

The world of social action

Social action aims to bring about social change that will benefit people, communities or societies. There are many ways to be part of bringing about social change. Some different kinds of social action are described here.

SERVICE ACTIVITY

Taking practical action that makes an immediate difference on an issue. When many people get involved, more may be achieved. This may include recycling, planting trees, stocking food banks, working on a service project (local or overseas), volunteering time to help a person or organisation.



FUNDRAISING

Raising money in different ways to fund action on a specific issue. This may include street collecting with donation buckets, donation boxes in specific locations, getting sponsored or sponsoring those doing an activity (e.g. run-a-thon), competitions and raffles, selling goods/experiences at a fair or stall, charity events/concerts/dinners.

JOINING OR LEADING

Being part of a group or organisation and taking on responsibilities. This may include becoming a member, participating in meetings, volunteering skills or resources, contributing to the planning and direction, joining a working group or committee, becoming a representative, taking a leadership role.



INVESTIGATING

Looking deeper into an issue through research. This may include gathering data, forming and testing a hypothesis, consulting experts, surveying or interviewing people involved, drawing conclusions.

INFORMING

Communicating factual information about the issue so people know more about it. This may include speeches, presentations, articles, documentaries, research results, policy papers, fact sheets, magazines, reports.

COOPERATING

Working alongside a group or organisation to influence/improve how they address the issue. This may include team work, finding agreement, liaising or mediating between different groups to find workable solutions.



RAISING AWARENESS

Persuading people to think and talk about an issue they need to be concerned about.

This may include communicating facts, information, people's stories and first-hand experiences through news items, posters, presentations, events, social media posts, emails, media interviews, videos, movies, drama.

SHARING OPINIONS

Communicating an issue using argument and personal experience to stimulate discussion and challenge people's opinions. This may include letters to editor, website blog, social media posts and comments, using hashtags (#), articles, debates, opinion polls.



ACTIVISM

Taking action to draw wider attention to an issue by challenging those holding power to change things. This may include protests, boycotts, marches, hikoi, occupying a strategic location, hunger strikes.



LOBBYING

Talking directly with or influencing people with the power to change things. This may include petitions, letter writing, meeting with decision-makers.



ADVISING

Providing change-makers with information that helps bring about change. These may include council advisory panels, policy advisory groups, user consultation groups.



ADVOCACY

Calling for people to act in a certain way on an issue to bring pressure for change. The call to action may include media campaigns, billboards, advertisements or videos that use emotive or creative concepts and language to convey a strong message. Advocacy can also be personally advocating on behalf of an individual or group for their rights to be met.

Informing, Sharing opinions, Raising awareness

INFORMING

Communicating factual information about the issue so people know more about it. This may include speeches, presentations, articles, documentaries, research results, policy papers, fact sheets, magazines, posters, reports, websites. *Examples: Gapminder www.gapminder.org website; World Vision topic sheets; The State of the World's Children annual report and statistics, UNICEF.*

SHARING OPINIONS

Communicating an issue using argument and personal experience to stimulate discussion and challenge people's opinions. This may include letters to editor, website blog/vlog, social media posts and comments, comments on articles, using hashtags (#), articles, debates, opinion polls, editorial for newspaper or magazine, interview. *Examples: Class or school speech competition; Phone up or message radio station host; Write letter to local newspaper.*

RAISING AWARENESS

Persuading people to think and talk about an issue they need to be concerned about. This may include communicating facts, information, people's stories and first-hand experiences through news items, posters, presentations, events, social media posts, emails, media interviews, videos, documentaries, dramas, guest editor/editorials for newspapers or magazines. *Examples: Remember September month, Students Against Dangerous Driving; Fairtrade Fortnight; United Nations commemorative days; The Outlook for Someday youth film challenge; Our Planet, Planet Earth, Frozen Planet – BBC documentaries.*



Educating parents, Cambodia

On International Children's Day in Cambodia, nearly 250 children and young people from three areas gathered to highlight the issue of parents who gamble and send their children to work instead of school. The group used banners and posters to educate parents about these issues and amplified their key messages through a loud speaker to reach a wider audience.

Photo: Vanneth Um / World Vision

TIPS FOR TAKING ACTION

Audience – choose the main people you want to communicate with, their age, location, number of people, their level of interest in this issue.

Message – be clear about the main things you want to communicate to them on this issue.

Approach – choose an appropriate style(s) of communication to get your message across to this audience.

Informing – share accurate information using: thorough research, evidence, reliable sources, relevant visuals (graphics, diagrams, maps, photos), clear summary and conclusion.

Sharing opinions – express opinions clearly using: real-life examples or personal experience, compelling or challenging evidence, opinion backed up with reasons.

Raising awareness – spark interest using: an engaging opening, persuasive language, compelling facts and evidence, questions, surprising or shocking content, stories showing the impact on people.

Skills focus: communicating, engaging interest, informing, persuading, creating meaning.

Main features

May vary for different actions.

- ✓ Information and facts
- ✓ Personal and emotive
- ✓ Inform and persuade
- ✓ In the public/media
- ✓ Aimed at the public
- ✓ Awareness

Social action continuums
(Student sheet 1)

Investigating, Advising

RESOURCE



INVESTIGATING

Looking deeper into an issue through research. This may include gathering data, forming and testing a hypothesis, consulting experts, surveying or interviewing people involved, drawing conclusions. *Examples: Mapping your community Streetwyze app; Map your world, UNICEF; Our Voices, Our Rights interviews and report by UNICEF and Save the Children youth ambassadors; Youth Participatory Action Research; INSPIRE strategies to end violence against children, World Health Organisation.*

ADVISING

Providing change-makers with information that helps bring about change. These may include council advisory panels, policy advisory groups, user consultation groups. *Examples: Youth MPs and Youth Parliament; Youth Advisory Panel, Auckland City Council; Submission on a Bill or Law or Speaking at a Select Committee hearing, NZ Parliament; Barnardos NZ; Child Poverty Action Group NZ.*



Smoking survey, Armenia

Young anti-smoking advocates marked Armenia's National Anti-Smoking Day with sports competitions and awareness-raising events at schools, government offices and on the streets. The young people also conducted a survey to find out the number of smokers in their town. According to their survey, 52.6 per cent of men were active smokers, while only 4.1 per cent of women said that they smoke. A Health Assessment by the Government revealed that 58 per cent of Armenian males, 20 years and over, smoke daily – one of the highest rates in Europe. Armenia's youth feel they face a huge risk of damaging their health as a result of becoming heavy passive smokers. They're determined to protect themselves from smoke in their homes and neighbourhood.

Photo: Ani Chitemyan / World Vision

TIPS FOR TAKING ACTION

Decide on your main area of research and how you will find out what you need to know. Decide the most effective way to share this research or communicate with the relevant changemaker(s).

Investigating – consult experts, gather unbiased data, test assumptions/hypothesis, question and interview a range of people involved, collate evidence to support conclusions, use a suitable format following conventions, present or publish conclusions, inform those involved.

Advising – choose appropriate change-maker i.e. decision-making authority (principal), representative with access to decision-making authority (form teacher, dean), choose an appropriate format, thoroughly prepare and check your information, arrange to present/submit your information by the agreed deadline, provide additional information if needed, request an update or outcome.

Skills focus: researching, gathering and interpreting information, communicating.

Main features

May vary for different actions.

- ✓ Information and facts
- ✓ Inform
- ✓ Collaborate
- ✓ Behind the scenes
- ✓ Aimed at the public and decision-makers
- ✓ Awareness

*Social action continuums
(Student sheet 1)*

Service activity

RESOURCE

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SERVICE ACTIVITY

Taking practical action that makes an immediate difference on an issue. When many people get involved, more may be achieved. This may include recycling, planting trees, stocking food banks, working on a service project (local or overseas), volunteering time to help a person or organisation. Can be combined with informing, raising awareness, or fundraising. *Examples: Sustainable Coastlines Beach Clean-Up; Community service day; Cooking for families in need; Helping at a school breakfast club; Working bee to clean up community facilities (childcare centre, kindergarten, playground); Preparing Christmas dinner at the City Mission.*

Planting mangroves, Philippines

Climate change is having a devastating impact on the tropical country of the Philippines. Abnormally strong cyclones have destroyed communities and heat waves have devastated crops and livelihoods. A group of student leaders in one small town witnessed the effects first-hand when their own rice paddies dried up, destroying their food source.

The students decided to tackle the effects of climate change by planting mangrove seedlings along a coastline in their community. The fully-grown trees will protect the shore from storm surges and damage. World Vision Philippines provided the seedlings as part of the community's disaster risk reduction programme. The mangrove seedlings will also help to rehabilitate the marine ecosystem damaged by the strong cyclones and over-fishing.

Photo: Jimenez Mong / World Vision



TIPS FOR TAKING ACTION

Decide on the main person/people you want to help and find out the types of service activity that would be most useful to them. Also consider your own skills and resources, then choose an appropriate service activity or action.

Things to consider:

- number of people involved (individual, group, class, etc.)
- the type of service
- check whether this service activity is needed and helpful
- could there be unintended negative impacts (taking away work or paid roles)
- the amount of time involved and frequency (one-off, weekly, monthly)
- level of skills required
- any gear or training required
- application or request process
- other requirements of the volunteer/service organisation
- expenses that need to be paid

Skills focus: practical action, participating, organising, teamwork.

Main features

May vary for different actions.

- ✓ Collaborate
- ✓ Behind the scenes
- ✓ High personal involvement
- ✓ Action

*Social action continuums
(Student sheet 1)*

Fundraising

FUNDRAISING

Raising money in different ways to fund action on a specific issue. The money may be for another person/organisation to do the action. Fundraising may include street collecting with donation buckets, donation boxes in specific locations, fundraising via an online platform, getting sponsored or sponsoring those doing an activity (e.g. run-a-thon), competitions and raffles, selling goods/experiences at a fair or stall, charity event/concert/dinner. *Examples: Givealittle fundraising website; World Vision 40 Hour Famine; Selling fundraising chocolates; Coin collection boxes at supermarkets; Food stall or sausage sizzle.*



Improving their school, Albania

"From the outside, our school seemed like an old building, neglected and abandoned," says Endri, aged 18. "This yard used to be full of mud, making it very difficult to get to class, especially on rainy days."

For the first time in the school's history, a group of students from the Impact Club ran a fundraising campaign. First they approached their parents, teachers and other community members and raised about NZ\$1500! Then they asked World Vision Albania for help and received about NZ\$4500.

Parent volunteers installed benches and paved the school yard. Student volunteers planted trees and flowers. "We thought it would be impossible, but here we are in the yard we dreamed of and worked for," says Dionis, aged 17.

Photo: Linda Karameta / World Vision

TIPS FOR TAKING ACTION

Fundraising – choose the child rights action, group or organisation you wish to support, choose your target audience and suitable fundraising activity, plan how to do this most effectively, promote activity to attract helpers or participants, prepare appropriate resources/gear/guidelines, do fundraising activity and report results, fund chosen action.

Skills focus: promoting, organising, fundraising.

Questions to make your fundraising worthwhile

- Are there enough people in this location, e.g. at my school, to make this worthwhile?
- Do people want to support this and be involved?
- What are the expected (and unexpected) costs involved?
- How can we make as much money as possible from this?
- How will we keep any cash secure to prevent loss or theft?
- How can we raise awareness about this issue at the same time?
- How much organisation and effort will be involved compared to the amount we expect to raise?
- Can we realistically do this? Do we need help and who can we ask?
- What activities have we seen or done in this location that worked or didn't work well?
- Do any other groups already run these kinds of activities here?
- Does this type of fundraising connect with the action we want to support?

Main features

May vary for different actions.

- ✓ Personal & emotive
- ✓ Persuade
- ✓ Behind the scenes
- ✓ Aimed at the public
- ✓ High personal involvement
- ✓ Action

Social action continuums
(Student sheet 1)

Joining or leading, Cooperating



Working together, Indonesia

Members of the Kelapa Jatinagara Child Forum meet to discuss and plan upcoming activities. Child forums are run by children or young people and they decide on the group's focus and purpose. Forum members meet once a month to discuss any social issues affecting their community and plan activities to spread awareness about child protection. This forum was started by World Vision Indonesia as a way of empowering young people to influence their own situation. World Vision is also working with their wider community on other poverty and development challenges they face.

Photo: Annila Harris / World Vision

JOINING OR LEADING

Being part of a group or organisation and taking on responsibilities. This may include becoming a member, participating in meetings, volunteering skills or resources, contributing to the planning and direction, joining a working group or committee, becoming a representative, taking a leadership role in a youth organisation. *Examples: School council; Youth membership of a political party; Student representative on school Board of Trustees; Kiwi Conservation Club, Forest and Bird; Youth advocate, Amnesty International; Youth reporters – UNICEF U-Report NZ; Coaching a younger sports team; Neighbourhood Watch group; Schoolwork buddy or mentor; Youthline volunteer; Organising school 40 Hour Famine.*

COOPERATING

Working alongside a group or organisation (service provider, local government or authority) to influence/ improve how they address an issue. This may include team work, finding agreement, liaising or mediating between different groups to find workable solutions. This includes 'interest' groups that collaborate with a decision-making organisation. *Examples: Leadership through Peer Mediation, The Peace Foundation; School council; Parent Teacher Association; Waitua Committees (fresh water quality), Greater Wellington Regional Council.*

TIPS FOR TAKING ACTION

Decide on your main area of interest and opportunity to be part of:

- (i) a group or organisation helping to meet children's practical needs
- (ii) a group or organisation seeking to bring change on child rights issues.

Joining or leading – attend meetings, participate in discussions and activities, become a member, contribute skills and experience, take part in decision-making, use your skills to contribute or lead.

Cooperating – liaise with decision-making groups or organisations, understand what each one seeks to achieve, look for common ground, build communication, seek agreement, mediate for workable solutions.

Skills focus: communication, cooperation, participation, negotiation, leadership, teamwork.

Main features

May vary for different actions.

- ✓ Regular, ongoing, over time
- ✓ Information and facts
- ✓ Collaborate
- ✓ Behind the scenes
- ✓ High personal involvement
- ✓ Action

Social action continuums
(Student sheet 1)



Advocacy, Lobbying, Activism

ADVOCACY

Calling for people to act in a certain way on an issue to bring pressure for change. The call to action may include media campaigns, launch events, billboards, advertisements or videos that use emotive or creative concepts and language to convey a strong message. (Advocacy can also be personally advocating on behalf of an individual or group for their rights to be met.)

Examples: Save the Amazon, Greenpeace; Plastic-free NZ campaign; #KidsoffNauru NZ campaign; Every Child Counts NZ.

LOBBYING

Talking directly with or influencing people with the power to change things. This may include petitions, letter writing, meeting with decision-makers. *Examples: Amnesty International – pressuring governments, companies and decision-makers to stop abuses of human rights worldwide; Action Station NZ.*

ACTIVISM

Taking action to draw wider attention to an issue by challenging those holding power to change things. This may include protests, boycotts, marches, hikoi, occupying a strategic location, hunger strikes. *Examples: School Strike 4 Climate Change; Sea Shepherd anti-whaling action in the South Pacific; Greenpeace action against oil exploration in the Arctic and in New Zealand waters.*

Speaking out, Vietnam

Luong Nhu is a Youth Ambassador for World Vision Vietnam's campaign to end violence against children, 'It takes a world'. At the campaign launch event, Luong Nhu spoke about how parents often use physical violence as a means of discipline, believing that physical pain, such as whips, lashes, slaps and pinches, will make their children remember which behaviours are not allowed.

Numerous government officials, leaders of Non-Governmental Organisations, embassy representatives, news reporters and people from the corporate sector attended the launch event. Afterwards, they signed a pledge committing to participate in efforts to change cultural beliefs and practices that promote physical violence against children.

Photo: Pham Thu Trang / World Vision



TIPS FOR TAKING ACTION

Decide what issue, policy or decision you want to change, what part you want to change and who will participate with you.

Advocacy – choose a clear, easy action for participants that includes: a strong advocacy message, accurate facts, effective promotion, ways for people to join in, how they can respond or show support.

Lobbying – choose the person/people who could influence this issue, research their beliefs and who else is lobbying them, identify your resources/strengths and lobbying approach (personal messages, social media, petition, submission, meeting), undertake lobbying, follow up outcomes.

Activism – choose an action with potential to attract attention, assess any risks (health and safety, unintended outcomes), invite relevant media, undertake action, follow up your action and/or the media.

Skills focus: organisation, communication, influencing others, commitment/determination, challenging others.

Main features

May vary for different actions.

- ✓ Personal and emotive
- ✓ Inform and persuade
- ✓ Confront
- ✓ In the public/media
- ✓ Aimed at decision-makers
- ✓ High personal involvement
- ✓ Action

Social action continuums
(Student sheet 1)