

# How to Make the World a Better Place

The world is an awfully big place and there are accordingly a huge number of things that you can do to make it an even more incredible place to live. But sometimes having so many options can be overwhelming and there may be ways that you...

Part 1 of 4:

## Improving Locally

1.



**Volunteer.** Volunteering with a local charity is a great way to improve the world around you. You'll be able to do the most direct good and see the impact on the people that you help. If you have a practical skill or can learn one, or evening volunteering at the Humane Society<sup>[1]</sup> in your local neighborhood. using that skill will offer the most good (skills like construction or medicine are good examples).

1. Tutor disadvantaged kids
2. Work at a local soup kitchen
3. Work with a charity like Habitat for Humanity.

2.



**Reduce your impact.** Another way to really make the world a better place is to reduce the negative impact you have on the world around you. Being good stewards of the world has a significant and positive impact on your environment and helps to preserve the planet for the next generation.<sup>[2]</sup>

1. Be consistent about recycling.
2. Reduce the waste you produce and compost.
3. Conserve water and grow some of your own food.
4. If you really want to help your local environment, buy and install solar panels for your home and switch to public transit, a bike, or an electric vehicle.
5. Increase positive impacts. Notice how your happiness and well-being are interconnected with other people and the natural environment. Learn how you can leave a legacy of sustainable happiness.

3.



**Be civically engaged.** Exercise your right to vote. Bad politicians and policies can have an incredibly negative impact on your community and your environment. By not voting and letting your voice be heard,

you are allowing opportunity for bad policy to rule. Be engaged in your city, states, and country by voting and talking with the politicians you support, as well as educating others on important issues.

1. In America, for example, only about 50% to 60% of eligible voters actually vote during the presidential election. And that number tumbles to about 35% to 40% in midterm elections.<sup>[3]</sup> Imagine the changes people might enact if 90% of people voted during presidential elections and 60% of people voted during midterms!



**Make a statement with what you buy.** With companies, your money talks....so shout as loud as you can! Don't buy products that harm animals or from companies that use abusive tactics with their animals. Whenever you can, buy local products that support the people around you and your local economy. When a company makes poor choices that negatively affect people, stop buying their products.

1. Always, always feel free to contact companies to let them know what you're doing and why! Some, not all, businesses actually care about what their customers want. They'll never know how to change if people don't tell them.

5.



**Take pride in where you live.** Take care of and take pride in the area where you live. This preserves the area not just for you but for everyone else in your community. If you have the opportunity to help, take it because not everyone will have the chance. You should also find ways to improve the environment where you live. Here are just a few ideas:

1. Combine good citizenship and environmental cleanup by volunteering with your city to plant trees, maintain sidewalks, and keep green spaces green.
2. Never litter when you're out and about — always try to find a proper trash can or recycling bin for your trash! Clean up trash that you do find, even if someone else dropped it.

Part 2 of 4:

## Improving Globally

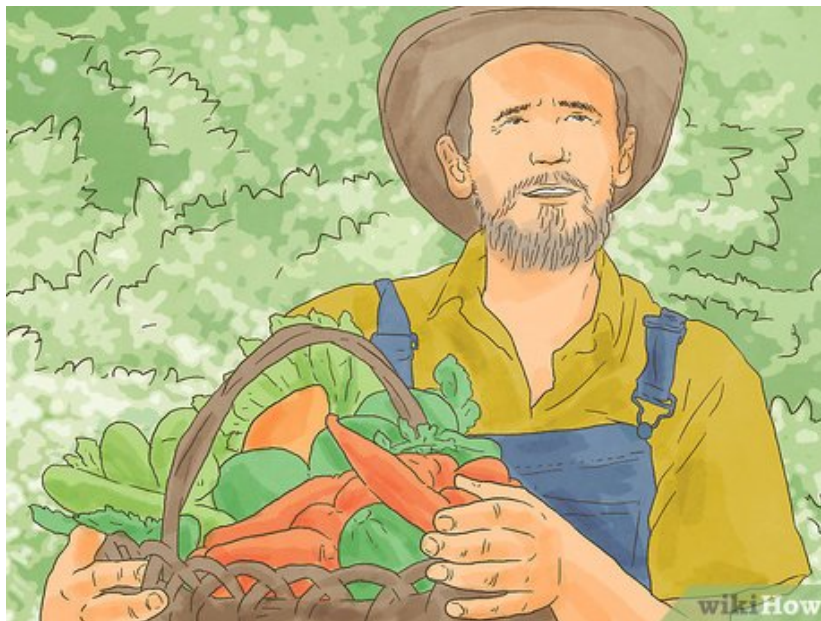
1.



**Donate to the right charities.** If you want to help people across the world, it's important to give to charities that provide the right kind of help and provide it where it will do the most good. Charities which create sustainable good in areas where it is needed are the best and will do the most good.

1. You don't necessarily have to donate money. Some nonprofits accept educational materials, clothing, or other supplies. Call or email to ask what they need. Some really want awareness most of all, so you can help by spreading the word, in addition to any physical donations you can make.
2. Volunteer or be part of fundraising efforts for charities that do good abroad. Run a half marathon or other fundraiser to raise funds for an international charity of your choice. Look for programs that allow you to fly out and volunteer in person. Consider other options, like providing input, advice, or tutoring to small nonprofits and organizations over the web.

2.



**Buy fair trade.** Fair trade certified products are guaranteed to have been produced under humane conditions for worker, with that worker being paid a fair wage, and produced under sustainable conditions.

By buying these products as much as possible, you show companies that you think these practices are worth a few extra pennies and encourage other companies to invest in these practices as well.<sup>[4]</sup>

1. Fair Trade items will almost always be labeled as such. If you're unsure, try to at least avoid items that are often unethically sourced. Coffee, bananas, cocoa, many tropical fruits, wine (mainly from California), clothing items (mainly from China, Bangladesh, and SE Asia) and jewelry are often unethically sourced.

3.



**Invest your money.** Sometimes, all a third world or disadvantaged community needs is a chance for their own economy to flourish. One way you can help these people help themselves is by providing small business loans. This means that you should get your money back and the small business will get what it needs to contribute to that economy and community. An easy way to get in to this is through Kiva.org, which provides small business loans to people in disadvantaged areas.

1. This is an especially good way to help women and other vulnerable groups to support themselves.

4.



**Protect the environment.** Do things that help the environment globally. A great way to do this is to reduce your reliance on fossil fuels and other fuel sources that have a negative impact on the environment. You can do this by using public transit, a bicycle, or an electric vehicle to get around. You can also use solar power to heat your home, instead of things like natural gas (which put a strain on the environment). Eating local food and using local products will also cut down on global fossil fuel usage.

1. Conserve as much energy as you can. Producing energy is very taxing on the planet, often requiring the burning of gases or the production of nuclear energy. Any energy you don't use can then be used for more important things and less power will need to be produced overall.<sup>[5]</sup> Turn off lights in rooms that you're not in, take colder showers, switch to energy efficient light bulbs, turn off your computer when you're not using it, etc. There are lots of ways to conserve power!



**Reduce waste.** Don't eat more than you need to, don't buy a bunch of junk that you don't need, and avoid buying new clothes every year. Buying used clothing can help reduce waste that is created. Eating a healthy, balanced, minimal diet will also reduce waste. If you do have leftover food, compost it. You want to reduce the waste you produce before our planet ends up looking like a still shot from Wall\*E!

1. Compost your excess organic waste. Get or build a large bin that can be left outdoors, as well as a small one that can go in your home. Collect all of the food scraps that are leftover from eating and preparing your meals, as well as things like yard waste, and deposit these items in your outdoor bin. Use a pitchfork or rake to turn and mix the compost regularly. You will also need to add soil on occasion. Once it has turned into a homogeneous mixture, it's ready to be spread in your green spaces.<sup>[6]</sup>
2. Recycle more and correctly. Most cities will come and collect your recycling along with your garbage, though they'll be kept in separate bins. Recyclable items vary by city, but generally most plastic jugs, metal cans, and paper are all recyclable.

6.



**Be an animal advocate.** As the dominant life form on this planet, it is our responsibility to protect the creatures that cannot protect themselves. Because of the way we currently live, many animals suffer and are even going extinct! If you want to improve conditions for animals, there are many ways you can help.

1. Encourage and vote for legislation that protects animals.
2. Only buy products that do not contribute to animal abuse.
3. Donate to charities which help animals, such as the Humane Society, The Marine Mammal Center, or the Performing Animal Welfare Society.

7.



**Donate feminine hygiene products.** In many disadvantaged countries, like many regions in India and Africa, women do not have access to sanitary feminine hygiene products. This leads to humiliation and isolation at best, and at worst discomfort and even life-threatening infections. By donating items and money to charities that work to solve this problem, you'll be keeping women healthy and help them to do things like attend school and work so that they get the opportunity to better their own lives.

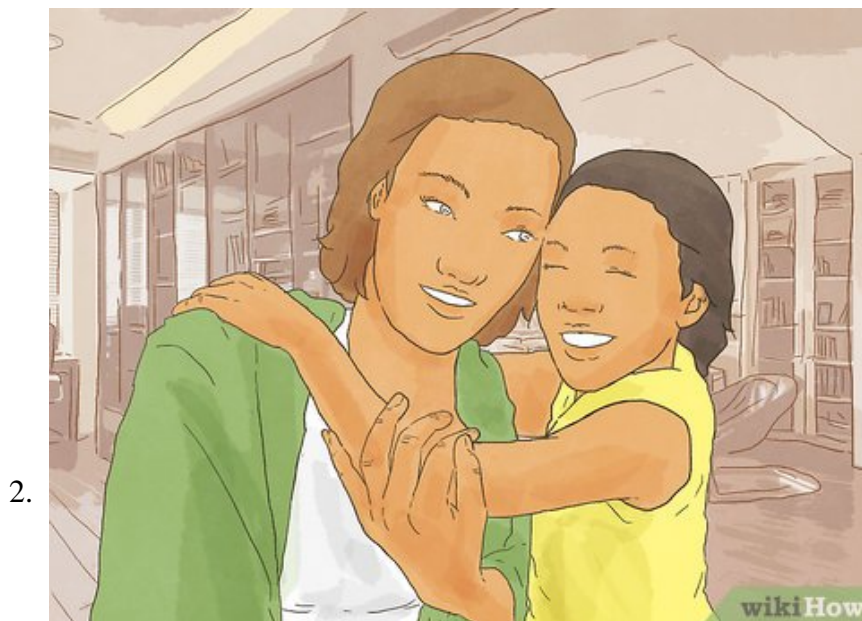
1. One such charity is Days for Girls.

Part 3 of 4:

## Improving at Home



**Be nice.** A lot of the time we can get so caught up in working to improve the globe as a whole that we forget there are lots of things that we can do every day at home that have a positive impact too. One of the best things you can do easily and every day is to treat others how you want to be treated. Do something nice for someone as often as you can. This can be small things like making someone a birthday present, or big things like driving someone around until they get their car fixed. When we work together, everything runs more smoothly and we're better able to further invest those gains in benefiting the rest of the globe.



**Set a good example.** Set a good example for your friends and family members, and educate them on the issues so that they can make good decisions too. Help them to understand why these things are important, so that they're also motivated to change their lives. By changing a few minds you can double, triple, or even more greatly increase your positive impact on the world.



**Get a job.** Almost any job that you get can have a positive impact on your community. You'll be providing a service to people who want it and adding to the economy in your immediate area, improving the lot of everyone around you. It will also give you money that you can use to donate to charity or fund small business loans!



**Be positive.** When we're surrounded by people who are negative and mean, it makes us sad and pessimistic, making it much harder to get through the other difficulties in life. Let your attitude show everyone that a smile and hopeful attitude can really improve the day of everyone around you. By finding the upsides in tough situations and working hard to fix problems, you can positively impact the people you

come into contact with.

5.



**Be helpful to everyone.** We have lots of opportunities to be nice and helpful to other people every day. Many times we don't take the opportunity because we think we're too busy or someone else will help. If you want to make the world around you better, just do the right thing and help, instead of thinking that it's someone else's problem.

1. For example, if someone is carrying groceries to their car and they drop a bag, help them by picking up the groceries and loading them back into the bag. The simple things like that are very much appreciated by anyone!

Part 4 of 4:

## Getting More Ideas

1.



**Help the homeless.** The homeless are a vulnerable group that are often misunderstood. By helping the homeless, both locally and across the world, you'll be improving people's lives and helping to create more sustainable and safe cities.

2.



**Help women.** Women have traditionally been another vulnerable group. Though conditions have improved in many places, even in the most feminist countries you will still see unequal pay and disproportionate abuse. Do what you can to help women not just in the obvious places, like third world countries, but also closer to home. Remember: by creating a gender equal society, we open up more opportunities for everyone.

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