

Serve2Unite

Building Social/ School Community

Project Based Service Learning Overview

Project Discription

In this project, students will read sections from the Migration Issue Brief concerning why migration happens and the economic and cultural effects of migration. Students will read “the town that loves refugees” to learn about the resettlement process for refugees in the US. The teacher will engage the students in a discussion about the readings to understand the issues and will have the students learn about the immigrant population in their own community. For the service aspect of the project, students will volunteer at a local refugee resettlement or immigrant services organization and write a report about the experience.

Instructional Goals

Students gain an understanding of why immigration happens and relate this knowledge to what to the immigrant population in their own community.

Service Goals

By volunteering, students will be able to utilize their knowledge of the issue of migration in general and the specifics about their local immigrant community to help address the local challenges.

Learning Outcomes

- Students can analyze how migration affects the social, economic and political systems in the host country and country of origin.
- Students understand push and pull factors in migration
- Students can articulate the connections between local and global problems.

Materials

Migration Issue Brief Sections(<http://www.globalization101.org/issue/migration/>):

- Why Does Migration Happen?
- Push Factors
- Pull Factors
- Economic Effects of Migration
- Cultural Effects of Migration

United Nation’s HCR’s April 2005 Refugee Magazine article “The town that loved refugees” (<http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/426f4c772.pdf>)

Time Required

Introductory lesson: 1 class, Volunteering: Varying, Follow-up lesson: 1 class

Procedure

Before Class: Students should read the Migration Issue in Depth sections and the article “The town that loved refugees” and then answer the following homework questions.

Homework questions:

- 1) What is the difference between a “push” and “pull” factor? Give an example of each.
- 2) List some of the economic and cultural effects of immigration
- 3) How did Utica benefit from the new refugee population?
- 4) What problems did the new refugees face in Utica?
- 5) What skills are needed to succeed in America? Where can refugees go to gain these skills?

Classroom discussion and activity:

Discussion: Spend the first 5-10 minutes in class discussing the homework assignment. Then bring your students to the library or computer room and have them research the immigrant population in their own community. Research questions:

- 1) Number of immigrants in their own community and, if possible, country of origin.
- 2) What are the different institutions involved in helping resettle the immigrants in your community.
- 3) How does your community differ from Utica? Is it more or less diverse? Do you also resettle refugees or are immigrants coming for different reasons.
- 4) Why are immigrants coming to your community? Are there “push” or “pull” factors or both?

After the research is complete, discuss the results in class.

Optional Service Activity:

The length of the volunteer period for the service is up to you. You can decide if you want the students to go after school or together as a class, during school hours. Choose the format that works best for your requirements and time constraints. Here is a list of a couple of different options of places where they can volunteer.

- 1) International Rescue Committee: <http://www.theirc.org>. They have refugee resettlement centers in 14 cities across the US
- 2) National Voluntary Agencies (note, many of these are associated with religious groups): http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/partners/voluntary_agencies.htm
- 3) Local community organizations which the students find online

The service activity will depend on the needs of the organization. Some suggested activities are:

- A donations drive and packing welcome baskets for recently arrived refugees (school supplies, clothing, backpacks, winter gear, etc.)
- A book drive where each student donates a copy of his or her favorite book
- On-going tutoring on the weekend or weeknights with refugee resettlement offices

Note, it is important to find out the organization’s needs and capacity and structure your volunteer activity around them

Assessment

Students write a 2-page report or a diary about the volunteer experience. The report should include a summary of the volunteer activity and reflections sections. In the reflection section, students should address the following questions

- 1) What did you enjoy most about your volunteer experience?
- 2) What did you enjoy least about your volunteer experience?
- 3) Do you feel this organization meets the needs of the immigrant community?
- 4) What else needs to be done to address these needs in the community and how can you help?