

IC Responsibility



The Ali Ghandour Center for Leadership Diversity and Civic Engagement (AGC)

The Ali Ghandour Center for Leadership, Diversity, and Civic Engagement (AGC) is now in its 3rd year and on track to graduate its first cohort! The AGC, for those who aren't familiar, is a program jointly funded by IC and the Ghandour Family that offers a three-year extracurricular intensive leadership and social citizenship program for IC Secondary School students. Half of the program's participants are scholars recruited from underserved schools and communities across Lebanon who receive tuition assistance to attend IC under the tutelage of the AGC. The program is rooted in a Community Engaged Learning (CEL) model, which aims to educate students through socially impactful, reciprocal, and hands-on learning experiences to support them in becoming agents of change. The AGC program reinforces the IC's ethos



and mission "to empower learners to take initiative, think critically, and serve as role models in a global society." The program is divided into three levels, each building on skills and insights from the years prior.

Level 1 (Grade 10) fosters students' soft skills, like creative thinking, problem solving, and teamwork, through tailored training sessions. Participating students are also required to volunteer for a well-established grassroots organization of their choice to gain exposure to social outreach and successfully reach leadership and civic engagement milestones, with a special focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The AGC team was thrilled by the high number of grade 10 applicants for the 2021-22 academic year and their impressive presentations! In order to accommodate

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the demand and the different levels of skills and commitment demonstrated by the applicants, we are offering a new branch of the program: the **"One Year Certificate Program"**, in addition to the existing **"Three Year Diploma Program"**. The main difference between the two programs is the level of commitment required and rigorousness of capacity building components.

Level 2 (Grade 11) students continue to cultivate their civic awareness and soft skills. They start developing their own Community Service Projects (CSP) and work in teams to conceive of, design, and implement their own social outreach initiative that benefits the Beirut community writ-large. Alongside their CSPs, students are taught on how to assess the needs of their society with and for the communities through a mutually beneficial relationship.

The AGC Level 2 students began the 2021-22 year by attending several "Project Planning and Proposal Writing" workshops. During these sessions students learned how to gather accurate information and data to identify the needs of a community and determine issues for action, a necessary first step in designing and planning CSPs. This fall, the AGC also collaborated with the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Through this collaboration, the students were

introduced to the CCECS' scope of work and were paired with AUB students based on interests for a mentorship opportunity.

Five groups have since been created. Their projects focus on the following themes: **sustainable environment, health care, differently abled persons, public health, street insecurity, and livelihoods** and mainly targeting **senior citizens, people with physical disabilities, public schools, and teenage girls**. The projects will be carefully designed and implemented on a larger-scale throughout the next year and a half.

Level 3 (Grade 12) Third-year AGC participants are in the final stage of their capstone projects. The students brought their leadership and management skills to life by working in small groups to envision and realize innovative solutions for real-life problems in the Lebanese context. Their projects address issues of electricity, pollution and the environment, and the isolation of senior citizens and related mental health struggles. You can learn more about these incredible initiatives by visiting their Instagram accounts "Pedal Power", "Climinds", and "SAWA".

The AGC is now home for a group of motivated, creative, engaged, and civically aware students who will soon become agents of change in their community. Our students' energy and drive positions the center for a strong year ahead!

