How have R2G Utica and R2G Binghamton affected students and the Utica and Binghamton, NY communities?

Cornell’s Rust-to-Green (R2G) Action Research Project is nearing its 10th anniversary in building on our work. To look back on where we’ve been and also, to look ahead, towards improving and advancing learning value, we’ve launched the **R2G Collaborative Evaluation Project** (R2G CEP) to enable us to look back on where we’ve been and also, to look ahead, towards improving and building on our work.

**DEMONSTRATING IMPACT**—on students and on communities—is important at Cornell where there is a strong commitment to community engaged education and research. For Utica and Binghamton, demonstrating the impact of community development partnerships like R2G, is paramount to advancing and sustaining real change across the short and long-term.

**Participatory Approach**

R2G CEP is a 2-year project (2018-20) seeking to learn how university students and the Utica and Binghamton, NY communities have experienced and been affected by participating in R2G. It is a systematic intentional inquiry being collaboratively led and undertaken by a team of Cornell and R2G Utica and R2G Binghamton representatives. Guided by mutually agreed upon university and community goals, R2G CEP is using approaches including theory of change pathway modelling and concept mapping, for example—that invite and broaden inclusion and participation and that also further and strengthen R2G’s relationships across university-community and Binghamton-Utica geographies. Overall, in keeping with R2G’s underlying approach, R2G CEP is participant-driven and grounded in inquiry and reflection.

**Learning Value**

R2G CEP’s data and findings will help Cornell understand R2G’s impact on Upstate communities and on the upwards of 300 university students who’ve been engaging, through R2G, with those communities over the last decade. It will help those who’ve had a role in creating and advancing R2G projects in Utica and Binghamton attract support and funding and gain greater agency and empowerment in future work with R2G or other community-university partnerships. Findings from R2G CEP, we hope, will benefit educators, researchers, practitioners and decision-makers engaged in community development related fields. Finally, our hope is that R2G CEP’s findings will be relevant to other communities and groups seeking to bring universities and communities together so they can combine their wealth of knowledge and work together in advancing positive and impactful change, whether in Upstate NY or beyond.