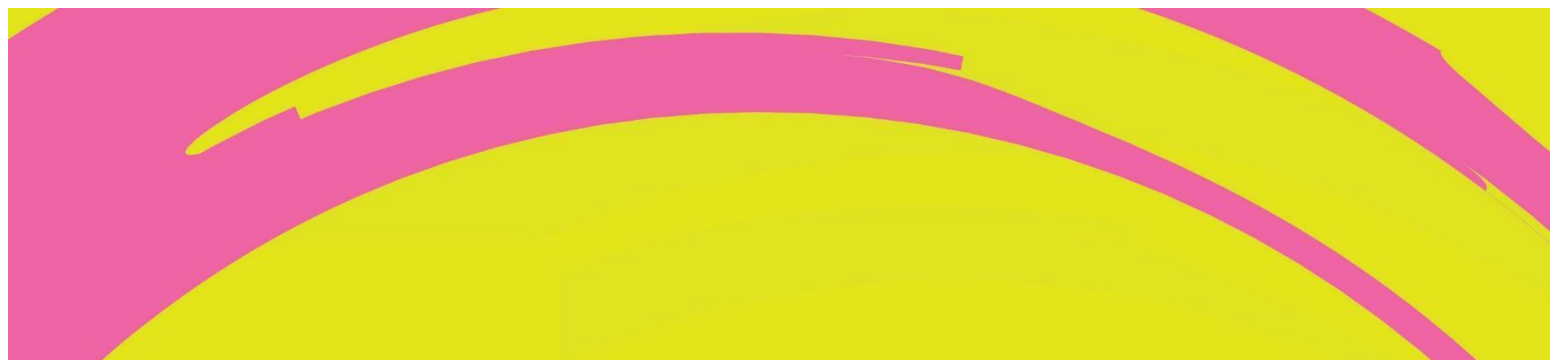


WP2 - Social Action Toolkit

**Introduction to Social Action:
Learner Handout**





Social Action Toolkit

How-To Guide

Title: Introduction to Social Action

Introduction:

According to [Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research](#) Social action or social activism refers to efforts and actions taken by individuals or groups to bring about social or political change, address injustices, and promote equality and human rights. Social activism is working with other people to bring about a change in society. The word “social” applies both to “society” and to the idea that the activism fosters opportunities for participation. It reflects a personal choice to engage in society. If the participation is forced or coerced, it is not social activism. Social activists work towards advancing a particular cause or advocating for specific issues such as civil rights, environmental protection, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, racial justice, economic justice, and more.

Social activism can take various forms, including:

Awareness raising: Activists strive to increase public awareness and understanding of social issues through campaigns, protests, public demonstrations, and media outreach. They aim to educate and engage the public to generate support and mobilize for change.

Advocacy and lobbying: Activists engage in advocacy efforts by lobbying lawmakers, policymakers, and government institutions to implement policy changes and reforms that address social issues. They may write letters, organize meetings, and use their voices to influence decision-making processes.

Grassroots organizing: Activists often work at the grassroots level, organizing communities and mobilizing individuals to take collective action. They establish networks, coalitions, and organizations to foster collaboration and empower communities to address social challenges.

Nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience: Social activism may involve peaceful protests, sit-ins, boycotts, and acts of civil disobedience to draw attention to social issues and put pressure on those in power. These actions aim to disrupt the status quo and create public discourse around the problems at hand.

Fundraising and support: Activists may engage in fundraising efforts to support organizations, projects, or initiatives working towards social change. This can involve





organizing events, crowdfunding campaigns, or seeking donations to provide resources and financial support for their causes.

Online activism: With the rise of digital platforms and social media, activists utilize online spaces to raise awareness, organize campaigns, and mobilize support. They leverage social media platforms, online petitions, and digital tools to reach wider audiences and amplify their messages.

Social activism plays a crucial role in shaping societies and challenging systemic issues. By striving for social justice, activists aim to create a more equitable and inclusive world for all individuals, raising awareness about marginalized communities and advocating for their rights.

What drives activism

Alongside the logical and rational analysis of scientifically collected data, which may point to issues such as climate change or social disadvantage and discrimination against certain groups, **emotions** are the main driving force behind activism. From a human and psychological point of view, there is no such thing as a bad emotion. In this context, for example, anger and outrage at injustice or violence against certain people, animals or the planet can be a driving force for action. A driving force to take compassionate and loving action. **Kindness** is a very important ingredient in activism, especially for the activists themselves. Ignition driven by a desire to change the world for the better can lead to burnout or blindness. Therefore, it is important to compensate for fire with pause, reflection, kindness, a willingness to listen to all perspectives, and self-healing and self-love.

The two main components of activism, then, are **passion** and **kindness**. So how can we support and motivate young people to make the very meaningful changes in the world that they themselves would like to see?

Materials Needed:

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Arts and Crafts materials
- Food and snacks for the young people





Step 1: Self-Inquiry

As an adult and youth worker, first start with yourself. Try answering these questions:

Why do you want to work with youth and support them to actively participate in social change?

What is your biggest concern in the world?

What questions do you have about this work?

What qualities do you need to do this work with youth? Empathy, patience, sense of humor, curiosity, mindfulness, non-judgmental, honesty.... What else can you think of?

Take a moment to reflect, ask quietly your intuition and your heart. Write down your thoughts and insights.

Step 2: The need for a respectful and empathetic environment

It is also important to create an environment for the youth and yourself where you can actually work together for social change. An environment that supports both the youth and you as leaders in this work. Set rules for safe and respectful communication within the group. In some settings where youth are invited to participate in such activities involuntarily (for example,





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| | <p>within a school), do not force anyone to actively participate in exercises and discussions. Sometimes an inner spark can jump-start a confused young person from a safe observer position.</p> |
| Step 3: Selection of a specific topic | <p>It is important to support young people in their autonomy and give them a choice in which area of social change they want to be actively involved. Help them find one topic in which they can engage based on their unique talents and capabilities. This can be difficult for young people, they may be weighed down by many of the world's problems and have many ideas in which they can easily get lost. <i>We suggest specific exercises to try with young people that can move them closer to identifying their path of activism in Call To Action Activity in this chapter.</i></p> |

Conclusion:

Social activism can have several benefits for youth. Here are some ways in which youth can benefit from engaging in social activism:

Personal growth and development: Social activism provides opportunities for young people to develop important skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, effective communication, leadership, and teamwork. Through activism, they can gain a deeper understanding of social issues, develop empathy, and enhance their overall personal growth.





Empowerment and self-efficacy: Engaging in social activism empowers youth by giving them a sense of agency and the belief that their actions can make a difference. It helps them realize that they have a voice and can contribute to shaping their communities and society. This sense of empowerment can boost their self-confidence and self-efficacy.

Increased awareness and understanding: Social activism exposes youth to a wide range of social issues and challenges, promoting awareness and understanding of the world around them. It encourages them to question the status quo, examine different perspectives, and develop a broader worldview. This expanded awareness can lead to greater empathy, tolerance, and a commitment to social justice.

Civic engagement and participation: Engaging in activism encourages youth to become active citizens and participate in democratic processes. It promotes a sense of responsibility towards their communities and encourages them to engage in conversations, debates, and decision-making on social issues. Youth activists often become advocates for change, contributing to the betterment of society.

Networking and community building: Social activism provides opportunities for young people to connect with like-minded individuals and build networks of support. They can form relationships with other activists, organizations, and community leaders who share similar interests and goals. These connections can foster collaboration, mentorship, and the exchange of ideas.

Learning about social change strategies: Youth activists can gain firsthand experience in understanding how social change is achieved. They learn about various strategies such as grassroots organizing, lobbying, campaigning, and nonviolent resistance. This knowledge equips them with valuable skills and tools that can be applied to future endeavors and career paths.

Impact and making a difference: By engaging in social activism, youth have the opportunity to contribute to positive social change and make a difference in the lives





of individuals and communities. Whether through raising awareness, influencing policies, or mobilizing communities, their actions can have a tangible impact on addressing social injustices and creating a more equitable society.

It's important to note that while social activism can offer numerous benefits, it is crucial for young activists to have support systems in place to ensure their well-being and safety. Mentorship, guidance from experienced activists, and creating safe spaces are important considerations when involving youth in social activism.

Additional Resources:

In the Czech Republic, there is Hnutí Brontosaurus. It is a group of mostly young people under 26 years old, who care about the world they live in. Therefore they combine meaningful volunteering for nature, historical sites and people with unconventional experiences and fun. Thousands of volunteers set out each year to mow orchid meadows, plant trees, repair castles, or build a school in the Himalayas, to name just a few of the activities. <https://brontosaurus.cz/>

Here are some global sources specifically focused on youth social activism:

Youth-led organizations: There are numerous organizations that specifically focus on empowering and supporting youth in their activism efforts. Some examples include [Youth Activism Project](#) and [DoSomething.org](#). These organizations provide resources, toolkits, campaigns, and platforms for youth to get involved and make a difference.

[UNICEF Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#): UNICEF has developed a comprehensive toolkit that guides young people through the process of becoming effective advocates for children's rights. The toolkit provides information on understanding social issues, developing advocacy strategies, and taking action. It can be accessed through the UNICEF website.

[The Youth Activist's Toolkit](#): This toolkit, developed by Advocates for Youth, is designed to assist young people in organizing for sexual health and reproductive justice. It offers guidance on advocacy, organizing, and creating social change around sexual health education, access to healthcare, and reproductive rights.





YouthActionNet: YouthActionNet is a global network that supports young social entrepreneurs and activists. They provide resources, training, and networking opportunities for young changemakers. Their website offers access to toolkits, case studies, and guides on various aspects of social activism.

Youth-led social media campaigns: Follow social media campaigns initiated by youth activists and organizations. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok often highlight youth-led activism movements and provide valuable resources, information, and opportunities to get involved.

Local community organizations: Check with local community organizations or youth-led initiatives in your area. They may offer resources, mentorship programs, workshops, and opportunities for young activists to engage in social change efforts at the local level.

Remember to adapt and tailor the information and resources to specific interests and causes of your teen target group.

Resources for this unit:

Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research

https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-94-007-0753-5_2729

Aktivismus, aneb jak mládež podpořit v zapojení se do společnosti

<https://www.semwell.org/post/aktivismus-aneb-jak-ml%C3%A1de%C5%BE-podpo%C5%99it-v-zapojen%C3%AD-se-do-spole%C4%8Dnosti>

Case Study

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| Module Title | Introduction to Social Action | | |
| Case Study Title | Shanti Generation | | |
| Type of resource | Case Study | Type of learning | Self-directed learning |





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| <p>Duration of Activity (in minutes)</p> | <p>60 minutes</p> | <p>Learning Outcome</p> | <p>Meeting yoga and its benefits</p> |
| <p>Aim of Activity</p> | <p>Getting know sustainable activism through yoga and mindfulness</p> | | |
| <p>Introduction</p> | <p>Want to instill confidence and self esteem in your child? Does your teenager have trouble focusing? Does your preteen have trouble making appropriate decisions? Are you seeing signs of depression in your teenager? Does your child stress over taking tests or having too much homework? Are you looking for techniques to help your child with autism focus and integrate?</p> <p>While this may seem like a very strange or novel idea, one path to sustainable activism for both adults and youth may be the path of yoga. Yoga is not just the physical practice of asanas on a mat. It is just a philosophy of life that includes disciplines, in addition to exercises for a healthy body and mind, moral and ethical recommendations for living in a respectful society.</p> | | |
| <p>Challenge</p> | <p>Shanti Generation - Mindful Yoga for Kids and Teens is an online platform offering free tutorials and programs on how to guide children and teens towards enhancing the overall health and wellbeing of young people through yoga. Programmes are accessible for any cultural, ethnic or religious background.</p> <p>Informed by over 15 years experience in the field teaching yoga and mindfulness to kids and teenagers, Shanti Generation’s programs are thoughtfully created to meet the specialized needs and sensibilities of youth ages 7 & up, with a strong focus on early adolescence.</p> <p>Through this platform you can gain access to an array of free yoga practices including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● poses | | |





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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● breathing exercises● relaxation techniques● basic mindfulness practice● yoga from the students perspective <p>Themes include creating happiness, choosing peace and energy amplified. The practices are taught in a choice of English, Spanish or Japanese, making the same disc suitable for a wide range of students and situations.</p> <p>Beyond asana (posture), programmes offer guided meditation instructions to help students relax and connect to their source of power in any situation.</p> <p>Shanti Generation’s programs are effective tools for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● reducing stress associated with test taking and homework● coping with anxiety and depression● self esteem and body image issues● attention deficit disorders● peer pressure and bullying● working with teens and autism <p>For your peace of mind and the safety of our students, they chose simple poses that do not require intensive instruction. Poses like headstand, handstand, shoulder stand or deep backbends require the presence of a yoga teacher to ensure safety and are not included in the sequencing. No previous yoga experience necessary.</p> |
| Assignment | <p>Check out shantigeneration.com and to get a better idea of the way they engage young people. Search its YouTube channel for free tutorials on how to practice yoga with teens.</p> <p>Set of questions for reflection:</p> |






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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How might yoga practice be adapted or applied in your own work with young people? 2. What is your relationship to physical exercise? How often do you stretch, move or do any other kind of physical activity? Could a regular yoga practice be also helpful for you? 3. How might you collaborate with other organisations or stakeholders to promote social change and activism among young people through yoga? 4. Are there any local organisations similar to Shanti Generation you can connect and collaborate with? |
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Call to Action

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| Theme | Introduction to Social Action |
| Activity Title | Exploring Social Action Types and Purposes |
| Type of resource | Call to Action Activity |



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| Photo |  <p>Photo by Meg Jenson on Unsplash</p> | | |
| Duration of Activity (in minutes) | 20-30 minutes | Learning Outcome | <ul style="list-style-type: none">educate youth workers and young people about the different types and purposes of social action |
| Aim of activity | This activity not only educates youth workers and young people about the types and purposes of social action but also encourages them to take concrete steps toward making a difference in their communities. | | |
| Materials Required for Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Flipchart paper or a whiteboardMarkersSticky notes or index cardsWriting instruments | | |





Step-by-step
instructions

Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Begin by explaining the importance of social action and its role in creating positive change in society. Emphasize that there are various types of social actions, and each serves a unique purpose. Provide some real-world examples of social actions, such as volunteering, fundraising, advocacy, and community organizing.

Step 2: Group Categorization (5 minutes)

After collecting a variety of social action types, work together as a group to categorize these actions based on their purposes. For example, you might have categories like "Community Building," "Environmental Conservation," "Youth Empowerment," "Poverty Alleviation," and so on. Group similar types of social actions under each category.

Step 3: Discussion (5 minutes)

Engage in a group discussion about the different purposes of social actions. Encourage participants to share their thoughts on why each type of social action is important and how it contributes to positive change.

Step 4: Case Study (5 minutes)

Present a short case study or success story of a social action project that had a significant impact. Discuss the type of social action involved and the purpose it served. Analyze what made it successful and how it influenced change.

Step 5: Reflection and Goal Setting (5 minutes)

Ask participants to reflect individually and set a personal or group goal related to engaging in social action. Encourage them to think about the type of social action they are interested in and the purpose they want to pursue. Have them write down their goals on a sticky note or index card.





Step 6: Sharing and Commitment (5 minutes)

Each participant should share their goal with the group and make a commitment to take a small step toward achieving it. This could include researching local opportunities, connecting with organizations, or planning a small-scale social action project.

Step 7: Wrap-Up (2 minutes)

Summarize the key points discussed during the activity and reiterate the importance of social action in creating positive change. Provide additional resources or references for participants to explore further.



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YOUTH COMMUNITY



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