

BARACK OBAMA

Barack Obama was born in 1961 in Honolulu, Hawaii. His parents separated when he was two years old and his father returned to his home in Kenya; his mother eventually remarried and moved to Indonesia. At age 10, Obama was sent back to Hawaii to live with his maternal grandparents and was later joined by his mother and sister.

While studying at the Pinahou Academy in Hawaii, Obama became aware of racism and what it meant to be African-American. He was one of only three black students at the school and struggled with identity formation, a struggle that was only compounded by the absence of his father. A graduate of Columbia University and Harvard Law School, where he became the first African-American editor of the Harvard Law Review, Obama was a community organizer in Chicago before earning his law degree. Following law school he worked as a civil rights attorney in Chicago and taught constitutional law at The University of Chicago Law School. He also served three terms representing the 13th District in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004. In 2004, he was elected to the U.S. Senate.

That year, Obama came to national prominence for his inspirational speech at the Democratic National Convention, where he talked about the role of hope and community work in making America a better place. In 2008, he became that 44th president of the United States.

In 2009, President Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.” He was the fourth U.S. president to win the award.



President Barack Obama ©Taylor-Kennedy

“WE DO NOT HAVE TO THINK THAT HUMAN NATURE IS PERFECT FOR US TO STILL BELIEVE THAT THE HUMAN CONDITION CAN BE PERFECTED. WE DO NOT HAVE TO LIVE IN AN IDEALIZED WORLD TO STILL REACH FOR THOSE IDEALS THAT WILL MAKE IT A BETTER PLACE. THE NON-VIOLENCE PRACTICED BY MEN LIKE GANDHI AND KING MAY NOT HAVE BEEN PRACTICAL OR POSSIBLE IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE, BUT THE LOVE THAT THEY PREACHED—THEIR FUNDAMENTAL FAITH IN HUMAN PROGRESS—THAT MUST ALWAYS BE THE NORTH STAR THAT GUIDES US ON OUR JOURNEY.”

Excerpts from Barack Obama: 2009 Nobel Peace Prize Lecture

I receive this honor with deep gratitude and great humility. It is an award that speaks to our highest aspirations—that for all the cruelty and hardship of our world, we are not mere prisoners of fate. Our actions matter, and can bend history in the direction of justice.

And yet I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the considerable controversy that your generous decision has generated. In part, this is because I am at the beginning, and not the end, of my labors on the world stage. Compared to some of the giants of history who've received this prize my accomplishments are slight. And then there are the men and women around the world who have been jailed and beaten in the pursuit of justice; those who toil in humanitarian organizations to relieve suffering; the unrecognized millions whose quiet acts of courage and compassion inspire even the most hardened cynics. I cannot argue with those who find these men and women – some known, some obscure to all but those they help – to be far more deserving of this honor than I. Perhaps the most profound issue surrounding my receipt of this prize is the fact that I am the commander-in-chief of the military of a nation in the midst of two wars.

Still, we are at war, and I'm responsible for the deployment of thousands of young Americans to battle in a distant land. Some will kill, and some will be killed. And so I come here with an acute sense of the costs of armed conflict—filled with difficult questions about the relationship between war and peace, and our effort to replace one with the other.

Now these questions are not new. War, in one form or another, appeared with the first man. At the dawn of history, its morality was not questioned; it was simply a fact, like drought or disease—the manner in which tribes and then civilizations sought power and settled their differences.

And over time, as codes of law sought to control violence within groups, so did philosophers and clerics and statesmen seek to regulate the destructive power of war. The concept of a “just war” emerged, suggesting that war is justified only when certain conditions were met: if it is waged as a last resort or in self-defense; if the force used is proportional; and if, whenever possible, civilians are spared from violence.

Of course, we know that for most of history, this concept of “just war” was rarely observed. The capacity of human beings to think up new ways to kill one another proved inexhaustible, as did our capacity to exempt from mercy those who look different or pray to a different God. Wars between armies gave way to wars between nations—total wars in which the distinction between combatant and civilian became blurred.

In the wake of such destruction, and with the advent of the nuclear age, it became clear to victor and vanquished alike that the world needed institutions to prevent another world war. And so, a quarter century after the United States Senate rejected the League of Nations America led the world in constructing an architecture to keep the peace: a Marshall Plan

and a United Nations, mechanisms to govern the waging of war, treaties to protect human rights, prevent genocide, restrict the most dangerous weapons.

In many ways, these efforts succeeded. Yes, terrible wars have been fought, and atrocities committed. But there has been no Third World War. We are the heirs of the fortitude and foresight of generations past, and it is a legacy for which my own country is rightfully proud.

And yet, a decade into a new century, this old architecture is buckling under the weight of new threats. The world may no longer shudder at the prospect of war between two nuclear superpowers, but proliferation may increase the risk of catastrophe. Moreover, wars between nations have increasingly given way to wars within nations. The resurgence of ethnic or sectarian conflicts; the growth of secessionist movements, insurgencies, and failed states—all these things have increasingly trapped civilians in unending chaos. In today's wars, many more civilians are killed than soldiers; the seeds of future conflict are sown, economies are wrecked, civil societies torn asunder, refugees amassed, children scarred.

I do not bring with me today a definitive solution to the problems of war. What I do know is that meeting these challenges will require the same vision, hard work, and persistence of those men and women who acted so boldly decades ago. And it will require us to think in new ways about the notions of just war and the imperatives of a just peace.

We must begin by acknowledging the hard truth: We will not eradicate violent conflict in our lifetimes. There will be times when nations—acting individually or in concert—will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified.

I make this statement mindful of what Martin Luther King Jr. said in this same ceremony years ago: “Violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem: it merely creates new and more complicated ones.” As someone who stands here as a direct consequence of Dr. King's life work, I am living testimony to the moral force of non-violence. I know there's nothing weak—nothing passive—nothing naïve—in the creed and lives of Gandhi and King.

But as a head of state sworn to protect and defend my nation, I cannot be guided by their examples alone. I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to the American people. To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism—it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason.

Concretely, we must direct our effort to the task that President Kennedy called for long ago. “Let us focus,” he said, “on a more practical, more attainable peace, based not on a sudden revolution in human nature but on a gradual evolution in human institutions.”

What might this evolution look like? What might these practical steps be?

To begin with, I believe that all nations—strong and weak

alike—must adhere to standards that govern the use of force. I—like any head of state—reserve the right to act unilaterally if necessary to defend my nation. Nevertheless, I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do, and isolates and weakens those who don't.

America—in fact, no nation—can insist that others follow the rules of the road if we refuse to follow them ourselves. For when we don't, our actions appear arbitrary and undercut the legitimacy of future interventions, no matter how justified.

America's commitment to global security will never waver. But in a world in which threats are more diffuse, and missions more complex, America cannot act alone. America alone cannot secure the peace.

First, in dealing with those nations that break rules and laws, I believe that we must develop alternatives to violence that are tough enough to actually change behavior—for if we want a lasting peace, then the words of the international community must mean something. Those regimes that break the rules must be held accountable.

One urgent example is the effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, and to seek a world without them. In the middle of the last century, nations agreed to be bound by a treaty whose bargain is clear: All will have access to peaceful nuclear power; those without nuclear weapons will forsake them; and those with nuclear weapons will work towards disarmament. Those who seek peace cannot stand idly by as nations arm themselves for nuclear war.

The same principle applies to those who violate international laws by brutalizing their own people. When there is genocide in Darfur, systematic rape in Congo, repression in Burma—there must be consequences. Yes, there will be engagement; yes, there will be diplomacy—but there must be consequences when those things fail. And the closer we stand together, the less likely we will be faced with the choice between armed intervention and complicity in oppression.

This brings me to a second point—the nature of the peace that we seek. For peace is not merely the absence of visible conflict. Only a just peace based on the inherent rights and dignity of every individual can truly be lasting.

It was this insight that drove drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War. In the wake of devastation, they recognized that if human rights are not protected, peace is a hollow promise.

And yet too often, these words are ignored. For some countries, the failure to uphold human rights is excused by the false suggestion that these are somehow Western principles, foreign to local cultures or stages of a nation's development. And within America, there has long been a tension between those who describe themselves as realists or idealists—a tension that suggests a stark choice between the narrow pursuit of interests or an endless campaign to impose our values around the world.

I reject these choices. I believe that peace is unstable where citizens are denied the right to speak freely or worship as they please; choose their own leaders or assemble without fear. Pent-up grievances fester, and the suppression of tribal and religious identity can lead to violence. No matter how callously defined, neither America's interests—nor the world's—are

served by the denial of human aspirations.

Let me also say this: The promotion of human rights cannot be about exhortation alone. At times, it must be coupled with painstaking diplomacy. I know that engagement with repressive regimes lacks the satisfying purity of indignation. But I also know that sanctions without outreach—condemnation without discussion—can carry forward only a crippling status quo. No repressive regime can move down a new path unless it has the choice of an open door.

Third, a just peace includes not only civil and political rights—it must encompass economic security and opportunity. For true peace is not just freedom from fear, but freedom from want.

And that's why helping farmers feed their own people—or nations educate their children and care for the sick—is not mere charity. It's also why the world must come together to confront climate change. There is little scientific dispute that if we do nothing, we will face more drought, more famine, more mass displacement—all of which will fuel more conflict for decades. For this reason, it is not merely scientists and environmental activists who call for swift and forceful action—it's military leaders in my own country and others who understand our common security hangs in the balance.

Agreements among nations. Strong institutions. Support for human rights. Investments in development. All these are vital ingredients in bringing about the evolution that President Kennedy spoke about. And yet, I do not believe that we will have the will, the determination, the staying power, to complete this work without something more—and that's the continued expansion of our moral imagination; an insistence that there's something irreducible that we all share.

We do not have to think that human nature is perfect for us to still believe that the human condition can be perfected. We do not have to live in an idealized world to still reach for those ideals that will make it a better place. The non-violence practiced by men like Gandhi and King may not have been practical or possible in every circumstance, but the love that they preached—their fundamental faith in human progress—that must always be the North Star that guides us on our journey.

For if we lose that faith—if we dismiss it as silly or naïve; if we divorce it from the decisions that we make on issues of war and peace—then we lose what's best about humanity. We lose our sense of possibility. We lose our moral compass.

Somewhere today, in the here and now, in the world as it is, a soldier sees he's outgunned, but stands firm to keep the peace. Somewhere today, in this world, a young protestor awaits the brutality of her government, but has the courage to march on. Somewhere today, a mother facing punishing poverty still takes the time to teach her child, scrapes together what few coins she has to send that child to school—because she believes that a cruel world still has a place for that child's dreams.

Let us live by their example. We can acknowledge that oppression will always be with us, and still strive for justice. We can admit the intractability of depravation, and still strive for dignity. Clear-eyed, we can understand that there will be war, and still strive for peace. We can do that—for that is the story of human progress; that's the hope of all the world; and at this moment of challenge, that must be our work here on Earth.

HUMAN PROGRESS—MORAL IMAGINATION

BARACK OBAMA

LESSON GRADE LEVEL: 9–12
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES: DEMILITARIZATION

“Take our share of responsibility for a global response to global challenges”

The globe is our home.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

Article 2: Freedom from Discrimination

Article 3: Right to Life, Liberty, and Personal Security

Article 21: Right to Participate in Government and Free Elections

Article 25: Right to Adequate Living Standard

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- Who should govern?
- What does it mean to be a global citizen?
- How do powerful individuals and the masses drive political change?
- How do the political actions of the few benefit or disadvantage the many?

TIME REQUIREMENT:

Ten 45-minute periods

OBJECTIVES:

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the achievements of President Barak Obama.
- Analyze the complexities of the struggle for racial equality in the U.S. elections.
- Analyze the role of the United States as a global actor

COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS:

Students will be able to:

- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source. (RH.11-12.2)
- Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually qualitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem. (RH.11-12.7)
- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (Including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate;

synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. (WHST.11-12.7)

- Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (WHST.11-12.9)

ILLINOIS STATE LEARNING STANDARDS:

- **14.B.5.** Analyze relationships and tensions among members of the international community.
- **14.C.5** Analyze the consequences of participation and non-participation in the electoral process (e.g., women’s suffrage, voter registration, effects of media).
- **16.D. 5 (W)** Analyze the relationship between an issue in world social history and the related aspects of political, economic and environmental history.
- **16.D.4a (US)** Describe the immediate and long-range social impacts of slavery.
- **18.A. 5** Compare ways in which social systems are affected by political, environmental, economic and technological changes.
- **18.C.4b** Analyze major contemporary cultural exchanges as influenced by worldwide communications.

VOCABULARY:

- **Universal suffrage**
- **Voting Rights Act of 1965**
- **Global citizenship**
- **Race relations**
- **Peace**

CONCEPTS:

- **Change**
- **Global citizenship**
- **Human rights**
- **Empowerment**

TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED:

- Computers with Internet access
- LCD projector

MATERIALS:

- Nobel Peace Prize speech by President Barak Obama, video and print
- CBS News video clip: “The Idea of

America” <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=4564168n>

- Robert Kennedy quote: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/people/robert-f-kennedy>
- http://www.cwa-union.org/news/entry/national_action_network_martin_luther_king_jr_rally_and_march_keeps_dr_ki
- Kerry Kennedy quote: http://articles.nydailynews.com/2008-11-16/news/17911010_1_kerry-kennedy-hillary-clinton-barack-obama
- Voting Rights Act of 1965 PowerPoint presentation: <http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/sutton/Design/Assets/Soc%20173%20Voting%20rights.pdf>
- Timeline template: <http://classroom.jc-schools.net/read/timeline.html>
- Department of Justice Supreme Court cases summary: http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro_a.php
- Voting Rights Act impact stories: <http://www.civilrights.org/voting-rights/vra/real-stories.html>
- U.S. blackline map: http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/usa__blank_map.htm
- Generalization handout: page 10 <http://www.pfsd.com/uploads/GraphicOrganizers.pdf>
- Berlin—Video Clip: Berlin Speech, July 26, 2008—<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REnSUruqeNw>
- Transcript of Berlin speech: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Vote2008/story?id=5442292&page=1>
- News article on Berlin speech: <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0708/12028.html>
- Global international appeal—What does Obama mean to the rest of the world? http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=e9769290b21598b0191bb18ae57d5a24
- Video clip—President Barak Obama Nobel Peace Prize speech: <http://www.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/index.php?id=1221>
- Transcript of Nobel speech: http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/obama-lecture_en.html
- White House page on the end of the Iraq War: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/10/21/president-obama-has-ended-war-iraq>

- U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security EXECUTIVE ORDER: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/19/executive-order-instituting-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security>
- U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security FACT SHEET: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/19/fact-sheet-united-states-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security>
- U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security CALL TO ACTION: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/email-files/US_National_Action_Plan_on_Women_Peace_and_Security.pdf
- Women and Peace website for comparison to other countries: <http://www.peacewomen.org/pages/about-1325/national-action-plans-naps>.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

ANTICIPATORY SET:

- 1 Show students the short video clip from CBS on the international excitement surrounding the 2008 campaign of Barack Obama. Video clip -- Election coverage of Obama election – “The Idea of America” – Hope, change the image of America – November 1, 2008 <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=4564168n>
- 2 Discuss the concept of hope. Have students write their own definition of hope and share with three or four other students.
- 3 Place the following quotations on the board. Analyze the predictions of an African-American president. Have students explain in their own words the significance of race in America.
 - On May 25, 1961, Robert F. Kennedy delivered an idealistic radio broadcast for Voice of America, defending America’s record on race relations to the rest of the world, insisting that *“there is no reason that in the near or the foreseeable future, a Negro could [not] become President of the United States.”* <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/people/robert-f-kennedy>
 - In a 1964 interview with the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), when asked to respond to a quotation from Senator-Elect Robert F. Kennedy, who predicted a Negro president in 40 years, *“I’ve seen levels of compliance with the civil rights bill and changes that have been most surprising. . . So, on the basis of this, I think we may be able to get a Negro president in less than 40 years. I would think that this could come in 25 years or less.”* This was Dr. King’s response according to the United Press International wire story. The story also ran in the Washington Post and the Chicago Daily News. http://www.cwa-union.org/news/entry/national_action_network_martin_luther_king_jr_rally_and_march_keeps_dr_ki
 - Kerry Kennedy, daughter of Robert F. Kennedy, saw what the country saw when it was official that Barack Obama had been elected President, saw the remarkable joyful pictures from Chicago. It was the city her father never made it to in 1968, the year he began the campaign that finally ended for Obama on the night of Nov 4.

“My father said this would happen,” she said. “You can look up the exact quote, but he said that in 40 years an African-American would be President.”

http://articles.nydailynews.com/2008-11-16/news/17911010_1_kerry-kennedy-hillary-clinton-barack-obama

ACTIVITY I

ELECTING AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN PRESIDENT

TEACHER TIP: Refresh student understanding of life in America during the civil rights movement. Explain the polarization of races in America.

Students will explore the struggle for African Americans as political participants in the American post-Reconstruction period. Students will identify barriers placed on African-American suffrage prior to the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Use this PowerPoint presentation to introduce the topic: <http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/sutton/Design/Assets/Soc%20173%20Voting%20rights.pdf> to introduce the topic.

TOPICS

- Equal Protection Clause—14th Amendment—1868
- Universal male suffrage—15th Amendment—1868
- Disfranchisement methods - poll tax, literacy tests, grandfather clause, white primaries
- Students will create a timeline of the following Supreme Court cases to understand the gradual gains in voting obtained through court decisions. Have students write a summary of the cases. <http://classroom.jc-schools.net/read/timeline.html>

SUPREME COURT CASES

- Guinn v. U.S. (1915)
- Smith v. Allwright (1944)
- Gomillion v. Lightfoot (1960)
- Baker v. Carr (1962)
- Reynolds v. Simms (1964)
- Westberry v. Sanders (1964)
- Fortson v. Dorsey (1965)
- Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections (1966)
- South Carolina v. Katzenbach (1966)
- http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro_a.php

TEACHER TIP: Quick background on the Voting Rights Act 1965 and Amendment http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro_b.php)

- Jigsaw the articles that show the impact of Voting Rights Act 1965 in all parts of the country. Have students work in small groups and place stories on a USA map and write generalizations. <http://www.civilrights.org/voting-rights/vra/real-stories.html>
- Map: http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/usa__blank_map.htm
- Generalization handout: page 10 <http://www.pfsd.com/uploads/GraphicOrganizers.pdf>

ACTIVITY 2

- Show clips and share excerpts of 2008 Berlin speech to show the anticipation in the international community as a global citizen. Discuss how the world views an American president.
 - Berlin -- video clip -- Berlin speech, July 26, 2008 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REnSUruqeNw>
 - Transcript of Berlin speech—<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Vote2008/story?id=5442292&page=1>
 - News article on Berlin speech <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0708/12028.html>
- Have students read the following websites to participate in a whole-group discussion.
 - Global International Appeal—What does Obama mean to the rest of the world?
http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=e9769290b21598b0191bb18ae57d5a24
 - Electing Obama would signal that Americans have changed—The Promise of a new America <http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=94800>
 - Ireland—Interview with Ireland's President March 17, 2009—The Today Show Meredith Vieira—Story 2 <http://www.mediaresearch.org/cyberalerts/2009/cyb20090318.asp#2>
 - Kenya: http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/blog/2008/01/the_kenya_conne.html
 - Ghana: http://articles.cnn.com/2009-07-10/world/ghana.obama_1_africa-tour-president-barack-obama-visit?_s=PM:WORLD
 - South Korea: http://articles.cnn.com/2011-10-13/politics/politics_korea-state-visit_1_obama-and-lee-president-barack-obama-president-lee-myung-bak?_s=PM:POLITICS
 - England: http://articles.cnn.com/2011-10-13/politics/politics_korea-state-visit_1_obama-and-lee-president-barack-obama-president-lee-myung-bak?_s=PM:POLITICS

ACTIVITY 3

THREE WAYS TO A JUST AND LASTING PEACE

Students will use the double-entry journal format to respond to the speech. In one column they will write direct quotes from the speech that explain each of the “3 Ways.” In the second column they will reflect on the selected quote and state how it

explains President Obama's ideas. After completing the double-entry journal, students will write a response to the concepts, focusing on achieving a just and lasting peace.

- <http://www.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/index.php?id=1221>
Watch the Nobel Peace Prize Lecture (19:56)
 - Way 1: Agreements among Nations—Alternative to violence that is tough enough to actually change behavior: International sanctions and treaties
 - Way 2: Promotion of human rights and diplomacy—Seek a just peace based on the inherent rights of every individual (UHDR).
 - Way 3: Economic Security and Opportunity—Investments in development
- Read Excerpt #1: http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2009/obama-lecture_en.html
 - Journal Prompt: What does President Obama mean by the phrase “continued expansion of our moral imagination?” Why does he believe that the human condition can be improved if we work to find similarities in each person? Do you agree or disagree with this concept?

ACTIVITY 4

- Read the official White House page on the end of the Iraq War: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/10/21/president-obama-has-ended-war-iraq>
- How has the ending of the Iraq war improved global peace efforts? What more needs to be done based on the “3 Ways” outlined in President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize speech? Students will write a five-paragraph essay explaining their position on the ending of the war.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

VISUAL DISPLAYS OF WOMEN AND PEACE—Students will share their findings by creating PowerPoint presentations, glogster.com poster, or websites.

- 1 Students will summarize the U.S. National Action Plan for Women on Peace, and Security and create a graphic chart explaining the role of women in conflict resolution, protection of women and instituting global peace.
- 2 Students will then select another country and compare their action plan for women and peace. <http://www.peacewomen.org/pages/about-1325/national-action-plans-naps>.
- 3 Students will write a reflective essay to accompany the visual.

EXECUTIVE ORDER: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/19/executive-order-instituting-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security>

FACT SHEET: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/19/fact-sheet-united-states-national-action-plan-women-peace-and-security>

CALL TO ACTION: http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/email-files/US_National_Action_Plan_on_Women_Peace_and_Security.pdf

President Obama worked as a community organizer in Chicago. In that capacity, he helped set up job training programs, college preparatory tutoring programs, and a tenants' rights organization, addressing human rights issues such as the right to an adequate standard of living, an education, and to join associations.

Community organizers work with members of their community and empowers them to take action on a pressing local issue.

DESIGN A COMMUNITY-ORGANIZING PROJECT

- Determine the issue(s) that you want to address in a community organizing campaign. Consider whether you want to focus on issues within your school, your neighborhood or your city. Consider what your experience is with this issue, what you will need to learn, and who is available to work with you.
- Decide what success would look like. Think big but be realistic; you should be able to measure your success.
- Establish a timeline. Consider your school year and the time constraints connected to addressing the issue. For instance, do you want to pass or support legislation that will be presented before your city council or your school board? If you do, you will need to factor those meeting dates into your action plan.
- Explore the tactics used to educate and engage your community.
 - To educate your community, you can, for example, have a day of presentations, create posters or videos about the issue, set up an information table, or create a pamphlet.
 - Tactics to consider might include organizing a letter-writing campaign, attending and having representatives speak at relevant meetings, or initiating a new program in your school.
- Based on the approach you selected, educate your community about the issue – root causes and proposed solutions.
- Based on the tactics you selected, design your campaign around your timeline and other school-specific requirements.
- Be sure to document your experience! Do this through meeting notes, a video or journal entries.
- Celebrate! And remember, not all community organizing campaigns achieve the desired outcomes. But if you have educated one person on the issue and how your community can address that issue, you have created change and you are a human rights defender.

The Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights is sponsoring an annual contest honoring a student who submits the best advocacy activity based upon the lesson studied. A goal of the lesson is to inspire in each student the idea that one voice, one person can make monumental changes in the lives of many. Tell us how you became a defender!

THE CRITERIA FOR THE CONTEST ARE:

- A one-page summary of the advocacy activity
- Digitized copies of materials that can be sent electronically
- Photos of the activity (please include a parental consent form)
- A one-page summary of how the activity changed the lives of one or many persons

THE PRIZES INCLUDE:

- A week-long "virtual" internship at the RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights
- An opportunity to meet the defender through a Skype visit
- A visit from Kerry Kennedy or a defender to your school
- A poster of a *Speak Truth To Power* human rights defender
- Donation of a signed copy of the book *Speak Truth To Power* to the winner's school library

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Obama/Biden 2012

<http://www.barackobama.com/>

The official website for the 2012 re-election campaign of Barack Obama.

President Barack Obama | The White House

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/president-obama>
Information and media on Pres. Obama's biography and administration.

Barack Obama Biography

<http://www.biography.com/people/barack-obama-12782369>

Videos, photos, and detailed information on Barack Obama and those connected to him.

Change.gov: The Obama-Biden Transition Team

<http://change.gov/content/home>

Throughout the Presidential Transition Project, this website was a source for the latest news, events, and announcements so that for following the setting up of the Obama Administration. (Now archived.)

Barack Obama—U.S. Congress Votes Database

<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress/members/o000167/>

Information on Obama's voting record as Illinois senator.

Govtrack.us

http://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/barack_obama/400629

GovTrack.us is a tool to help the public research and track the activities in the U.S. Congress, promoting and innovating government transparency and civic education through novel uses of technology.