

University of Virginia Center for Politics



Democracy Corps Lesson Plan 8: Identity Target Democracy Corps Issue

Purpose:

This lesson plan is a part of YLI's Democracy Corps service learning program. Students select a community issue to target for the remainder of the Democracy Corps project.

This issue should be relevant to their community, current and appeal to individual student interest.

Materials:

- Student Guide 1: Identify Target Democracy Corps Issue

Central Questions:

- What contemporary community issue do I want to address?

Warm up

Place five random issues on the board and ask students to screen them with the criteria outlined below. Discuss answers as a whole class.

Sample issues may include the following

- A curfew imposed by local leaders
- Sewage disposal problem
- Irrigation concerns
- Censorship of books
- Pollution from steam engine trains

Samples Criteria

- Is the issue relevant to our community?
- Is it current?
- Does it appeal to student interest?

Procedure

1. Distribute copies of the **Student Guide 1: Identify Target Democracy Corps Issue**. Give students time to work through the questions and reinforce that the target issue will be their focus for the duration of the project.
2. Collect **Student Guide 1: Identify Target Democracy Corps Issue** as it is completed and review student choices. Make suggestions for modifications if the complexity of the issue exceeds the skills/knowledge of the student, or if the issue has been resolved.



Tip: Since Fast Track students did not complete Lesson Plan 6, they will not be able to answer the second question

Lesson Plan 8

Student Guide 1

Identity Target Democracy Corps Issue

An issue can be defined as a need or problem in the community. Issues can be found everywhere; at your school, skateboard park, neighborhood, grocery store, etc. The challenge for you is to observe the needs in your community and find one problem you would like to address or solve. Your selection will become your target issue for Democracy Corps and will be the focus of your work throughout the remainder of the project.

Step One

Begin to identify your target issue by reviewing the data gathered from Democracy Corps experiences.

Review your research on contemporary issues, information from current readings and data gathered from interactions with political leaders. As you examine this material, answer the following questions:

1. What contemporary issue was striking from the articles read? Explain why it captured your interest.

2. What political issue is a priority based on your conversations with elected representatives? Do you agree that this issue is a priority?

3. Identify one or two contemporary issues that are interesting to you based on personal experiences.



Lesson Plan 8

Student Guide 1

Identity Target Democracy Corps Issue

Step Two

Use the answers from Step 1 along with the criteria listed below to identify a target Democracy Corps Issue.

Your target Democracy Corps Issue needs to be:

- relevant to your community
- current
- a public issue
- a topic of personal interest

Tip: Be sure your target issue is interesting to you since it will be your focus for the remainder of the Democracy Corps project.

My Target Issue Is:

Briefly explain why this issue is important to you.

Identify a government agency that addresses this issue.

Identify a non-profit organization and/or charity that lobbies for change on this issue.
