Choosing a Project
to Make a Difference

This lesson is designed to lead students to select and start planning an individual or team community project using what they have learned from previous units.

Essential Question
How can I apply the things I've learned to make a difference in my community?

Guiding Question
What volunteer/community project would I like to develop (individually or as part of a team)? What steps will this involve?

Objectives	Students will be able to: • Process and share findings from previous lessons. • Confirm their selected community project. • Decide between working individually or joining a team to develop a plan for the community project. • Begin articulating components of project plan.
Advance Preparation	• Prepare student materials • Load video • Prepare resource station at back of classroom for student planning activity (see below)
Materials/Resources	• Post-its, poster boards, scratch paper, markers, colored pencils, etc. for group planning activity.
Student Materials	• "What are my school community's needs?" and "What are my neighborhood community's needs?" completed handouts (collected on Days 1 and 2) • "Solutions to Community Problems: Possible Personal Contribution" handout • "My/ My Team's Volunteer Project Plan" handout

Vocabulary	• Transactional • Compensation • Humanitarian

Do Now   2 min.

Slide 2 ("Be the change you want to see in the world"): Students write or draw ways they might "be the change."

Introduction (Framing/Overview)   10 min.

1. Slide 4: Show this (1:28 minute) video on youth volunteering:

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJq1ZVzG0QA

   Invite students to the connection circle and have them read silently the Connection Circle Handout. Explain vocabulary words as needed:

   - Transactional: based on a "give to get" mindset
   - Compensation: pay
   - Humanitarian: showing empathy and compassion for others

   Slide 4: Ask students in the circle, "How does Cole's experience resonate with you, especially as you are solidifying your plans for a school community project?

2. Tell students that today's main goal is for them to select a volunteer project, decide whether to carry out their project alone or with a partner or team, and begin planning their project. Review the day's agenda (slide 5).

3. Remind students about the notion of lifelines and advisors they learned about in Lesson 1. Besides school adults, students may also consider reaching out to neighborhood leaders, educational advocates, parent groups, business contacts, local newspapers, spiritual leaders, and adults who may offer access to informational and practical resources as potential lifelines.

Activity 1: Sharing Project Ideas and Plans   15 min.

4. Slide 6: Invite students to share some of the ideas they have been thinking about and writing on their School and Neighborhood Community Needs sheets, including possible ways to address needs.

   Whole Class Discussion

5. Give students a few minutes to consider the ideas they have written down or that others have share. Suggest that they list the ideas that they are most interested in on the "Possible Personal Contributions" activity sheet (slide 8). After listing 2-4 ideas that they find interesting, they could circle or highlight their top choice.

   Personal Reflection

6. Explain to students that it may be helpful to identify students who are interested in the same volunteer activities, since those with similar interests may want to form groups (maximum of 4 students) to plan their projects together. Students are also welcome to work individually if they prefer.

Direct Instruction

Slide 9: Have each student share the idea from their School and Neighborhood Community Needs sheets that they are most interested in pursuing as a volunteer project plan. List these on the board.

Whole Class Discussion

7. Identify natural groupings of students who have similar interests, and invite students to gather in groups if desired for the next stage of their planning.

NOTE: If more than 4 students are interested in the same project idea, consider creating two small groups of 2-3 students.

Activity 2: Explanation of Final Project Assignment   5 min.

8. Slide 10: Explain that students will need to create a Volunteer Project Plan that addresses each of the following areas:

Direct Instruction

- What is the need?
- Planned activities and how they will meet the need
- Steps required for project completion
- Resources/lifelines needed for project
- How will we know how well the project was accomplished?

Explain that students will be required to present their project plan at the end of unit, but they are encouraged to begin carrying out their project any time.

9. Slide 11: Explain to students that they can present their plans in a format of their choice, such as a written report (using a word processor), digital slide presentation (e.g. PowerPoint), poster presentation, blog post, TikTok video, or oral presentation (with visual aids). [Teacher: PLEASE ADD OR SUBTRACT FROM THIS LIST AS DESIRED.]

Activity 3: Preliminary Project Planning   10 min.

10. Slide 12: Invite students to rearrange their seats so that students working on the same project are seated together. Those doing individual projects remain at their tables. All students will have access to the resource station set up in the back with sticky notes, poster boards, markers, etc. for students to use in planning their projects.

Team Planning

JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of EDUCATION

11. Have students complete as much of the "My Team's Volunteer Project Plan" worksheet or "My Volunteer Project Plan" worksheet (as appropriate) as they are able.

Closure   5 min.

12. Slide 13: Ask students to share insights they have gained if they wish to.

   Explain that groups are probably at different stages in their planning process, and this is okay. Tell students they will begin the next lesson by learning some more tools for their planning process and will have time over the next several days to complete and present the Volunteer Project Plan.

   Exit ticket – ask students to hand in their "My Team's Volunteer Project Plan" or "My Volunteer Project Plan" worksheet.

Extensions

Homework or Classwork Extension: Write a one-paragraph response to each of the following questions: What do you think will be the most challenging part of working individually or with your classmates on this volunteer activity? What do you think will be most rewarding?

Connection Circle Handout

Cole, a young science achiever from Chicago, describes his experience volunteering and serving on community projects as experiences that have stayed with him throughout his life. He remarks about his team's learning experience:

"We become more open people, who are willing to work hard to change situations around us that might not be ideal. And they really affect the quality of life of those who you are working with. And in a world that's becoming increasingly transactional in nature, it's really refreshing to see people, especially young people, take time out of their days to help others without the promise of compensation. It really awakens the humanitarian within us all."

Reflect on Cole's message.

How does Cole's experience resonate with you, especially as you are solidifying plans for a community project?

JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of EDUCATION

Solutions to Community Problems: Possible Personal Contributions

Issue I have Identified in My School or Community	Possible Way I Could Help with This Issue	Possible Lifeline I Could Access

Name _____

JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of EDUCATION

My Team's Volunteer Project Plan

Student Names: _____

Project Name: _____

What is the need we plan to address? _____

_____

What will we do, and how does this address the need?_____ _____

_____

_____

Preparation needed for the project: _____

_____

_____

Why is our team project important or valuable? _____

_____

_____

What skills will be needed for this project?_____

_____

_____

JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL *of* EDUCATION

My Volunteer Project Plan

Student Name: _____

Project Name: _____

What is the need I plan to address? _____

_____

What will I do, and how does this address the need?_____ _____

_____

_____

Preparation needed for the project: _____

_____

_____

Why is my project important or valuable? _____

_____

_____

What skills will be needed for this project?_____

_____

_____

JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of EDUCATION