participated in this evaluation.

All of the alumni who participated in the evaluation exhibited qualities of active and responsible democratic citizenship. They are prepared with knowledge, skills and the willingness to be agents of

change in Georgia. Their enthusiasm is rooted in their personal experiences associated with the course and the actions they have taken since as a result of these experiences. They recognize that there is work to be done but they share a hope for the future of Georgia and are anxious to be leaders in the continued movement towards democracy.

- *What we did was important because it is a drop in the ocean. Maybe people it will start others to think about becoming active citizens and this idea can spread and help improve society.*
- *John Lennon said, "You may think I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one." I think I'm a dreamer but there are others like me and we will find each other.*

Conclusions and Recommendations

The use of focus group and individual interviews with course alumni provided an in-depth look at the alumni's views of the course, their conceptions of citizenship and the actions they have taken since the course. The research findings support the conclusion that the intended goals of the course are being realized among alumni. These findings are indicative of promising long-term impacts of the course. The findings strongly indicate that course alumni:

- Benefitted greatly from the practical experiences offered through class activities and the student action project
- Found knowledge associated with human rights and the role of government and the citizen in a democracy to be most meaningful
- Apply skills developed through course experiences to academic, professional and civic endeavors
- Experienced positive transformation in their perceptions and understandings of the rights and role of persons with disabilities and minorities
- Are inclined to be leaders and role models of civic virtues and engagement
- Possess a strong sense of efficacy toward their ability to affect change
- Are committed to the realization of the principles of democracy for all Georgians

Based on the findings from this evaluation a few recommendations are offered:

- Professors are encouraged to continue to use interactive teaching methods in order for students to develop deeper understandings of content and to practice skills of civic engagement
- The student action project must be an integral part of the course experience and for students to obtain the full benefits of the project, implementation should be true to the model presented in the Student Handbook
- Experiences that extend the students understandings like summer or winter school or mini-workshops offered by IFES are useful for the students
- More students should have the opportunity to take the course. This is a view strongly recommended by alumni. As one participant explained:

It doesn't matter which faculty you study at, this subject helps everyone and it helps not only to raise civic awareness but increase general knowledge and will help students to become more active, engaged and motivated.



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