

Six Steps to Engage Millennials in Social Change

NEW RESEARCH UNCOVERS BEST PRACTICES FOR NONPROFITS TO BROADEN YOUTH SUPPORT



OVERVIEW

One in five kids in America can't count on always getting the food they need. 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.

22 million kids in the U.S. rely on free and reduced-price school lunches during the school year, but only about 4 million kids get a free summer meal, and only 12 million get school breakfast. No Kid Hungry and the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation are working to close that gap and believe the promise to connect every kid to healthy food every day cannot be fulfilled without help from the next generation of young leaders – today's millennials.

No Kid Hungry and the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation teamed up to uncover the best practices for engaging youth in this fight and uncovered a series of findings that can be applied by other nonprofits to engage youth in any social cause they care about.

THE FINDINGS

To get youth involved in your cause:



1. 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 they can bring to the table.



2. Be genuinely inclusive of youth.

Inclusiveness refers to whether youth are able to participate fully in the activities within the 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.



3. Work through schools as a means to engage youth in this issue.

Most young people go to school every day. They view their schools as safe harbors and they trust their teachers, coaches, and advisors. Youth are more likely to volunteer and get involved with social issues that are associated with their school and prefer to volunteer during or after school days vs. on the weekends or national service days.



4. 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.



5. 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.



6. Use the right 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.

BOTTOM LINE

There is no one “right” way in which to engage youth. 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.” To best engage youth, offer them a variety of ways to get involved in the causes they care about via advocacy, fundraising and direct service.

For more information: NoKidHungry.org/YouthToolkit

METHODOLOGY

An online survey of 138 youth between the ages of 10 and 25 years was completed in the fall of 2015 and recommendations based on that survey were developed by SHG Advisors, a firm that strategically advises corporations, foundations and non-profits to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measurable and timely change. The respondents represented 29 states across the U.S.



ABOUT NO KID HUNGRY

No child should go hungry in America, but 1 in 5 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.



ABOUT SODEXO STOP HUNGER FOUNDATION

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. Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation is committed to empowering youth who are dedicated to combating hunger and positively impacting their communities across America. From nutrition programs to engaging youth in service and advocacy, Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation supports hunger-related initiatives on local, state, and national levels. Sodexo, Inc. funds all administrative costs for Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation to ensure that all money raised helps those in need. Since its inception, the Foundation has granted more than \$27 million to help end childhood hunger. To learn more visit www.HelpStopHunger.org.