



**National
Peace Corps
Association**



Peace through Food
Food Security Educational Kit
NPCA Global Education
March 1, 2011

Celebrating Peace Corps' 50th Anniversary

The Peace Corps is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2011. To honor the five decades of service, communities around the world are hosting a series of Global House Parties on March 1, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Peace Corps by President John F. Kennedy. To coincide with those events, NPCA invites educators to join in the celebration by integrating the House Party theme of food security in their classrooms – on March 1 or at any time throughout the year. This kit provides background on the food security theme, teaching suggestions for different grade levels and action steps to maximize your impact in making the world more food secure for all.

Part 1: Preparation

What can I do in my classroom or community?

- Educate yourself about the topic of food security – both here at home and in countries around the world. The information provided here in Part 1 will get you started.
- Use the teaching suggestions provided in Part 2 to educate your students and/or your neighbors about what food security means and what we can do.
- Take action to make your school or community healthier and more food secure using some of the ideas presented in Part 3.
- Give us your feedback and let us know what you did by taking our survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NPCAPeaceThroughFoodSurvey>. You can also email us at gloaled@peacecorpsconnect.org.

About Food Security

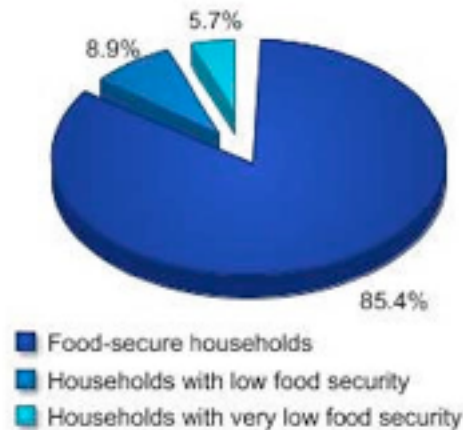
2010 United States Hunger and Poverty Facts and Statistics
Courtesy of World Hunger Education Service

(Thanks to Kids Can Make a Difference – www.kidscanmakeadifference.org - for allowing us to share excerpts below from this fact sheet. The complete fact sheet and bibliography are available online off the home page of the KIDS website.)

HUNGER IN THE UNITED STATES

There has been a dramatic increase in hunger in the United States in the last three years, 2008, 2009 and 2010. Statistics are only available for 2008. US statistics do not measure hunger, they measure food insecurity and security.

Food security status of U.S. households, 2008



Note: Food-insecure households include those with low food security and very low food security.

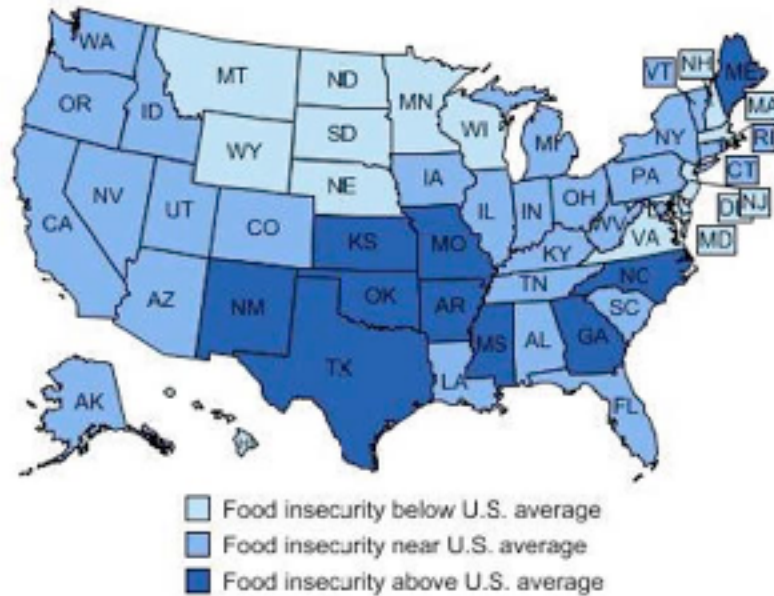
Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2008 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

THE CENSUS BUREAU STATISTICS ESTABLISH TWO GRADES OF FOOD INSECURITY.

- **VERY LOW FOOD SECURITY** In these food-insecure households, normal eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake was reduced at times during the year because they had insufficient money or other resources for food. 6.7 million US households (5.7 percent of all US households) had very low food security at some time during 2008, a 39 percent increase from 2007 (4.1 percent of US households). This was the largest increase ever recorded since nationally representative food security surveys were initiated in 1995, as well as the largest year-to-year percentage increase.

Where do they live? The image below shows food security status by state.

Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2006-08



Source: Calculated by ERS based on Current Population Survey Food Security Supplemental data.

- **LOW FOOD INSECURITY** 10.4 million US households (8.9 percent of households) had low food security in 2008, a 27 percent increase from 2007. These food-insecure households obtained enough food to avoid substantially disrupting their eating patterns or reducing food intake by using a variety of coping strategies, such as eating less varied diets, participating in Federal food assistance programs, or getting emergency food from community food pantries.
- **FOOD SECURITY** Thus, counting those with low and very low food security, in 2008, 17 million households, 14.6 percent of households (approximately one in seven), were food insecure, the highest number ever recorded in the United States. Four million households became food insecure in 2008, the largest increase ever recorded. (To get population figures from family size figures, multiply family size numbers by 2.58, the average family size.)

For more on hunger in the United States, poverty in the United States, causes of hunger and poverty, programs to address hunger and poverty and a bibliography, see the full fact sheet online at <http://www.kidscanmakeadifference.org/> .

What is Peace Corps' policy around food security?

Addressing food shortages in Countries of Service has been a part of Volunteer projects since the beginning of the Peace Corps. Volunteers who serve in undernourished communities take part in initiatives along the entire food value chain, from better agricultural practices, like drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting, to more efficient food processing and marketing of foods. With the sharp increase in chronic hunger world-wide, Peace Corps has developed a Food Security Strategic Plan that emphasizes tailored initiatives for each Country of Service Community and the volunteers responsibility to train members of the local community in sustainable agricultural development, income generation, and nutrition.

Learn more about what Peace Corps Volunteers are doing to combat food insecurity and how you can support their efforts

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.whatvol.foodsecurity>.

Part 2: Discussing food security in classrooms and communities

Ideas for younger audiences

Food for Thought

by Susan Neyer (RPCV Philippines; Editor, NPCA *Global Education News*)

Whether for this special 50th anniversary study or for World Food Day each October, how about taking a look at food with your students? It's a basic of life, and everyone will have something to contribute to a discussion.

When I was growing up in northern Illinois, there was very little variety in my diet. Pizza was a new craze and you could buy "hot tamales" at the drive-in movie, but we never had anything very "exotic." I remember a friend who had traveled introducing us to artichokes – how strange they seemed! And avocados and eggplants weren't around, not to mention bok choy and kim chee. How times have changed! Your students are probably already aware of a number of foods from different cultures, since Mexican, Chinese, etc. are very prevalent in the mainstream these days and our classes often contain students from many regions and cultures.

In discussing food, K-2 students can look at questions such as:

- *Why do we need food?*
- *Where does our food come from (besides the grocery store)?*
- *What foods do you eat at home? What is your favorite food?*

They can learn the basic food groups (perhaps using the food pyramid) and see how their own diets fit into this, sorting food in typical meals into grains, fruits, vegetables, etc.

Older students can look at the foods from different countries and cultures with a thought to why certain foods are central to certain countries and areas. Every culture has a staple food – rice, potatoes, wheat or other grain – a starch. Why is this so important? How have these staple foods developed in certain areas, e.g. why is rice, rather than potatoes, corn, or wheat/bread, such a basic food in Asia? What effect has climate or terrain (temperature, rainfall, mountains, coastline, etc.) had on the foods of a country?

Students can also learn about food shortages and the causes of hunger (economy, politics, climate/drought, etc.) and what can be done about this. They can look at the distribution of food around the country and the world and see how this is changing and how distribution problems may contribute to hunger and malnutrition. What about issues of equity in food distribution?

And, don't forget to have some tasting parties and perhaps do some simple cooking with your class.

Suggested Resources:

FOODS OF THE WORLD

- ***Let's Eat!: What Children Eat Around the World*** by Beatrice Hollyer (Henry Holt & Co. 2004) done in association with Oxfam, features a child from each of five countries (South Africa, Mexico, Thailand, France and India) with colorful photos of the children raising, shopping for and preparing food in the course of their daily lives. In the back it has a recipe from each country and a glossary of food terms.
- ***Food (Traditions Around the World Series)*** by Jillian Powell (Thomson Learning, 1995) highlights traditional foods from all the continents.
- ***Let's Eat: Foods of Our World*** by Janine Scott (Congress Point Books, 2003) is a book for primary level, organized by the type of food rather than the geographic area. It could be a good starting point for students to look at their own diets in light of these food categories.
- The University of Illinois Extension has a unit on their website at <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/food/teachersguide.cfm> entitled ***Fresh from the World... Where Your Food Comes From***. It has a lot of activities that would be useful in helping students to learn where food comes from, how it is grown and transported, etc. A few sample questions:
 - Do the foods we eat all come from our own country or are they grown in other parts of the world?
 - Have students ever been to a U-Pick farm or farmer's market to buy fresh food?
 - Who has gone to a community food festival? What food was being celebrated?
 - How is it possible to have a continuous almost seamless supply of fresh produce?
 - How have foods changed over time?

It also suggests several activities, such as a "Food Travelogue": Ask students to bring to class a food product with a product of origin label. How far did the product travel? What traveled the farthest? What had the shortest trip? Was anything grown locally?

FOOD GROUPS

- *Where Food Comes From* by Dorothy Hins Patent (Holiday House, 1991), *The Food Pyramid* by Kristin Petrie (ABDO Publishing, 2004), and *Good Enough to Eat* by Lizzy Rockwell (HarperCollins, 1999) may be useful for a study of food families.
- *Junk Food* by Vicki Cobb (Millbrook Press 2006) – yes, there is even a book that tells us all about popcorn, chips, candy, etc.

ECOLOGY & FOOD

- *Natural Foods and Products* by Gary Chandler & Kevin Graham (Henry Holt, 1996) and *One Good Apple: Growing Our Food for the Sake of the Earth* by Catherine Paladino (Houghton Mifflin 1999) deal with organic farming and preservation of species.

HUNGER ISSUES

- An excellent resource for studying hunger is *Kids Ending Hunger: What Can We Do?* by Tracy Apple Howard (Andrews & McMeel, Kansas City, 1992; ISBN 0-8362-7000-2). Written in a kids-friendly manner, the book highlights the difference between famine and chronic hunger and how they need to be dealt with in very different manners. It contains short stories of children in several countries dealing with hunger, lots of hands-on activities, and an extensive list of “50 things kids can do to end hunger.”
- For a great website on hunger, see www.feedingminds.org, where you will find lesson modules for teachers, resources and activities for young people and an interactive forum for exchanging information and experiences around the world.
- At <http://www.foodbankwma.org/learn/resources/you> will find an extensive bibliography of books about food and hunger.

A GLOBAL LOOK AT FOOD

- *World Food (Living for the Future)* by Sally Morgan and Pauline Lalor, (Franklin Watts, 1998) is written as a follow-up of Agenda 21, the document produced at the Earth Summit in 1992. This could be a good book for upper elementary/middle school to study food issues on a global scale, including farming, protection of the earth, water, transporting food, and maintaining variety in foods.
- Students can find many fascinating tidbits and the answers to almost any questions about food in *Food: How we Hunt and Gather It, How We Grow and Eat It (Buy & Sell, Preserve & Waste....)* by Milton Meltzer (Millbrook Press, 1998).

Ideas for high school audiences and adults

Food and Us – Gardening Locally and Globally

by Angene Wilson (RPCV Liberia)

*Our family has always had a garden and in recent years we have grown sweet potato greens for Liberian friends. Farmers markets have multiplied in our city and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and school gardens are gaining popularity. Our church houses an ecumenical preschool and a daytime Alzheimer's program that share a small garden. Kentucky Proud, meaning Kentucky grown, products are widely advertised. I've also read Barbara Kingsolver's book, **Animal, Vegetable, Miracle** about her family's year of living off the land and local resources as much as possible – becoming "locavores." Several weeks ago I heard the owner of a local CSA tell the story of a new CSA member who confessed in embarrassment that she hadn't realized strawberries were seasonal, only available for less than a month in late May, early June in Kentucky – she was accustomed to buying them year-round from California or Florida in the grocery stores.*

*Thus the articles in **WorldView** magazine's spring 2010 issue (Vol. 23 No. 1) focused on agriculture and food security caught my attention. Perhaps the referenced articles and the following teaching ideas could spur a high school class or club to participate in or start a garden and also think about why that might be an important thing to do. (You may download or read this issue online at <http://bit.ly/23-1WorldViewPDF> .*

OBJECTIVES

After reading the *WorldView* articles "Global Gardens" and "Food Sovereignty," students will discuss the value of gardening locally and globally and be encouraged to get involved themselves locally.

MATERIALS

Articles in the Spring 2010 *WorldView Magazine*:

- "Global Gardens: It Takes a Community to Raise a Garden" by JoAnna Haugen (available for download as a PDF at <http://bit.ly/CommunityGarden>)
- "Food Sovereignty" by Kyle Freund (available for download as a PDF at <http://bit.ly/FoodSovereignty>)

PROCEDURE

As before or in-class homework, ask half the class or club to read "Global Gardens" and half to read "Food Sovereignty."

If the classroom has web access, show pictures on the Idaho Refugee Garden Program website at www.idahorefugees.org/Home/Global_Gardens of Somali, Russian and other refugees working in gardens and selling their produce. Ask students who read that article to fill in for the rest of the class the information about how the community-supported gardens work and the value for the refugees and for the community. Be sure students understand the term CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) and make reference to local CSAs, if any, and how they work.

Ask a student who read “Food Sovereignty” to define that term. Be sure students understand why food scarcity is a problem for families in the state of Veracruz, Mexico.

Ask questions such as:

- In what ways are we in the same boat as the families in Mexico, buying cheap, processed foods instead of locally produced and healthier foods?
- What are the advantages and constraints for the consumer to buying as much food locally as possible?
- How do CSAs fit in the local economy?

Finally, ask students: “So what?” Create a list of possible individual and group actions which might include such options as talking to local refugees about food crops they grew in their home countries, visiting a local CSA or inviting a CSA manager or member to talk, and even starting a school garden.

Part 3: Taking the Next Step

The most effective global education takes what students have learned about a topic and turns it into action. Whether your students choose to do something on their own or work together as a class, it’s important to involve them in the process of deciding what is needed and what they can do in their community.

Here’s one example, reprinted from the Winter 2011 “Finding Solutions” newsletter (<http://mim.io/f8f9a>) produced by Kids Can Make a Difference.

Bringing Lasting Change To School Food: How We Do It and How You Can, Too

by Meredith Modzelewski

While it’s easy enough to say that children need healthy food – and the right amount of it – in order to succeed, far too many children come to school hungry. A hungry child can’t learn or play well, and school food may be her main meal of the day. In the U.S., more than 30 million children eat school food five days a week, 180 days a year – so it’s incredibly important that these meals are healthful.

In recent years, school food service professionals have had to face new challenges in providing kids with the healthy food they need. Soaring costs of food and fuel, the siren call of fast food, and financial pressures due to tight state budgets, diminished tax revenues, and a meager federal reimbursement rate for school meals create added strains on school food service professionals as they work to meet standards of nutritional quality.

Strengthening and maintaining the quality of school meals is essential to our nation’s future and an important step toward reversing the epidemic of childhood obesity and related diseases.

What is School Food FOCUS?

Today, with nearly three years of experience and real-world results behind us, School Food FOCUS leverages the knowledge and procurement power of large school districts to make school meals more healthful, regionally sourced, and sustainably produced. FOCUS works with 29 school districts and their district partners, representing nearly 4 million children across the U.S. These districts are actively engaged in procurement change, using informed sourcing and purchasing decisions as well as wielding their large volume to make better options available to kids in lunchrooms everywhere.

SOME EARLY SUCCESSES INCLUDE:

- **Saint Paul Public Schools** surveyed districts throughout Minnesota and found that a majority preferred lower sugar content in flavored milk. While the volume for one district alone was not enough to convince its supplier to make changes, many districts across the state working together to flex their procurement muscle persuaded the supplier to change the formula for statewide use. The path to success was shared with fellow FOCUS districts and others, providing them with a straightforward “how-to.”
- **Denver Public Schools** has significantly increased the amount of locally grown fruits and vegetables on their menu, and all produce sourced from growers in Colorado is now traceable to the farm of origin. Menus sometimes even feature sustainably raised Colorado beef; locally-grown and processed chile sauce, and beans, are under development.

So, how can you and the children you teach get involved in procurement change? It may sound like a tough proposition, as the fundamental work of procurement often takes place in offices, central kitchens, and warehouses rather than in classrooms or cafeterias, but here are some ideas to get the gears turning.

Editor’s note: read an example from ASCD’s Healthy School Communities program in Des Moines, New Mexico

(http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/products/healthyschools/HSC_DesMoines2.pdf).

Another resource is Education Update (<http://bit.ly/EdUpdateApril2008>).

WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO?

Take a long, hard look at what your students eat for breakfast or lunch. Eating with them in the cafeteria once a week, or even once a month, will provide an eye-opening experience to help you better understand today’s debates around school food. Where does the food on the lunch tray come from? Why? Who makes the decisions that get it there?

For a deeper understanding, pick up Jan Poppendieck’s book, **Free For All: Fixing School Food in America**. Poppendieck explains the surprising history and frustrating complexities of school meals - as well as exciting possibilities for their future - in a vivid, compelling way.

WHAT CAN KIDS DO?

Consider the following:

Healthy Hits and Minnesota Grown in Saint Paul

In Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS), staff members involve kids in choosing new foods for the cafeteria. The Healthy Hits process starts with ideas for new dishes that meet all National School Lunch Program (NSLP) nutritional requirements, fit into the budget, and can be made in the district's central kitchen. These ideas are then tested through student focus groups, and promising dishes are piloted at a single school.

If students like a particular dish, it appears on the menu three more times. If participation numbers are high enough and positive feedback from staff and students continues, it's declared a Healthy Hit and placed on regular menu rotation. This thoughtful process allows kids who want delicious, healthy food to vote early and often with their lunch trays.

SPPS also collaborates with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy to create "Minnesota Grown" educational materials. These posters, maps, and other visual elements are displayed in lunchrooms, promoting regionally grown ingredients featured in their school meals. Produce is sourced from farms around the state, providing fresher and better-tasting food, supporting family farmers, and building regional economies. The materials show students where their food comes from, with the hopes that this knowledge will lead to healthier choices down the road.

School gardens and local produce in Denver

Slow Food Denver, district partner of Denver Public Schools (DPS), started a school garden program that not only directly engages students in the growing process and brings them closer to their food, but also allows DPS to purchase produce grown by the kids themselves and feature it in school salad bars and other menu items. This year, its first, saw 14 schools participating in the program. With help from adult volunteers, students grew over 1,200 pounds of squash, strawberries, lettuce, beets, and more, purchased for \$1,800 by DPS Food and Nutrition Services. Since then, Food and Nutrition Services has announced plans to triple school garden contributions to next year's menu.

DPS and Slow Food Denver also partner on Youth Farmers Markets, in which school sites set up market stands to sell produce from school gardens as well as from Colorado farms. Students create displays, harvest and sell fruits and vegetables, and, in some cases, manage revenue. Over eight weeks, Youth Farmers Markets sold over 18,000 pounds of fresh produce in 100 separate markets. Through these educational, hands-on programs, kids in Denver have real influence over purchasing and sourcing decisions.

Cooking Up Change in Chicago

Healthy Schools Campaign - a district partner of Chicago Public Schools - has created Cooking Up Change, a contest that challenges teams of high school culinary students to create a healthful school lunch that meets many of the same budget, nutrition, and preparation constraints faced by school food service. A talented group of Chicago chefs assists the teams in

preparing for the competition, providing healthy cooking suggestions and nutritional tips. The winning meal is served in Chicago schools, creating an opportunity to discuss healthy food with students in lunchrooms across the district. In fact, the 2009 winning meal proved so popular that it has become a regular menu item.

Through Cooking Up Change, kids in Chicago are able to learn about, engage in, and shape the future of school food.

Resources

Exciting, isn't it? If you're eager to find out more, check out the following links.

- School Food FOCUS - Learnings from the Lab:
 - Local Produce: <http://bit.ly/enOC4w> and
 - Milk: <http://bit.ly/grX2ko>
- Saint Paul Public Schools: <http://www.spps.org/>
- Denver Public Schools: <http://www.dpsk12.org/>
- Chicago Public Schools: <http://cps.edu/Pages/home.aspx>
- Slow Food Denver: <http://slowfooddenver.org>
- Denver Urban Gardens: <http://dug.org>
- Cooking Up Change:
<http://www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/event/cookingupchange/2010/flagship/>
- LiFE: Linking Food and the Environment Curriculum Series:
<http://blogs.tc.columbia.edu/cfe/>
- CookShop Classroom:
<http://foodbanknyc.org/go/our-programs/nutrition-and-health-education/cookshop-classroom>
- National Farm to School Network: <http://farmtoschool.org>
- Let's Move! <http://letsmove.gov> and its program Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools:
<http://saladbars2schools.org>
- FoodCorps:
http://food-corps.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=2

Meredith Modzelewski facilitates the sharing of information, successes, and best practices among those working tirelessly to make school food more healthful, more regionally sourced, and more sustainably produced -- and spreads the good word to the rest of the world through social, digital, and traditional media. She may be contacted at mmodzelewski@schoolfoodfocus.org.

Part 4: More Resources

About NPCA

The National Peace Corps Association is the nation's leading nonprofit supporting Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and the Peace Corps community through networking and mentoring to help guide former volunteers through their continued service back home. It is also the longest-standing advocate on behalf of the Peace Corps and its values.

Our mission is to help foster peace by supporting people who have served in the Peace Corps and the Peace Corps community through supporting domestic and international grassroots projects organized by returned Peace Corps Volunteers, and promoting networking, advocacy, and mentoring among those who have served in the Peace Corps.

The National Peace Corps Association was founded in 1979 and incorporated in 1983 as the national association to connect, inform, and engage people impacted or inspired by Peace Corps. It is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization encompassing a network of over 30,000 individuals and more than 140 member groups. The NPCA and its member groups produce global education programs and advocacy campaigns, and provide community, national and international services. It is governed by a board of directors, and is managed by a professional staff with headquarters in Washington, DC. It is not a part of the United States Peace Corps, which is a federal agency.

NPCA Global Education: <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/education/>

- Educators Toolbox – Global Issues: <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/education/toolbox/>
- Classroom Materials: <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/education/classroom-materials/>
- Millennium Development Goals: <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/education/millennium-development-goals/>
- Newsletter: <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/education/newsletter/>

Kids Can Make a Difference: <http://www.kidscanmakeadifference.org/index.html>

The KIDS Teacher Guide, *Finding Solutions To Hunger, Kids Can Make A Difference*, contains 25 lessons that provide valuable background and creative suggestions to help students answer the difficult questions dealing with hunger and poverty. The book helps students move beyond negative feelings into constructive actions that show that they can make a difference in their community, country and world. Book includes fund-raising ideas, organizations to contact, and a listing of available videos and books for use with lessons.

- Sign up for newsletter at <http://www.kidscanmakeadifference.org/>
- Download KIDS Teacher Guide

Oxfam America: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/>

- Host a Hunger Banquet:
http://actfast.oxfamamerica.org/index.php/events/banquet?utm_source=OAWebAction&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=ACTFAST
- Hunger & Food Security: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/issues/hunger-food-security>

ASCD: <http://www.ascd.org/>

- Healthy School Communities Program:
<http://www.ascd.org/programs/hsc/healthyschoolcommunities.aspx>
- Professional Interest Communities:
<http://www.ascd.org/about-ascd/professional-interest-communities/home.aspx>

NPCA Global Education is the Global Education Professional Interest Community at ASCD.

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- Organizations
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 - Kids Can Make a Difference (www.kidscanmakeadifference.org)
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