

Green Civics Project
Civic Empowerment & The Economy
Lesson: Middle School- 6-8th grade

Goals:

Students will learn the importance of civic engagement

Students will critique the connection between entrepreneurship and altruism

Objectives

- Students will learn about the importance of civic engagement by using mobile devices to access information through QR Codes/Understanding civic engagement through QR Codes. (Review)
- Students will explore the connection between entrepreneurship and community empowerment through the example of The Shadow Transit Story & The Dollar Van History
- Understanding the connection between economic empowerment and food sovereignty in communities of color.

Materials & Resources

The Shadow Transit Animation Video

Laser Cut QR Codes

<https://projects.newyorker.com/story/nyc-dollar-vans/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/08/nyregion/inside-the-dollar-van-wars.html>

<http://www.dollarvan.nyc/>

<https://ny.curbed.com/2014/7/2/10079798/9-factoids-about-nycs-shadow-transit-network-dollar-vans>

<https://qns.com/2020/08/local-minority-business-owners-team-up-with-community-leader-to-launch-laurelton-farmers-market/>

<https://a-live-kitchen.business.site/>

Vocabulary

altruism- the belief in or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others.

civic engagement - it involves “working to make a difference in the **civic** life of one's community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference.

food sovereignty - a food system in which the people who produce, distribute, and consume food also control the mechanisms and policies of food production and distribution. This stands in contrast to the present corporate food regime, in which corporations and market institutions dominate the global food system.

immigrant-a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence.

economic development-In the economic study of the public sector, economic and social development is the process by which the economic well-being and quality of life of a nation, region, local community, or an individual are improved according to targeted goals and objectives.

dollar van/commuter van- a privately owned type of **bus** service used to carry passengers in the United States. **Dollar vans** are typically modified **passenger vans**, and often operate in urban neighborhoods that are under-served by public mass transit or taxis.

entrepreneurship - the creation or extraction of value. With this definition, entrepreneurship is viewed as change, generally entailing risk beyond what is normally encountered in starting a business, which may include other values than simply economic ones.

Mom & Pop Store- a small, family-owned, or independent business.

social entrepreneurship - is an approach by individuals, groups, start-up companies or **entrepreneurs**, in which they develop, fund and implement solutions to **social**, cultural, or environmental issues. This concept may be applied to a wide range of organizations, which vary in size, aims, and beliefs.

Warm Up Activity:

The facilitator will engage youth in a conversation to identify local businesses versus national businesses by asking the following key questions?

- 1) Can any of you name a Mom & Pop Store in the neighborhood that you shop at in the neighborhood? (Define "Mom & Pop Store" to participants)
- 2) Ask participants to name a national store in their neighborhood or close by? (Define a national store if needed)
- 3) The following examples are for profits. Ask participants to name the non-profits they are familiar with . Give examples of (civic associations, charities, foundations on the local and national level.
- 4) Does anyone take the dollar van in your neighborhood? Where do you travel to?

Main Activity

The Facilitator will inform students of the difference between business entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. In the main activity the facilitator must show the connection between the representation of food sovereignty and the importance of local entrepreneurship in communities of color. In leading the discussion the facilitator will highlight the following local businesses to show the connections between food sovereignty, and entrepreneurship through highlighting local social and business entrepreneurs. In beginning the conversation, the facilitator should review the vocabulary provided emphasizing the definitions for :

Food Sovereignty

Social Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship

The facilitator will highlight the difference between local, national and global business and the importance of supporting local businesses. Participants will then be allowed to explore the garden for QR Codes that highlight for profit and non-profit entities that highlight the importance of economic development. A **profit** business describes the financial benefit realized when revenue generated from a **business** activity exceeds the expenses, costs, and taxes involved in sustaining the activity in question. A **non-profit** organization is not making or conducted primarily to make a profit. This entity represents a charity that could be a foundation or a community based organization.

Key Example Briefing:

Social Entrepreneurship-The community based organization, DIVAS for Social Justice highlighted the importance of economic development by facilitating the creation of a mural in

Laurelton designed by middle school students from The Linden SDA School. The students highlighted the Dollar Van, a transportation system created in the 1980's by the Afro-Caribbean community. Essentially, the van commuter experience created jobs for thousands of immigrants and also helped commuters get to work during the MTA Strike. This will be further highlighted when participants access a QR code activity sheet. This project was facilitated by Alissa Semple and the final edit of the work was done by Collin Gayle.

Food Sovereignty- The Laurelton Farmers Market made its debut in May of 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dianna Rose, Founder of The Laurelton Farmers Market provided a platform to bring healthy food in combination with small businesses entrepreneurship through food vendors of color thus highlighting an example of food sovereignty. This will be made accessible through a QR code activity sheet.

Entrepreneurship- The Nourish Spot and A Live Kitchen are establishments founded by local African American residents to bring healthy food options to Southeast Queens. Both entrepreneurs' main mission is to bring healthy food options to their community through vegan, vegetarian options. This will be made accessible through a QR Code.

The facilitator will review how to read a QR Code with the following instructions:

Step By Step Instruction on how to access the QR Code

<https://www.dummies.com/business/marketing/social-media-marketing/how-to-scan-a-qr-code/>

Open the QR Code reader on your phone.

Hold your device over a QR Code so that it's clearly visible within your smartphone's screen.

Two things can happen when you correctly hold your smartphone over a QR Code.

The phone automatically scans the code.

On some readers, you have to press a button to snap a picture, not unlike the button on your smartphone camera.

If necessary, press the button

Facilitator will provide further examples of QR Code:



Figure 1. QR code that encodes information using black and white boxes

QR codes (see Figure 1 above) each have their own design of black and white boxes. QR codes are similar to barcodes (see Figure 2 below) that get scanned at the checkout line in the grocery store. While barcodes have vertical black and white stripes, QR codes have a set of black and white boxes arranged in a square.



Figure 2. Vertical barcode on a water bottle

QR codes were originally designed in Japan for tracking car parts within a factory. The design of the square allows more information to be stored in the design than in a normal barcode. The designers who created the QR code got inspiration from the board game called go (see picture below).



Figure 3. The Go board game which is popular in Japan and is known as the most popular board game in the world.

Each design is a unique code that can be read by a computer. Similar to how we can write out words using the alphabet, the QR code can write out words and symbols using the black and white boxes within their designs. When you hold up your phone's or tablet's camera to the QR

code it automatically tries to read it, so it can give you a decoded link. The links usually take you to a website, and different QR codes can take you to different websites.

We have QR codes stationed throughout the garden that take you to different websites. Each QR code is on a piece of wood that we laser cut at the *Forward Makerspace*. Click the video below to see the laser cutting process.

PLACE QR CODE VIDEO FROM VIMEO HERE

The tool lets you create a design and tell the computer what you want etched into the wood. In this case, we uploaded images of the QR codes and also other pictures like the flower. The laser cutter can also cut pieces of wood along a line. The QR codes were etched in by the laser cutter, and then cut out so that we could put them in the garden.

Facilitator will model the activity and then give students the opportunity to identify the QR Code they are looking for by providing a legend key. The QR Codes will be placed throughout the garden so they can navigate

different areas of the green space and allot for at least 5-10 participants to interact with the assigned QR Code. The participants will specifically be looking for QR Codes that help them understand the connection between food sovereignty and entrepreneurship through the following activity sheets exploring QR Codes

DIVAS for Social Justice

The Laurelton Farmers Market

The Nourish Spot and A Live Kitchen

After students have interacted with the QR Codes, they will be broken up into teams to create business idea that incorporates the Garden Of Resilience, Food Sovereignty, & Social Entrepreneurship by answering the following questions:

- 1) Based on your experience interacting with the QR codes, what kind of business would you bring to your community ?
- 2) How would it create a healthier environment for everyone?
- 3) How would you promote your services so everyone knew about it?
- 4) What would be the name of your business?

The teams will be able to write their answers in Google Drive with the tablets used

