

Students Rebuild  
Youth Uplift Challenge

# Telling Our Stories

Understanding Opportunities and Obstacles of Youth

*Elementary Curriculum*



students  
rebuild



A Global Nomads Group Curriculum

## Curriculum Overview

**Telling Our Stories: Understanding Opportunities and Obstacles of Youth** is a new curriculum from Students Rebuild and Global Nomads Group that will help young people explore the essential question:

*How might we, as students, better understand the opportunities and obstacles youth face around the world?*

Through self-reflection, challenging assumptions, and being exposed to new stories and perspectives through our live webcast, this curriculum will support a transformative learning experience—whether inside a classroom or in other community programs.

### Student Learning Outcomes

This program is designed to promote the following:

1. **Critical Thinking:** Students will reflect on their own identity as well as the identity and diverse experiences of other youth.
2. **Global Awareness and Empathy:** Students will deepen their understanding of the opportunities and obstacles of youth living in Nicaragua and the United States.

### Curriculum Overview

This curriculum includes three activities, ranging from 40 – 60 minutes. Activities 1 and 2 are to be completed prior to viewing or joining the live webcast (Activity 3). Activity 3 includes the live webcast and an opportunity for students to reflect on their experience. Each activity includes an educator lesson plan, marked by a blue bar along the top, and a corresponding student page. Sample responses are included for some questions, not to limit responses, but to support you in eliciting multiple responses from students. Be sure to print out all student pages for your class: pages 3, 6, 9, and 10.

### Classroom Activities and Preparation

| Activity                              | Activity Overview  | Time       | Student Page # | Materials  |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------|----------------|--|
| 1. Who Am I?<br>What Makes Me Unique? | Students create a self-portrait that answers questions about their unique story. Students include details of their daily life, language, interests, family, religion, school, friendships and/or social groups, and dreams (opportunities and challenges). Students reflect on how others might describe them and the impact this has on their identity. | 40 minutes | 3 & 6          | Chart paper (or white board), markers, and pencils or pens |

| Activity   | Activity Overview   | Time       | Student Page # | Materials   |
|--|---|------------|----------------|---|
| 2. Investigate the World: Nicaragua                    | Students brainstorm a list of what they think they know about Nicaragua and what they are interested in learning. Students build background knowledge about the country of Nicaragua and recognize assumptions they may have. Students are introduced to Asking Complete Questions to write questions that provide context about their own experiences and ask specific questions to expand their understanding of youth living in Nicaragua. | 40 minutes | 9 & 10         | Chart paper (or white board), markers, and pencils or pens          |
| 3. Youth Uplift Challenge: Live Webcast and Reflection | Students join the Youth Uplift Challenge: Live Webcast, broadening their understanding of youth living in Nicaragua and the United States and asking prepared questions. Students who miss the live webcast can watch the recording found on the <a href="#">Students Rebuild YouTube channel</a> . Students respond to reflection questions after joining or viewing the webcast.  | 60 minutes | N/A            | Computer with access to the internet and projector; pencils or pens |

# Telling Our Stories: Understand Opportunities and Obstacles of Youth

Before you jump into telling your own story and learning from the stories of others, we want to share a little about one of our partners: [Global Nomads Group \(GNG\)](#). GNG believes all young people should have the opportunity to connect with peers all over the world to grow in empathy, increase global awareness, and take action together. Young people, like you, have an incredibly important voice!

GNG also believes in bringing people together. Together we work across borders that often keep us apart. If we engage in conversation across cultures, discover similarities, and understand and celebrate differences, we can break down barriers and collaborate to change our communities.

In these activities, you'll think about what makes you "YOU." You'll learn about the importance of listening to others' stories in order to better understand what makes each person unique, and challenge assumptions that may exist. Through joining or viewing a live webcast, you'll hear the stories of youth from around the world and better understand the opportunities and obstacles they face. Through all of these activities, we'll work together to answer the question: How might we, as students, better understand the opportunities and obstacles youth face around the world?

Let's get started!



## Activity #1: Who Am I? What's My Story?

**Overview** Students create a self-portrait that answers the questions about their unique story. Students include details of their daily life, language, interests, family, religion, school, friendships and/or social groups, dreams (opportunities), and challenges. Students reflect on how others might describe them and the impact this has on identity.

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**Time** 40 minutes

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**Materials** Chart Paper (or white board), markers, and pencils or pens  
Student Page(s): 3 & 6

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**Learning Objective** Students will reflect on their individual identity and its relationship to a broader community membership.

### Lesson Plan Activities

#### 1. Introduction to Global Nomads Group (5 minutes)

- *Read:* Pass out Student Page 3 and as a class read about this program and Global Nomads Group.

#### 2. Creating and Sharing a Self-portrait (25 minutes)

- *Brainstorm:* Pose the following questions to students: What makes a person special or unique? When you think of describing yourself to others, what types of information would be important to include?
- *Chart:* As students share their responses, write them on chart paper or a white board so students can refer to these ideas when they create their own self-portrait. Use the sample responses below to guide students in thinking about various aspects of their own identity.

*Student responses might include: my interests, what I like to do for fun, where I live, my family, my friends, the languages I speak, my religion, responsibilities I have, general beliefs, my aspirations or dreams, the struggles or obstacles I may face.*

- *Create:* Self-portraits are a classic way for people to share one aspect of their identity, their physical appearance. Explain to students that in this activity they will create a self-portrait that answers the questions, “Who Am I?” and “What Makes Me Unique?” Students will focus on a portrait that includes specific aspects from the class list just created related to identity. Pass out Student Page 6 and provide time for students to work individually to create their portrait. Encourage students to use pictures, words, or short phrases inside the outline of a person to describe unique information about themselves. Let students know that you’ll be looking for several volunteers to share their self-portraits with the rest of the class.

- *Share*: Ask several students to share their self-portraits and facilitate a class conversation using the questions below:
  - What did you include on your self-portrait and why?
  - What similarities do you have with others in our class?
  - Are you surprised? Why or why not?

#### 4. Connecting to Community (5 minutes)

- *Discuss*: Students will now think about the various groups or communities to which they belong. As unique individuals, we belong to different groups or communities who may have common interests or activities, live in the same geographic location, or have shared beliefs.

Pose the following questions to students: What groups, or communities, do you belong to? Do you belong to more than one group or community?

*Student responses might include: my family, my school, my class, my Girl Scout group, my soccer team; it is possible to belong to more than one group or community.*

- *Create*: Ask students to return to their portraits on Student Page 6 to write the various groups to which they belong **outside** the outline of the person.

#### 4. Discussing How Others Impact Our Identity (10 minutes)

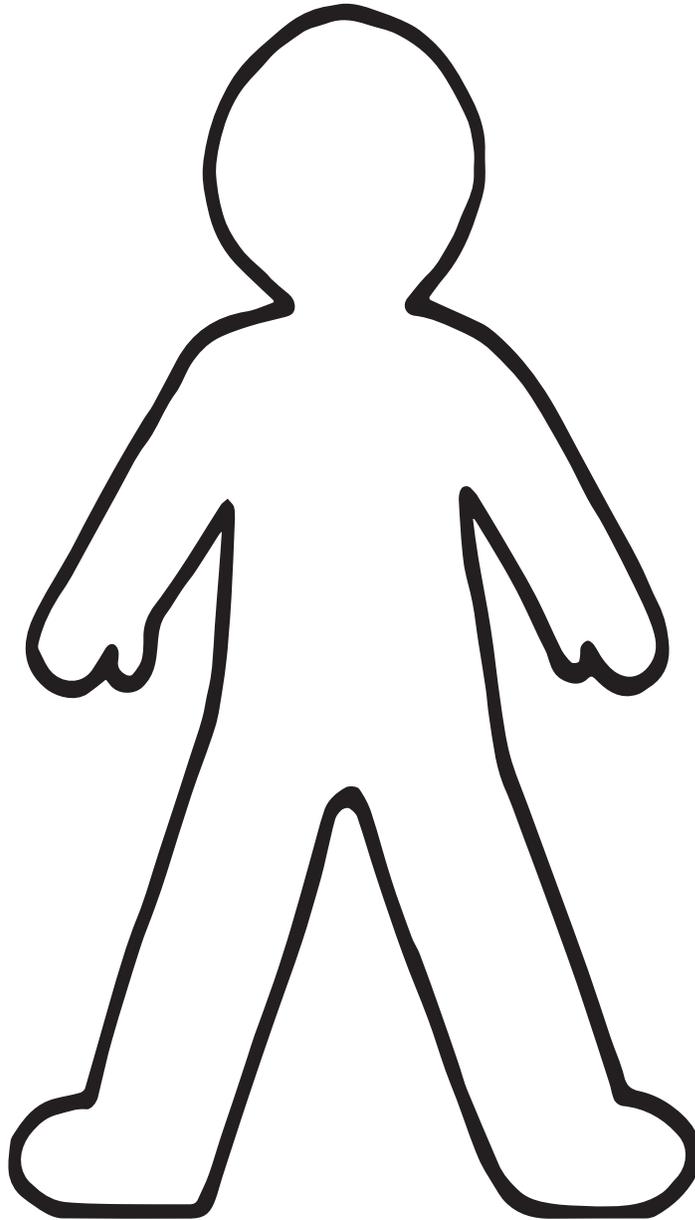
- *Discuss*: Students will now consider how their identity is viewed by others. How others view us can be very similar or very different to how we may see ourselves. This can include assumptions that may negatively impact our identity.

Use the following questions to facilitate a discussion on how identity might be seen by others.

- How might others describe you? Is this the same as what you included on your self-portrait?
- How might others' descriptions of you be different than how you see yourself?
- Has anyone made assumptions about you or the groups and communities you belong to that weren't true? How did that feel?
- Have you ever made assumptions about others that weren't true? How do you think that made others feel?
- Why do you think we make assumptions?

## Who Am I? What Makes Me Unique?

Every one of us is unique! We're all shaped by many different experiences. Use pictures, words, or phrases **inside the person outline** below to describe what makes you unique.



As individuals, we belong to many different groups or communities. Think about the different groups or communities you belong to and write them in the space **outside the person**.

### Activity #2:

## Investigate the World: Nicaragua and the United States

**Overview** Students brainstorm a list of what they think they know about Nicaragua and what they are interested in learning. Students build background knowledge about the country of Nicaragua and recognize assumptions they may have. Students are introduced to Asking Complete Questions to write questions that provide context about their own experiences and ask specific questions to expand their understanding of youth living in Nicaragua.

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**Time** 40 minutes

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**Materials** Chart Paper (or white board), markers, and pencils or pens  
Student Page(s): 9 & 10

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**Learning Objective** Students will build background knowledge about their peers in preparation for the webcast.

In the live webcast (Activity 3), students from Nicaragua and the United States will meet and learn about each other's daily lives, opportunities, and obstacles. In this lessons' activities, students will prepare for joining or viewing the live webcast by building background knowledge, recognizing assumptions they may have about youth living in Nicaragua, and writing questions that will be answered in the live webcast. General facts are provided about the country of Nicaragua; however, students are encouraged to see how this information does not provide details about the daily lives of individual students living in Nicaragua and may even lead to assumptions. Challenging assumptions includes, but is not limited to, the practice of remaining open, curious, and asking questions to learn more about the unique experiences of others.

### Lesson Plan Activities

#### 1. Accessing Prior Knowledge: Nicaragua (20 minutes)

- *Introduce:* Explain to students that in Activity 3, they'll have the opportunity to join a live webcast and learn about the daily lives of youth living in Nicaragua and the United States.
- *Brainstorm:* Draw or create the chart below on a white board or chart paper. As a class, brainstorm a list of what students already know about Nicaragua and write these in the KNOW column. As students provide information, ask students to tell you how they know this information, recording this in the HOW column. Students may be able to provide only general information related to geography, language, etc. that they have learned from media sources, etc. The WISH column of the chart will be completed later in this lesson with information students would like to know about Nicaragua

## KNOW

What do we KNOW?

Or what do we think we know?

*Example:* Nicaragua is in Central America

## HOW

HOW do we know this? Where did this information come from?

*Example:* From the world map in our classroom

## WISH

What do we WISH to learn more about?

*Example:* What is school like for you?

- *Read:* Pass out Student Page 9 to briefly discuss additional general information about the country of Nicaragua. This information may provide more context of the country, but is still very limited.
- *Reflect:* Refer students back to the self-portrait they made in Activity 1 that included details about what made each one of them unique. Use the following questions to reflect on what kind of information is truly known about students living in Nicaragua and then create a WISH list of what students would like to learn.
  - Earlier we created self-portraits. With the information we know or think we know about Nicaragua, could we create a portrait of a student living in Nicaragua? Why or why not? If we tried, do you think our portrait would include assumptions?
  - What might those assumptions be?
  - What types of questions could we ask to learn more about the daily lives of students living in Nicaragua? [Record 4 – 5 questions in the WISH column that would support students learning more detailed information related to daily life, language, interests, family, religion, school, friendships and/or social groups, dreams (opportunities), and challenges.]

## 2. Asking Complete Questions (20 minutes)

- *Introduce:* Explain to students that you will now turn your WISH list of questions into complete questions that can be asked in the live webcast. Ask students to look at the Asking Complete Questions activity on Student Page 10 and answer the following question: “What do you notice about the question on the left side of the column, ‘What is school like for you?’ and the example of the complete question on the right side of the column?”

*Sample responses may include: The complete question starts with information about the person (background context) and then asks a specific question. The question on the left is very general; the complete question on the right is more specific.*

- *Rewrite:* As a whole class, rewrite the second question as a complete question. Now take 2 or 3 questions from the class WISH list and together rewrite these questions as complete questions. Provide support as needed in order to frame questions in an appropriate and culturally sensitive way. During the live webcast, you will have the opportunity to type your students’ questions into the live chat box.

## Investigate the World: Nicaragua and the United States

In the live webcast, you will learn about the lives of students from Nicaragua and the United States. You'll also have the chance to hear several stories and broaden your understanding of youth living in diverse contexts. But first, let's look at a few general facts about the country of Nicaragua.



**A Nicaraguan Coin**



### **Geography**

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America and is slightly bigger in area than New York State. The country is bordered by Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south. The Pacific Ocean provides the border to the west, and the eastern border of the country is on the Caribbean Sea.

### **Government and Economy**

President Jose Daniel Ortega Saavedra was elected in 2006. Nicaragua is the poorest country in Central America, and has widespread unemployment and poverty. Their main crops are coffee, bananas, sugarcane, cotton, rice, corn, and sesame.

### **Population**

5,966,798

### **Official Languages**

Spanish, English, and indigenous languages



**The Nicaraguan Flag**

Colombia

## Asking Complete Questions

We know you're eager to ask your questions, but there's one more important step! Practice asking complete questions with background and context that will help you create open, honest, and engaging dialogue throughout the webcast.

| Instead of asking....           | Create a complete question:   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| What is school like for you?    | <i>Example: Our school day starts at 7:30am and ends at 2:30pm. We eat in the school cafeteria for lunch at 11:20am. What time do you start and end school? Where do you eat lunch?</i> |
| What do you like to do for fun? |   |

### Create Your Complete Questions

As a class, write 2 or 3 complete questions that could be asked in the live webcast.

1.

2.

3.

## Activity #3: Youth Uplift Challenge: Live Webcast

**Overview** Students join the Youth Uplift Challenge: Live Webcast, broadening their understanding of youth living in Nicaragua and the United States and asking prepared questions. Students who may miss the live webcast can watch the recording found on the [Students Rebuild YouTube channel](#). After joining or viewing the webcast, students respond to reflection questions.

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**Time** Day/Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tech Dial-in Time (30 minutes prior to start): \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ AM/PM  
YouTube Live Hangout on Air Start Time (50 minutes): \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_ AM/PM

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**Materials** Computer with access to the internet and projector (if available).

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**Learning Objective** Students will deepen their understanding of youth living in Nicaragua and the United States.

### Join the Live Webcast!

#### 1. Join the Live Webcast! (50 minutes)

- Step 1: RSVP to the live webcast
- Step 2: Launch the live webcast
- Step 3: Introduce yourself and join the conversation!

#### 2. Reflect (10 minutes)

- *Whole Class Debrief.* Facilitate a whole class discussion using the following questions:
  - What was the most interesting or surprising thing you learned from the live webcast?
  - In what ways are your experiences similar to the experiences students shared in the live webcast? In what ways are they different?
  - What questions do you still have for your peers?

#### 3. Optional: Hand Making (20 minutes)

- *Create:* As part of the Youth Uplift Challenge, students were asked to create a thoughtful, symbolic hand prior to May 8, 2017 to represent their commitment to take action. If your team has not yet created your hands, this is a great opportunity to do so. For every hand students make and send in during the Youth Uplift Challenge, the Bezos Family Foundation will donate \$1.90—up to \$500,000—to Save the Children’s programs empowering youth in Nicaragua and Indonesia to rise into a life they dream for themselves.

Additional resources for Hand Making can be found at <http://studentsrebuild.org/youthuplift/hands>.