

STUDENTS

AS DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGERS



SDCE OERS MODULE 2: WHERE ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS?

Module 2

In this module we will examine the opportunities for students who participate in Digital Civic Engagement activities.

Students will learn about different examples of applicable civic engagement projects as well as the resultant competencies and skills that they will gain in the process.

Topic 1: Problems that need solving – spotlight on global issues.

Topic 2: Improving your community through civic engagement

Topic 3: Taking a service-learning approach to a Digital Civic Engagement project (DCE).

Topic 4: DCE is building your competency levels. Here are the opportunities.

Spotlight on the SDCE case studies

Video links and exercises

A note on the terms we use

Before we start your Civic Engagement journey, we need to explain what some of the abbreviations are that we will use throughout these Modules.

HEIs- Higher Educational Institutions.

SDCE- this is the name of the project that created these materials.

DCE- Digital Civic Engagement

The Guide to DCE- this is a guide surrounding information about Digital Civic Engagement and students. You can find [a link to the toolkit here](#)

The DCE Toolkit- Our Student Digital Civic Engagers' Toolkit is designed to teach you about relevant digital tools that you can use for your own civic engagement.

01

PROBLEMS THAT NEED SOLVING – SPOTLIGHT ON GLOBAL ISSUES

Learner level: Beginner





WHAT ARE SOME OF THE GLOBAL PROBLEMS THAT NEED SOLVING?

The UN's Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) is a global call to action for all countries- developed or developing - to help resolve recognized problems that the people of Earth face.

The DSDG have highlighted that ending poverty and other deprivations must also ensure that there is an improvement in health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

The DSDG have highlighted 17 goals (SDGs) that we should all try and work towards.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>





A SELECTION OF SDG GOALS

We have chosen four SDG goals that would benefit from a fresh student perspective as part of Digital Civic Engagement.

1. **Goal 10- Reduced Inequalities**

This goal examines the inequality and aims to reduce inequality within and among countries.

Since the pandemic has come into effect, research has suggested that inequality has increased, and is likely to reverse progress made against income equality. This hasn't been seen since the financial crisis.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10>





A SELECTION OF SDG GOALS

2. Goal 12- Responsible consumption and production

This goal advocates for sustainable and responsible consumption and production patterns. Did you know that the global “material” footprint has increase by 70% from 2000 to 2017?

Even with resources such as food, it is estimated that as of 2016, almost 14 per cent of food produced globally was lost before reaching the retail sector.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal12>





A SELECTION OF SDG GOALS

3. Goal 13- Climate Action

This goal focuses on the reduction of greenhouse gasses, and the impact of climate change. To limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in accordance with the Paris Agreement, the world would need to achieve net zero carbon dioxide emissions by around 2050.

Global emissions should be cut to 45 per cent below 2010 levels by 2030 in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Emissions from developed countries are approximately 6.2 per cent lower in 2019 than in 2010, while emissions from 70 developing countries rose by 14.4 per cent in 2014.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>





A SELECTION OF SDG GOALS

4. Goal 16- Peace, Justice and strong institutions.

This goal aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed inequalities and discrimination and has tested, weakened, and in some cases shattered rights and protection systems in countries and territories.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>

A photograph of a brown, textured surface with the words "no justice" and "no peace" written in black ink. "no justice" is on the top line and "no peace" is on the bottom line, both in a cursive, handwritten style.

no justice
no peace



IDENTIFYING SOLUTIONS

So, what are some of the solutions to these problems? We present you with three key resources that can help identify key local/global issues or challenges that a student civic engagement project could help address.

We then bring you through inspirational examples of digital civic engagement projects from around the world.

We would recommend to read and explore the links and tools in the following section. The sources give many examples of Digital Civic Engagement in practice. These highlight what DCE projects can look like and give you some ideas as students what involvement might look like!





3 key resources to inspire

1. CITIZENSLAB

Citizenslab is an excellent resource to look at examples of civic engagement throughout Europe.

It aims to connect and strengthen active citizens from all sectors of society that are passionate about their local communities.

Citizenslab uses a Lab Approach, hosting and activating a network of people and communities throughout Europe.

<https://citizenslab.eu/>





CITIZENSLAB

What does Citizenslab do?

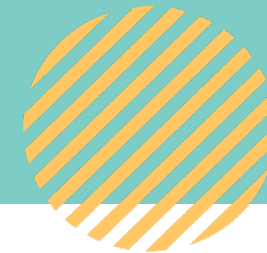
- Self-organise, collaborate, co-create and take action to address local and global challenges for the good of all
- Demonstrate that these new ways of understanding and practicing democracy should be part of our future political ecology
- Deeply question our thinking, worldviews, and value system activating transformational processes at individual, collective and planetary levels to radically reinvent ourselves, our way of being and seeing.



2. STREET CIVICS

Street Civics is a public education and data summarisation website which provide advocates, activists, and organizers with resources on how to create social and institutional change.

The Street Civics website will guide you on key topics of Digital Communications & Software, Campaign Materials, Services, & Equipment, Education & Games, and Reading, Knowledge, & Power.



<https://streetcivics.com/>



2. STREET CIVICS

READ

Take a look at the paper below that examines 18 examples of civic engagement activities:

<https://streetcivics.com/18-examples-of-civic-engagement-activities/>





3. THE BUCKET LIST FOR INVOLVED CITIZENS

The Bucket List For Involved Citizens is a list of 76 different ways to become civically engaged.

The list provides specific and practical actions to become a more involved citizen.

The list is broken into five actions that are essential components for engagement. It is expressly free from politics perspectives or affiliation.

The 5 actions are **stay informed, vote, participate, build community and get social.**





3. THE BUCKET LIST FOR INVOLVED CITIZENS

The resource contends that each of us should try to be as active and involved in our community and country as possible.

“Civic engagement is the glue that holds self-government together. But self-government can be hard work and requires much effort. Action is essential to maintaining the foundations of our democracy, no matter which political party happens to be in power.”

Explore and take inspiration from the list:

[The bucket list for involved citizens: 76 things you can do to boost civic engagement now.](#)



GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Let's take a closer look at inspiring examples of some Digital Civic Engagement projects.

These examples can be explored in detail in our Guide to DCE. A link to the Guide to DCE can be found by [clicking on this link.](#)



UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

This Good Practice Example puts the spotlight on an optional course called **Methods of Civic and Intercultural Adult Education** offered at the Department for Pedagogy and Andragogy at the University of Belgrade.

The main idea was to use principles of process to create a framework, build relationships and create space for exploration of the topic of civic and intercultural education.

The idea was to engage with the community by mapping social issues and becoming familiar with the existing educational initiatives.



UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

The pandemic has meant that the format of the class had to change. Moving to an online format, students met and chose to work on the issue of safety of women in the city.

The students developed a map, where people walked around the city and took photos of places where they felt safe, and places where they did not feel safe and created a digital map of the city through the tool Milanote.

[Find out more about this case study by clicking here:](#)

[Find out more about the Milanote tool by clicking here:](#)





THE VIRTUAL STUDENT SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMME AT UNED

Teacher students from Spain and teacher students from Benin in South Africa participated in a virtual Service-Learning course for an intercultural exchange.

The project aimed to strengthen the oral proficiency of the Spanish-language students from Benin, since they did not have options (scholarships and grants) to travel to Spanish speaking countries.

At the same time, the programme aimed to allow Spanish students to gain a deeper understanding of other educational cultures and learn first-hand about their educational reality.



THE VIRTUAL STUDENT SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMME AT UNED

The students' participation in the activity was technologically mediated. It supported the possibility of promoting civic engagement virtually, using 2.0 technologies to meet the needs of social groups located in other regions of the world.

The programme also represented an innovative pedagogical Service-Learning (more on this key topics later) and civic engagement activity, which was supported by virtual learning environments.

[Click here to read more:](#)



PROBLEMS THAT NEED SOLVING – SPOTLIGHT ON GLOBAL ISSUES: EXTRA RESOURCES.

Click on the following link for more resources:

[Citizen's Lab have a comprehensive resource mapping new forms of civic engagement in Europe](#)

[Article on 10 Easy ways to be a more engaged citizen](#)

[The Digital Civics Toolkit draws on the research and work of the MacArthur Research Network on Youth and Participatory Politics \(YPP\)](#)



02

IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

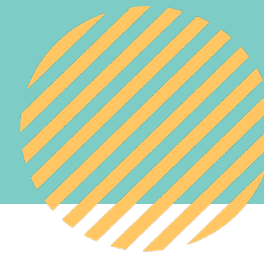
Learner level: Intermediate





“Fake woke stuff we do on IG dies in a week. We have to donate our time and money to organizations.”

Hasan Minaj





IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The benefits of students improving their communities through civic engagement are numerous. Through our research for the DCE Guide, we found many positive benefits to students partaking in an DCE project.

Positive results included practicing and gaining experience in skills relevant to a career, building strong relationships, having great experiences and helping small community projects to become a success.

Source





THREE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

1. Support community-based organizations

Pick an issue that you are passionate about and that you want to address.

Become an activist by supporting community-based organizations which are likely to be at the forefront of making small changes everyday.

By supporting small organizations that have goals of improving communities, it can be one of the most effective ways of joining activism.





THREE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

2. Attend local city council meetings.

While this point might not sound the most interesting, having first-hand experience of the local challenges and what the community is concerned about is an insightful way to gain insights and initial experience.

You will widen your network and may meet like minded people, who may share your ambition to develop a solutions-based project based on Digital Civic Engagement.





THREE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

3. Support Local Businesses

By supporting local businesses, you are helping to ensure that your local community is able to become economically stronger.

Many local businesses are family owned, and by supporting them you are also supporting workers and local suppliers.

By communicating with local businesses, it is also a fantastic way of developing relationships and identifying what needs local businesses have which might be aided with a Digital Civic Engagement project.





IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT- EXTRA RESOURCES

For more information & resources,
check out the following links:

[Blog on 5 Ways To Improve Your
Community Through Civic Engagement](#)

[Article about 4 Steps to Consider in the
Project Planning Process for an DCE
project](#)

[Report of the Taskforce on Active
Citizenship](#)



03

TAKING A SERVICE-LEARNING APPROACH TO A DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT.

Learner level: Beginner



TAKING A SERVICE-LEARNING APPROACH

Service Learning is realised when learning is established through a course of action and then reflection. This helps not only to increase understanding and learning, but also helps to practice skills associated with the learning. Typically, service learning would follow four steps:

1. The course includes societal engagement ("service")
2. Students acquire subject specific and generic competences ("learning")
3. The course includes cooperation with partners to form practice of competencies
4. Scientific knowledge is being transferred into practice

Service learning and volunteering

There are some interesting differences between service learning and volunteering, particularly when looking at a DCE project which participatory students are involved with it due to HEI obligations.

Service learning is a type of pedagogy that some research proposes many benefits of learning over volunteering. Such benefits can include an increased retention rates in first-year college students, increased levels of student leadership, and it can also increase academic performance.

But what makes service-learning different to volunteering?

Source





SERVICE LEARNING MUST INCLUDE:

1. Reciprocal Benefits: Service-learning benefits a specific community's needs as well as students' academic learning and civic growth.
2. Planning and Reflection: Guided reflection helps students consider their experience allowing them to identify what they have learned.
3. Connection to Course Content: As activities always connect directly to learning objectives this supports "experiential education," or learning through experience.





Putting the community in focus

Service-learning allows students to work directly with community projects.

Community/ civic services are often the main focus of a Digital Civic Engagement project.

As being an active member of a Digital Civic Engagement project, it also enables students to experience how to address civic issues firsthand, whilst building relevant skillsets.





EXAMPLES OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Plugging Service learning into a course, would ensure that students would practice what they have learnt by volunteering or practicing their skill for civic good.

Two examples of Service Learning are **The Starter Program at the University of Tartu** and **Queens University Belfast's Dementia Awareness Game.**

[Both are included in our DCE Guide, click here to find out more.](#)




04

DCE IS BUILDING YOUR COMPETENCY LEVELS. HERE ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES.

Learner level: Intermediate





Students who participate in digital civic engagement activities utilize/apply their digital skills and refine them to meet the needs of the civic engagement issue they are working on. This could be researching information on the community needs, to creatively developing content online to share with others.

The following slides examine the competencies that will be acquired.





THE DIGITAL competencies YOU WILL ACQUIRE WILL ALIGN TO:

DigComp– is the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens as approved and used by the EU Commission.

It is important to highlight which competences could be utilised and furthered by “digital civic engagement”.

Students that partake in digital civic engagement activities will gain the opportunity to develop and upskill on a wide range of digital competences.





THE DIGITAL competencies YOU WILL ACQUIRE WILL ALIGN TO:

DigComp: 2.3 Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies.

This competency can be viewed as participating in society through the use of public and private digital services, as well as seeking opportunities for self empowerment and participatory citizenship through appropriate digital technologies.

Click here more information on the DigComp framework:
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp/digital-competence-framework>

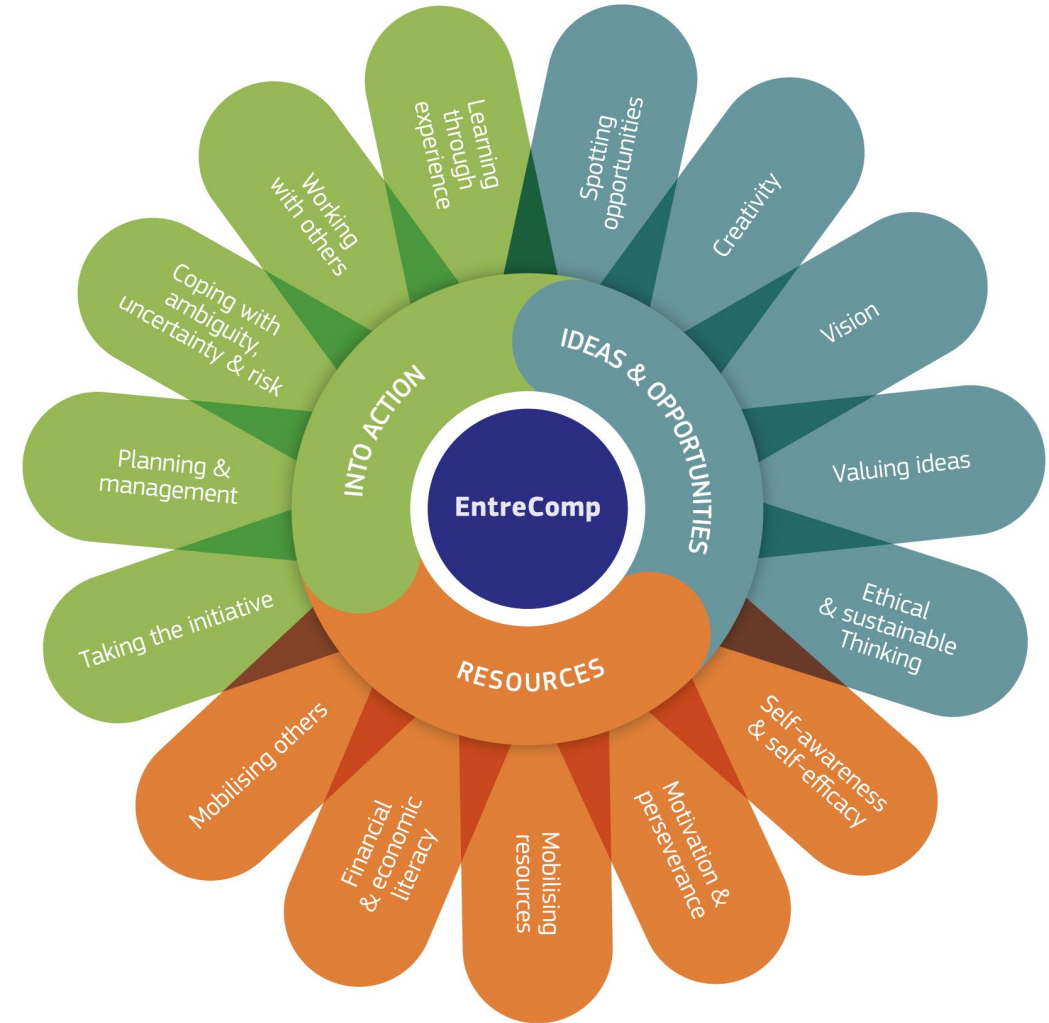




THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP competencies YOU WILL ACQUIRE WILL ALIGN TO:

EntreComp, the European Entrepreneurial Competences framework. EntreComp is approved and used by the European Commission as a key tool and source of inspiration to help Europe become an entrepreneurial society. The EntreComp Framework identifies 15 competences across 3 Competence areas:

- Competence area 1: **Ideas and Opportunities**
- Competence area 2: **Resources**
- Competence area 3: **Into Action**





ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCES FRAMEWORK(ENTRECOMP)

Students that participate in digital civic engagement activities are afforded the opportunity to develop a wide range of entrepreneurial competencies, this could begin with spotting an issue in the community which needs resolved, to then working with others to think of creative solutions to solve the civic issue.

For more information on the EntreComp framework, please click on the link below:
<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcompedu>





THE COMPETENCIES YOU ACQUIRE IN ENTRECOMP WILL ALIGN TO:

EntreComp: 1.5 Ethical and sustainable thinking.

Back to the big global problems. Assess the consequences of ideas that bring value and the effect of entrepreneurial action on the target community, the market, society and the environment.

It is also important to reflect on how sustainable long-term social, cultural and economic goals are, and the course of action chosen- Remember to act responsibly.





THE COMPETENCIES YOU ACQUIRE IN ENTRECOMP WILL ALIGN TO:

There is a huge amount of information to be found in the EntreComp and DigiComp frameworks. We would highly recommend opening the links to each framework where more information can be found about EntreComp and DigiComp.



05

SPOTLIGHT ON DCE CASE STUDIES

Learner level: Beginner





SPOTLIGHT ON SDCE CASE STUDIES

In this section we will take a closer look at the opportunities for students whilst looking at some of the case studies from the DCE Guide .

The case studies were collected from 6 European countries, which gave a wide set of examples of what an Digital Civic Engagement project can look like and how students can engage.

Throughout the case studies, many students were required to take part in their own DCE project , as it is a mandatory part of their course.





REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN A DCE PROJECT

It is interesting that while students responded that the project was mandatory, it was also very beneficial to them.

Some students highlighted that they made great connections and friendship and they would encourage their colleagues to reach out and apply to join an DCE project that would benefit them.

Source





EXAMPLE OF MANDATORY PARTICIPATION AIT FLAC SOCIETY

The AIT FLAC Society was developed to offer legal aid to the local community, by allowing students to offer legal advice with the supervision of a real solicitor or barrister.

Before Covid, the FLAC society would meet once a week in person, however, this moved to online during the pandemic.

It was mandatory for students who participated in the law and business degree to join the FLAC Society

Source





AIT FLAC SOCIETY

While this was a mandatory part of the Business and Law course, it gave students a great opportunity to experience what it would be like working in the legal sector.

Students found that this was a great opportunity to help decide what they might want to do in the future as a career, especially when they may not have had any previous experience of how the legal sector operates.



VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION- THE STARTER PROGRAMME

The Starter Programme is an extracurricular activity for students which is aimed to develop the mindset and skills of entrepreneurship in students. It is a three-month long idea-development program which consists of a kick-off event, a number of training sessions and workshops, a networking/ mentoring event, mentoring sessions and a demo day.



THE SORTER APP

The students involved in this case study had a background in change management. They saw the need to reduce waste by creating an App that would be used to help identify how one can sort their waste.

Participants in this project pointed out that during the programme, in addition to solving problems in community, they benefitted by gaining entrepreneurship skills, communication skills, IT skills, team management skills, leadership skills, and time management skills through the participation of this project.

Source



05

MODULE 2 EXERCISES





DCE OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR COUNTRY – AUSTRIA

Click on the following links for some DCE opportunities in Austria:

[STEOP Mentoring, University of Vienna](#)

[Intercultural Mentoring, University of Vienna](#)

[Mentoring for first-year students, Vienna University of Economics and Business](#)

[Learn Buddy, Vienna University of Economics and Business](#)

[Service-Learning, University of Vienna](#)





DCE OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR COUNTRY - ESTONIA

Click on the following links for some DCE information and opportunities in Estonia:

[Good Citizen](#)

[Check out more about the opportunities for young people to participate in civic activities](#)

[Volunteer Gate](#)





DCE OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR COUNTRY- IRELAND

Click on the following links for some DCE information and opportunities in Ireland:

[DCU examples of Civic Engagement](#)

[Check out what Cork City is doing to get people involved in DCE](#)

[Open volunteering.ie for volunteering opportunities in Ireland](#)





DCE OPPORTUNITIES IN PORTUGAL

Click on the following links for some DCE information and opportunities in PORTUGAL:

[Civic Engagement Portugal for Ukraine](#)

[Check out what Uminho Students Union is doing to get people involved in DCE](#)

[Students volunteering opportunities](#)



WATCH

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Check out the video, a presentation on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): What They Are & Why They're Important

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAlolKgDPrA>



WATCH

MODELS FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Check out the video, a Ted Talk on some new models for civic engagement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpCzIniPZDU>



WATCH

RESTORING STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Check out the video, an inspiring TED Talk on student civic engagement.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqrHkM_6dsM&t



WATCH

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT UNIVERSITIES' THIRD MISSION

Take a look at the video from [SocialErasmus+](#) highlighting the Third mission of universities and skill-oriented approach in learning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BV8PICN1xWM>



TASK 1: SELF FOCUSED LEARNING

This task will take approximately 45 minutes.

Step 1: Watch the videos that have been linked within this section. Also click on the links for examples of DCE in your country.

Step 2: Please write down and answer the following questions:

Can you identify different local or global issues that could be resolved from a DCE project?

Can you identify different ways that you could improve your community? How would you do this?

Thinking about this global or local issue, would you take a service-learning approach to help combat this, or a voluntary approach? Please discuss why you think this approach would be best.

Do you understand how different competencies can become established from practicing a DCE project?

Tip: Struggling to come up with ideas? Think about everything that you have learned in this module and from the YouTube videos and apply this to your answers. You can also think about experiences and opportunities you have had in your life so far that may have involved civic engagement.

TASK 2: GROUP LEARNING- DEVELOPING A DCE PROJECT

This activity should take approximately 30 minutes.

Step 1: Break up into teams of between 4-6 people.

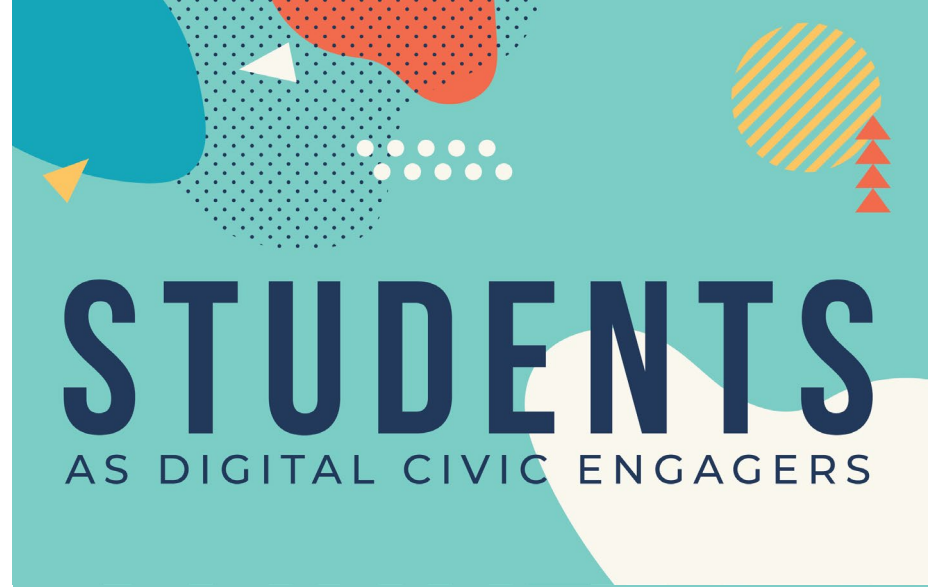
Step 2: Create a conversation with your teammates, highlighting experiences they have had regarding civic engagement. However, this time think about experiences that have more of a global impact.

Step 3: Using these experiences, create some ideas for your own DCE project. Firstly, identify a local or global problem, and determine how your team will go about addressing it. Consider if your DCE project will contain service-learning, and why?

Step 4: Present your DCE project to your lecturer and other classmates to gain feedback and ideas.



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