

Students Rebuild  
Youth Uplift Challenge

# Telling Our Stories

Understanding Opportunities and Obstacles of Youth

*Middle/High School Curriculum*



students  
rebuild



A Global Nomads Group Curriculum

## Curriculum Overview

**Telling Our Stories: Understanding Opportunities and Obstacles of Youth** is a new curriculum from Students Rebuild and Global Nomads Group that will help young people explore the essential question:

*How might we, as students, better understand the opportunities and obstacles youth face around the world?*

Through self-reflection, challenging assumptions, and being exposed to new stories and perspectives through our live webcast, this curriculum will support a transformative learning experience—whether inside a classroom or in other community programs.

### Student Learning Outcomes

This curriculum is designed to promote the following:

1. **Identity:** Students will reflect on their individual identity and its relationship to their local and broader global community.
2. **Empathy:** Students will deepen their understanding of how poverty impacts the opportunities and obstacles youth face around the world.
3. **Critical Thinking:** Students will understand the importance of hearing multiple stories and perspectives. Students will reflect on their own assumptions and/or biases and learn about the diverse experiences of youth.

### Curriculum Overview

This curriculum includes five 50-minute activities. Activities 1 – 3 are to be completed prior to viewing or joining the live webcast (Activity 4). Activity 5 provides an important opportunity for students to reflect on their experience. Each activity includes an educator lesson plan, marked by a blue bar along the top, and a corresponding student page. Sample responses are included for some questions, not to limit responses, but to support you in eliciting multiple responses from students. Be sure to print out all student pages for your class: pages 3, 7, 10, 13 – 15, and 18.

### Classroom Activities and Preparation

Activity	Activity Overview	Time	Student Page #	Materials
1. Who Am I? What's My Story?	Students create a self-portrait that answers questions about their unique story. Students include details of their daily life, language, interests, family, religion, school, friendships and/or social groups, and dreams (opportunities and challenges). Students reflect on their membership in a community and how this impacts their individual identity.	50 minutes	3 & 7	Chart Paper (or white board), markers, and pencils or pens

Activity	Activity Overview	Time	Student Page #	Materials
2. Multiple Stories, Multiple Perspectives	Students watch “The Danger of a Single Story,” a TED Talk by novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and reflect on the importance of hearing multiple stories to better understand the lives and experiences of youth all over the world. Students discuss assumptions and/or stereotypes that may exist about their own community or other communities and how this impacts identity.	50 minutes	10	Computer with access to the internet, projector, pencils or pens
3. Investigate the World: Nicaragua and the United States	Students complete a Know—How—Wish chart about their peers in Nicaragua and/or the United States. Students are introduced to Asking Complete Questions to write questions that provide context about their own experiences and ask a specific question of their peers. Students review general information related to global poverty.	50 minutes	13-15	Chart Paper (or white board), markers, and pencils or pens
4. Youth Uplift Challenge: Live Webcast	Students join the Youth Uplift Challenge: Live Webcast, broadening their understanding of youth living in Nicaragua and the United States and asking prepared questions. Students who miss the live webcast can watch the recording found on the Students Rebuild YouTube channel.	50 minutes	N/A	Computer with access to the internet and projector
5. Reflect and Take Action	Students respond to reflection questions related to what they learned in the webcast and how their perspectives about youth living in Nicaragua or the United States may have changed.	50 minutes	18	Pencils or pens

# Telling Our Stories: Understand Opportunities and Obstacles of Youth

Before you jump into telling your own story and learning from the stories of others, we want to share a little about one of our partners: [Global Nomads Group \(GNG\)](#). It's no secret that the world is undergoing vast social, cultural, technological, and economic transformations—GNG believes all young people should have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with our world and to foster empathy, awareness, and action. Young people, like you, have an incredibly important voice!

GNG also believes in the power of human connection, and works to connect young people with their peers around the world. Together we work across borders that often keep us apart. If we engage in conversation across cultures, discover similarities, and understand and celebrate differences, we can break down barriers and collaborate to change our communities.

In these activities, you'll reflect on your own identity and tell your own story. You'll learn about the importance of hearing multiple stories in order to broaden your own perspective and challenge assumptions you may have about others. Through joining or viewing a live webcast, you'll hear stories from youth around the world and learn how poverty impacts the opportunities and obstacles we face. You'll also have an opportunity to reflect and take action. Through all of these activities, we'll work together to answer the question: How might we, as youth, better understand the opportunities and obstacles youth face around the world?

Let's get started!



## Activity #1: Who Am I? What's My Story?

**Overview** Students create a self-portrait that answers questions about their unique story. Students include details of their daily life, language, interests, family, religion, school, friendships and/or social groups, and dreams (opportunities). Students reflect on their membership in a community and how this impacts their individual identity.

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**Time** 50 minutes

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**Materials** Chart Paper (or white board), markers, and pencils or pens  
Student Pages 3 & 7

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**Learning Objective** Students will reflect on their individual identity and its relationship to a broader community membership.

### Lesson Plan Activities

#### 1. Introduction to Global Nomads Group (5 minutes)

- *Read:* Pass out Student Page 3 and have students read—individually or as a class—about this program and Global Nomads Group.

#### 2. Exploring Self-Identity (5 minutes)

- *Brainstorm:* Pose the following questions to students: What makes a person unique? When you think of describing yourself to others what types of information would be important to include? If you were to tell your own story, what types of information would you include?
- *Chart:* As students share their responses, write them on chart paper or a white board so students can refer to these ideas when they create their own self-portrait. Use the sample responses below to guide students in thinking about various aspects of their own identity.

*Student responses might include: my interests, what I like to do for fun, where I live, my family, my friends, the languages I speak, my religion, responsibilities I have, general beliefs, my aspirations or dreams, the struggles or obstacles I may face.*

#### 3. Creating and Sharing a self-portrait (25 minutes)

- *Create:* Self-portraits are a classic way for people to share one aspect of their identity, their physical appearance. Explain to students that in this activity they will go beyond physical appearance in creating a portrait that answers the questions, “Who Am I?” and “What’s My Story?”

Students will focus on a portrait that includes specific aspects from the class list just created related to identity. Pass out Student Page 7 and provide time for students to work

individually to create their portrait. Encourage students to use words or short phrases to include unique information about themselves. Let students know that they will be invited to share their portrait in small groups of their peers.

- *Share:* In small groups of 3 – 4, have students share their self-portrait with each other. Check-in with various groups and refer students to questions on Student Page 7 to prompt discussion, as needed.

#### 4. **Connecting to Community (10 minutes)**

- *Connect:* Students will now consider how their individual identity (self-portrait) is supported by and connected to various communities or group memberships. Explain to students that as you were listening to them share their portraits, you heard many aspects of their self-identity that were also connected to their broader community or various group memberships. An example is provided below, but please share examples from your own classroom.

*Example: I heard Casey mention being a part of the local neighborhood theatre. Casey's interest in drama and poetry connects her to a group (or community) that also share a love for the arts.*

Prompt discussion by asking students questions like, "What is a community? Can you belong to more than one community?"

*Student responses might include: A community is a group of individuals; it is possible to belong to more than one community; communities can be organized around ideas or beliefs (church community), geography (my neighborhood community), interests (people I play basketball with at the park), ethnicity and culture, etc.*

Connect to students' responses by saying: Communities are made up of groups of individuals. We're all a part of various communities or group memberships. For example, we have a classroom community where we share similarities and differences. Our community identity is dynamic and constantly changing depending on who is here/isn't here, the topics we choose to discuss, etc. But this certainly is not the only community you belong to. The communities you belong to are related to your interests, your activities, where you live, and what you care deeply about.

- *Expand Identity to Include Community:* Ask students to return to their self-portrait on Student Page 7. Students can work individually or in small groups to add their various group memberships in the space around their the self-portrait, and write how these groups are connected to their self-identity. Provide an example from your own life to model the activity. An example is provided below.

*Example: I'm from a large family and therefore am a member of my family community. I'll write family in this group here. I also included family in my portrait here because they are part of my self-identity. I am connected to them through our shared childhood. Because we grew up together, we have shared stories and experiences which make me who I am today.*

#### 4. Debrief and Reflection (10 minutes)

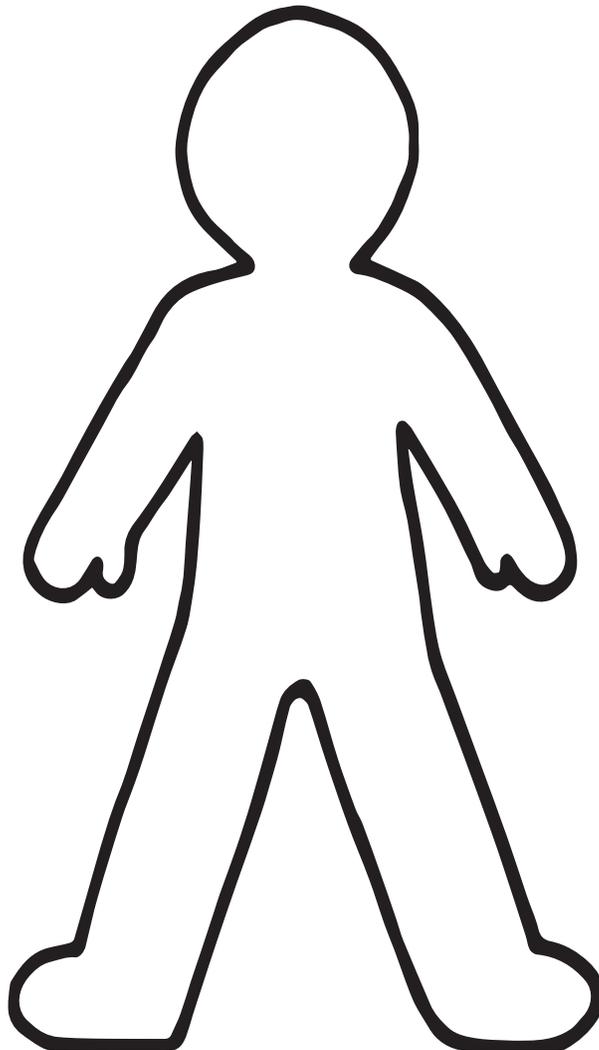
- *Share:* Bring class back together as a whole group and ask several students to share the various communities they're a part of and how these communities are connected to their self-identity.
- *Debrief:* Use the following questions to reflect on individual identity and community membership:
  - What did you learn about others from their self-portraits?
  - How do you think group membership (or being a member of various communities) impacts who we are?

## Who Am I? What's My Story?

Every one of us has a story. We're all unique individuals who are shaped by many different factors and experiences. Beyond your physical appearance, what makes you unique? What's your story?

Below, use words or short phrases **inside the person outline** below to describe what makes you unique.

As individuals, we belong to many different groups or communities which shape our self-identity. Think about the different groups or communities you belong to and write them in the space **outside the person**. How do these communities shape your identity?



**Share** your portrait with your group. You might find the following questions helpful in guiding your conversation: What did you include on your portrait and why? What are your dreams or aspirations? What are some obstacles or challenges you face? What similarities do you have with others in your group? Are you surprised? Why or why not?

### Activity #2: Multiple Stories, Multiple Perspectives

**Overview** Students watch “The Danger of a Single Story,” a TED Talk by novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and reflect on the importance of hearing multiple stories to better understand the lives and experiences of youth all over the world. Students discuss assumptions and/or stereotypes that may exist about their own community or other communities and how this impacts identity and opportunity.

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**Time** 50 minutes

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**Materials** Computer with access to the internet, projector (if available), pencils or pens  
Student Page 10

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**Learning Objective** Students will recognize the importance of hearing multiple stories to better understand the lives and experiences of youth all over the world.

#### Lesson Plan Activities

1. **Watch “The Danger of a Single Story” (25 minutes)**

- *Discuss:* Has anyone every made an assumption about you that wasn’t true? What did that feel like? Why do you think people make assumptions?
- *Watch:* Pass out Student Page 10 and explain to students that they will now watch a TED Talk by novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie called “The Danger of a Single Story” (18:42) found at <https://goo.gl/pHa9AX>. Ask students to think about the guiding questions found on their student page and record their ideas as they watch.

2. **Small Group Discussion (15 minutes)**

- *Discuss:* Ask students to form groups of 3 – 4. Students will discuss their ideas related to the questions on Student Page 10?

3. **Debrief and Reflect (10 minutes)**

- *Debrief:* Facilitate a whole group discussion eliciting responses from students based on the questions found on Student Page 10.

Students responses to the questions will vary, but use the following sample text to support students as you debrief and reflect as a whole class.

- *Adichie’s single story about Fide being poor kept her from imagining all of the other aspects of Fide—such as the fact his family had talents that included making a beautifully patterned basket.*

- *Single stories referenced are: who is included or represented in books, what it means to be from Africa, ideas about immigration and what it means to be Mexican.*
  - *The danger of a single story is that it creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.*
- *Reflect:* Ask students, “How do you think assumptions impact our identity?”

## Learn More

### Consider Power and Stereotypes

As Adichie stated, like our economic and political worlds, stories—how they are told, who tells them, when they’re told, how many stories are told—are really dependent on power. Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person.

Due to how students and/or their communities are positioned in society, some students may have a difficult time coming up with single stories or stereotypes that exist about themselves or their community. Other students, who identify with marginalized communities, might be able to more quickly provide single stories/stereotypes. The danger in an activity like this is the reinforcement of stereotypes. As an educator, it will be critical to remind students of the danger of stereotypes or single stories—this one story becomes the only story. Single stories must be challenged by hearing multiple stories.

### Diversity in Young Adult Literature

Adichie refers to her own experiences with books as a child. See <http://www.teachingforchange.org/books/multicultural-childrens-books> for more information about who is represented in children’s/young adult literature in the United States today.

Here is a related optional prompt for your students: Think about the books you read in class or at home. Who is often represented in these books? Do you see yourselves in the pages of these books? Why or Why not?

Learn about books that reflect and honor the lives of all young people. Check out <http://weneeddiversebooks.org/>. We Need Diverse Books™ is a grassroots organization interested in putting more books featuring diverse characters into the hands of all young people.

## Multiple Stories, Multiple Perspectives

“Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories.” Novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice—and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding .

### As You Watch

Record your thoughts about these questions as you watch “The Danger of a Single Story.”

#### Scene 1

How did the single story of poverty impact Adichie’s view of Fide?

#### Scene 2

Adichie discusses several “single stories,” some that were about her and some she has heard about others. Make a list of the stories she mentions so that you can discuss them later.

#### Scene 4

What is “the danger of a single story?”

#### Scene 5

Write in your own words what you think this means: *“When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.”*  
– Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

### After You Watch

What single stories do you think people might have about you or your own community? What single stories might you have about other individuals or communities? How can these single stories be challenged?

### Activity #3:

## Investigate the World: Nicaragua and the United States

**Overview** Students complete a Know—How—Wish chart about their peers in Nicaragua and/or the United States. Students are introduced to Asking Complete Questions to write questions that provide context about their own experiences and ask a specific question of their peers. Students review general information related to global poverty.

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**Time** 50 minutes

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**Materials** Chart Paper (or white board), markers, and pencils or pens  
Student Pages: 13 – 15

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**Learning Objective** Students will build background knowledge about their peers in Nicaragua and the United States in preparation for the webcast.

In the live webcast (Activity 4), students from Nicaragua and the United States will meet and learn about each other's daily lives, opportunities, and obstacles. In this lessons' activities, students will prepare for joining or viewing the live webcast by building background knowledge, reflecting on what they already know and would like to learn, reviewing general information related to global poverty, and writing questions that will be answered in the live webcast.

### Lesson Plan Activities

#### 1. Complete Know—How—Wish Chart (20 minutes)

- *Introduce:* Ask students to turn to Student Page 13. Explain to students that they will work in small groups to brainstorm what they already know about Nicaragua or the United States (students select the country they are most interested in learning about), how they know it, and what they wish to learn more about. Explain to students that this is not about getting the “right” answers, but about identifying what they think they already know and reflecting on whether or not what they know may be based on single stories or assumptions about youth living in one of these two countries.
- *Small Group Work:* In groups of 3 – 4, students will work to complete the Know—How—Wish chart on the Student Page 13. Provide support as needed to groups as they work.
- *Whole Class Debrief:* Facilitate a whole class discussion of the Know—How—Wish chart. Ask specific groups to share one or two pieces of information from each column with the goal of coming up with a class list of 5 – 10 questions students WISH to know more about. Record these questions on chart paper or a white board as they will be used for the Asking Complete Questions activity.

## 2. Asking Complete Questions (20 minutes)

- *Introduce:* Explain to students that you will now turn your WISH list of questions into complete questions that can be asked in the live webcast. Ask students to look at the “Asking Complete Questions” activity on Student Page 14, and answer the following question: “What do you notice about the question on the left side of the column, ‘What is school like for you?’ How is it different from the example of the complete question on the right side of the column?”

*Sample responses may include: The complete question starts with information about the person (background context) and then asks a specific question. The question on the left is very general; the complete question on the right is more specific.*

As a whole class, think about ways you could rewrite the second question as a complete question.

*Sample responses will be varied but should follow this pattern: I’ve seen stories in the media that talk about a lot of political and social challenges in your country. Do these challenges impact your life?*

- *Rewrite:* Students now work in their same groups from the previous activity and take 2 or 3 questions from the class WISH list and rewrite these questions as complete questions.
- *Whole Class Debrief:* Facilitate a whole class debrief with students sharing their complete questions. Provide support as needed in order to frame questions in an appropriate and culturally sensitive way. Identify the top 3 questions students would like to ask. During the live webcast, you will have the opportunity to type your students’ questions into the chat.

## 3. A Global Challenge: Poverty (10 minutes)

- *Introduce:* Explain to students that through the Youth Uplift Challenge, they have been exploring the complex issue of poverty and how this impacts the goals and dreams of youth all over the world. Now, they will review general information related to global poverty. Ask students to take a moment to read the information that is provided on Student Page 15.
- *Whole Class Discussion:* Facilitate a discussion using the following questions to support your classroom conversation.
  - Did you read anything that surprised you?
  - How can youth uplift and support one another in addressing global poverty?

## Investigate the World: Nicaragua and the United States

You've thought about your own identity as an individual and as part of many groups or communities. You've also learned how single stories can create assumptions, or stereotypes, and overshadow an individual or community to become the only story. In the live webcast, you'll learn about the lives of students from Nicaragua and the United States. You'll also have the chance to hear several stories and broaden your understanding of youth living in diverse contexts.

### Know—How—Wish

But first, let's reflect on what you think you know, how you know it, and what you wish to learn more about. As you do this, reflect on whether or not what you know may be based on a single story or assumption about youth living in one of these two countries.

Select the country you want to reflect on: Nicaragua or the United States

	<b>KNOW</b> What do we KNOW? Or what do we think we know? Is it possible this is a single story?	<b>HOW</b> HOW do we know this? Where did this information come from?	<b>WISH</b> What do we WISH to learn more about? What do we want to learn more about in order to begin to have multiple stories?
<b>Interests</b> What do youth here like to do for fun? What kind of activities are they interested in?			
<b>Language</b> What languages are spoken? What languages are taught in school?			
<b>Geography</b> Where do youth live? In the city? Rural areas? Suburban area? What's life like in these areas?			
<b>Social Groups/Community Identity</b> What groups do youth belong to? Church groups? School clubs? Are families large, small, etc.?			
<b>Religion</b> What religions are practiced?			
<b>Goals</b> What goals or dreams do youth have?			
<b>Obstacles</b> What obstacles do youth face?			

## Asking Complete Questions

We know you're eager to ask your questions, but there's one more important step! Practice asking complete questions with background and context that will help you create open, honest, and engaging dialogue throughout the webcast.

Instead of asking....	Create a complete question:
What is school like for you?	<i>Example: I start school at 7:30 am and have 5 classes each day. They include English, science, art, gym, and world history. What's your school day like?</i>
What's it like to live in a country with problems?	

### Create Your Complete Questions

As a group, rewrite 2 or 3 of the class questions as complete questions that could be asked in the live webcast.

1.

2.

3.

## Understanding Global Poverty

Through the Youth Uplift Challenge you've been exploring the complex issue of poverty and how this impacts the goals and dreams of youth all over the world.

### How do we define poverty?

The way poverty looks—its origins and its solutions—can be quite different from place to place based on geography, politics, social and cultural history, and personal story. The measure most commonly used to calculate extreme poverty is the international poverty line developed by the World Bank and set at US\$1.90 per day in October 2015.

Understanding the cause of poverty requires looking at a complex set of factors that may include such things as access to education, employment opportunities, geographic location, disasters, discrimination, maternal and child health, hunger, disease, regional conflict and war, and relationships and family support.

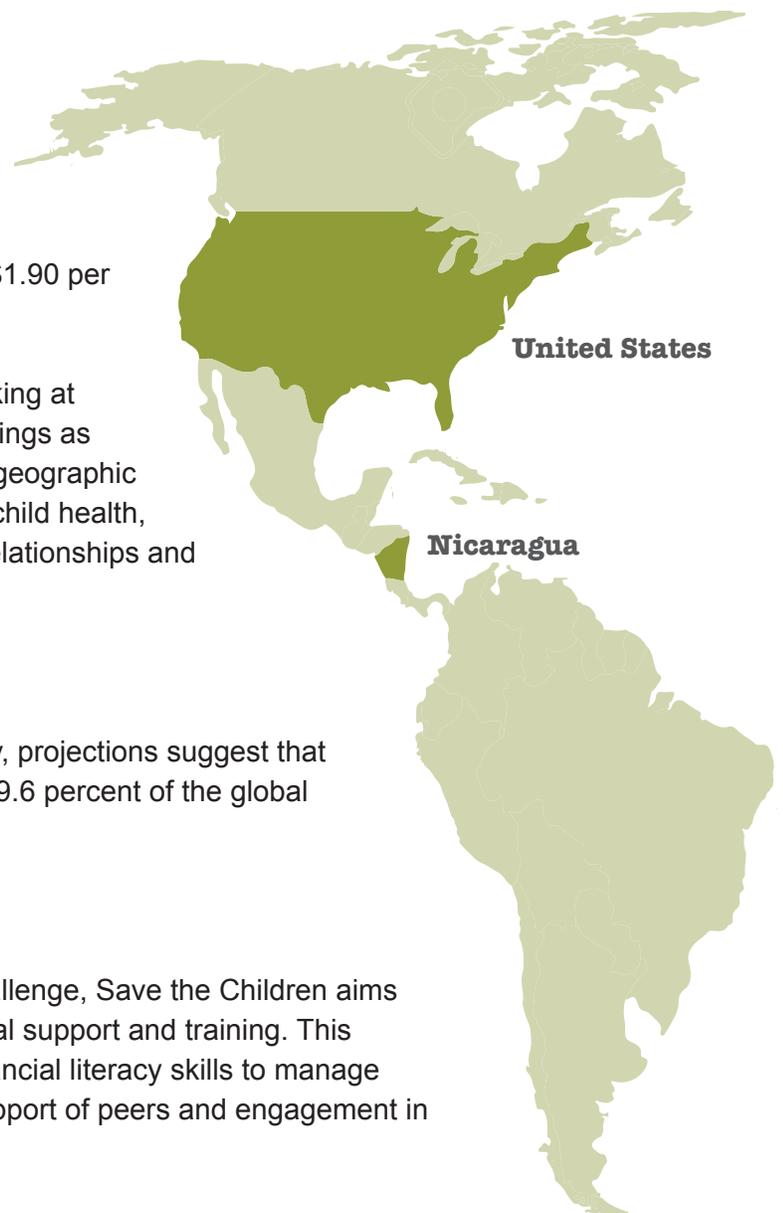
### How many people live in poverty?

Based on the updated poverty line of \$1.90 a day, projections suggest that global poverty may have reached 700 million, or 9.6 percent of the global population.

### What can be done to address global poverty?

Through your involvement in the Youth Uplift Challenge, Save the Children aims to uplift young people by providing entrepreneurial support and training. This includes helping youth develop life plans and financial literacy skills to manage their incomes, and plan for the future with the support of peers and engagement in their communities.

Empowering youth to influence the decisions that affect their lives, advocate for their rights, secure their livelihoods, increase household income, and positively impact their futures are all critical to addressing global poverty.



## Activity #4: Youth Uplift Challenge: Live Webcast

**Overview** Students join the Youth Uplift Challenge: Live Webcast, broadening their understanding of youth living in Nicaragua and the United States and asking prepared questions. Students who miss the live webcast can watch the recording found on the [Students Rebuild YouTube channel](#).

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**Time** Day/Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tech Dial-in Time (30 minutes prior to start): \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_AM/PM  
YouTube Live Hangout on Air Start Time (50 minutes): \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ AM/PM

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**Materials** Computer with access to the internet and projector (if available).

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**Learning Objective** Students will deepen their understanding of youth living in poverty and engage in authentic conversation around multiple youth stories.

### Join the Live Webcast!

1. **RSVP to the live webcast**
2. **Launch the live webcast**
3. **Introduce yourself and join the conversation!**

## Activity #5: Reflect and Connect

**Overview** Students respond to reflection questions related to what they've learned in the webcast and how their perspectives about youth living in the United States and Nicaragua may have changed. Students create a thoughtful, symbolic hand to represent their commitment to take action.

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**Time** 50 minutes

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**Materials** Pencils or pens  
Student Page 18

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**Learning Objective** Students will reflect on what they have learned about the obstacles and opportunities of youth living in Nicaragua.

### Lesson Plan Activities

#### 1. Reflect and Connect (20 minutes)

- *Reflect:* Ask students to respond individually to reflection questions on Student Page 18.
- *Whole Class Debrief:* Facilitate a whole class discussion using the questions as a guide—highlighting how this experience broadened students understanding of the opportunities and obstacles youth face in various parts of the world, the importance of hearing multiple stories and challenging single stories, and how they can work to address issues of poverty within their own community.

#### 2. Hand Making (30 minutes)

- *Create:* As part of the Youth Uplift Challenge, students were asked to create a thoughtful, symbolic hand prior to May 8, 2017 to represent their commitment to take action. If your team has not yet created your hands or you'd like to create more, this is a great opportunity to do so. For every hand students make and send in during the Youth Uplift Challenge, the Bezos Family Foundation will donate \$1.90—up to \$500,000—to Save the Children's programs empowering youth in Nicaragua and Indonesia to rise into a life they dream for themselves.

Additional resources for Hand Making can be found at <http://studentsrebuild.org/youthuplift/hands>.

## Reflect and Connect

Now that you've had the opportunity to hear the stories of youth from around the world and learn about the opportunities and obstacles they face, please take some time to reflect on the following questions:

**What was the most interesting or surprising thing you learned from the webcast? How did it make you see the opportunities and obstacles youth face—in both the United States and Nicaragua—differently?**

**Were any of your assumptions challenged? If so, which assumptions and why?**

**What questions do you still have for your peers?**

**How is the issue of global poverty relevant to your life and your country/community? What action can you take to address this issue in your community?**

**What have you learned about the importance of multiple stories and/or multiple perspectives?**