



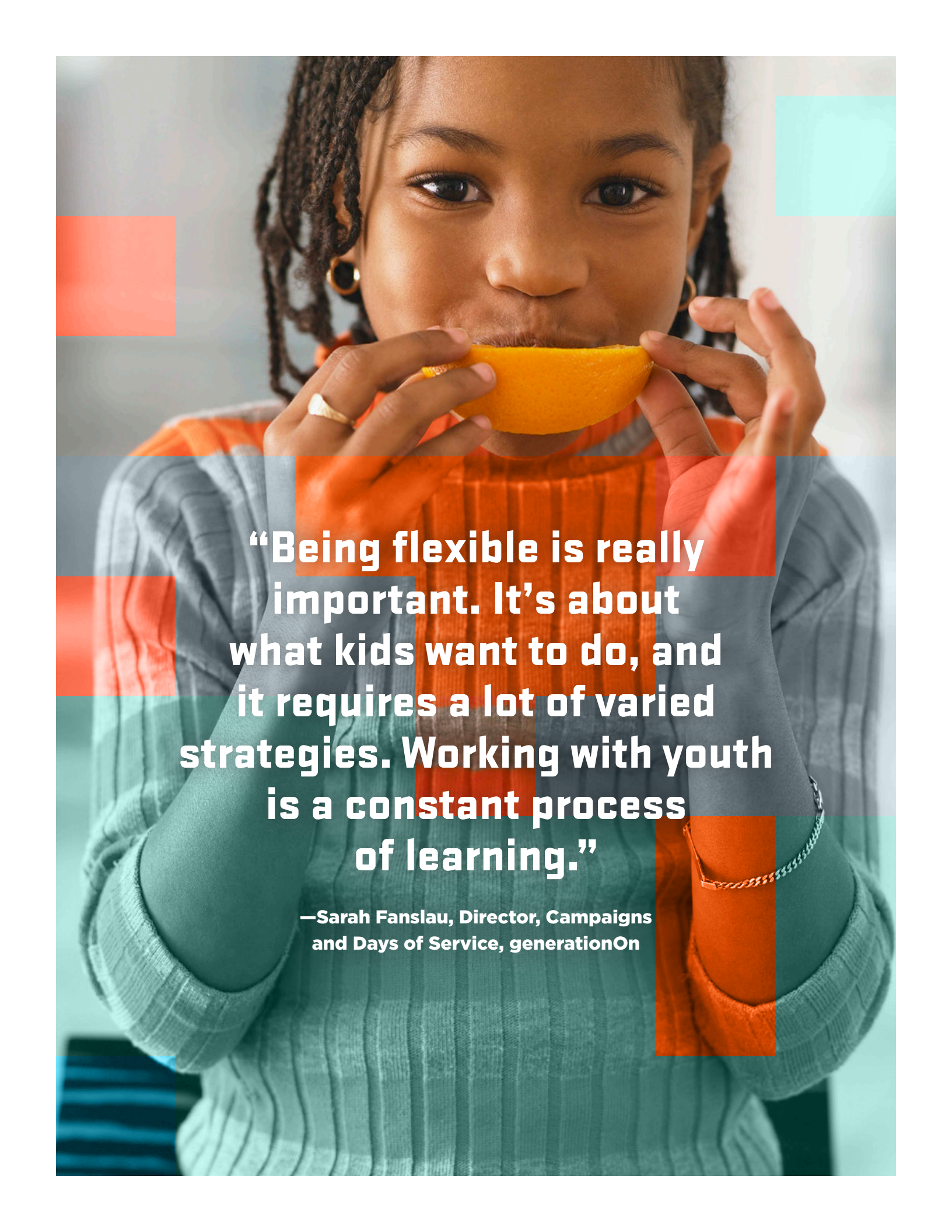
# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT



SODEXO  
 **stop  
hunger**  
FOUNDATION

 **NOKID  
HUNGRY**<sup>®</sup>  
SHARE OUR STRENGTH



A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark skin and braided hair, wearing a blue and white striped sweater. She is holding a slice of orange to her mouth with both hands. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue rectangle containing white text. There are also several solid-colored geometric shapes (a red square, a teal square, and a blue square) scattered around the image.

**“Being flexible is really important. It’s about what kids want to do, and it requires a lot of varied strategies. Working with youth is a constant process of learning.”**

**—Sarah Fanslau, Director, Campaigns and Days of Service, generationOn**



**One in six kids in America can't count on always getting the food they need.** This takes a terrible toll on their health and development, and threatens their futures in profound ways. Hungry kids are more likely to experience serious short- and long-term health issues. They tend to have more trouble learning and are more prone to behavioral and emotional problems. It's a devastating problem – but one that can be solved.

Our job is to break through barriers to make sure more kids are getting the critical food they need, every single day. There is a great deal of work still to be done. We know that 22 million kids in the U.S. rely on free and reduced-price school lunches for their nutrition during the school year, but only about 4 million kids get a free summer meal, and only 12 million – just over half – of those kids get free or reduced-price school breakfast.

We can do better than that. No Kid Hungry and the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation firmly believe that the No Kid Hungry promise to connect every kid to healthy food every day cannot be fulfilled without help from the next generation of young leaders. Generation No Kid Hungry allows us to spark student engagement and uncover the best practices for engaging youth in this important work. Young leaders can advocate for a hunger-free America by spreading the word to their families, friends and government leaders, encouraging them to help end childhood hunger in their local communities.

This toolkit provides an understanding of “what works” in engaging youth, with tools that can be used to broaden the base and immediately engage youth support in the fight to end childhood hunger.

Childhood hunger in America is a solvable problem, and the solution is within our reach. Together, we can ensure that every child has the healthy food they need to dream big and succeed.

Sincerely,

**Billy Shore**

Founder & CEO,  
Share Our Strength

**Shondra B. Jenkins**

Executive Director,  
Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>4</b>
	2.1 Background On Youth Engagement Toolkit.....	4
	2.2 Youth Engagement Is Critical to Ending Childhood Hunger .....	4
<b>3</b>	<b>Volunteerism .....</b>	<b>6</b>
	3.1 What We Know About Youth Volunteers .....	6
<b>4</b>	<b>Youth Engagement to End Childhood Hunger .....</b>	<b>7</b>
	4.1 An Organization to Engage Every Youth.....	7
<b>5</b>	<b>What Youth Told Us.....</b>	<b>8</b>
	5.1 Overall Survey Results .....	8
	5.2 Age .....	9
	5.3 Geographic Differences.....	9
	5.4 Girls Vs. Boys.....	9
	5.5 Youth Want to Matter .....	10
	5.6 Communication Platforms.....	11
<b>6</b>	<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>13</b>
	6.1 Best Practices to Engage Youth .....	13
<b>7</b>	<b>Immediate Steps to Engage Youth .....</b>	<b>17</b>
	7.1 Partner with Influencers .....	17
	7.2 Raise Awareness .....	17
	7.3 Be Genuinely Inclusive of Youth .....	18
	7.4 Be Responsive .....	18
	7.5 Advocacy .....	20
	7.6 Fundraising .....	22
	7.7 Direct Service.....	22
	7.8 Celebrate.....	22

## 01

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Youth view hunger as a problem that can be solved. In their words, “It is not fair that some kids don’t have enough food to eat.” Young people do not want to stand on the sidelines; they want to employ their full range of assets – their time, talents, treasure and even their connections – to end childhood hunger in the United States. Empowering young people to have a voice in their local communities provides opportunity for them to make change happen.

Together, we can help inspire these future agents of change.

And we desperately need their help. Despite substantial success in recent years in increasing the number of children who are participating in federal nutrition programs, there are still millions of kids who are not accessing healthy meals where they live, learn and play.

There is no one “right” way in which to engage youth. It varies by age, gender, where they live, their socio-economic status and other factors. Some youth want to make a difference as an individual, and others want to feel part of a larger community and be part of something “big.” As a result, the best manner in which to engage youth is to offer them a variety of ways to engage in the fight to end childhood hunger via advocacy, fundraising and direct service.

There are a few steps that can be taken to immediately engage youth:

- **Ask them.** The statement, “Come help us end childhood hunger” does not resonate with young people. Instead, let them know: **“We need you.”** When a specific request is made, youth feel valued for who they are and the insights that they can bring to the table.
- **Work with schools.** Most young people go to school every day. They view their schools as safe harbors and they trust their teachers and coaches and advisors. Youth are more likely to volunteer and get involved with social issues that are associated with their school – a known entity.
- **Be responsive. Be authentic.** Those organizations that are most successful in engaging youth respond to individual texts and emails. They speak “youth language.” Since an individual’s perceptions of, and feelings about, the way s/he is treated by the organization impact their volunteerism, make an investment to respond to those youth who do want to be engaged and support your efforts.
- **Be genuinely inclusive of youth.** Inclusiveness refers to whether youth are able to participate fully in the activities within an organization or group. Inclusive organizations not only have youth involved, but are also learning-centered and incorporate the needs, assets, and perspectives of everyone into everything they do. Inclusiveness generally refers to *how* youth are authentically engaged in every aspect. Make it a strategic priority.
- **Appreciate youth and their perspective.** Like everyone, youth need to feel appreciated for their participation and the difference they are making. Recognize and celebrate their contributions.

**Collectively, we can end childhood hunger in the U.S.**



# 02

## OVERVIEW

### 2.1 BACKGROUND ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

The work through Generation No Kid Hungry, funded by Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation, provides the opportunity to catapult student engagement and uncover the best practices for engaging youth in this important work. Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation's investment in youth engagement work has been fundamental to taking on new challenges and exploring creative ways to educate and support the next generation of leaders as they end childhood hunger in their communities.

Despite substantial success in recent years in increasing the number of children who are participating in federal nutrition programs, there are still millions of kids who are not accessing healthy meals where they live, learn and play. There is an opportunity for program providers and advocates at the local level to engage youth at a much larger scale. This toolkit provides an understanding of “what works” in engaging youth, and what tools can be used to broaden the base of youth support in the fight to end childhood hunger.

### 2.2 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IS CRITICAL TO ENDING CHILDHOOD HUNGER

Engaging youth in social issues is tricky. The issues about which they care and want to get involved change quickly - and yet they are often seeking more permanent, systemic change. It is a tension that must be balanced.

Youth engagement empowers young people to have a voice in decisions that affect them in their local communities, to make change happen. Authentic youth engagement requires that young people have actual authority and responsibility, as well as opportunities to develop the skills needed to make sound decisions. For programs, community organizations, and policymakers, it means working as partners with youth, instead of making decisions for them or only providing services to them. Young people become agents of change instead of targets to be changed. Youth engagement is both a road to better community results and a positive result in itself. Youth learn about their communities and how to create better places for themselves and others to live. They develop research, leadership, community organizing, and decision-making skills. As young people develop their full civic potential, their lives and the well-being of their communities improve. Youth engagement is not the same in every community. Sometimes, young people themselves take charge, identify the results they want to achieve, and set about reaching their goals. In other instances, government officials, agencies, schools, and community organizations reach out to youth for their input and participation in planning and decisions. Often, a variety of youth engagement strategies are at work and young people are involved in many different ways. It is not “all or nothing” for most communities— youth participation is neither completely lacking nor a routine part of all decision making.<sup>1</sup>

Youth can recruit their peers to be engaged in the fight to end childhood hunger. Furthermore, they can generate new ideas on how to increase participation in federal nutrition programs; activities to entice youth to visit meal sites; and develop different messages that will resonate with others about the programs available to increase access to nutritious food. They might even help manage a program!



**“Young people bring fresh  
eyes, energy, and a different  
perspective to the issue.”**

**—Shondra Jenkins, Executive Director,  
Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation**

## 03

## VOLUNTEERISM

## 3.1 WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

Research indicates that while youth are influenced by their teachers, peers and religious institutions, they are ultimately motivated to volunteer by an intrinsic need to do good. Feeling a connection to the community appears to be an additional requisite for their motivation.<sup>ii</sup> Once youth begin to volunteer regularly, a majority of them will continue to do so for at least a few years.<sup>iii</sup> Females are more likely than males to volunteer, and volunteerism peaks during middle adulthood.

Regardless of the primary factor that motivates a young adult to volunteer, altruism seems to be pervasive throughout the various motivations to volunteer.<sup>iv</sup> Volunteering may be a developmentally consequential experience. Adolescents are better able to understand and internalize values than are younger children. They have increased capacity for empathy with others' needs. Generosity and other forms of helping behavior have been found to increase as children approach adolescence. Volunteering may serve as an outlet for such an emerging proclivity for helping behavior.<sup>v</sup>

When participation is voluntary (as opposed to being a requirement towards community service hours), only those who are already well-equipped, self-select to volunteer; whereas, those who are most in need of this experience refrain from engaging in community service on their own accounts. Therefore, it is important to work with on-the-ground partners, teachers and others who are deeply involved in the youth community to identify the unusual suspects and encourage them to volunteer. Volunteers had significantly higher sense of community belonging, social responsibility, and self-evaluations.<sup>vi</sup>

A decision to volunteer is impacted by demographic characteristics, personal beliefs and values, pro-social personality, volunteer-related motives, volunteer social pressure, organizational attributes & practices, situational factors, and their relationship with the organization.<sup>vii</sup> Younger volunteers have greater social motivation.<sup>viii</sup> Younger volunteers rank career, social, and understanding functions higher on their motivations for volunteering, with "values function" (i.e., their altruistic values) as the primary motivating factor.<sup>viii</sup>

Millennials are motivated by their values, not by relationships or obligations. They see strategy and impact as key drivers to their involvement in social causes. They don't want to stand on the sidelines; they want to develop close relationships, become partners, and employ their full range of assets – their time, talents, treasure and even their connections – to encourage others to get involved.<sup>ix</sup>





# 04

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER

### 4.1 AN ORGANIZATION TO ENGAGE EVERY YOUTH

There are dozens of organizations across the U.S. engaging youth in the fight to end childhood hunger. Most, if not all, are all trying to identify the best mechanism to engage youth in their activities. There is not one “right” approach, and it varies by the age of the youth who are being recruited, where they live, their socio-economic status and other factors. Furthermore, some youth want to make a difference as an individual, and others want to feel part of a larger community and be part of something “big.” As a result, most organizations offer youth a variety of ways to engage in the fight to end childhood hunger, and focus on advocacy, fundraising, and direct service.

The Alliance to End Hunger is a coalition of more than 90 members that engage diverse institutions to build the public and political will to end hunger at home and abroad. As part of the research for this toolkit, several Alliance members were interviewed. We also asked interviewees about other organizations that have been successful in engaging youth to fight hunger. We specifically identified organizations that are intentional and authentic about how they work with youth, have a robust and sophisticated approach, and set the “gold standard.” While it is by no means comprehensive, below are some examples of organizations that have a strong reputation in engaging youth in ending hunger. Descriptions of these organizations can be found in Appendix A.

- No Kid Hungry & Generation No Kid Hungry
- Campus Kitchens Project
- Congressional Hunger Center
- DoSomething.org
- FFA (Future Farmers of America)
- Food Recovery Network
- generationOn
- GENYOUth
- Universities Fighting World Hunger (UFWH)
- Youth Service America (YSA)

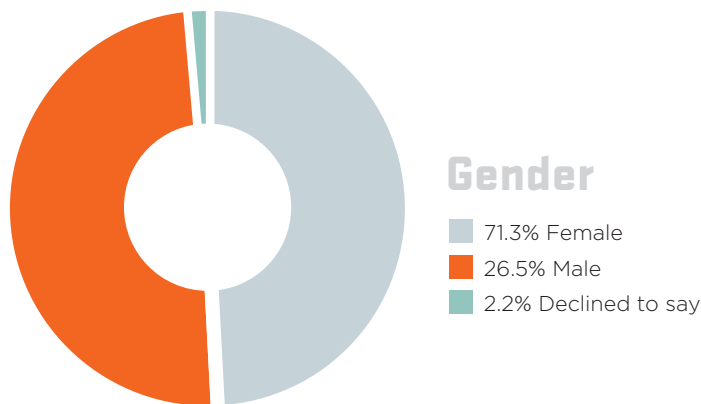
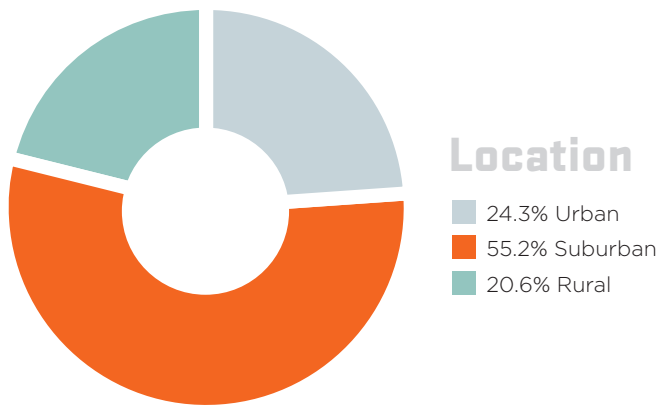


## 05

## WHAT YOUTH TOLD US

## 5.1 OVERALL SURVEY RESULTS

An online survey of 138 youth between the ages of 10 and 25 years was completed in the fall of 2015. The respondents represented 29 states<sup>1</sup> across the U.S. and provided the following information about themselves:



Furthermore, the survey revealed these findings:

- Youth see hunger as a problem that can be solved, and feel that it is not fair that some kids don't have enough food to eat. Youth want to get engaged because they want to help others.
- Youth are most interested in getting involved via volunteer events, as opposed to hunger summits, webinars, workshops, etc. They also want to participate in group activities, and participate in ways that are tangible – such as collecting canned goods, making sandwiches, dishing out food, etc.
- Regardless of whether they are already engaged in the movement to end childhood hunger, youth indicated that email or word-of-mouth via friends, family and Facebook are the best ways in which to communicate with them. However, youth admitted that their social media preferences are ever-changing and thus it's important for organizations to measure and determine what platforms work best for their purposes in engaging youth.
- Rural, urban and suburban youth identify a desire to feel more connected to the local community, and opportunities to get involved, as the most motivating factors to engage in ending childhood hunger in the U.S.
- Youth are most interested in volunteering on weekends and weekdays, as opposed to holidays, school breaks and national service days.
- Focus groups revealed that youth are more likely to volunteer or participate in activities sponsored or aligned with their school, because it is a trusted and reliable institution.

<sup>1</sup> Respondents represented the following states: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Washington, DC.

## 5.2 AGE

Regardless of age, the primary reason that youth provided for volunteering is a desire to help. It also makes them feel good! They want to have fun outside of classroom lessons while giving back. Youth ages 14-18 years are marginally engaged in volunteering, but are more involved with social issues overall than other age groups. Similarly, this same age group is more interested in U.S. hunger than other age groups; they felt that “hunger is a problem that can be solved.” Thus, when engaging 14-18 year old youth, it is best to connect the volunteer activity to a school, and to provide opportunities where they can volunteer in groups.

## 5.3 GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

Those youth living in urban or suburban areas are slightly more engaged in activities (i.e., volunteering, signing petitions, donating money and talking about community problems) than those living in rural areas.

Urban and suburban youth are more interested in equality, poverty, U.S. hunger and the environment, than are rural youth.

Urban and suburban youth indicate a much higher awareness (44.44%) of using volunteerism as a resume builder than do rural youth.

Regardless of geographic location, it is important to identify the local advocates who already have relationships established with youth. Those advocates can be critical to sharing information with youth, as they are seen as trusted advisors. “‘Boots on the ground’ lead to better participation.”

## 5.4 GIRLS VS. BOYS

Females tend to talk with friends about community problems more frequently than do males. Yet, males donate and sign petitions more frequently than do females. Both genders indicated that they volunteer because it makes them feel good, and that they have a desire to help others.

Males strongly believe hunger is a problem that can be solved. Females believe it is not fair that some kids don't have enough food to eat.

Both male and female ninth graders with higher educational plans, educational aspirations, grade point averages, and intrinsic motivation toward school, were more likely to volunteer in Grades 10 to 12.<sup>x</sup>



**“Youth in rural areas might consider the entire county their “community,” whereas urban youth think about their community as a 3-block radius to their home.”**

**—Amanda Villacorta, Senior Manager, Financial Planning & Analysis, No Kid Hungry**

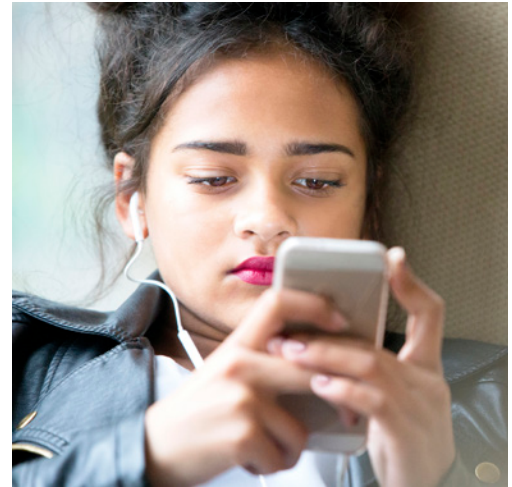


## 5.5 YOUTH WANT TO MATTER

Developmentally, between the ages of 14 and 18 is the age range when kids form civic identities that often stay with them for the rest of their lives. Raising children to become active citizens doesn't happen by chance. Being familiar with the common steps in their journeys can help parents, educators, and other adults support kids through these important learning experiences. And it can help develop effective youth leadership programs.<sup>xi</sup>

A study on youth leadership and how young people adopt passionate causes reveals the stages of growth often experienced by youth:<sup>xii</sup>

- Kids who develop a passion to serve can usually point to a critical experience that became transformative for them.
- The potential for youth leadership occurs when teenagers form relationships with people in need. This creates moral dilemmas for them. They begin to ask questions that compare their own circumstances to others. For the first time, they may wonder why people are hungry or why children are homeless.
- As they consider these moral dilemmas, adolescents reach deep within and think about their values. Instead of mimicking the opinions they have heard from others, such as parents or friends, they begin to form their own conclusions. They need to process their feelings with adults who are not judgmental, and who trust in their abilities to find their own answers. Often, these adults are leaders of volunteer programs, older siblings, or a favorite teacher. Encouraging teens to discuss their feelings with others, or even write about them, helps facilitate learning.
- Through reflection, talking with others, and linking their values to the issues that impact them, young people experience a shift in perspective. They begin to see how issues are connected to each other, and they become interested in understanding the root causes of societal problems.
- Young people reach the last step in this journey when they see themselves as active, engaged citizens. They are able to articulate their beliefs about how they understand a social or environmental issue, and they hold a worldview that incorporates themselves as agents of change. They know that small things that they do to contribute to social and environmental causes have a big impact. At this point, they are ready and able to make a long-term commitment to serving the public good.



### Key Discovery:

Messaging is important.

The statement, “Come help us end childhood hunger” does not resonate with all youth.

Instead, tell youth:

**“We need you.”**

Adults play a critical role as youth need them to (1) feel supported and encouraged, (2) listen, (3) set high expectations, (4) show interest in them as individuals separate from academics or civic activities, (5) foster self-decision making, and (6) provide another perspective during problem-solving.<sup>v</sup> See Appendix B for a template that adults can use to ensure youth needs are being met.

Youth want to make sure that adults share responsibility with them, and adults look to youth to be active participants. That means that adults and youth work together toward common objectives and that ideas and creativity offered by youth are honored. Youth can help think in new ways and increase moments of understanding and inspiration.<sup>xiii</sup>



**“One of the biggest challenges is getting as many boys to serve as girls. Girls tend to volunteer more than boys.”**

**—David Battey, President & Founder, Youth Volunteer Corps**

## 5.6 COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

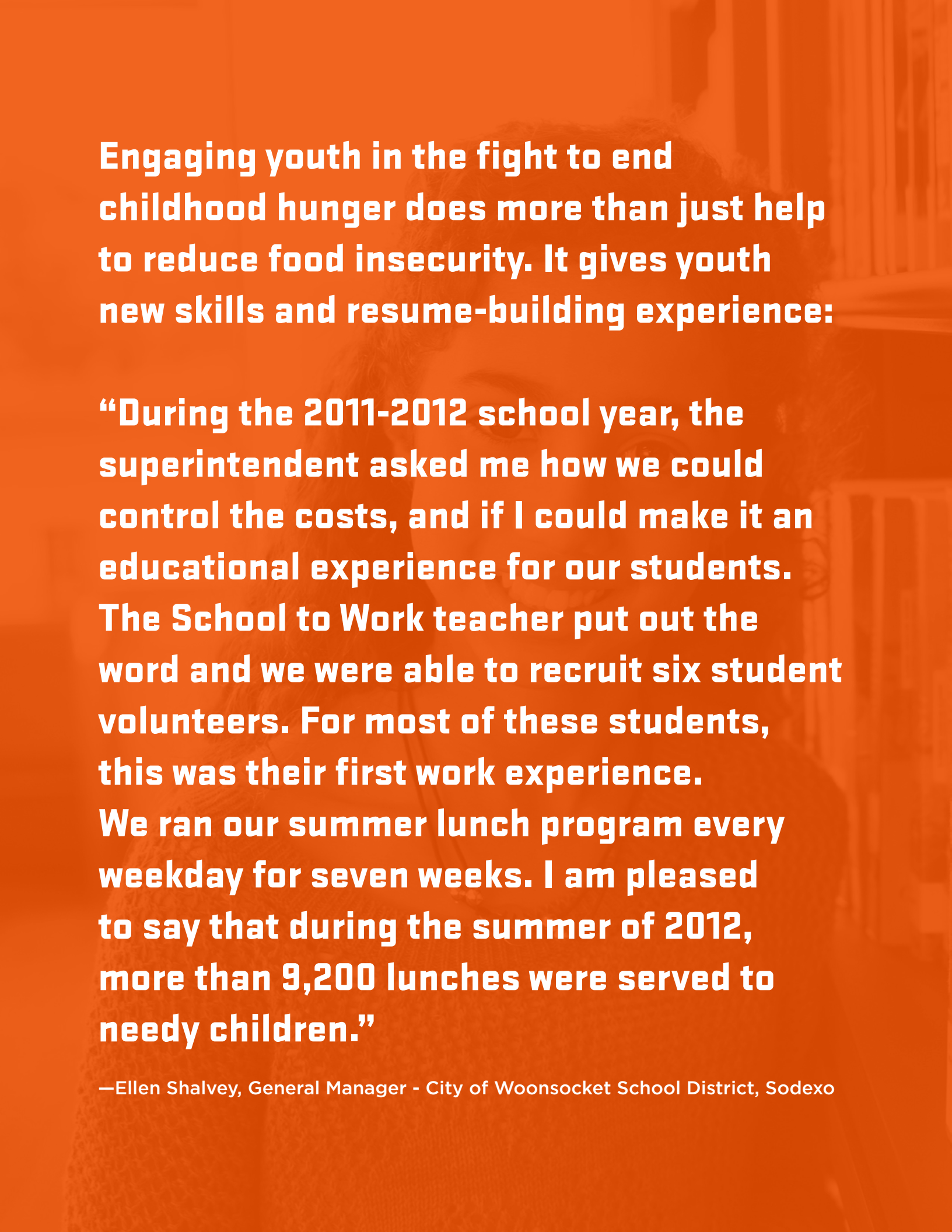
Youth shared that the best way to communicate with them was via email and text. They are also active users of Facebook, Twitter (Hashtags are huge!) and Instagram. However, reminders of upcoming opportunities and activities to get involved via Snapchat resonated with youth as well.

Despite the reliance on technology by almost all youth, it is important to remember that technology can only do so much. Ending childhood hunger is about people, and that means personal relationships.

*Reminder: There are regulations around text messaging, so check with the Federal Communications Commission before you start putting those thumbs to work!*

### Communication Tools

Most Effective	Somewhat Effective
Email	Facebook
Text	Twitter
Friends	Instagram
Teachers	Snapchat



**Engaging youth in the fight to end childhood hunger does more than just help to reduce food insecurity. It gives youth new skills and resume-building experience:**

**“During the 2011-2012 school year, the superintendent asked me how we could control the costs, and if I could make it an educational experience for our students. The School to Work teacher put out the word and we were able to recruit six student volunteers. For most of these students, this was their first work experience. We ran our summer lunch program every weekday for seven weeks. I am pleased to say that during the summer of 2012, more than 9,200 lunches were served to needy children.”**

**—Ellen Shalvey, General Manager - City of Woonsocket School District, Sodexo**



# 06

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 BEST PRACTICES TO ENGAGE YOUTH

There are many recommendations for moving youth from interest to commitment to create sustainable engagement programs for both younger (middle school level) and older youth (college level). However, the most important first step is recruiting adolescents as early as possible to increase their awareness to social problems, and to help them see that they can make a difference as conscientious citizens.<sup>xiv</sup>

As your organizations seek to engage youth in the fight to end childhood hunger, there are some specific steps that you can take to achieve success:

- **Create infrastructure.** If engaging youth is a new priority within your organization or program, don't add it as an "additional responsibility" to an overloaded team member. Find the funding to bring on a new addition to the team or hire an AmeriCorps member or enlist a No Kid Hungry Youth Ambassador who can focus on youth engagement. Check with your local state commission to inquire about hiring AmeriCorps members, or with No Kid Hungry to work with a youth ambassador.
- **Raise awareness.** Empower youth with the knowledge of childhood hunger in their community. Share maps with them about summer sites, provide up-to-date facts on participation rates, and provide articles on the difference that the program can make in the lives of children. Give them the tools they need to educate others. And yet, be sensitive to the fact that some youth might be struggling with hunger themselves.
- **Use existing resources.** There are a number of templates that are included in this toolkit's appendix. Additionally, visit <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/> to view other resources that are available, such as assessment tools, sample Public Service Announcements, etc.
- **Ask them.** There is a difference between knowing that childhood hunger exists, and being asked to help solve the issue. When a specific request is made, youth feel valued for who they are and what they can bring to the table. Be sure to ask the "unusual suspects"—not just the youth who are already engaged in activities and/or social issues. Work with community partners to identify and engage a variety of youth.
- **Offer a variety of options.** Youth want to get engaged in advocacy, direct service, philanthropy and activation – but probably not all at the same time. Provide opportunities for skill building and leadership. Ultimately, the goal is to have youth engaged year after year on a regular and consistent basis, but the first step is to get them involved. Meet youth where they are. Assume that youth don't have access to a car, money or an adult. Give them easy and accessible options, and start with small requests. The initial ask might be for an hour to help assemble bag lunches, or a half-day to oversee a site. Don't ask for too much too soon.
- **Give them a role.** With a college course comes a syllabus, and with any job comes a description. Involvement in ending childhood hunger does not have to be an exception. Set expectations. Talk about the options (see above) and roles that youth can play (and the associated responsibilities). Once youth know what is expected, they can make an educated decision.

- **Create friendly competition.** The act of randomly selecting youth to participate in a competition motivates them – and their friends – to action. Consider creating a competition to see which summer site can recruit the most participants, or which youth ambassadors can get the most “Facebook likes” by sharing a post. The “award” does not have to be one of high value; recognition via social media is sufficient.
- **Be responsive. Be authentic.** Those organizations that are most successful in engaging youth, such as DoSomething.org, have a tech team devoted to SMS strategy and a customer service team that responds to individual texts and emails. They speak “youth language.” Since an individual’s perceptions of, and feelings about, the way s/he is treated by the organization impact their volunteerism, make an investment to respond to those youth who do want to be engaged and support your efforts.
- **Use different communication methods.** Aside from direct personal contact with teachers and/or friends, the most successful platforms in engaging youth include email, text, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Apps such as SnapChat and PeriScope are considered helpful tools to communicate a call to action (such as “Text XXXXX to join Generation No Kid Hungry”) but are not most helpful in conveying important details about upcoming activities.
- **Work with schools.** Organizations that work with school administrators to design and develop plans to influence and encourage students to join volunteer activities are more likely to achieve mutual goals to help develop the community. The students should understand that volunteerism could be one of the ways that they can contribute to community development.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, partner with schools where the percentage of students participating in free- and reduced-priced lunch is greater than 50%, and ask the teachers and principal to recommend students who are creative and might provide a different perspective in how to end childhood hunger.
- **Appreciate youth.** There are two significant factors that have an impact on volunteerism: (1) an individual’s perceptions of and feelings about the way s/he is treated by the organization; and (2) the organization’s reputation and personnel practices.<sup>4</sup> Like everyone, youth need to feel appreciated for their participation and the difference they are making. Recognize their contributions. Find other ways in which they and their peers can stay involved in the fight to end childhood hunger.

**“Develop a menu of strategies and structures. One tactic is not going to work for every youth.”**

**—Cody Oliver, Former Director, Partner  
& Youth Engagement, America’s Promise Alliance**









# 07

## IMMEDIATE STEPS TO ENGAGE YOUTH

### 7.1 PARTNER WITH INFLUENCERS

- Identify those organizations in your community that have already connected and established a relationship with youth. Consider the local chapter of organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, United Way, etc. Also consider volunteer and parks & rec centers, various types of social or academic clubs, faith-based connections, and organizations operating AmeriCorps programs (which you can find from your State Service Commissions).
- Youth like volunteering if/when activities are associated with their school. (Visit <http://schooldistrictfinder.com/> to identify the schools in your vicinity.) Work with your local middle and high schools to design and develop plans to influence and encourage students to support your work in ending childhood hunger. The students should understand that volunteerism could be one of the ways they can contribute to community development. Share YSA's Teacher's Guide to Engaging a New Generation of Anti-Hunger Leaders to offer additional support.
- If you are working with college students and young adults, visit the Universities Fight World Hunger or Food Recovery Network websites to identify a local chapter.

### 7.2 RAISE AWARENESS

- Youth may not know that hunger exists in their community. Share the fact sheets for teens (Appendix C). DoSomething.org also offers 11 Facts About Hunger in the U.S.
- The 30-second Public Service Announcement and viewing guide found in Appendix D helps frame a discussion by posing thoughtful questions and facts about hunger and how it impacts children.
- Initiate a contest to challenge youth to post pictures with the No Kid Hungry sign at places or local hang-outs where youth convene.
- Challenge youth to participate in the "Make Your Mark on Hunger Campaign" to address the issue of hunger in the U.S. through meaningful hands-on service in their communities.
- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation created a Youth-Hosted Forum Playbook that provides guidance to youth leaders on how to collaborate with peers. It creates a platform for kids to tell stories, share struggles and successes, and organize efforts to inspire healthy changes for themselves, their schools and their communities.
- Help youth raise awareness about childhood hunger by encouraging them to participate in Global Youth Service Day (GYSD). GYSD is the largest service event in the world and the only one dedicated to the contributions that children and youth make 365 days of the year. YSA provides examples of projects in which you can participate to end hunger and malnutrition and achieve food security (see Appendix E).

### 7.3 BE GENUINELY INCLUSIVE OF YOUTH

Inclusiveness refers to whether youth are able to participate fully in the activities within an organization or group. Inclusive organizations not only have youth involved, but are also learning-centered and incorporate the needs, assets, and perspectives of everyone into everything they do. Inclusiveness generally refers to *how* youth are authentically engaged in every aspect.

- Invite youth to sit on your board of trustees. Ask them to share their stories. Include them on the agenda. See Appendix F for examples of expectations of youth board members, as well as an application to join a board of trustees.
- Launch a Youth Advisory Council. Members of the Council should be “unusual suspects” who can help recruit participants to sites, brainstorm on communication methods, and provide feedback on how to improve program activities. The National Farmers Union has a National Youth Advisory Council to strengthen leadership development skills and coach peers who will follow in their footsteps.
- Provide titles to youth – such as Ambassador, Social Media Guru, Site Captain – to enforce that they are an important voice and integral to success.

### 7.4 BE RESPONSIVE

- Determine what platform your organization will use to engage youth and *be proactive and responsive*. For instance, if you choose to connect with youth on Facebook, ensure that someone is reviewing the Facebook page several times a day to post updates and respond to questions. If you choose to communicate by email, assign one email account to which youth should send notes, and have one person responsible for responding within 24 hours.
- Speak the “Language of Youth,” while still being professional! Youth are more likely to connect with, “Yaass!!” than “Hooray!” and “Turnt up!” than “Let’s get this party started!” Another example is, “I’m on the midterms grind” rather than saying, “I’m stressed about midterms.” Of course, the best thing to do is to ask youth about the latest language trend.

**“We work really hard to remember: Fight for the User. In our case, the users are young people. We want every decision that we make to be grounded in the value of trying to serve young people.”**

**—Greg Perlstein, Director of Strategy & Partnerships,  
TMI (consulting arm of DoSomething.org)**





## 7.5 ADVOCACY

- Ask youth to conduct an assessment or mapping of hunger in their community. They can compare that data to summer meals sites, participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), as well as participation in the school breakfast program. Organize an advocacy campaign to have the youth contact their local elected officials. Youth could also send a letter to the editor, meet with local elected officials, invite those officials to visit a summer meals site or a school breakfast, or get groups of people to e-mail and call government representatives to encourage them to learn more about hunger in their community, or just to thank them for their support.<sup>iii</sup>
- Invite youth to an Information Session to share the Advocacy Playbook developed by the Alliance to End Hunger and also review *Community Tables* (an impact volunteering initiative and service strategy through which the mayor's or city chief executive office engages citizen volunteers to help ensure that all children from low-income communities have access to healthy meals and snacks). Invite the mayor's or city chief executive's offices to participate and talk about a Community Tables coordinator, or coach the youth attendees about writing letters or postcards to their elected officials about the importance of ending childhood hunger.



**“Students want to be part of social change. Everyone can relate to being hungry at some point. It is an easy concept to understand.”**

**—Dr. Harriet Giles, Ph.D., Managing Director,  
Hunger Solutions Institute**







## 7.6 FUNDRAISING

- Challenge youth to be creative in how they raise money to end childhood hunger. Activities such as dodge ball games can help raise money to support activities in the fight to end childhood hunger. Be able to offer different activities to entice increased participation.
- Blessings in a Backpack mobilizes communities, individuals, and resources to provide food on the weekends for elementary school children across America who might otherwise go hungry. The organization provides step-by-step instructions (including fundraising and requesting donations from grocery store) on how to offer the program locally.

## 7.7 DIRECT SERVICE

- Work with generationOn to launch a Service Club for youth 11-18 years old to inspire and equip youth to take positive action in their communities to end hunger. Clubs are youth-led, and supported by an adult advisor. See Appendix for an example from generationOn, or Appendix for instructions on how to run a canned food drive.
- Youth can also help to collect breakfast food so that kids can start every day with a healthy meal (see Appendix).
- Ask youth to coordinate a kick-off event in their neighborhood that will be appealing for families to participate and learn about how their children can access nutritious food on a regular basis.
- Use the YSA No Kid Hungry Guide in Appendix to brainstorm, create and organize other childhood hunger projects in your community.
- Suggest youth take the [Revolution Hunger quiz](#) to explore how their personality and unique skills match up with activities where they can help solve hunger.

## 7.8 CELEBRATE

Create teams around the three aforementioned action areas (advocacy, philanthropy and direct service) and have a friendly competition.

- Recognition could include:
  - Bragging rights on all social media platforms.
  - An afternoon watching a local sports team in practice.
  - Lunch with the Mayor.
  - A pass to the movies.
- Provide certificates to those youth who have been consistently engaged in the fight to end childhood hunger.
- Write recommendation letters or serve as a reference for youth who may want to include their participation on their resume.





A photograph of two young boys smiling outdoors. The boy in the foreground is wearing a green jacket, and the boy in the background is wearing a plaid shirt and a backpack. The image is decorated with several semi-transparent, colorful geometric shapes: a red square in the top left, a blue square in the top right, a teal square in the middle right, and an orange square in the bottom right. The text "Hunger now affects our future tomorrow." is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the lower left side of the image.

**“Hunger now  
affects our future  
tomorrow.”**

**—Statement made by youth via online survey**



## This toolkit is sponsored by:

Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation, the charitable arm of Sodexo, Inc., was created with the mission to ensure that every child in the United States grows up with dependable access to enough nutritious food to enable them to lead a healthy, productive life. From nutrition programs to engaging youth in community service activities, the foundation supports hunger-related initiatives on local, state, and national levels. Sodexo, Inc. funds all administrative costs for Sodexo Foundation to ensure that all money raised helps those in need. Since its inception, Sodexo Foundation has granted more than \$27 million to help end childhood hunger. To learn more visit [www.SodexoFoundation.org](http://www.SodexoFoundation.org).

No child should go hungry in America, but 1 in 6 kids will face hunger this year. Using proven, practical solutions, No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger today by ensuring that kids start the day with a nutritious breakfast and families learn the skills they need to shop and cook on a budget. When we all work together, we can make sure kids get the healthy food they need. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of national anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength. Join us at [NoKidHungry.org](http://NoKidHungry.org).

This toolkit was developed by SHG Advisors, a firm that strategically advises corporations, foundations and non-profits to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable and timely change. SHG Advisors work with stakeholders who are laser-focused on making our community a better place for everyone.

## Citations

- <sup>i</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Center for the Study of Social Policy. Engaging Youth in Community Decision Making. 2007. Website: <http://www.cssp.org/community/constituents-co-invested-in-change/other-resources/engaging-youth-in-community-decision-making.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> Zaff, J., Boyd, M., Li, Y., Lerner, J., Lerner, R. (2010). Active and engaged citizenship: Multi-group and longitudinal factorial analysis of an integrated construct of civic engagement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(7) 736-750.
- <sup>iii</sup> Omoto, A., Snyder, M. (1995). Sustained helping without obligation: Motivation, longevity of service, and perceived attitude change among AIDS volunteers. *Journal Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 671-686.
- <sup>iv</sup> Hussin, Zaliha and Arshad Mohd (2012). Altruism as motivational factors toward volunteerism among youth in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
- <sup>v</sup> Johnson, M., Beebe, T., Mortimer, J.T., & Snyder, M. (1998). Volunteerism in Adolescence: A Process Perspective. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 8 (3), 309-332.
- <sup>vi</sup> Cemalcilar, Zeynep (2008) Understanding individual characteristics of adolescents who volunteer. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 46, 432-436.
- <sup>vii</sup> Penner, L.A. (2002). Dispositional and organizational influences on sustained volunteerism: An interactionist perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58 (3), 447-467.
- <sup>viii</sup> Omoto, A., Snyder, M., & Martino, S (2000). Volunteerism and the life course: Investigating age-related agendas for action. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 22(3), 181-197.
- <sup>ix</sup> Oristian, D, Goldseker, S. (2013) High-Net-Worth Families & Family Offices. *Trusts & Estates*. 8. 32.
- <sup>x</sup> Johnson, M., Beebe, T., Mortimer, J.T., & Snyder, M. (1998). Volunteerism in Adolescence: A Process Perspective. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 8 (3), 309-332.
- <sup>xi</sup> Price-Mitchell, M (2015). *Tomorrow's Change Makers: Reclaiming the Power of Citizenship for a New Generation*. Amazon Digital Services.
- <sup>xii</sup> Price-Mitchell, M (2015). *Tomorrow's Change Makers: Reclaiming the Power of Citizenship for a New Generation*. Amazon Digital Services.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Robison, S. & Cooke, J. *Engaging Youth in Community Decision-Making*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Cemalcilar, Zeynep (2008) Understanding individual characteristics of adolescents who volunteer. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 46, 432-436.
- <sup>iv</sup> Hussin, Zaliha and Arshad Mohd (2012). Altruism as motivational factors toward volunteerism among youth in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.



VISIT US ONLINE:  
[www.NoKidHungry.org/YouthToolkit](http://www.NoKidHungry.org/YouthToolkit)

.....

@StopHungerUSA | [facebook.com/SodexoStopHunger](https://facebook.com/SodexoStopHunger)

@NoKidHungry | [facebook.com/NoKidHungry](https://facebook.com/NoKidHungry)

@GenerationNKH | [instagram.com/GenerationNKH](https://instagram.com/GenerationNKH)

