

## **Gen Z vs. The World**

Generation Z, from 1995–2016, is the most diverse generation yet. We are known for our passion and inclusiveness, and we run some of the most important movements of our time. We fight for change in our communities and our countries and advocate for each other and our futures in powerful ways, paving the way for revolution. With this being said, why does it seem like the world is against us?

It was halfway through the school day when I received a text from my friend's mom asking if I was okay. I was thoroughly confused and asked what had happened. She told me to open up my Facebook page and look at the comments under my most recent post encouraging my local chapter of USYCS. What I found was astonishing; middle-aged adults were commenting under my post telling me to “go fuck myself” and commenting names like “dirty hippie” and the classic “snowflake.”

Throughout my organizing experience, there has always been a noticeably negative way that older adults treat youth organizers. Living in the political climate we do, the constant barrage of negative criticism is especially present. Youth voices are more often than not pushed aside and drowned out. People accuse us of being indoctrinated or not educated enough. The irony is that the issues we are working to solve are issues caused by generations much older than us. As youth organizers, we are often faced with punishment for trying to organize. During the September climate strikes in Ohio, members of our team were harshly punished by their school's administration for leading a walk-out. They were dealt with in-school suspensions and barred from activities they cared about even though their actions proved them to be valuable leaders in the school's community.

Kai Levenson-Cupp, a California Bay-area organizer, recently spoke about this, stating that adults are surprised by our actions saying that so many adults want changes made but won't put in the work, leaving adults to applaud our youth for the older generations' inaction. With that being said, the older generations constantly discredit youth action. They taunt and demean our work, and that can take a toll on young organizers.

What is important is that we have each other's backs. We cannot and will not allow our movement and our credibility to be diminished by the taunts of older generations. It is imperative that we continue fighting for what is right. It has always been Generation Z versus the world, but we will not let that get in the way of fighting for a better world for ourselves. We are young and bright and revolutionary, and we cannot be stopped! With that being said, an allyship is important to maintain with older generations. To fight back against the negativity, it is important for adult allies to call out their peers, and start including youth voices in their own activism. Bringing youth to the table adds a new perspective into the mix that is important because, in the end, we will be the ones affected by the outcome of our fight. I encourage adults to make sure youth activists in their community are being stood up for because our perspective is just as important as any other. We are Generation Z, the most inclusive, diverse, passionate generation to date, and we demand to be heard.