

Connect!

LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN ASSETS

II



Equality and Social Justice

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY	YFP Administration and Support
STATE OF UTAH	YFP Funding and Support
OJJDP	YFP Funding and Support

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Introduction

THE CONNECT! II LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN ASSETS

Curriculum is centered around strengthening the “Developmental Assets” of Youth. These 40 “Developmental Assets” as identified by the Search Institute of Minneapolis have proven to be crucial building blocks that youth and families need in order to succeed in life.

Throughout the country, organizations and schools recognize that these assets can be built and strengthened in our youth with the quiet revolution termed “mentoring.” A mentor is defined as a “wise and trusted friend; or someone that shows the way.”

In the 1997 Summit on America’s Future, leaders from all across the country hailed mentoring as one of the necessary solutions to help ensure a stable future for America’s youth. They were supported by research proving that mentoring works. Goals were set to find and enlist 2,000,000 mentors by the year 2000. That goal has been met!

Volunteer mentors come with a variety of education and experience. Asking mentors to work in a structured program to build or strengthen “Developmental Assets” in youth without prior training, raises serious concerns.

In order for meaningful interaction to occur between mentors and youth, a basic asset-related curriculum was needed. **CONNECT! II...** was developed out of this necessity. **CONNECT! II...** is a supplement of activities that apply to additional developmental assets from The Search Institute.

CONNECT! II... is designed to give meaningful interaction during the time mentors spend with their youth. It is designed to be flexible enough to be conducted informally on a one-on-one basis, or with a small group of mentors and mentees, or it can also be used during family trainings or family activity nights. The activities are designed to help the youth develop life-long competencies based on the “Developmental Assets” model.

From the volunteer/mentor perspective, **CONNECT! I** and **II...** provide readily available materials and activities that can be prepared and used quickly. **CONNECT! I** and **II...** will help mentors effectively meet the individual needs of each youth.

Using This Book: To The Mentor

Each of the units/chapters in this curriculum is dedicated to one of the “40 Developmental Assets” as identified by the Search Institute. The Individual units or chapters are designed to: 1) identify the asset or quality that you would like to work on with your youth, 2) give specific instructions for fun, active learning activities, and 3) follow up with concrete discussion questions that will help the youth achieve higher level thinking and processing skills. Each unit is self-contained. Activities can be printed off for to be used individually by one or several sets of mentors and their youth.

Goal And Objective Page

Following the title page is a goal and objective page. This page lists the asset or quality, followed by the goal the youth is expected to meet if successfully achieving that quality. Each goal is broken into three concrete objectives for you and your youth to work on. To the right of each objective is a list of activities that can be completed by you and your youth.

Activity Page

The activity pages are written so that at a quick glance, you can see:

1. Topic of the activity
2. Whether the activity is better as a one-on-one or as a whole group activity
3. Time required to complete the activity
4. Necessary materials
5. How to set up the activity
6. Detailed directions to conduct the activity
7. Discussion topics to focus and reinforce the purpose of the activity
8. Specific questions to guide the youth’s thinking and processing

Checklist Page

Following each set of activity pages, is a Checklist page. After completing the activities, use this page to evaluate the progress your youth is making on a particular asset. Mentally answer the questions. If the youth is not ready to move on to the next objective, additional activity and resource suggestions are included.

Handouts

At the end of each set of activities are related activity sheets or handouts. Make as many copies of this material as you need.

EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

ASSET #27

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

OBJECTIVES

The youth will:

		PAGE
<p>1a. Gain a basic understanding of equality and social justice as they apply to basic human rights.</p> <p>1b. Identify a key issue in their school and/or community for which they feel strongly enough to take action.</p>	<p>Activity 1 What's Going on Around Me?</p>	6
	<p>Activity 2 On the Beat</p>	8
	<p>Activity 3 Getting the Word Out</p>	9
<p>2. Study an issue they are interested in related to equality and/or social justice and be able to discuss their findings with others.</p>	<p>Activity 1 What Works?</p>	11
	<p>Activity 2 Finding Consensus: What Will Work for Us?</p>	13
<p>3. Use the goal they have identified based on a key issue (problem or concern) and develop a plan to resolve or address the related issue. This may involve family, friends, or others in the community.</p>	<p>Activity 1 What Are You Going to Do?</p>	15
	<p>Activity 2 Get It Down on Paper</p>	16

What's going on around me?

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

Objective

The youth will gain a basic understanding of equality and social justice as they apply to basic human rights. They will identify a key issue in their school and/or community for which they feel strongly enough to take action.

Materials

- Computer with Internet access
- Current local newspapers
- Local television news program, live or pre-recorded
- Local school newsletter
- Notebook/pencil or pen
- Table or other surface to spread out on

Set Up

- Collect copies of local newspapers from the last week and have them available.
- Schedule a time to watch the local news for 2 to 3 days in a row or pre-record the local news to watch together another time.
- Attend a local PTA, School Board, or City Council meeting and take notes on school/community issues that are discussed. (Note: You can usually find out what will be on the city council agenda 2-3 days prior to the meeting by calling the city offices.)

Activity (2 hours)

- Gather the resources listed under Set Up and be prepared to have an interactive discussion with the youth. If you have access to the Internet, you can find many resources about human rights. This is a good place to begin.

Discuss

- What local government, community, or school guidelines are you aware of that would be considered an application of human rights?

What's going on around me? Continued...

Ask

- What are human rights?
Search the Internet and see what is written about current human rights. What is the history behind human rights? One key site to check is www.hrweb.org or simply type in "human rights" on your favorite search engine and see what comes up.
- What do you believe are the basic rights every person should have?
- Have you or your family or someone you know experienced a form of discrimination?
- How did it make you feel?
- How did you decide to deal with it?
- What might you have done differently?
- Who are the underprivileged, underserved, under represented people in your school or community?.

On the Beat

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

Objective

The youth will gain a basic understanding of equality and social justice as they apply to basic human rights. They will identify a key issue in their school and/or community for which they feel strongly enough to take action.

Materials

- List of issues related to the students at youth's school
- Voting/Signature pages

Setup

- Paper/pen to write down issues or computer and printer to write and print issues list.

Activity (2 hour)

- Have the youth conduct an informal interview/survey. Ask students at the youth's school to choose three top issues from a prepared list for which they feel most strongly. You may decide to use a sporting event or lunch period to reach several people in a short amount of time. (Possible questions to ask: "If you could change one thing about our school, what it would be?", or "I am 'sick and tired' of...", "If I had \$1,000 to give someone else, I would...") Print the results in the local school newsletter or post on a central bulletin board.
- Ask youth to vote on their top concern or issue by signing their name to a list. Based on the results of the survey and your own interest, choose an issue to work on.

Discuss

- The youth is the reporter: Discuss together the information gathered on school or community issues related to equality and/or human rights.

Ask

- What were the top two or three issues identified by the survey?
- What were the attitudes of students about the issue(s) they identified?
- What types of solutions to the issues were offered by the students?
- How do you believe you can help?

Getting the Word Out

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

Objective

The youth will gain a basic understanding of equality and social justice as they apply to basic human rights. They will identify a key issue in their school and/or community for which they feel strongly enough to take action.

Materials

- Computer, printer, paper, email (optional)

Setup

- Find a location at the local library or school to access information about one of the top issues/topics that is of interest to the youth. Help the youth apply what has been written to his/her local situation. Help the youth find answers to the questions below and write an article or report.

Activity

- Based on information gathered, choose one topic to research more and write a report or put an article in a local newspaper or school newsletter. Address the questions: What is the issue/concern? Who is affected? What has been done to address the issue? What still needs to be done? How do you propose addressing or resolving the issue?
- End the article inviting people who would like to get involved in working on a solution to the problem/concern you address to contact you.

Discuss

- Did the research you conducted increase your interest in the topic?
- How do you feel about getting involved in a solution?

Ask

- What do you think is the best solution to resolve the issue?
- What role can you play in making a difference?

Equality and Social Justice

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

After completing activities 1 and 2, is the youth ready to move on?

1. Does the youth have a basic understanding of human rights?	YES	NO
2. Can the youth identify examples of human rights issues in his/her community/school/or neighborhood?	YES	NO
3. Is the youth able to define discrimination in his/her own words?	YES	NO
4. Did the youth adequately search for information on human rights using available resources?	YES	NO
5. Has the youth identified an issue of interest and one he/she feels strongly enough about to do something about it?	YES	NO

If you answered "yes" to at least 4 of the 5 questions, you are ready to move on to the follow-up questions. Otherwise, continue with the activities listed below.

More Activities

- Check with the local volunteer center, 4-H Club, or other service organizations that utilize volunteers and volunteer to donate hours to a project already planned or ready to be implemented.
- Check with the city offices for listings of community events that utilize volunteers. Sign up to help plan or participate in one or more events.

Follow-Up Questions

- Are there other causes the youth feels more strongly about or that might be more achievable?
- Is the youth aware of other youth or adults working on the same or similar issues?

What Works?

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

Objective

The youth will build support for their identified issue related to equality and/or social justice. They will be able to discuss what others have done to address this issue and decide what they will do to address the issue locally.

Materials

- Access to encyclopedias, Internet, newspapers and/or other sources of information on current events.

Setup

- Work with interested youth, Extension staff, teachers, etc., to brainstorm names to add to a working team of interested persons.

Activity (2-4 hours)

- Form a team of interested persons (Note: Effective youth teams include one or more trusted adult advisors) to work on a specific issue. Together and individually research what others have already done to address the same issue or a similar issue in their area. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Then meet again to give reports on findings.
- In creating your team, have the youth ask themselves: "If I could have anyone in the community on my team, who would I choose?" Write those names down, contact each one with a personal invitation. You might be pleasantly surprised at their willingness to help. If they are not able to help, ask them to please suggest others who might be available. Have the youth ask themselves: will I need at least one or two key adults
- Also, have youth recruit students from their school that they believe would be interested and able to serve. Again, go for the very best. Choose two key students to be on the team.

What works? Continued...

Activity (2-4 hours)

- Sources for gathering information are the library, Internet, service clubs in the community such as Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, etc., government agencies, parent groups (PTA), youth groups (Boy Scouts, 4-H and many more). Don't be afraid to ask around..

Discuss

- Talk about the experience of forming a team of interested individuals. Was it a positive experience? What skills did you need/use to talk with people? Did you receive all the help you needed?

Ask

- Is this something you enjoyed doing?
- Do you feel like you can work with this group?
- Who will you count on to teach you how to work with this group?

Finding Consensus: What Will Work for Us?

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

Objective

The youth will build support for their identified issue related to equality and/or social justice. They will be able to discuss what others have done to address this issue and decide what they will do to address the issue at the local level.

Materials

- Copies of the identified issue to give each person—or write it on a poster/white board for everyone to see.

Activity (1-2 hours)

- Contact individuals and set up a meeting date and time. Contact key individuals and set up a meeting date and time. Extension staff and/or other caring adults can assist you in preparing for this initial meeting, including how to put an agenda together and how to conduct a meeting.
- Brainstorm and gather valuable information on projects other people/groups have worked on. Then, you are ready to decide what will work best for you and your group. As a group, identify what your own end goal will be.
- Ask yourself: “What do we want to have happen as a result of our efforts?” “Is our goal realistic?” “Is it specific?” “What is our time line?”
- Write down your goal on a poster-size paper to post in front of the group each time you meet together.

Discuss

- It is important to make certain everyone in the group has an opportunity to give input as to what the goal should be. It is also important to do your homework in finding out as much information as you can about your topic/issue.

Ask

- How did your group go about deciding on a goal?
- What might have been handled differently?
- Do you feel the goal is realistic, specific, and can be done in a reasonable amount of time?

Equality and Social Justice

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

After completing activities 1 and 2, is the youth ready to move on?

1. Did the youth effectively bring a team of interested people together?	YES	NO
2. Is the youth committed to being a leader of this group and following through?	YES	NO
3. Does the group have a specific goal to work on?	YES	NO
4. Has the goal been written down and agreed upon by all members of the group?	YES	NO
5. Has a date for the next meeting been set?	YES	NO

If you answered “yes” to at least 4 of the 5 questions, you are ready to move on to the follow-up questions. Otherwise, continue with the activities listed below.

More Activities

- Join a local service club already in existence and serve for a period of at least 6 months.

Follow-Up Questions

- Is the youth willing to try additional ways to bring people together that share common interests in human rights issues?
- Can the issue that has been identified grow into a common cause that people are willing to work on together?

What Are You Going to Do?

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

Objective

The youth will use the goal they have identified based on a key issue (problem or concern) and develop a plan to resolve or address the related issue. This may involve family, friends, or others in the community.

Materials

- Primary Resource: *The Kids' Guide to Social Action* by Barbara A. Lewis. Available through www.amazon.com or other online book stores, or check your local library. Approximate cost: \$6.50 (paperback).
- Secondary Resource: *Kids Guide to Service Projects* by Barbara A. Lewis. Also available online or check your local library. Approximate cost: \$13 (paperback).

Setup

- It is suggested that there be at least one copy per two persons of *The Kids' Guide to Social Action*.

Activity (1 hour)

Review a few of the success stories included in *The Kids' Guide to Social Action* by Barbara A. Lewis.

- What were the key steps these young people took that can be used in your own project?
- Review the "10 Tips for Taking Social Action" as outlined in *The Kids' Guide to Social Action* by Barbara A. Lewis.
- Write down the steps that have already been taken to reach your goal. You are off to a great start!

Discuss

- Young people all across the nation have been successful in carrying out service projects and making a difference in their communities by addressing human rights issues.

Ask

- What was it like learning about other successes young people like you have had in their communities?
- Did you find something that you can use in your own project?
- What, if any, changes need to be made to your goal to make it more achievable?

Get it Down on Paper

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

Objective

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- Secondary Resource: *Kids Guide to Service Projects* by Barbara A. Lewis. Also available online or check your local library. Approximate cost: \$13 (paperback).

Setup

- Ongoing meetings, progress reports.

Activity (45 minutes)

- How will you implement the next step? Divide responsibilities so everyone has an assignment that will help accomplish the goal.
- Design/complete your plan of action including deadlines and schedule meetings to review progress along the way.
- Report results (successes, learning experiences, failures) back to your work group. Prepare a written and/or oral report to present to key community groups. If you received donations from any group to conduct your project, make certain reports and appropriate thank yous are presented.

Discuss

- How would you rate your overall experience with this goal?
- Which successes and learning experiences provided you the most fun? The most challenge?

Ask

- What did you learn about the power of one person vs. a team having a large goal and then working to achieve it?
- Is this something you would try again? Why? Why not?
- What might you have done differently to make the experience more positive?

Equality and Social Justice

GOAL: Help Promote Equality (and Reduce World Poverty and Hunger)

After completing activities 1 and 2, is the youth ready to move on?

1. Was the youth actively involved in the process of accomplishing the goal?	YES	NO
2. Can the youth describe the process the group followed to achieve goal?	YES	NO
3. Did the group produce a written report on project/goal?	YES	NO
4. Did the youth contribute adequately to the team process?	YES	NO
5. Did the youth follow up with thank yous and/or reports to sponsors/donors?	YES	NO

If you answered “yes” to at least 4 of the 5 questions, you are ready to move on to the follow-up questions. Otherwise, continue with the activities listed below.

More Activities

- If the project was not successful, return to the original goal with the same group of individuals and/or recruit new members who may be better able to help the project be successful. Work back through the “10 Tips for Taking Social Action.”

Follow-Up Questions

- Did the youth/group utilize the media to get the word out about the identified issue?
- Did the youth/group gain enough experience to tackle another project in the future?

10 Tips for Taking Social Action

1. **Choose a problem.** Look around your school, neighborhood or community. Are there any areas you feel need to be improved? Consider the environment, child safety, renovation of old buildings, or grungy neighborhoods.
2. **Do your research.** You may already have some valuable information to use, but try some new ways of researching, too, like surveys, telephone interviews, writing letters, reading magazines and newspapers, or searching the Internet.
3. **Brainstorm possible solutions and choose one.** Think of what you might do to solve the problem. Brainstorm everything you can think of. There are no “dumb” ideas. Choose the solution that seems the most possible and that will make the most difference.
4. **Build coalitions of support.** Find all the people you can who agree with your solutions. The more people you have on your team, the more power you will have to make a difference.
5. **Work with your opposition.** For every good solution, there are people, businesses, and organizations that might oppose the plan. Be willing to explore your responses to “Who or what might make it hard to carry out your plan?”
6. **Advertise.** If you let people know what problem you’re trying to solve, and what solution you propose, you’ll suddenly find all sorts of people who want to climb on board.
7. **Raise money.** This isn’t essential to every project. However, if you are able to raise money, you can sometimes raise your visibility and present your project more professionally.
8. **Carry out your solution.** You have your team players, you’ve advertised to let people know your plan. Now, make it happen. Make a list of all the steps you need to take.
9. **Evaluate and reflect.** Is your plan working? Take time to evaluate along the way to judge your project and progress. If you need to make some changes to save the project, make them now.
10. **Don’t give up.** Unless you think it’s time to quit, don’t pay too much attention to folks who tell you all the reasons why your solution won’t work. Don’t give up. Climb.

Adapted from: Barbara A. Lewis. (1998). The Kids’ Guide to Social Justice Free Spirit Publishing.



Utah's Youth and Families with Promise Program (YFP) is designed to address youth problems through early intervention with at-risk youth, ages 10-14, and their families. YFP is a mentoring program designed to reduce and prevent delinquent behavior. The program addresses three goals:

- 1) improve academic performance
- 2) increase interpersonal competence
- 3) strengthen family bonds.



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This project was supported in part by grants No. 2000-JG-FX-K001 and No. 2012-JU-FX-0022 both awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs.

The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice.



This material is based upon the work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, US Department of Agriculture, and the Utah State University Extension Service, under special project number 99-EYAR-1-0559.4-H MENTORING Youth and Families with Promise.