Life Skills:
Decision Making, Communication, Accepting Differences

What to Do:
Survey people to determine important issues of our day and discuss those issues.

Measuring Success:
Youths will recognize and think about world issues. They will compare global issues concerning different age groups and determine which issues they are interested in learning more about.

Audience:
9th - 12th grades

Time Involved:
One to two hours for individuals to conduct survey prior to meeting and 30-45 minutes at the meeting to discuss issues.

Group Size:
10-20

Preparation and Materials
Prior to Session No. 1 — Instruct each member to survey five people and ask those people what global issues they think are most important. Suggest youths survey people from different age groups.
• Paper
• Pens or pencils

Introduction
As young people, you have opinions about issues you believe present the greatest risk to our global survival. These might include terrorism, germ warfare or our environment. This activity will give you a chance to compile a list of issues you're interested in learning more about and also learn what others think.

Activity
Based on the interviews and your own knowledge, let's work together to list the 10 most pressing issues of our time.
Reflect/Discuss
Share What You Did
I’d like each one of you to choose your two or three highest priority issues. (Form work
groups based on these priorities. Choose three to five points that each group will discuss
on each issue. Some suggested discussion questions are: What would the group like to
know about the issue that it does not know already? Why is each issue of concern to
young people? Why is it of concern to middle-aged people and why is it a concern to
older citizens? Are these concerns different?)

Tell What's Important
(Point out the similarities in the issues that are priorities to the youths. Explain that those
concerned about certain priorities may work together to improve specific situations while
others focus their efforts on different priorities. Discuss the benefits of different people
taking different priorities and working together to improve the world we share.)

Generalize to Your Life
How did you develop your priorities? What are the priorities in your family, your
community or your school? Does everyone have to be concerned about the same issues?

Apply
I encourage you to share this exercise with your friends and family. Then, think of ways
to get involved in changing the issues that are priorities to you and to those you know.
(Have youths share their findings with the group at the next meeting.)

More Challenges
• Invite an international resource person to your meeting. What issues are facing the
guest's home country? Are they the same as or different from those identified by the
group? Why? What has brought your guest to the United States? Does his/her purpose
here relate to any of the issues your group discussed? If so, how?
• Youths can look in newspapers and magazines to get a sense of global issues. How are
these different issues being addressed? Has the United Nations or any nations around
the world found good solutions? Are the top issues identified by the group recognized
as world problems? Conduct a discussion about why or why not. Those who would
like more detailed issue formation can do further library research and/or write to
special interest groups.
• Invent and propose a possible solution to an issue that you analyzed and researched or
discussed. (i.e., What can young people do to help lessen the problem and how would
you propose doing it?)
• At the meeting: Have youths compare their lists of issues. Based on the interviews and
their own knowledge of world events, have them list the 10 most pressing issues of
our time.