



## What is a Social Action Project?

An integral part of World Savvy's AYLP with Bangladesh will be the completion of a **social action project** by each Youth Leader participating in the trip. Social action projects may be big or small, and will grow out of what Youth Leaders learn and experience during their time in Bangladesh. Working together during the four weeks in Bangladesh, leaders will learn about social action projects, as well as brainstorm ideas together and start designing a plan for their individual projects. Upon their return home, Youth Leaders will be responsible for implementing and evaluating the impact of their social action project, with the support of World Savvy and the AYLP educator leaders. Youth leaders attending the same school as another participant or those who live in the same community as another participant may work together.

To get started, it's important to think about just what a social action project is. Social action projects go beyond volunteering and service learning, where people help others in need and learn about social issues in local and global communities. A social action project is a multi-step process in which youth address an issue they care about, learn about it and potential solutions to solve it, then take action to create positive change on this issue.

### **Good social action projects:**

- involve community members and stakeholders in their implementation
- both educate and motivate others to take action too
- focus on solutions to address the root causes of a social issue

Here's an example of a social action project that addresses these factors:

*Your school has a recycling program, but the bins around campus are almost always empty. Last year, students made posters to hang around campus, but this didn't seem to have much of an impact. This year, the green team decides to survey students and faculty about why they aren't recycling. They used this information to change the location of some bins, to develop not just awareness but also educational campaigns about climate change and the importance of recycling, and to encourage accountability for recycling by sponsoring contests, incentives, and electing recycling captains. All these efforts have led to a huge increase in recycling and a reduction in the trash across campus.*

### **Steps of a Social Action Project:**

- 1) Learn about the issue and identify a specific problem within that issue on which to focus.
- 2) Identify stakeholders and needs/resources of the community affected by that issue.
  - a. Stakeholders are the people involved in an issue – those impacted by the issue, those who can influence or create change, etc.
  - b. Assess the needs and strengths of the community related to your issue. Are other organizations working on the same issue? Are there needs in your community not being addressed?
- 3) Assemble a team.
  - a. Partner with other organizations, or recruit friends to help plan and implement. Find out what everyone's strengths and skills are, and design a project to utilize those strengths.
- 4) Choose an action and then create a plan to carry out your project.
- 5) Implement your action project.
- 6) Monitor and evaluate your action.
  - a. Keep data, survey participants, and track the results of your project.



## Types of Social Action Projects

There are many different types of projects you can undertake to make change. Use the graphic below as a guide to think about how your team's talents align with the problem and solutions you identified.

In many cases, there will be overlap between these different actions - - you might design a project that educates, unites people to your cause, and advocates for a policy change to address the issue. Think creatively and critically about how you personally can have an impact on the problem!



### Examples of each type of action:

<b>Educate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop educational workshops for your peers or younger students</li><li>• Present at local organizations, churches, etc. to educate the community about your topic</li></ul>
<b>Advocate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organize a letter writing campaign or petition to local/national representatives</li></ul>
<b>Unite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organize a school-wide event to raise awareness and get students to take action</li><li>• Sponsor a social event to bring people together while also generating awareness or funds for an organization working to solve your issue</li></ul>
<b>Speak Out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share your research and ideas through theatrical performances or artwork</li><li>• Develop a PSA and post on social media or work with local media to get it on the air</li></ul>
<b>Engage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commit to change your behavior in some way and start a campaign to encourage others to as well</li></ul>
<b>Serve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start a non-profit or business that provides a service aligned with your proposed solution</li><li>• Organize a fundraising campaign for a non-profit working to advance your solution</li></ul>



## Examples of Social Action Projects

The following are examples of social action projects addressing a wide range of social issues, including climate change.

### **Green Belt Movement**

What is now a global movement started by the late Nobel Peace Prize winning Wangari Maathai, started as a simple social action project where Maathai took action to plant more trees in deforested areas of her native Kenya. Recognizing that the reasons trees were being town down had to do with economics, politics, and the impacts of colonialism, and that deforestation was having a disproportionately negative impact on women, Maathai created a unique approach. She hired women to plant and grow trees in their own community, providing them with income and making the project sustainable because the women would ensure the trees would be cared for (because the local community was involved instead of someone from the outside who planted trees and then moved on).

<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/>

### **Green Dhaka Initiative (BYEI)**

Green Dhaka initiative motivates Dhaka's citizens to plant more within the city (particularly on balconies and in terraces). The principal idea is to distribute free seedlings in the major traffic intersections in the Dhaka city. The seedlings will be wrapped with decorative garments for both beautification and cleanliness and each of the seedlings will have a note attached to it containing our message about making Dhaka a green city. The project was undertaken on World Environment Day. <http://byei.org/>

### **Project Jatropha**

This student-created organization is dedicated to promoting the plant *Jatropha curcas* as an ecologically friendly and economically profitable crop among the farmers of rural India. *Jatropha curcas* is a carbon sink, taking carbon dioxide out of the air and putting it into the ground. The bio-fuel produced by the seeds provides a clean, alternative source of energy that not only helps reduce emissions, but also is able to be used in diesel engines to power vehicles and irrigation pumps. In addition, by providing an alternative crop to tobacco for rural farmers, the burning of large quantities of firewood, which releases large amounts of carbon dioxide, can be reduced. <http://projectjatropha.com/>

### **Brower Youth Awards**

The Brower Youth Awards recognize 6 youth every year for their outstanding contributions in environmental action and advocacy. Past winners of the award include the 17 year old Californian who started Project Jatropha (above), as well as projects to transform the food purchasing and eating practices at universities, to create community gardens and healthy, sustainable food campaigns in communities that were food deserts, to spotlight communities impacted by the mining, processing and burning of coal, and to save nearly one million acres of boreal forest from industrial logging.

<http://www.broweryouthawards.org/>

### **Mission Greenbelt**

The Mission Greenbelt Project works with San Francisco residents to build a public artwork of sidewalk gardens connecting the city's street trees, existing sidewalk gardens, backyards and vacant lots. The project's goals are: to create more habitat and forage for area birds and insects, and to collect rainwater, which is otherwise diverted into San Francisco's combined sewage treatment system. All this is done in collaboration and with the input of community members. [http://www.art-ecology.com/mission\\_greenbelt\\_project.html](http://www.art-ecology.com/mission_greenbelt_project.html)

### **Facing the Future**

Facing the Future is an education organization dedicated to creating curriculum and helping teachers globally educate students about some of the world's most pressing global issues, including climate change. They have compiled a database of organizations taking action on climate change to assist students in finding service learning and action project ideas.

<http://www.facingthefuture.org/ServiceLearning/ClimateChangeActionProjects/tabid/350/Default.aspx>



### Timeline – Social Action Projects

The following timeline will help break down the steps of the process for designing a social action projects, and the due dates for each step along the way.

Action Step	Activities	Due Dates
1) Learn about the issue and identify a problem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bi-weekly assignments and pre-trip reading</li><li>• Workshops and projects completed during the trip</li><li>• Additional research related to your specific action project to be completed after the trip, as needed</li></ul>	Before and during the trip
2) Identify stakeholders and community needs/ resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As your next bi-weekly assignment (you have more than two weeks for this one, though!), interview two community members (teachers, local business people, staff of local social service or environmental organizations, etc.) and post a paragraph summary of each interview on Edmodo (turned in as an assignment and posted on your small group).</li></ul>	November 28
3) Assemble a team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and speak to two people to be part of the team for your social action project. These could be friends, members of your school's environmental/green club, members of local organizations, etc. Talk to them about what their skills and interests are, and think about how you will utilize their talents for your project.</li></ul>	December 13
4) Choose an action and make a plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During the trip, students will work together to begin brainstorming ideas for projects.</li><li>• When you return from the trip, sit down with your team and complete the planning of your project. Then write and submit 5 page social action project plan.</li></ul>	February 20
5) Implement your project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All the planning and the actual project itself should be completed.</li></ul>	April 16
6) Monitor and evaluate your project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submit the results from the evaluation of your project, with the data you have collected and the results of what you have accomplished.</li></ul>	April 28