

FACTSHEET: SOCIAL JUSTICE



St Vincent de Paul Society
NSW
good works

ACTIVITY BUST SOME MYTHS!



Ask the group to stand in the middle of the room. When you share the following statements, get them to stay standing if they think it's a fact or duck down if they think it's a myth. Then share the correct answer.

- Everyone in Australia has the same life expectancy. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a life expectancy of over 8 years less than other Australians.* **myth**
- Indigenous people only make up 3.8% of Australia's population, but Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners account for 32% of all prisoners. **fact**
- 1 in 6 Australian children are growing up in poverty. **fact**

VINNIES SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION



The Society is committed to alleviating immediate need, but also to challenging structures and government policy that contribute to inequality. The Society advocates for policy reforms leading to a more just, compassionate and equitable society, with the aim of eliminating the root causes of poverty.

We begin by providing immediate assistance and building trusting relationships with the people we assist. This trust helps us to uncover the causes of disadvantage in order to offer a hand up to people in need.

The Society calls for solutions to injustice by engaging government, working with other organisations and raising awareness across the community. Your group can help with these initiatives.



TRANSFORMATION

Shaping a more just and compassionate society



IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

Addressing urgent needs



HAND UP

Build trusting relationships



RAISING OUR VOICE

Empowering people to advocate for change

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Ask the group questions then discuss the facts.

WHAT DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE MEAN TO YOU?

What does 'safe' mean to you? What about 'secure' and 'adequate'?

Broadly, it means everyone has equal economic, social and cultural rights – like access to education, employment, safety, health and social fulfilment – regardless of their ethnicity, religion, class, disability, gender, sexuality, age or race.

WHAT SOCIAL INEQUALITIES HAVE YOU SEEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Local issues might include poverty, racism, ageism, or when someone is treated unfairly or denied access to opportunities because they are seen as different.

WHY DO YOU THINK SOCIAL INEQUALITY EXISTS?

Generally, social inequality falls into two groups that have two different causes:

- Unequal treatment of people by other people due to a personal belief about someone's race, sex, age, faith, etc, or;
- Unequal regulations and laws made by government that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against a group, and leave them without the same opportunities and resources afforded to others.



ACTIVITY

IMAGINING A BETTER WORLD

Social equality is a good aim for society, however addressing social issues can often be controversial and difficult. In small groups, imagine one of you has just been made Prime Minister, and the rest of you are their support team. You have been given the opportunity to create new policies for your country. Keeping in mind that you have limited money to make these changes, what kind of society would you create and how would you deal with these social justice issues? You may like to consider:

- There are over 120,000 people experiencing homelessness in Australia today.
- Indigenous people only make up 3.8% of Australia's population but figures show more than half of young people in juvenile detention are Indigenous.
- An estimated 8 million Australians (41%) have experienced violence (physical and/or sexual) since the age of 15

Share your ideas as a group, and then share your ideas with the real decision makers in your local government office.

"We often hear of the change we are able to make in the lives of people experiencing hardship and disadvantage, yet it is similarly transformative for individuals coming together in the name of bringing about the change."

- Yolanda Saiz, St Vincent de Paul Society NSW CEO

CHALLENGE

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS?

Find the declaration online and identify five rights that you enjoy but that students in other countries (or those seeking asylum) do not. Discuss your findings as a group.

As a group, talk about the options you have to advocate for people in other countries who do not enjoy the same rights as you.

As a group:

1. Research and contact an organisation which is working to address the issues you've identified.
2. Ask how you can contribute.
3. Commit to an achievable but worthwhile goal, aimed at advocating for those who go without the rights you have.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

BE ADVOCATES

Talk to your family, friends, classmates, and community to help raise awareness about homelessness and fight stereotypes. Research the topic. See what Vinnies is doing in your local area, and how they're advocating to government. Collect signatures for a Vinnies petition, start your own, invite a local MP or Mayor to your school so your group can share your concerns with them – and let us know about it!

BE AWARE OF YOUR PRIVILEGE

... and how others aren't as fortunate. Think about how your actions could change to be more inclusive of others, and then change those actions.

CREATE A SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION PLAN:

Visit the **Vinnies Key Event Calendar** and create a **Social Justice Action Plan** to help support minority groups: youthnsw.vinnies.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/YOUTH_KEY-EVENTS_CALENDAR_2024.pdf

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