



Expanding Your Impact

Connecting with Youth Around the World

The idea: All over the world, young people are serving their communities, feeding neighbors, cleaning rivers, tutoring kids, welcoming newcomers. When you connect with them, you realize you aren't doing this alone: you're part of a worldwide movement of young people making things better.

"We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike." — Maya Angelou

"One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world." — Malala Yousafzai

"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." — Jane Goodall

FACILITATOR NOTES

Time. about 60–90 minutes total. Works in a classroom, youth group, or club. No materials or cost required.

Service today. Pick one option in Serve below and set it up before you begin.

Warm-up (10 minutes)

FACILITATOR NOTES

Keep this quick, short answers are great. Read the questions together.

- When you picture a "volunteer," do you usually picture someone like you? Someone in another country?
- What might a young person in another part of the world be doing to help their community right now?
- What could you learn from how youth somewhere else solve a problem you also have?
- Does knowing that millions of other young people serve too make you more likely to? Why?

Learn (10–20 minutes)

Here's something easy to miss: the work you do to help your community is happening everywhere, all at once. Right now, teenagers in dozens of countries are packing food, planting trees, teaching younger kids, and looking after elders, just like youth here. Youth service isn't a local thing; it's a global movement, with millions of young people in it. Connecting with that bigger picture does two things. It reminds you that you're part of something huge, which is motivating on the hard days. And it lets you trade ideas: a clever solution a youth group found in one country can spark a project in yours. You don't have to travel to be part of it; you just have to look up, reach out, and realize how much company you have. The clearest proof shows up once a year, on Global Youth Service Day, billed as the largest service event in the world made just for young people. Each spring, youth in communities across many countries plan and lead their own service projects around the same time, turning "young people serve everywhere" from an idea into a date you can actually join.

Being part of the global picture can mean:

- Learning how young people elsewhere tackle problems you care about too.
- Sharing what your group does, and being inspired by what others do.
- Joining worldwide efforts where youth everywhere serve at the same time.

A closer look. A service club in a small town reads about a group of teenagers in another country who turned a trash-filled lot into a thriving community garden that now feeds dozens of families. Inspired, the club tracks the group down online through their school and trades messages: how did you get the land, what did you plant, what went wrong. Months later, the town has its own garden, started from a stranger's idea half a world away. The two groups have never met in person. But a problem one of them solved became a problem the other one solved too. That's the quiet power of connecting: good ideas don't care about borders.

Why connecting matters. It's easy to feel like your one project is a drop in the bucket. Connecting with youth around the world fixes that feeling, because you see the bucket filling everywhere at once. That does something real: it keeps you going, it helps young people see themselves as the capable, global citizens they actually are, and it spreads what works. A good idea shared between two groups becomes two projects, then ten. None of it requires money or a passport, just curiosity and the willingness to reach out safely. The more young people realize how many others are serving alongside them, the bigger and bolder their own service tends to get.

How to connect. Connecting with youth elsewhere is easier than ever, and a few safe habits make it work. You can:

- Learn first: find out what young people in other places are doing to serve, online, in the news, through global youth networks.
- Share your story: post or present what your group does, so it can inspire someone else.
- Reach out safely: connect through a teacher, school, or trusted program, never sharing private information.
- Join Global Youth Service Day: each spring, take part in the world's largest youth service event, when young people everywhere serve at once.

Keep these in mind.

- **You're not alone in this.** Millions of young people serve worldwide. You're part of something far bigger than your town.
- **Good ideas travel.** A solution from across the world can work on your street, and yours can work on theirs.
- **Connect safely.** Reach out through a school, teacher, or trusted program, and never share private information online.
- **Lead, don't just follow.** Young people aren't junior helpers. Treat yourself as a global citizen with something to offer.

Serve (30–60 minutes)

Today you'll put this into practice in a real service activity. Here are ways to do it:

Option A — Bring the world to your group *(no cost, works in any setting)*

Pick a country or community and dig up a real story of young people there serving, a cleanup, a school they built, a hunger project (the stories youth share around Global Youth Service Day are a great place to start), and turn it into something you can share: a short presentation, a display, or a post for your group or school. Showing others what youth elsewhere are pulling off connects you to the movement and sparks ideas at home, all for the price of a little research.

Option B — Start an exchange *(low cost, a bit more effort)*

With a teacher's or mentor's help, set up a safe connection with a class, club, or youth group in another community or country, through a school partnership, a trusted exchange program, or a youth-service network. Trade what each of you is doing to serve, swap ideas and encouragement, and keep it going. A real connection turns “youth around the world” from an idea into actual people you know.

Option C — Serve on Global Youth Service Day *(more effort; coordinated service)*

Plan and carry out your own service project for Global Youth Service Day, the worldwide event each spring when young people everywhere serve at the same time. Pick a real need, line up your group, do the work, and register or share your project so you're counted among youth serving across the planet that day. For an extra global twist, team up with a group elsewhere doing the same. It's the most direct way to turn “part of a global movement” into something you actually did.

Before you go (all options): Make any connection with people elsewhere through a teacher, school, or trusted program, never on your own through random online contact. Don't share personal details (full name, address, school, photos) or arrange to meet anyone. Have your mentor or teacher set up and supervise any exchange, and stick to reputable, youth-focused organizations.

Reflect (10 minutes)

FACILITATOR NOTES

After serving, talk through a few of these together, then give everyone quiet time to write.

What did you learn about how young people in other places serve?

Did anything you found change how big you think your own impact could be?

What's one idea from somewhere else you'd want to try here?

How does it feel to know millions of young people are serving alongside you?

Then finish one or both sentences:

A place or group whose youth service I want to learn more about is...

One idea from elsewhere I'd like to bring home is...
