Many times when people hear “Citizenship” they immediately think of service learning. There are many more components to Citizenship, but this month, we are going to focus on combining our global world with that popular mindset of service learning. 

Global Youth Service Day is coined as The World’s Largest Service Event and you can easily take part in the global service movement. Projects are currently being planned and promoted by youth all around the globe and will take place over GYSD weekend (April 15th – 17th) or throughout the month of April. These projects all have a specific global focus on a variety of topics: health, education, poverty and hunger, the environment and more!

- Visit the GYSD website at http://gysd.org/ to explore an interactive map that features the GYSD projects being planned by youth around the world.
- Research the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs) and plan your project around one or two of these global goals.
- Utilize the GYSD website to find project ideas, partnering events, and resources to increase your project’s success.
- Include a learning aspect for your group to raise awareness and increase the understanding about your project’s topic.

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Sarah’s Efforts to Promote Food Security in Ghana

Originally a 4-H’er from Worth County and a graduate of Iowa State University, Sarah Tweeten currently calls the northern region of Ghana home. Towards the end of her college career, she connected with AgriCorps (www.agricorps.org). Sarah, as well as other AgriCorps members (including Melissa Tabke featured in April 2015) work to promote food security in a developing country by serving as an agricultural teacher and developing a 4-H club in their school.

Coming from a 4-H background encouraged her to empower her students as the agents of change in their community. Because over 60% of the Ghanaians are farmers, they keep the focus of 4-H on agriculture. Sarah teaches General Agriculture to second year students at the Kumbungu Senior High School and uses the school garden to allow her students an experiential learning opportunity. She is also in the process of creating a speaking competition between her 4-H club and another to develop students’ public speaking skills.

According to Sarah, Ghana’s people are very welcoming, friendly and hospitable. To earn their respect, the best thing to do is learn their language – or at the very least, learn their greetings. When you’re out and about, you will be greeted by nearly every person. Their culture also finds it acceptable to be late to meetings and events by thirty minutes to an hour. This took Sarah some getting used to as did other cultural differences, but she believes “to gain such a strong cross-cultural awareness makes the challenges more than worth it.”

Sarah notices the way she looks at the world, how she acts and even talks have all changed because of this experience which she believes has changed her life. “There is something humbling about living in a developing country for a long period of time. Washing machines, warm showers and access to clean and safe drinking water are just a few things awaiting me at home that I will never again take for granted.” She encourages everyone to take the opportunity for cultural awareness. “There is such a value to experiencing and submerging yourself into another culture that simply cannot be replicated within the classroom setting.”

To be featured in our newsletter, share your story! E-mail: youth_rachelw@iastate.edu | Social Media: #Iowa4HGlobal

Any questions, comments, or ideas regarding events, global citizenship or stories: share with me today!

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