

Activity 20 - Service Learning: Sewing Something for Others

Project Outcome:	Create a sewn product and donate to an international cause.
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Part of the 4-H experience is community service. What better way to put your sewing skills to use than to make something to give to people. Most of the time we think about community service as volunteering in your local community.

Have you ever thought of looking beyond your own community to the needs of individuals and communities in other countries?

In this activity you will learn about possible ways to provide community service to youth and families internationally as well as possible items you might sew as part of this project.



4-H'ers making pillowcase dresses

TO DO

Let's start out by thinking of what you have made through sewing or would like to make that you think children and/or youth in other countries might like.

What I have made:	What I would like to make:



You may be thinking, where do I start finding an international cause that can use what I can make? Let's look first at well-known international community service organizations/groups of which you may be familiar.

You may have heard of the acronym **NGO** which stands for nongovernment organizations. These are voluntary organizations or institutions with a social mission that operate independently from governments. NGOs exist in all parts of the world. They are usually *nonprofit organizations* which means they do not exist to make money. Many NGOs are active in humanitarianism or the social sciences. NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions.

Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (**CARE**) is an NGO that provides disaster response and fights poverty through long-term international development projects.

Habitat for Humanity is another NGO and works with communities to help families build and improve places to call home. They believe affordable housing plays a critical role in strong and stable communities. They work here in the U.S. and internationally.

International Home Economics Services (IHES) is a nonprofit organization of which you might not be familiar. Its mission is to work to strengthen programming in less developed countries that will ultimately improve the quality of life for individuals and families. Examples include providing training for women so they can earn money for their families in Sierra Leone and Honduras and providing textbooks in subject areas such as fashion and textiles, nutrition, etc. and school supplies in countries that have suffered disasters, such as hurricanes in Puerto Rico.

Now that you know that there are a lot of organizations reaching out to people in need internationally to improve various aspects of their lives, let's explore where you can contribute using your sewing skills.

Operation Christmas Child sends filled shoeboxes to countries around the world. This religious-based organization encourages churches, community and student groups to participate. As you might expect, the items needed must be small to fit in shoeboxes. Many 4-H groups across Tennessee are involved in this effort. Here are some ideas on what could be sewn to put in shoeboxes for this outreach: hair bows, scarves, pillowcase dresses, finger and/or hand puppets, and small stuffed animals.

You might consider leading this effort as part of a project for your 4-H sewing group. To find additional information go to:

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>



Little Dresses for Africa provides humanitarian relief to girls in remote villages in developing countries. These home-sewn dresses serve as little ambassadors so girls will know they are important. As relationships are built in these communities, projects are completed through clean water, education and community. The dress patterns used are simple to make and are called pillowcase dresses. They can be made from pillowcases or using fabric and ribbon. (Instructions are at the end of this activity.) This would be a great project to do. For more information go to:

<http://www.littledressesforafrica.org/blog/>

Other Places to look for International Project Ideas

Many local churches participate in **mission work** with groups from the church going to other countries to improve the lives of others. You may find that these groups want to take sewn items to distribute as part of their missions. Items as listed previously such as puppets, stuffed animals and pillowcase dresses would be great to make and send.

School and University Groups

Many of your school clubs/organizations participate in international service projects. If you live near a community college or university, you may find many student organizations who are doing international community service. The University of Tennessee at Knoxville and Martin have Collegiate 4-H groups that would be great to work with when planning an international project.

See what UT Knoxville is doing at:

<https://utk.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/collegiate4h/events?showpastevents=true>

UTM Collegiate 4-H has a Facebook page where you can see their work.

To Do with What you have Learned

1. List individuals and organizations that you will contact/research to find out the type of international community service they provide:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

2. Based on the information you have gathered of the needs and services provided, make a list of items you want to make that could be shared with others internationally through these services.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

3. Get your fellow 4-H'ers who sew involved in an international community service project.

4. Take pictures of what you are doing for your portfolio.

5. Try your hand at sewing one of the following items to possibly use as part of your international service project.

Pillowcase Dress Instructions

To make pillowcase dresses from fabric yardage:

- 1 piece of 44/45-inch wide cotton fabric (see below sizes for length needed)
- 24 inches length of single fold bias tape
- 2 yards of ribbon for ties

OPTIONAL TRIM: 45 inches of each trim (enough to go across the width of the fabric). There are two different trims used here.



1. Fold the fabric in half, selvage edges together. Cut off the selvage edges so it doesn't cause puckering in the finished dress.



2. Cut the fabric to the length needed, using the following measurements. These measurements include a 3/4-inch hem allowance. Adjust the length if you want a larger hem allowance.

6 months - 15 inches
12 months - 17 inches
18 months - 18 inches

2T - 19 inches
3T - 20 inches
4T - 21 inches

3. Finish the bottom edge by turning under 1/4 inch and then another 1/2 inch and pressing. You can add trim at the lower edge at this point.

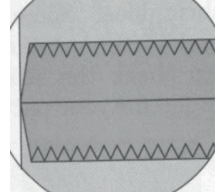
4. Stitch the side seams. With right sides together, stitch the side seam with a 5/8-inch seam. Finish the seam with a zigzag or serged seam, or better yet do a French seam.

5. Cut out the armholes. Fold fabric in half lengthwise. Mark the top and the side edge depending on the dress size you are making:

- for 6 months to 2T: mark 1.5 inches in from the folded edge and 3 inches down from the top edge

- for 3T to 4T: mark 2 inches in from the folded edge and 4 inches down from the top edge

6. Draw a curved line to connect the two marked points. Cut both armholes with one cut so they will be exactly the same. Cut on the line, cutting through all four layers of fabric.



6.

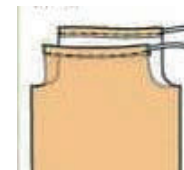


7.



8. Finish both top edges. Fold the raw edges at the top, first 1/4 inch, then 5/8 inch to form a casing. Stitch across from armhole to armhole. Repeat for second top raw edge.

9. Thread 1 yard of ribbon through each casing. Pull the ribbon out an equal amount at each armhole to create gathers in the front and the back. Tie small knots at the end of the ribbons to prevent raveling.



10. Tie bows on the shoulders with the ribbon, adjusting the gathers as needed to get the right fit for the child.



Fleece Hand Puppets Instructions



Follow These Steps:

- 1) Trace pattern onto the fleece using your hand as a guide (pinky and thumb out). Cut two bodies and whichever accessory you want for your puppet.
- 2) Stitch ears right sides together if your puppet has them. Turn and lightly stuff with batting or scrap fleece if desired.
- 3) If the animal has a “snout” zigzag stitch the snout pieces together and straight stitch the nostril lines.
- 4) Sew or appliqué face and/or snout pieces to the right side of the front of the puppet body. (Add the white body front if you are making the penguin.)
- 5) Attach the eyes or embroider eyes. You can hand sew buttons as the eyes. You can also use sequins, markers or fabric paint instead for your puppet design.
- 6) Take both body pieces and place them right sides together, sandwiching the ears between the layers for puppets that have ears. Pinning the ears is recommended as they tend to shift. Baste the head together and turn to check ears are positioned properly.
- 7) Stitch around the edge of the puppet.
- 8) Use pinking shears and cut the lower edge or cut very neatly.
- 9) Snip corners where the arm and head meet.
- 10) Turn puppet right side out and smile at your cute creation! Think how happy the child will be who receives it!

SPECIAL NOTES for making these HAND PUPPETS:

For the DUCK: Stitch the duckbill like an ear, turning and lightly stuffing it. Zigzag stitch it to the face with the beak pointing up toward the top of the head. Push the beak down and stitch a couple of times at the corner of the beak to help it lay properly.

For the BUNNY: Ears are pinched/folded at the base of the ear. I folded the rabbit ears where I wanted them and sewed across the bottom before I attached them to the head. The rabbit ears have one pink side and one body-colored side. He has a pompom tail glued to the back (let dry overnight and use Elmer's glue, not super glue).

For the DOG: The tooth gets tucked under the muzzle for a rabbit.

For the FROG: Place the frog eyes on top of the rounded head and cut out as part of the body. All other accessory pieces cut one each and appliqué to face.

For the OWL: Place owl head over the rounded head and cut out as a complete body piece.

<https://joywithpurpose.com/make-hand-puppets/>