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Create the World You Want - A Social Action Project Guide

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**The World We Want Foundation believes in the extraordinary potential of Young Global Citizens
to make a difference in their communities and around the world.**

Discover Your Resiliency

Resiliency is the ability to find our inner strength to bounce back from adversity and challenges, to overcome stress and hardships, adversity, or trauma. We believe young people have within them the abilities to be successful, socially competent, motivated, tenacious, optimistic, and determined when participating in creating Social Action Projects.

Creating Social Action Projects to benefit others in the community or around the world enables young people to foster connections and collaborations, find meaningful purpose and effect positive social change. Through our simple framework – student generated, mentor guided – team members are treated with dignity and respect, given a voice and a platform for creating the world they want to see.

Making a difference requires tenacity, fortitude, passion, planning, and most importantly, a **Team** of others to help you. The first step is to believe that you can make a difference. Sometimes that is the hardest part, but with a Team, a Mentor, and a Partner Organization, you can work together to discover a common ground as a team, where you learn what you might want to tackle together to create the world you want. This is the **"discovery"** process for your team.

Below are a few questions to **brainstorm** as a team, guided by your Mentor. This exercise helps your Team come together by understanding what is most important to them.

- What are things we value in our lives? Do others share these same values?
- What issues are important to us and would motivate us to take action?
- What can we offer so that others might benefit from our actions?
- What possible community needs or problems, challenges, or issues can our Team identify that we care about?
- Can our **Mentor** help us make contacts and identify experts as well as other community organizations that can help us discover more about what we care about or want to change?

Following this **"discovery"** process, guided by your Mentor, your Team members will identify possible community needs, problems, or challenges in the world that they wish to change. Throughout the process, your Mentor will help you identify social issues or environmental challenges that are most **"relevant, meaningful, and actionable"** to your Team.

This brainstorming activity is meant to provide a path for the Team members to discover and decide collaboratively which issues they want to consider, without necessarily determining a solution.

No matter what topic is ultimately chosen, the Team's dedication and commitment will be shaped by what they believe is the most important to them and to the other Team members.

Once your Team has gone through the "discovery" process regarding possible problems to address, they will revisit the brainstorming process again, but with possible solutions and outcomes in mind.

Step 1. Select one Problem, Challenge, or Issue to Address

Your Team's **Social Action Project** should be a step-by-step strategy for addressing a social problem, need, or challenge in your community or around the world. Your action plan will include the positive social change you wish to create and include those who will benefit from your Social Action Project. **Great Projects begin with planning for the end result.**

The following is a simple framework any **Young Global Citizen** can use to create a Social Action Project. There are four major parts: **Problem, Solution, Impact,** and sharing your **Story** of Social Impact.

To do this, your Team members will

1. Select and research a **problem** or challenge you want to address
2. Identify, refine, and implement a **solution** and an action plan
3. Measure and record the outcome or **impact** in the community, on the Team, on each member
4. Share your **Story of Social Impact** with the global community on the Foundation Showcase

Keep in mind the following as you decide on your problem or challenge, as the ideas presented can help lead you to greater success in reaching your desired outcomes:

- **Feasibility:** What is a realistic goal for the Project given your available resources (time, people, money, goods and services, etc.)?
- **Scalability:** How many people will be helped by your Project and can it be expanded?
- **Replicability:** Can the Project solutions be duplicated by others and used in other communities?
- **Longevity:** How long will the results and effects of the Project last?
- **Sustainability:** Can the Project continue on its own after the Team's participation and without further funding from the Foundation?

Research

You might start by asking every member of your Team to suggest problems that they would like to address, similar to your "discovery" brainstorming. Explore and debate the advantages and disadvantages of taking on each suggested problem. Consider not just the problem but also the possible solutions and their potential impacts.

If a problem is very complex, you may want to have some Team members research it and its possible solutions.

- Local research might include meeting with local officials regarding the severity of the problem and possible solutions.
- Global research might include looking online to discover what others elsewhere have done about the problem and any unforeseen aspects of the problem or solution that have occurred elsewhere.
- You need to understand each problem thoroughly before you can select one to address and develop the best solution.

Keep the five criteria above in mind, and others, when selecting and defining a particular problem.

- For example, consider **feasibility**. Your Team and Project probably won't have the resources to cure world hunger, but you just might be able to raise community awareness about local hunger and reduce it among the poor and homeless in your community.
- Consider **scalability**. If you want to stop or reduce bullying in your school, you might be able to do it in a way that would work in other schools.
- Consider the other criteria as well. You don't have to satisfy them all, but the more the better.

Once you have considered all your options, choose – by voting for example – the one issue that you want to tackle. Then, you should carefully and exactly define the nature and scope of the problem that you are going to solve.

For example, don't define the problem as "Bullying". The better definition is "There is bullying in the schools in our area". That shows more accurately the nature and scope of the problem that you are actually addressing, and will guide you in planning your solution and action plan.

You will also find it helpful to create a concise one sentence statement or question that goes back to your problem or challenge and describes what your Social Action Project hopes to achieve – what is the "change" you hope to see? This will be your **social action core question** and the basis for all of your activities. During the course of conducting your Project it is very helpful to revisit your core question to help you stay on course.

Examples of social action core questions:

- How can we plan a campaign to raise awareness among young people in our community on the importance of voting?
- What recommendations and actions would we make about how to improve the local creeks and walkways in our local parks?
- How could we design a safe bicycle path for the local elementary school?
- What effect does the local school board have on determining what we eat in our school lunch program?
- How can we raise awareness and support for children who live in orphanages?
- How can we share the resources we have with others in another country that does not have clean drinking water?
- How can we build a website to share information and opinions about what it is like for young people in hospitals to have a life-threatening illness?

Step 2. Your Solution

Next you need to **choose one** solution and create an **action plan**. Think of this as your roadmap for your Social Action Project.

You should start "documenting" your Project at the start, beginning with the application process and any meetings or other events that occur while researching and designing your Project. This will help you later on when you create your Story of Social Impact at the end of the Project.

Action Plan

An **action plan** typically consists of some or all of the following, which must be designed together and designed to work together, and simplified or expanded to fit your particular project:

Goals are the final, ultimate goal or goals of the Social Action Project. Just as you did with the problem, carefully and exactly define your ultimate goals. Use your social action core question to remind you what you are trying to achieve.

Example: Instead of saying, "stop bullying", say, "create and distribute a compelling anti-bullying poster that will (1) raise community awareness of bullying and (2) reduce bullying." This will help your Team stay focused on the actual solution in progress.

Milestones are important intermediate steps or goals that should be reached, or must be reached, during the progress of the Project towards its final goals.

Example: The anti-bullying team might set these milestones: (1) find someone or some way to create a poster, (2) design a poster with the proper message, (3) get copies printed, and (4) put the poster in appropriate places.

Include **major activities** that you must implement to achieve your Project's outcomes. Examples:

- Research, reading and collecting notes and photos on the problem
- Create a storyboard for your Project including a timeline of major activities and milestones
- Prepare and deliver an appeal to the local city council board meeting
- Contacting a local community organization to help with in kind resources like donations of supplies or support from volunteers
- Conduct a community gathering to present a skit or live entertainment that informs attendees about your Project
- Make an appointment and meet with a local civic leader or government official
- Gather information and resources and create flyers for distribution

Timetables are plans showing how long it should take to accomplish each major step in the Project, how long to reach any intermediate Milestones, and how long to complete the Project and reach its final goals, all based on available resources.

Example: Take a calendar and map out the weeks you plan to conduct the activities and add assignments to those days and weeks to create a Project calendar. Add responsibilities of team members to the tasks and share with one another so that you all know exactly how each task completed will get you to your end result.

Resource Budgets are plans stating how available resources, especially time and money, will be allocated or spent during the Project, such as a **work schedule or project calendar** for Team members and a **financial budget** for spending funds raised by Team activities or funds donated by **The Foundation**, both coordinated with the Milestones and Timetable.

The available work time of Team Members and any others involved must be allocated to the various steps of the Project. If the Project requires funds, a financial budget must show how much money is needed to complete the entire Project, how much is requested from **The Foundation**, how much will be taken in from other sources, if any, and how the total amount will be spent. For more information about budgets and work schedules, see Creating a Budget.

Roles and Responsibilities

Dividing up necessary tasks among Team members and assigning responsibilities is essential.

- We suggest the Mentor guide the Team through a few meetings to learn about Team members' individual talents, skills, and abilities and decide who would like to take on various roles.

- Here are a few roles or skills that might be considered: a reporter, a researcher, a photographer, a speaker, an artist, a writer, a social media expert, a curator of the documents, an accountant or treasurer, etc. Roles and responsibilities can be shared and volunteered for by the Team members accordingly.
- It is helpful to write down the roles and responsibilities and tasks so the whole Team knows what to expect from one another.
- Be sure that your Timetable and Project Calendar sets due dates for the assigned tasks, activities, and responsibilities.
- Here are some suggested headings for your Project Calendar: Objective, Tasks, Team Member, Due Date, Documentation for the Digital Portfolio.

Step 3. Impact Measurements and Documentation

We ask that you conduct on-going data collection for your Social Action Project so that you will have enough photos, documents, and informational highlights to create your Team's **Story of Social Impact** at the end of the Project.

The best way to monitor and measure your milestones and social impacts is through a documentation process that represents events and progress during your Project.

Here are a few examples of how to show measurement and documentation:

- Data collection through photos, videos, PowerPoint presentations, speech scripts, text reports, charts, research notes, images, drawings, and other visual media
- Surveys taken "before" and "after" in the local community can show measurement

Example 1:

If your goal is to reduce the number of teenage drunk drivers in your community, you might want to find out the number of annual teenage drunk driving arrests before you start, by interviewing someone in the police department.

Example 2:

If your goal is to clean up a local playground by removing graffiti, trash, and other problems, you may want to take photos of the site before you start and even quantify how much trash and graffiti is in the area.

What to Measure?

The method of measurement and documentation can be varied, depending on the Project's goals.

It might include things that can be measured (quantitative), like the number of people in the community that recycle, or the number of pounds of food collected and distributed each week to shelters, or the amount of money donated to an event for your Project.

It should also include things that are hard to measure (qualitative), like learning how to interact with people, handling pressure during a conflict situation, feelings of confidence and accomplishment, collaboration and teamwork, and joy.

Documenting your project includes both types of measurements.

Here are a few examples of success indicators:

Goal: Lower the amount of junk food and soda in the school lunch program to create awareness around healthy eating habits.

Indicators:

- Half of the freshman class participated in before and after taste tests revealing they felt better not drinking so much sugar.
- By the third week of the school semester, the contract with the local soda company was changed to replace soda with vitamin-enhanced water.
- Team members felt determined, and with a lot of patience they achieved their goals.

Goal: Research the issue of the best way to create an advocacy and fundraising campaign around human trafficking and choose a Partner Organization to help guide your team to the impact you hope to achieve.

Indicators:

- The increase in the number of community partners working together to use the same texting mobile number for raising funds.
- The amount of money given to the Project from public donations.
- The number of people involved in the Project resulted in inspiring many others to take action and make a contribution.
- Stories of how the Team felt more confident about their ideas and ready to take on a new project.
- Teamwork and organizational skills were exceptional.

Goal: Hold a special event to create awareness around the issue of clean drinking water for the people in a village in Niger.

Indicators:

- 75 people attended a special event held at a local jewelry store to hear about our mission to educate the community.
- 20 of the people who attended gave money to the event, and 35 signed up to receive more information and said they would be willing to help with our campaign.
- 15 people said they would post our photos on their Facebook pages and tell people to Like Us.
- Our entire Team committed to reaching out to our local grocery store to see if they would sponsor a day of shopping and contribute 10% of the receipts to our Social Action Project.
- The local news station interviewed our Team Coordinator as the spokesperson to tell our story on camera and to tell where to learn more about our Social Action Project.

Try to keep your measurements and evaluation simple and reflective of your work.

Unintended Consequences

Expect that there may be unintended consequences or outcomes during your Social Action Project that you might not have expected or considered. Think of these surprises during your monitoring as learning experiences. There are no failures, because valuable social impacts include opportunities to learn from what happened!

Logic Model

One way to think about measuring impact is to use a Logic Model as a tool for measurement. Here is an example of a Logic Model:

Inputs are all the resources your Team puts into your Project, such as your time, money, and materials.

Outputs are the products or services delivered and/or people served by your Team's actions.

Outcomes are the desired results of a project on its participants, including benefits and changes in condition. Examples include decrease in the number of teen drunk drivers, increase in the number of villagers with solar lights, increase in the number of students participating in conflict resolution seminars, or the increase in the number of community gardens.

Impacts are the longer-term behavioral results of programs. They are more personal to the local community or global community because they are bigger than just outcomes—they demonstrate changed behavior or attitudes or large-scale effects. Impact is based on the outcomes of your Project but includes those social changes that can't always be measured by money, but can be measured by the health and happiness of the community or people benefiting from the Project. This is where you decide what your Story of Social Impact will tell on the Showcase!

During your Project, you will want to look for your Project's successful outcomes and impacts and use those indicators in your story.

Reflection

Here are some suggested questions to ask your Team to think about and reflect on upon completion of their Social Action Project:

- Did your Social Action Project mission statement reflect the outcomes you achieved?
- How did the people benefiting from your Project feel about the outcomes?
- Are your Team members happy with the outcomes of the Project?
- How many people benefited from your Project and will the benefits continue and increase?
- Do those affected by the Project value the outcomes? How and why?
- What obstacles or challenges occurred and how did you overcome them?
- In what ways did the Team learn more information about their Project and its effect on the community or the people they were trying to help?
- What outcomes are the Team, the Team Members, and the Mentor most proud of?
- What skills did your Team learn while conducting your Social Action Project?
- What can you tell others who might want to conduct a Project like yours?
- What is the most important thing you would like to tell others about your Social Action Project's outcome?
- How did your Social Action Project benefit your community or a community around the world?
- Were community partners involved with your Project and how did they feel about the outcomes?
- What were successful milestones and what could you have done differently?
- Were there unintended consequences during your Project?
- What did you learn as a team?
- What did you learn as an individual team member?
- What would you like to celebrate in your story?

By answering these reflection questions, your Team can use the answers to help create your own outline or storyboard for your video or Digital Portfolio describing your Team's Story of Social Impact, to be shared with the global community.

Step 4. Sharing your Story of Social Impact

Your Story of Social Impact should tell the story and, most importantly, show the impact of your Project in a Digital Portfolio that describes and documents the creation, conduct, and outcome of the Project.

It should include an inspiring visual description of the Project, which could be in one or more of these formats

- A captivating video of the most compelling parts of the Project (3 minutes or less)
- A striking collection of photos, a photomontage, or other photographic display
- A powerful PowerPoint presentation as a storyboard summary (30 slides or less)
- A fascinating written narrative about the entire Project, including a brief Project summary and any helpful charts, graphs, photos, drawings, or other visual media

Keep a record of the progress of your Project from start to finish – with video, photos, written notes, or other media – and use this documentation to create your Digital Portfolio and Story of Social Impact.

Your audience for your story will be the world of other Young Global Citizens and their communities. Think about what you want to tell them about the outputs, outcomes, and impacts that resulted from your Team taking action.

Please see Creating Your Story of Social Impact for more in-depth details.

Thank you for creating the world you want! We look forward to receiving your Social Action Project Application soon!

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