



[www.crcjustice.org](http://www.crcjustice.org)

**BY GERDA KITS**

© 2003 CHRISTIAN REFORMED OFFICE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUNGER ACTION – CANADA

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to The Priscilla and Stanford Reid Trust, for its significant funding for this project.

### Thanks also to:

Contributing partners:      Campus Ministry Association, Christian Reformed Home Missions  
   Renaissance College/Campus Ministry, University of New Brunswick  
   The CRCNA Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action – Canada

Project supervisor: Sandra Elgersma

Design: Christian Reformed Product Services

Advisors: Marian Heinen, Tom Oosterhuis, Michael Veenema, and Jessica Zeyl

All scripture verses are from the New Revised Standard Version.

## DISCLAIMERS

The content, statements, and links contained in the websites, organisations, articles, and books suggested in *Just Basics* do not necessarily reflect the official position of or endorsement by the funders of this project or the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action of the Christian Reformed Church.

The opinions expressed in *Just Basics* reflect the opinions of the author, and not necessarily those of the funders of this project or the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action of the Christian Reformed Church.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gerda Kits is an Environmental Studies and Social Science student at The King's University College in Edmonton, Alberta. She is a member of the King's social justice group, the Action and Awareness Society. Gerda hopes to pursue a career in social justice and international development, and wrote *Just Basics* during a summer internship with the Christian Reformed Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action. You can contact her at [gkits@yahoo.com](mailto:gkits@yahoo.com).

## ORDERING AND DISTRIBUTION INFORMATION

*Just Basics* is available in both .pdf and website format at [www.crcjustice.org/justbasics](http://www.crcjustice.org/justbasics). *Just Basics*, in whole or in part, may be reproduced and distributed freely. Please give appropriate credit to the author (Gerda Kits) and publisher (Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action) and identify the website where it is available.

## INTRODUCTION

Students interested in pursuing social justice might become the busiest people on campus. Because they care about making the world a better place, they get involved in all kinds of activities, from serving lunch at the local soup kitchen to writing for the school newspaper to participating in candlelight vigils for peace.

And for every one of those busy, active students, there are others who also care passionately about changing the world – but don't know where to start. They may not think they know enough about the issues to speak up, or they might feel that one person can't possibly make a difference.

*Just Basics* is meant for both these groups of students. For those who have too much to do and too little time, it provides easy access to the basic information needed to organise a group, plan events and actions, and make contact with others. For those who want to help but don't know how, it offers the basics to get started, like biblical perspectives on justice and introductions to issues of concern.

*Just Basics* is written especially for Christian students who want to work together for social justice. By working with others who share our passion to make the world a better place, we can build communities of support, challenge and inspiration. We can remind each other, when we face discouragement or burn-out, that the work we are doing is ultimately God's – that we are called to be faithful, not necessarily to be successful. Together, we can spend time with those who suffer injustice, reminding ourselves that justice is not only about issues, but about people. And we can rejoice together in what we accomplish.

*Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up.*

~ Anne Lamott

### WHAT'S IN *JUST BASICS*

Each section in *Just Basics* is meant to stand on its own; we hope you will go straight to whatever interests you most. We have tried to keep *Just Basics* as concise as possible; throughout these pages, you will find references to websites, organisations, articles and books where you can learn more.

#### ***Biblical Foundations*** **2**

Basic biblical foundations for doing justice; connections between justice and worship; worship resources; workshops and bible studies.

#### ***Organising & Running a Group*** **6**

Tips for starting a group; possibilities for writing mandates, relationships with schools, group structures, and decision-making models; evaluating your group's resources; running meetings; ensuring the continuity of your group.

#### ***Education & Action Strategies*** **11**

Advice for getting people interested; an outline for activities; ideas for education and action activities; tips for doing research; general research resources; advice for publicity and follow-up.

#### ***Networking*** **21**

Who to network with and how; how to find local organisations; information about Canadian denominational, faith-based, youth-focused, and other organisations.

#### ***Issue Areas*** **25**

Brief introductions to a number of social justice issues, with resources and organisations to check out for further information.

#### ***Appendices*** **41**

- A – Sample Mandate
- B – Media Releases, Letters, & Petitions
- C – Government Representatives
- D – Special Days
- E – Other Helpful Guides

# BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

## UNDERSTANDING JUSTICE BIBLICALLY

*Eric Mabele is a soldier in Bunia, the Congo. He patrols the street with a rifle at his side and grenades on his belt. Eric has shot three men. He is twelve years old.*

(Reported in *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 16, 2003)

*Hilda Guerrero is 26, the mother of two young daughters. She works in a garment factory in Los Angeles, California, where the minimum wage is \$5.75 an hour. Hilda makes \$3.75 an hour and must sometimes work hours of overtime without being paid.*

(Reported in *The Calgary Herald*, March 11, 2000)

*The dead body of a homeless man, identified only as "Al," is discovered one winter on a heating grate in Toronto, Ontario. His possessions are nearby: "a cardboard box, two sleeping bags, a blue tarp, jeans, a bottle of water, some plastic bags and an unopened can of corn."*

(Reported in *The Toronto Star*, February 5, 1999)

As Christians called to love our neighbour, how do we respond to stories like these? Do we ignore them? Do we pray for the people involved? Do we do something to help them? And if so, what?

These kinds of situations are not unfamiliar to God's people. Job described the suffering he saw around him: "The wicked remove landmarks; they seize flocks and pasture them. They drive away the donkey of the orphan; they take the widow's ox for a pledge. They thrust the needy off the road; the poor of the earth all hide themselves. . . . They lie all night naked, without clothing, and have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the rain of the mountains, and cling to the rock for want of shelter. There are those who snatch the orphan child from the breast,

and take as a pledge the infant of the poor" (Job 24: 2-4, 7-9).

The Bible is clear on this: God is not blind to injustice. The Lord "executes justice for the oppressed [and] gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free. . . . The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow" (Psalm 146:7, 9). But *how* does God execute justice and feed the hungry? Through us.

God calls us to respond to situations of injustice and suffering. God wants us to participate in the work of redemption so that all – especially the weak and vulnerable – can enjoy God's good gifts. The command is clear in the book of Amos: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

### ***But what is justice?***

One of the problems with saying that we are supposed to do justice is that the word "justice" has different meanings for different people. Some think justice has to do only with the legal system – with crime and punishment. Others believe that justice has to do with people using power in the right ways, or with having the right procedures in place to protect people's rights and freedoms. However, the scope of justice in the Bible is much larger than this. Justice refers not only to punishing those who break laws, or refraining from oppressing others, but also includes caring for the poor and vulnerable, and righting the results of our sinful nature. This is one of the practical ways we live out the command to love our neighbour.

Striving for justice means striving to realise God's original intention for human society: a world where basic needs are met, people flourish, and shalom (peace) reigns. We believe that each of us is called to live in obedience to God, in whatever place or time God has put us. A biblical understanding of justice is based on this idea. *Justice, according to what we see in the Bible, means making sure that everyone has the resources and opportunities they need to live out their God-given calling.* Practically, this might mean things like a safe place to live, enough food to eat, access to education, protection

from exploitation and discrimination, basic freedoms, meaningful work, and a healthy environment.

Those working for justice in society often use the term “social justice” to define what they do. This term can’t be pinned down precisely because it has such a broad range of meanings for different people. Social justice can be taken to mean economic redistribution of resources, equal access to opportunities, equal freedom to make individual choices, social and political recognition of differences, or protection of human rights. Some people believe social justice means a combination of some or all of these. However, all these definitions do have a common thread of making sure people have certain resources and opportunities. This is very much like the biblical understanding of justice given above.

### ***I give to charity – isn’t that enough?***

Charity and justice can be seen as the two steps of Christian service. Both are necessary, but there are several differences between them. Justice responds to the root causes of suffering, while charity responds to the symptoms of injustice. Justice is usually long-term and addresses systems and institutions, while charity is meant to provide direct, immediate help to those who need it.

The story of the babies in the river is often used to illustrate the difference between charity and justice. The people of a small village noticed one day that there were babies floating downstream in the river that ran beside their village. Of course, they

*"You must be the change  
you wish to see in the  
world."*

*-Mahatma Gandhi*

waded in and rescued the babies, dried them off and took them into their homes. But the next day there were more babies in the river, and more the next day. The people continued rescuing the babies. Finally, one wise person in the village started walking upstream. When the rest of the villagers asked why, the person answered: “I’m going to find out why the babies are being put in the river, and do something about it!”

Both the approaches in this story were necessary. The charity approach (rescuing the babies from the river) met an immediate need. The justice approach (trying to stop the babies from being put in the river in the first place) addressed the root cause of the problem. Neither approach would be enough on its own.

### ***Isn’t justice the government’s job?***

It’s true that the government has a big role to play in ensuring justice, since it puts laws and regulations in place to guide how the rest of society works together, and it also uses public funds to provide services. However, justice is not limited to the government; it should guide the actions of every part of society. Churches, schools, and other institutions also are commanded to act justly, and individuals are commanded to do justice in their own lives. Both institutions and individuals are also required to call the other parts of society to account for situations of injustice.

### ***Does God really care about justice?***

The answer to this question is found throughout the Bible. Over and over we read that God loves justice and calls us to do justice as well. “For I the Lord love justice” (Isaiah 61:8). “And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night?” (Luke 18:7). And the commands to God’s people: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?” (Isaiah 58:6-7). When God set out commands to guide the daily life of Israel, the commands included laws that would ensure justice – laws to protect the poor, Sabbath laws about forgiveness of debts, Jubilee laws to make sure everyone was able to provide for themselves. And, in the gospel of Luke, when Jesus identifies himself as the fulfilment of the Old

Testament prophecies, he quotes Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." (Luke 4: 18-19). If you read the Bible with an eye for justice, you will find no lack of evidence that God loves justice and wants us to do the same.

### Justice Resources

The previous discussion about justice covers only a few basic points. You and your group can discover much more about justice and God's call by doing a bit of reading and study. The following resources, as well as the Bible studies suggested at the end of this section, are good places to start.

*The Advent of Justice* (available from the Public Justice Resource Centre, [www.publicjustice.ca](http://www.publicjustice.ca))

A series of reflections on Isaiah. Out of print, but still available from PJRC.

*Cry Justice* (Ronald J. Sider, ed., Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980)

This collection of biblical texts dealing with hunger, justice, and the poor includes study questions.

*Good News about Injustice* (Gary A. Haugen, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999)

Although Haugen has a fairly limited definition of justice, his discussion of how God responds to injustice in Part Two, "Hope amid Despair," is worth reading.

*Just Generosity* (Ronald J. Sider, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999)

See Chapter Two, "A Biblical Foundation," for an excellent discussion of what justice means and how Christians are called to respond to poverty.

*Social Justice Grantmaking: Finding Common Language* (Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development; available at [www.community-fdn.ca/doc/SocJus1ENG2003feb.pdf](http://www.community-fdn.ca/doc/SocJus1ENG2003feb.pdf))

This is an interesting (although academic) discussion of various definitions of social justice.

*Thine is the Kingdom* (Paul Marshall, United Kingdom: Marshalls Paperbacks, 1984)

Chapter Two, "Christian Action in God's World," and pages 51 – 56 in Chapter Three give biblical foundations for why Christians should be involved in the world and what justice means according to the Bible.

*It helps now and then  
to step back and take the long view.  
The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts  
it is even beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction  
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.*

*We may never see the end results  
but that is the difference between the master  
builder and the worker.*

*We are the workers, not the master builders,  
ministers, not messiahs.*

*We are prophets of a future not our own.  
This is what we are about.*

*~ Archbishop Oscar Romero*

### INCLUDING WORSHIP

Do worship and justice really belong together? Worship has to do with God, justice with other people – right? But if we Christians are really going to do justice, we must learn to put the two together. We need to worship together as a group and include worship as part of our events, and we need to make sure that the worship we already do guides and encourages people to do justice. Here are some links between justice and worship:

- We do justice because of our faith, and worship reminds us of that faith. Through worship we are reminded of the kingdom that we are working for and lament injustice experienced; we see a vision of the way the world ought to be and the way it someday will be.
- Working for justice is often difficult. It takes time, effort, determination, a willingness to confront others and work against the current. Worship

strengthens us for this work; together we are encouraged and supported to continue in our work for justice.

- We cannot worship truly if we don't do justice. We see in the Bible that worship pleases God only if the community worshipping is also committed to doing justice (Isaiah 1:11-17, Amos 5:21-24). Worship must be just in itself (welcoming the vulnerable, caring for those with differences), and it must also encourage worshippers to continue in the work of justice.

### **Worship Resources**

*Banquet of Praise* (available from Bread for the World, [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org))

Worship resources, hymns, and songs on justice, peace, and food for all.

*Hymns by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette*

([www.churchworldservice.org/hymns.html](http://www.churchworldservice.org/hymns.html))

Hymns written to old tunes, on various justice issues.

*Iona Community and Wild Goose Worship Group resources* (catalog at [www.iona.org.uk](http://www.iona.org.uk))

Many of the books from Iona and the Wild Goose Worship Group feature beautiful songs, liturgies, and prayers dealing with justice and peace.

*Just Worship links and resources*

([www.crcjustice.org/crjs\\_justworship.htm](http://www.crcjustice.org/crjs_justworship.htm))

Articles about worship and justice, links to online peace and justice worship resources.

*Sing! A New Creation* (available from Faith Alive Christian Resources, [www.faihaliveresources.org](http://www.faihaliveresources.org))

Many of the songs and readings in this contemporary worship resource deal with justice.

*We Can Do That, Too!*

([www.churchworldservice.org/wecantoo/TOC.html](http://www.churchworldservice.org/wecantoo/TOC.html))

Prayers and scripture verses from a Church World Service resource dealing with hunger and injustice.

*World Prayers* ([www.worldprayers.org](http://www.worldprayers.org))

A collection of prayers from different faith traditions, searchable by keyword.

*"There is a terrible hunger for love. We all experience that in our lives - the pain, the loneliness. We must have the courage to recognize it. The poor you may have right in your own family. Find them. Love them. Put your love for them in living action. For in loving them, you are loving God Himself."*

*~ Mother Theresa*

### **WORKSHOPS AND BIBLE STUDIES**

Working through one of these sets of workshops or Bible studies will give your group the opportunity to explore and discuss the biblical vision of justice. You can also use these resources to deepen your understanding of some specific justice issues, or reach out to others in your community.

*Act Justly* (online at [www.fish.co.uk/actjustly](http://www.fish.co.uk/actjustly))

A set of small-group Bible studies from Christian Aid (Great Britain), focused on God's call to justice and current issues of injustice.

*Shalom Seekers* (for ordering information, check [www.crcjustice.org/crjs\\_shalom.htm](http://www.crcjustice.org/crjs_shalom.htm))

A set of six workshops on social justice, with information to root the workshops in one of three specific issues (HIV/AIDS, Homelessness, and Refugees).

# ORGANISING & RUNNING A GROUP

If you would like to start a social justice group on your campus, or if you already have a group but would like some advice on running it and attracting new members, this section is for you.

## STARTING A SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUP ON YOUR CAMPUS

Your first task is to find other people on your campus who might be interested in joining a Christian social justice group. Start by collecting as many names as you can:

- Set up a display introducing the group, giving a general idea of what you want to do, and inviting people to help shape it. Include a sign-up sheet. Many campuses have an orientation week where student groups can set up displays and recruit members.
- Make a presentation at a conference or event, and ask interested students to sign up.
- Ask professors or other people you know to suggest students who may be interested.
- Talk to existing groups, like Christian fellowship groups, existing social justice groups, community service groups, or single-issue groups like Amnesty International.

Keep a list of everyone who expresses interest, and get their contact information. Use phone numbers to make personal contact, and email addresses to communicate with a lot of people at the same time.

It will probably take at least two meetings to plan and organise the group. When you have a long

enough list of possible members (keep in mind that not all of them will end up joining), call them all and invite them to an opening meeting. Choose a place that people can find and a time when most people will be able to come. Advertise the meeting widely to attract people not on your list. Let people know about the meeting well in advance, and then remind them of it the day before.

The purpose of your opening meeting is to introduce everyone to the idea of the group and invite some discussion, as well as to find out which of your possible members is actually willing to commit to the group. A possible agenda is below:

1. Open with prayer, introductions, and a brief explanation of why you have called the meeting.
2. Circulate an attendance sheet to get contact information for those present (phone and email).
3. Give a brief explanation of your ideas for the group: its purpose, main activities, and how it could be organised.
4. Invite discussion. You don't have to come to any decisions during this meeting; the purpose is to hear what other people think and to see if they want to get involved.
5. Ask people to indicate if they are interested in coming to a more formal planning meeting and determine a good time and place to meet.
6. Thank everyone for coming, and close in prayer.
7. Have refreshments and chat informally.

The second meeting is for those who are really interested in joining a social justice group. The purpose is to begin formalising the organisation of your group and do some thinking about what activities to undertake. Do keep in mind that if you are trying to get official group status with your school, there may be procedures and rules that you have to follow from the beginning to be accepted as a group (more about this later). The next few pages cover some of the topics you should discuss. Don't try to decide everything in one meeting, and remember that you don't have to wait until all your organising decisions are made to start thinking about activities!

*It means a great deal to those who are oppressed to know that they are not alone. And never let anyone tell you that what you are doing is insignificant.*

*~ Bishop Desmond Tutu*

## MANDATE OR VISION STATEMENT

Your group should spend a couple of sessions early in the planning process discussing your understanding of justice (see "Biblical Foundations"). From this, you can begin developing a mandate or vision statement. This will help your group become more united, and your work will be more focused and effective. Spend time with the whole group discussing the values, principles and expectations that are going to guide your work. Your mandate can include:

- The main purpose and goals of your group
- Your group's vision for your community and how you can help realise it (through raising awareness, encouraging discussion, taking action, etc.)
- Biblical foundations for the work you will do
- Who will be part of your group
- The organisational decisions you have made for your group (structure, decision-making)
- The range of issues you will address

When discussing your mandate, it is important to allow everyone a chance to express their views. Keep in mind that not everyone has to agree on everything, and there are usually ways to compromise. For example, half the group could be focusing on one goal and the other half on another, but is there any reason why both goals can't be included in the mandate? You might run up against disagreements that are more difficult to resolve, but it probably won't be any easier in the future; it's better to deal with them right away to avoid later problems.

For a sample mandate, see Appendix A.

*The most profoundly creative way to overcome enemies is to make them our friends. But this involves a series of painful acts, a constant decision never to achieve our goals by destroying or humiliating others.*

*~ Dom Paulo Cardinal Arns*

## RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SCHOOL

Right from the beginning, you should be careful to follow the proper procedures so that you will be able to have your group recognised as an official student club at your school (usually through the student government or student activities office). This may help you gain credibility, new members, and funding. You might also find it easier to get permission to hold activities at your school, participate in school-run events, and get publicity in your school newspaper. The requirements and process vary from school to school, but might include submitting a mandate and budget, and naming an executive team. Get in touch with your student government or student life staff to find out. If you are a Christian group at a public university, you may want to check with the chaplain's office for advice about approaching your school as a religious group.

## GROUP STRUCTURE

There are several possible ways to structure your group, including:

- One or two main leaders plan and lead meetings, delegate responsibilities, oversee activities, take care of funds, etc.
- An executive team with several distinct positions (president, treasurer, secretary, publicity co-ordinator, membership co-ordinator, etc.) leads the group.
- All members have equal decision-making power. There is no leader, and meetings are led by different people each time.
- A core group makes decisions, and other members (perhaps those with less time to offer) are asked to undertake specific tasks.
- The group is divided into several sub-committees focusing on different topics. The whole group meets a few times during the year.

## DECISION-MAKING

The decision-making model you choose will partly depend on the group structure you have chosen. Obviously, not every decision has to be

made by the whole group; some decisions can be made by the leaders. However, for any choice that does need a group decision, there are two main models to use:

- **Consensus:** All members (or, in modified consensus, all but one or two) agree on the decision. The point is not that everyone is totally satisfied, but that the decision is acceptable enough for everyone to support. Consensus is sought through discussion, considering alternatives, and compromise. Using this model increases the group's commitment to the decision because everyone agrees to it, avoids overruling any minority groups, and strengthens the unity and co-operation of the group. However, it requires patience, a willingness to compromise, and a commitment to allowing all members to voice their opinions.
- **Majority rule:** Decisions are voted on and the majority decision is chosen (the majority can be a simple 50% plus one, or another minimum majority can be chosen like 70%). This ensures every person has equal power, allows quick decisions, and eliminates the possibility of one or two members vetoing a decision. However, the group must pay special attention to making sure no minority groups are consistently overruled and that relationships are not damaged when some members are outvoted.

For more information about democratic decision-making, read *Democracy in Small Groups: Participation, Decision Making and Communication* by John Gastil (1993). There are also lots of books and resources available on consensus decision-making. One good introduction can be found at <http://www.antimedia.net/cookbook/Meetings.htm>.

## EVALUATION OF RESOURCES

A useful exercise to carry out when first forming a group, and periodically after that as well, is to evaluate what the group has to work with. This will give you ideas for activities which the group can undertake, alert you to areas that are lacking, make sure you don't waste time searching for outside help when you already have what you need, and help you

solve problems that come up. Spend time brainstorming and listing the resources you have. These might include:

- Skills of current members
- Information and knowledge, specific areas of expertise
- Physical resources (money and space)
- Time
- Creativity
- Experience
- Common values
- Membership in other organisations
- Relationships or connections
- Community support
- Commitment and enthusiasm

*When I feed the hungry, they call me a saint, but when I ask why people should be hungry, they call me a communist.*  
~ Brazilian Archbishop Dom Helder Camara

## GROUP MEETINGS

Holding meetings can be lots of fun. It can also be one of the most difficult and intimidating parts of organising a group. Here are some guidelines to help your group's meetings be effective and efficient.

1. **Have regular meetings.** You don't necessarily have to meet every week, but having regular meetings helps people remain committed to the group and allows you to meet for shorter times. However, do make sure your meeting has a real goal – don't meet just for the sake of meeting. Plan to always meet at the same place and time, if possible, and distribute a schedule to each member.
2. **Let members know what to expect.** Inform members ahead of time how long the meeting will last, and stick to that time (for busy students,

meetings should usually last no more than an hour unless they will include a meal or other event – or you could break the meeting into two parts, a short general meeting and a longer planning meeting for the leaders.) If some meetings are especially important, let members know this and encourage them to attend at least these.

3. **Prepare for meetings in advance.** Create an agenda for the meeting, including what will be discussed and who will lead the discussion, and circulate this in advance along with any other necessary information. Advertise the meeting well. Come to meetings with important proposals already prepared and ready for group discussion, rather than starting from scratch.
4. **Choose a facilitator.** If your group has a leader or president, they may facilitate the meeting, or the role of facilitator may rotate among the group. The job of a facilitator is to keep the meeting on track (but be flexible if unexpected situations come up) and to encourage the participation of every member.
5. **Welcome people.** Open meetings by welcoming everyone and asking new people to introduce themselves. Follow up with newcomers after the meeting, thanking them for coming and encouraging them to come again.
6. **Review the agenda.** At the beginning of the meeting, post the agenda where everyone can see it, and review it quickly. Agree on approximate times for each item to keep the meeting within its time limit. Take care of simple items first to leave more time for discussion at the end.
7. **Encourage respectful discussion.** Everyone should feel accepted and free to express his or her opinion. Don't allow interruptions (except from the facilitator, if necessary) and discourage people from critically pouncing on other's ideas or comments. If a discussion is dominated by a few people, try going around the group to ask everyone their opinion.
8. **Break into smaller groups if helpful.** You can save time by having several small groups deal with different topics or come up with different plans for action and report back to the larger group. This also encourages shy members of the group to participate, invites creative solutions to problems, and makes a long meeting more interesting.
9. **Keep minutes.** Assign someone to take notes of what is discussed and the decisions that are made. Have previous minutes available for reference. After the meeting, email a copy to every member, including those who were unable to come.
10. **End with a summary.** Briefly go over what has been decided, plans that have been set, and individual responsibilities to be taken care of. Confirm plans for the next meeting.
11. **Take time to build relationships.** Your group will be stronger if you don't spend all your time on work. Pray together. Set aside time to check in with one another. Build fellowship through shared meals and creating time to relax and have fun together.

A helpful resource for meeting leaders is "Meeting Facilitation," a short factsheet available at <http://www.trainingforchange.org/tools/meeting-facilitation.pdf>.

## ENSURING CONTINUITY

One of the major challenges facing campus groups is the high rate of turnover in both membership and leadership. This may mean a group will fizzle out after a few years, when experienced leaders graduate and no one else is able to take over. Or it can result in groups wasting time and energy repeating decisions or tasks every year, or losing track of key contacts or resources. To help avoid these problems, there are three major things you can do:

- Keep track of information. Start a binder which includes the group's mandate, major decisions, meeting notes, networking information, budgets, information about organisations the group has been in contact with, information about

campaigns or events the group has been involved in, evaluations of activities, and other helpful items. Going through this binder will help new leaders familiarise themselves with the group, its history, and the resources available to it.

- Encourage new leadership from within the group by giving people the opportunity to lead an event or activity. Focus on people who are just beginning at your school, to encourage long-term leadership. Once they have gained experience and confidence by leading events, they may be willing to take on a larger leadership role next year.
- Choose next year's leaders, or people who will take on the responsibility of getting the group going again, well before the end of the year. Involve them in running meetings and planning events if they haven't already. Hold a meeting just before the end of the year to brainstorm ideas for the coming year, building on what you have learned.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

*Amnesty International Campaigning Manual*  
([http://web.amnesty.org/web/content.nsf/pages/gbr\\_campaigning\\_manual](http://web.amnesty.org/web/content.nsf/pages/gbr_campaigning_manual))

This downloadable guide has advice on organising, campaigning, outreach, lobbying, and more. It is meant specifically for Amnesty International groups but should also be helpful for others.

*Kairos Network Handbook* (to order, visit  
[www.kairoscanada.org/english/resources/index.htm](http://www.kairoscanada.org/english/resources/index.htm))

This guide, produced by Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, focuses on building faith-based social justice groups and includes workshops, planning outlines, and other advice.

*Organizing Guide for Peace and Justice Groups*  
([www.ibiblio.org/netchange/cco](http://www.ibiblio.org/netchange/cco))

This online guide has lots of tips for organising a group and campaigning on campus.

# EDUCATION & ACTION STRATEGIES

There are many education and action activities that your group can decide to undertake, ranging from a workshop for your group members to a campus-wide awareness campaign, from sending a letter to your M.P. to gathering the whole community for a public demonstration. Keep in mind that the activities you choose should be consistent with your message. For example, if you are discussing poverty and inequality, an expensive dinner is probably not the most appropriate event.

## GETTING PEOPLE INTERESTED

One of the major purposes of student social justice groups is simply to make people aware of issues of injustice, and hopefully get them interested enough to take some action or find out more. Later in this section there are a number of specific activities to help you do this, but here are a number of general tips for raising people's interest and awareness on any issue.

1. **Make it real.** It can be easy to ignore issues of injustice, until you realise that real people are suffering. Let your audience hear from the victims of injustice themselves (for example, a panel discussion with homeless people) or have them experience what injustice is like (through a simulation, or a program like "Meet the Streets" where students spend a night in the inner city). Show them real stories, quotes, photographs and videos. Poetry and music can be powerful ways to help people connect with experiences of injustice (for example, check out books by Vancouver poet Bud Osborn). But be careful you don't exploit the people you want to support; don't portray them only as victims, but highlight their strength in adversity as well.
2. **Set an example.** The group, as well as its members, should set an example of living justly. Serve fair trade coffee at your meetings. Avoid

shopping at companies that aren't responsible. If people know you are willing to change your own lives for the sake of justice, they are more likely to listen to you.

3. **Be positive.** When talking about social justice, it can be easy to stress the negative and make people feel guilty or helpless. Make sure you include the positive in your campaigns and events – point out the good steps that are already being taken, the possibilities for improvement, the alternatives to current practices. Give people real ways to change injustice, instead of only lamenting it.
4. **Consider your audience.** Choose your methods according to the community you are working in. Think about what people will pay attention to, what they are likely to support, and what they will be willing to do. It might help to choose issues that directly affect the community (for example, homelessness in your city), or ones where their own choices can affect change (for example, international trade and sweatshops).
5. **Make events and publicity fun and interesting.** There is definitely a place for scholarly arguments and long speeches, but there is also a place for games, plays, interactive activities, etc. Don't short-change your message or the information you want to convey, but think about how you can communicate it creatively.
6. **Protect your group's integrity.** Don't do anything that would make people stop listening to you. Always make sure the information you present is reliable and accurate. Be honest and tell the whole story. Never allow violence to occur at your group's events. Find out your school's rules for events, posting flyers, information tables, etc. and follow them.

*Injustice anywhere is an affront to justice everywhere.*

*~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## GETTING STARTED

These are the steps you will need to take to carry out any events or activities. More specific details and tips follow.

1. **Choose a topic to focus on.** “Issue Areas” can help you with this.
2. **Define your audience and goals.** Who do you want to reach? Do you want to educate people? Do you want them to take action? What message do you want to convey? Having a clear objective in mind, including concrete goals, will help focus your work. You will also find it easier at the end to evaluate whether or not you have achieved your purpose.
3. **Decide what activities will help you meet your goals.** What is your audience likely to participate in? How can you convince them to get involved? How much do they already know, and how much do you need to tell them? What will be most effective?
4. **Decide on logistics.** Once you know what you want to do and how to do it, decide on the details – date, time, place, name of the activity. Try not to conflict with other major events that will draw your audience away. You might also want to use some of the internationally and nationally recognised special days to schedule your events – see Appendix D.
5. **Think about the resources you will need.** Do you need materials? Money? Information? Help from other people? What do you already have? How can you get what you need?
6. **Plan publicity.** How are you going to let people know about the activity? Consider different possibilities: word-of-mouth, flyers, posters, email, newspaper ads, articles, announcements.
7. **Plan action steps and assign tasks.** List things that have to be done, who will do them, and when. Spread out the responsibilities, and come up with a backup system in case people don't follow through with their tasks. It might help to create a timeline with due dates.
8. **Communicate!** Make sure everyone involved knows what has been decided about the activity, and what they have to do. Put this in writing so they don't forget. If you have a timeline, make copies and distribute them. Assign someone to follow up and make sure everyone is taking care of their responsibilities. Have a brief meeting just before the event or activity begins, to make sure everything is ready.
9. **Remember follow-up.** How can you keep track of people who participate in the activity, and invite them to continue their involvement? (Always have a sign-up sheet around!) What is the best way to evaluate the activity afterwards, to see if you met your goals?

## EDUCATION STRATEGIES

### *Displays*

Preparing a display is a great way to introduce people to an issue. You could have one big display on a broad topic or a series of displays on sub-topics. Focus people's attention on a simple, clear message or theme without using too many words. Use visual images and a few attractive colours to draw attention. Make text big enough so people can easily read it. Keep the display uncluttered, neat and organised. Rather than putting all your information on the display board, consider preparing more detailed information sheets and leaving them nearby for people to take. Have a secure place to store the display overnight and assign someone to set it up each morning.

### *Information Tabling*

This is more interactive than a display. Have things like information brochures or factsheets, stickers, pins, petitions, and letter-writing supplies available at a table. Have at least two people at the table: one to stay behind the table and answer questions, another to talk to people passing by. Be friendly and reach out to people with questions or invitations. You can give people an opportunity to take direct action (sign a petition, buy a ticket, write a letter) and sign up for participating in future events

with the group. Set up in a high-traffic area and make up a schedule for people to be at the table during busy times. Make sure you have a safe place to keep materials while there's no one at the table, especially if you are collecting donations, and that everyone knows where the materials are kept.

### **Information Fair**

This event allows local organisations active on a particular issue to set up displays on campus and send representatives to talk with people and answer questions. You don't have to limit yourself to justice organisations; local charities (food banks, homeless shelters, etc.), businesses, government departments, etc. can also have information to contribute. Make sure you get permission to use the area from your school, and have tables and chairs available for the groups participating. It can be helpful for your group to also prepare an information display as an introduction to the issue.

One example of an information fair is a "Fair Trade Fair." This is meant to make people aware of alternative products produced and traded in a socially responsible manner. Have sample products (including fair trade coffee, chocolate, sugar, etc) available along with catalogues, order forms, and brochures. Invite local businesses like Ten Thousand Villages or other stores that sell fair trade products, local organic farmers, or local co-ops. Local organisations working on global economic justice issues can also set up a display or run a workshop. You can set up a café serving fair trade coffee and hot chocolate, have a video running, or put on a play or sweatshop fashion show. Visit [www.web.net/~tendays/action/FairtradeFair.html](http://www.web.net/~tendays/action/FairtradeFair.html) for more information.

### **Public Meetings**

To educate people on an issue, you can invite them to an information session. This could involve a single guest speaker, a panel discussion (several speakers each make a brief presentation, then take questions), or simply an open forum where a brief introduction to the issue is made and then people are invited to discuss or debate. You can involve representatives of organisations active on the issue,

people affected by the issue, professors, and government representatives. To find speakers, contact local or national organisations and ask them for suggestions. Make sure to publicise the meeting well so you end up with a good-sized audience. For an open forum, make sure you have planned several questions to start debate.

### **Workshops**

Workshops are a good way to help people become more familiar with an issue or give them tools to take action. They can be part of a larger event, a follow-up to a previous event or activity, or part of a continuing Bible study. There are some workshop resources at the end of the "Biblical Foundations" section of *Just Basics*, or you can create your own. Include opening activities to introduce people to each other and to the issue, presentation of information, interactive discussion, exercises (ie. role-playing or problem solving), worship, opportunities to plan further action, etc.

### **Showing Films**

There are many videos available on social justice topics. Show the film on a large TV or in your campus movie theatre, and invite people to stay for discussion afterwards. Providing refreshments is a good incentive. Advertise the showing beforehand and invite groups who you think might be interested (classes or campus clubs). You can check your school or city library for videos, and organisations with videos to buy or borrow include:

- Mennonite Central Committee ([www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org))
- Kairos: CEJI ([www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org))
- World Vision Canada ([www.worldvision.ca](http://www.worldvision.ca))
- Oxfam Canada ([www.oxfam.ca](http://www.oxfam.ca))
- National Film Board ([www.nfb.ca](http://www.nfb.ca)).

### **Hunger Awareness Dinner**

This is a major event intended to raise awareness about the problem of world hunger. Participants are divided into categories and given different foods to represent hunger and poverty around the world. One possibility is to divide them

into high, middle, and low income groups which represent the proportion of these groups world-wide. Those in the high income group are served lavish meals by waiters, the middle income group receives shared platters of sandwiches and fruit, and the low income group lines up for small servings of rice. Another version is to divide participants into groups proportioned by area (North America, Europe, South America, Asia, and Africa). Different ethnic foods are served which also represent the average caloric intake for these areas (North Americans receive far too much food, Africans receive barely enough) and random unlucky people are chosen to represent the proportions of hungry people in each area. Seating arrangements should also reflect the different categories (the rich have tablecloths, nice dishes, etc. while the poor sit on the floor with a single bowl). Have a speaker or MC to talk about the purpose of the dinner and give some information about world hunger, and give participants leaflets with information. You can charge a fee for admission to cover costs, or even do this event as a fundraiser with profits going to a hunger-related organisation. Detailed information on planning a hunger awareness dinner is available from Oxfam America ([www.oxfamamerica.org/publications/art1104.html](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/publications/art1104.html)).

*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*

*~ Anne Frank*

### **Just Fashion Show**

This event can be held as part of a larger education effort about international trade, or it can stand on its own. The purpose is to alert people to the injustices related to the clothes they may be wearing. The Just Fashion show should be held in a public place where people can stop and watch for a few minutes, or stay for the whole thing if they choose. People dressed in clothing from companies guilty of running sweatshops, using child labour, human rights abuses, etc. walk down the “runway” (raised platform or stage) while an announcer

describes the clothing and the unjust practices associated with it (“John is wearing a lovely blue pair of Nike sneakers, produced in China where the average worker in a Nike factory makes \_\_\_ cents per hour” and so on). The announcer’s commentary should be kept fairly brief, and more detailed information on the offending companies can be made available as leaflets for people to take. Spend some time researching positive alternatives (responsible companies) and also give people opportunities to take direct action (like writing a letter to one of the offending companies).

For more information, a resource package detailing how to organise a Just Fashion Show can be found at [www.owren.org/ifa/docs/main.html](http://www.owren.org/ifa/docs/main.html). The Maquila Solidarity Network has current information on companies and campaigns.

### **Popular Theatre**

Your group can put on skits or plays to raise people’s awareness of a particular issue. These can be part of a worship service or large event, or performed in a public area so people passing by can watch. There are a few scripts listed in the “Issue Areas” section of *Just Basics*, or you could write your own. You can also do improvisation; for example, act out a particular unjust situation (a plantation owner fires a worker who was sick and missed a day of work) and then ask someone from the audience to take the place of either character and change the result of the situation. Or, stage an event such as an abduction from a crowded cafeteria to draw attention to human rights abuses. Follow up by inviting discussion and offering more information.

### **AIDS Stickers**

Choose a crowded classroom or cafeteria or do this activity with a captive audience in a conference or worship service. Send people throughout the room or have them stand at the door with red stickers. Every third person receives a sticker which they are asked to place in a visible spot on their body, to represent the one in three people in Sub-Saharan Africa who will die of AIDS (make sure to find the most recent statistics). Ask them to look

around the room and notice how many people have red stickers. If the activity is done in a formal situation, you can ask all the people with stickers to stand while someone does a brief presentation about AIDS. Be sure the statistics you use are reliable and up-to-date. Make sure to have more information available, as well as opportunities to take action (write a letter, sign a petition).

This activity can be adapted to apply to other issues as well; the purpose is to help people realise the reality of injustice and suffering in the world. For example, to illustrate the problem of World Hunger, circulate through a crowded room and place a black sticker on someone every 3.6 seconds, to reflect the 24,000 hunger-related deaths every day. If people aren't coming and going, it won't take long for every person in the room to have a black sticker. Ask them to reflect on the real people they represent. Provide further information and action opportunities.

### **Hunger Counter**

In a prominent place, post a running total of people who have died of hunger-related causes during the day or week. You can come up with more creative versions of this activity. For example, cut out little people from sheets of paper and stick them up on the wall, one every 3.6 seconds. (You won't be able to keep this activity up all week, since the rate is 1000 every hour). Stress to observers that each cut-out symbolises a real person who has died that day. Again, this activity can be adapted for a variety of issues.

### **Awareness Week**

This event uses any combination of the previous education ideas, with the goal of increasing the school community's awareness of a particular topic. Action strategies could also be part of the week. A sample week, focusing on World Hunger with some attention to hunger in Canada, is outlined here.

#### **Monday:**

- Opening display set up, welcoming people to World Hunger Awareness Week and providing a summary of the week's activities.

- Main display set up, giving information about world hunger, some solutions, and practical actions people can take.

#### **Tuesday:**

- Hunger stickers activity (adaptation of AIDS stickers activity).
- Film showing with discussion and refreshments afterwards.

#### **Wednesday:**

- Worship service focused on World Hunger, with offering of non-perishable foods for local food bank (it's true that this is a charity response, not a justice response, but it is good to have something concrete which people can do to help while still stressing the necessity of also responding to the injustice behind hunger).
- Information tabling added to main display, with people available to answer questions, opportunities to write a letter to the government asking for debt forgiveness for poor countries, and a chance to buy tickets for Friday's Hunger Awareness Dinner.

#### **Thursday:**

- Guest speaker from church development agency, with opportunity for discussion following.
- Tabling and ticket-selling continues.

#### **Friday:**

- Hunger Awareness Dinner. You could do this as a fundraiser, with all profits (after covering the cost of the dinner) donated to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

#### **Ongoing throughout week:**

- Hunger Counter in a prominent place, with running tally of how many people world-wide have died of hunger-related causes during the week.
- Hunger facts written on blackboards before classes, so people can see them as they come in.
- Posters hung throughout school, with pictures and quotes from those suffering from hunger (world-wide and in Canada).

## ACTION STRATEGIES

Action strategies will vary from issue to issue, and part of your research should include finding out about campaigns or organisations that give students opportunity to take action. Some issues are easier than others to take action on – for example, learning about Biotechnology or International Trade will encourage people to make changes in their everyday shopping and buying habits. Other issues, like World Hunger or AIDS, are more difficult. There is always the opportunity to financially support organisations active in that area, or give them volunteer support; students, however, are often short on both money and time. It is important, though, to give them an opportunity to take action of some kind. Some general strategies for action are below.

### Letter Writing

Asking people to write personal letters is the single most effective way to influence elected representatives. Letters are always read by someone, and a well-written letter demonstrates that there are people concerned enough about the issue to take time to address it. Letters are far more effective than petitions or postcard campaigns, even when not as many people write letters as would have signed the petition. They are also more effective than emails and more likely to get a response.

Guidelines for writing effective letters can be found in Appendix B. To find contact information for your government representatives, check Appendix C. If you are asking people to write letters on a particular issue, it is helpful to provide them with some background information, the guidelines for writing a letter, and the address for the person you are writing to. One strategy is to set up a table with paper, pens, and envelopes, and ask people to write a brief (but legible) letter immediately.

### Petitions

Asking people to sign a petition is much easier than getting them to write a letter, but also less effective since it takes much less effort on their part. However, if you can mobilise a large proportion of

the student body to sign the petition, you will still have some effect in calling the attention of decision-makers to the problem. The petition can also have a snowball effect if students encourage people outside the school – families, churches, workplaces – to sign as well. Or you can join in to support a national or international campaign that is already collecting signatures. And, if you are trying to convince the school itself to change something (for example, to implement a no-sweatshop policy on all school clothing), a petition can be very useful.

Official rules for writing government petitions can be found in Appendix B of *Just Basics*. Be creative in thinking of ways to get people to sign – use education activities to alert them to the problem, pass the petition around in classes or conferences, ask those who have signed to take a sheet home and gather more signatures. You can also encourage students to sign on-line petitions (not e-mail petitions) which are becoming more popular with some organisations, but first make sure the organisation is trustworthy and the petition is actually going to get to the person it is meant for.

### Demonstrations

Any demonstration has the intention of gathering a group of concerned people together to make a united statement about the issue, often using visual symbols like candles or signs. Kinds of demonstrations include vigils, protests, marches, rallies, pickets, and sit-ins. They can include speakers, participatory exercises (chants), music, and discussions. Be sure to find out school rules or local laws which may affect your demonstration. *Always* avoid violence. Have information available for people to take.

### Boycotts

Boycotting a company means refusing to buy their products until they agree to certain demands. Boycotts are effective if enough people participate that the target company actually faces lost profits. For this reason, it's best to encourage students to participate in large-scale boycott campaigns rather than beginning your own boycott. Of course, if you are using this strategy to affect your school directly

(for example, boycotting the coffee shop on campus unless it agrees to sell fair trade coffee) then your own school-wide boycott can be very effective. Communicate with the target of your boycott to let them know why you are boycotting them, what they have to do to get you to stop, what alternative choices they have, and what support they will receive for a change. Keep in mind that some boycotts can be more harmful than helpful: for example, boycotting a garment manufacturer may just result in closed factories and lost jobs, rather than any real change. Only participate in boycotts when you are convinced it will actually improve the lives of the people you are trying to help (for example, when South Africans asked for sanctions to bring attention to apartheid).

*Peace, in the sense of absence of war, is of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold. Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free.*

*~ The 14th Dalai Lama*

### **Meeting with Your Government Representatives**

Meeting with your municipal, provincial or federal representatives gives you an opportunity to let them know you care about an issue, build rapport, and respond to each other's concerns. Learning what their constituents think and becoming educated on issues is part of their job, so don't think you're imposing. Talk to them no matter what side of the issue they are on – those who agree with you need support, and those who don't may be persuaded to change their minds. Call their office to arrange a meeting, and prepare by deciding what you hope to achieve at the meeting, researching their position, and preparing the information you want to give them. Take a fairly small group of people (three to five) and be polite and friendly; you can disagree without being rude. Introduce yourself and the group, explain why you asked for a meeting,

communicate your basic message and be prepared for their questions. Take the opportunity to ask them questions as well. Bring supporting material along. Be persistent and stick to your key points – don't allow the discussion to get off-topic. Follow up with a brief letter thanking them for the opportunity to meet and reminding them of what you talked about and your key points.

### **DOING RESEARCH**

To plan any kind of education or action, you will probably need to do some research. This could include collecting facts about an issue or situation, analysis of those facts, information about campaigns dealing with the issue, etc. Just finding information is not usually a problem; the bigger problem is deciding which of the resources you have found are useful and reliable.

1. **Start with places you trust.** Begin by visiting the websites of organisations you are familiar with that are active on the issue. Look for their information or links they recommend.
2. **Begin with general information, then get more specific.** Try to find some general introductory information to give you an overview of the issue (factsheets from organisations you trust are often helpful). Decide on the subtopics you want to focus on and make a list of questions.
3. **Be clear about what you're looking for.** Consider what you want the information for, to help you decide exactly what type of information you need (facts, statistics, analysis, current events). It can help to do a brief scan of the information available before settling down to the detailed research, so you know what's out there.
4. **Be aware of bias.** Always consider who is making the information available. What is their motive for doing so? What are the values that underlie their conclusions? Be critical of all information, no matter what the source. Gather information from a good variety of sources to get different viewpoints. You will have a better understanding of what's really going on, and the standpoint you take will be stronger.

5. **Check that your facts are accurate and up-to-date.** Cross-check with other sources, if possible. Use the most recent facts and statistics available. Statistics are often more effective if they are translated into easily understood concepts (compare the numbers to the population of your city, for example)
6. **Stay organised.** Keep track of your information so you can find it back when you need it. Make sure you can reference your sources later!
7. **Ask the experts.** If you can't find what you need, don't hesitate to ask someone else. Librarians, professors, and organisations are usually very willing to help.
8. **Check different sources.** Possibilities include libraries, government departments, professors, NGOs, churches, research organisations, other students, media, and public meetings or conferences.

## GENERAL RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH

This list contains links to general media resources, internet gateways, and statistics. There are more specific resources listed in the "Issue Areas" and "Networking" sections of *Just Basics*.

### Media

If your group has some funds available for subscriptions, it's probably worth subscribing to a couple of these resources to keep you informed of what's going on.

*Catholic New Times* – [www.catholicnewtimes.org](http://www.catholicnewtimes.org)  
Excellent journal of faith and social justice which examines Canadian and world issues. Only sample articles are available online, but subscriptions are inexpensive.

*The New Internationalist* – [www.newint.org](http://www.newint.org)  
Each issue focuses on a specific justice-oriented theme. Current and back issues available online (check the topic index to search by theme).

*OneWorld Canada* – <http://en.ca.oneworld.net/>

Online news and opinion from social movements in Canada and world-wide. Search or browse past stories. Find organisations in the "partners" section.

*The Other Side* – [www.theotherside.org](http://www.theotherside.org)  
Magazine for those working for justice and peace from a Christian perspective. Current and back issues available online. Check "resources" section of website for articles and links dealing with specific issues.

*Rabble* – [www.rabble.ca](http://www.rabble.ca)  
An online alternative media source of commentary, news stories, features, etc. Based in Canada but also has good coverage of global issues. Website has searchable archive.

### Links

*Canadian Social Research Links* – [www.canadiansocialresearch.net](http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net)  
Extensive annotated links to specific issues (Canadian and international).

*Eldis* – [www.eldis.org](http://www.eldis.org)  
Gateway to information on international development and related topics.

*GDSourcing* – [www.gdsourcing.ca](http://www.gdsourcing.ca)  
Links to Canadian statistics on lots of topics, from a variety of sources.

*Global Issues* – [www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org)  
Links on international and justice issues. Run by an individual, not an organisation, so keep in mind that the issues are presented from a single point of view.

*Praxis* – <http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/praxis.html>  
Well-organised links on all kinds of topics, including justice issues, poverty, and regional resources.

*WWW Virtual Library: International Affairs Resources* – [www.etown.edu/vl/index.html](http://www.etown.edu/vl/index.html)  
Links to a variety of international topics, regions, media sources and organisations.

## Statistics and General Information

These are links to statistics and information from reliable sources, but be aware that even “factual” information such as statistics is subject to limitations such as bias and inaccuracy. Cross-check your statistics whenever possible. Be sure to give the appropriate context and provide the references.

Statistics Canada – [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)  
Canadian statistics available online.

UNDP Human Development Reports –  
<http://hdr.undp.org>  
Global statistics from the United Nations  
Development Program, available in print or online.

United Nations Statistics Division –  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd>  
Global statistics databases.

United Nations System Web Site Locator –  
[www.unsystem.org](http://www.unsystem.org)  
Links to all UN websites, including the World  
Bank, International Monetary Fund, and  
International Labour Organisation. Use “thematic  
index” if you’re unsure which organisations deal  
with the topic you’re interested in. Search the  
organisations’ websites for statistics and other  
information.

*Past the seeker as he prayed came the  
crippled and the beggar and the beaten.  
And seeing them...he cried, "Great God,  
how is it that a loving creator can see such  
things and yet do nothing about them?"  
God said, "I did do something. I made you."  
~ Sufi Teaching*

## PUBLICITY TECHNIQUES

You could put days of work into planning an event, making sure it’s meaningful, effective, and creative – and no one shows up. It’s not because the event is no good; it’s because people don’t know about it. Here are some ways to publicise your group’s activities:

1. **Word of mouth.** This is first on the list because it’s usually the most effective publicity technique. People are much more likely to respond to a personal invitation than to a poster or newspaper article. Your whole group should be committed to inviting friends and classmates to participate in your event.
2. **Posters and fliers.** This is a good way to reach a broad audience, but keep in mind that your posters and fliers will be competing with lots of other ones for attention. Use bright colours, large print, and clear pictures to draw attention. Keep the message short and simple so people don’t have to stop to get an idea of what it’s about. Make sure to include all important information – time, date, place, contact info – and proofread for spelling and grammar mistakes. Post them at eye level in high-traffic areas around the campus, and in places where you have a captive audience (washrooms, cafeterias, bus stops). Keep extra copies in case the first ones are taken down.
3. **Local media.** Alert your school newspaper to what you’re planning to do. They may agree to run a preview, an ad, or even a feature story on the issue you’re focusing on. If prices for ads are too high, ask if the paper has a calendar of events where you can advertise for free. You can also write a letter to the editor to draw attention to the issue (to increase your chance of being printed, be concise and carefully follow the rules for submission). See Appendix B for tips on writing media releases.
4. **Creative visual publicity.** Chalking on sidewalks, creative displays (like creating a shantytown to draw attention to homelessness), still tableaux (a group of people form a scene with their bodies and freeze in place), and public theatre are some possible ways to draw attention to your event or issue.
5. **Leaflets.** Pass out small leaflets (use 1/2 or 1/4 sheet size to save paper) to publicise an immediate, urgent event or to distribute more information at events. Use bright colours and attractive layout to encourage people to read

them. Check spelling and grammar before you copy them.

6. **Class announcements.** Ask professors ahead of time if you can make a brief announcement at the beginning of class. Arrive early. You can have an overhead ready with details about the event (and about your group's next meeting) or write that information on the board. If there are professors who already support your group, you can simply create overheads (perhaps with a fact or quote about the issue, along with the necessary information about the event) and ask them to put them on the screen before class.

*Surely God's salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.*

~ Psalm 85: 9-10

## EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Having just spent time and effort planning and carrying out an activity, you may be tempted to skip the step of evaluation. However, evaluating your activities is important because it will help you do better next time, teach you what works and what doesn't, and strengthen your group. Keeping a written record of evaluations will help the group in future years. Ask for comments both from participants or community members, and from members of the group at your next meeting. Some of the questions you should consider are:

- Did you meet your goals? Why or why not?
- How did people respond?
- What worked well, and what didn't?
- How did the event change or impact your audience?
- What was the concrete result of the event? (for example, how many signatures did you collect, did legislation change, etc.)

- How could you improve for next time?

Follow-up for the event should include updating students about the issue they acted on. Inform them of the concrete impact of your event through email updates or stories in your school newspaper. Even if major developments (like a change in legislation) happen months after your event, students will appreciate hearing about a change they helped influence.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

*Organizing Guide for Peace and Justice Groups* ([www.ibiblio.org/netchange/cco](http://www.ibiblio.org/netchange/cco))

This online guide has ideas for activities and events on campus, as well as tips for doing publicity.

*The Virtual Activist 2.0* ([www.netaction.org/training](http://www.netaction.org/training))

This is an online resource with help on using email and the internet for your work.

As well, you can check out the organisations and resources listed in "Issue Areas" for activities, events, and action opportunities for specific issues.

# NETWORKING

## WHY NETWORK?

Networking basically consists of meeting other people or groups and sharing information, working together, or helping each other. Individuals involved in social justice might network without even realising it – meeting people at conferences and events, contacting organisations, chatting with people who share their interests. Networking as a group takes a little more conscious effort and organising, but it can be very helpful. By networking your group can:

- receive help from people experienced in, advocacy, education, research, and more
- gain first-hand information from those working for social justice
- work with others for more effective action
- get new ideas for actions, campaigns, and techniques
- gain new members
- find it easier to continue from year to year

## WHO TO NETWORK WITH

There are many individuals and groups who are worth networking with, including:

- other student groups on your campus
- social justice groups at other schools
- social justice organisations
- other local or national organisations (charities, youth networks, churches)
- church social justice committees
- church youth groups
- local individuals interested in social justice
- professors and other professionals

## GETTING ORGANISED

When networking as a group, it is important to be systematic and organised so that anyone in the

group can find out who the group is networking with and why. This way, important contacts will not be forgotten or overlooked, and connections can be continued from year to year. Begin a list of groups or individuals you have been in contact with, what they are interested in or working on, and why you contacted them. Come up with a system so that if you need something specific (like information on a particular topic, or people to work with you on a campaign) you can look at the list and find who you should contact. Don't rely on anyone's memory for this – write it down. Have a section in your group binder with contact information for each group or individual and notes on previous contacts, offers of help, etc. Get into the habit of keeping track of your contacts and consciously looking for more contacts, and your networking will be more effective.

*There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.*

*~ Elie Wiesel*

## HOW TO FIND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Many of the national organisations you might want to network with are listed in this section or under the specific issues they deal with. You probably already know about the groups and people within your school that you can network with. Finding local organisations may be more difficult, and yet they are one of the most important groups to network with because they provide local information and action opportunities.

If your group is new, or you have not been involved with social justice much in the past, you may not have any links to local organisations or people. In this case, the best way to find local groups is probably to contact one of the national Christian social justice organisations, like Kairos or Citizens for Public Justice. Both have members throughout Canada, although their national offices are in Toronto. Through Kairos you can contact one

of the local Kairos groups found in many cities throughout the country, who will probably know about local organisations in your city. CPJ may know of local organisations or people you can contact. Or, if you are working on a particular issue, contact one of the national organisations listed under that issue in the “Issue Areas” section of *Just Basics* and ask them about local groups.

If you have any contacts in your city already, you can ask them to refer you to other organisations. Your minister or campus chaplain may know about local groups. Organisations active on a particular issue might know about other organisations active on other issues. You can also contact local charities (for example, food banks or drop-in centres) and ask them about justice organisations they might know of.

Finally, keep your eyes open. Read your local newspaper for stories about justice issues, and note the organisations mentioned in the article. Take note of advertisements for public events. Attending conferences and demonstrations can put you in contact with any number of local groups or individuals.

## NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Following is a beginning list of Canadian organisations your group could contact and possibly work with. Note that inclusion of these organisations in *Just Basics* does not necessarily reflect endorsement by the funders of this project or the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action of the Christian Reformed Church. Before contacting any of these organisations, we suggest doing some research to discover if their values and methods are compatible with those of your group.

### Denominational Organisations

*Development and Peace* – [www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org)

International development agency of the Catholic Church in Canada. Involved in education and advocacy in Canada. Holds national campaigns on justice issues.

*Mennonite Central Committee* – [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org)

Relief, service and peace agency of the Mennonite and Brethren churches in North

America. Many resources available for order on a variety of topics – some provincial offices also have lending libraries. Speakers may be available.

*Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action* – [www.crcjustice.org](http://www.crcjustice.org)

Ministry of the Christian Reformed Church which encourages social justice action. Website includes information on a variety of topics, action opportunities, and links.

*Presbyterian Church in Canada – Justice Ministries* – [www.presbyterian.ca/justice/](http://www.presbyterian.ca/justice/)

Ministry meant to help the PCC respond to justice issues confronting our society. Website has action opportunities, current news, and resources.

*Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund* – [www.pwrdf.org](http://www.pwrdf.org)

Relief and development agency of the Anglican Church of Canada.

*United Church of Canada – Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Arm* – [www.united-church.ca/justice/](http://www.united-church.ca/justice/)

Department of the United Church active in justice issues. Website offers news and information about current events, current campaigns and actions.

## Christian Organisations

*Canadian Council of Churches Commission on Justice and Peace* – [www.ccc-cce.ca/english/jp/index.html](http://www.ccc-cce.ca/english/jp/index.html)

This commission provides a forum for member churches of the CCC to share information and concerns about social justice and peace. Website includes letters and statements on a variety of current issues and events.

O God,  
to those who are hungry, give bread;  
and to those who have bread,  
give a hunger for justice.

~ Latin American prayer

*Center of Concern* – [www.coc.org](http://www.coc.org)

(American) organisation concerned with poverty, environmental decline and injustice. Focuses on research, education and advocacy.

*Citizens for Public Justice* – [www.cpj.ca](http://www.cpj.ca)

National faith-based organisation that promotes justice in Canadian public affairs through research, education and advocacy. Resources include online papers, articles and letters on issues including aboriginal rights, housing, child poverty, and refugees; bi-monthly print newsletter “The Catalyst.” Sister organisation is the Public Justice Resource Centre ([www.publicjustice.ca](http://www.publicjustice.ca)).

*Evangelical Fellowship of Canada* –

[www.evangelicalfellowship.ca](http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca)

National association of evangelical Christians with the goal of bringing Christians together for greater impact in mission, ministry and witness.

Resources and initiatives on a variety of social issues (abortion, marriage, etc.) and also issues like refugees, poverty, and homelessness.

*Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives* –

[www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org)

Canadian coalition of churches, agencies and organisations working for justice in Canada and internationally. Local Kairos groups can be found across Canada. Website includes information about current issues and campaigns, as well as action e-kits on a number of topics. Publications include “Solidarité” (newsletter on issues of Canadian justice) and “Global Economic Justice Report.”

*World Vision Canada* – [www.worldvision.ca](http://www.worldvision.ca)

International humanitarian relief and development organisation that also does advocacy work with the Canadian government and international bodies. Resources include information about global issues and campaigns, videos, and “Voices” (free magazine discussing global topics).

## Other Organisations

*Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives* –

[www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca)

Researches issues of social and economic justice, produces online reports, articles, factsheets.

*Canadian Council for International Cooperation* –

[www.ccic.ca](http://www.ccic.ca)

Coalition of Canadian organisations active in social justice, humanitarian aid and economic development.

*Canadian Council on Social Development* –

[www.ccsd.ca](http://www.ccsd.ca)

Non-profit research, education and advocacy organisation, with the goal of developing social policies characterised by justice, equality and empowerment. Papers and reports available on website, especially dealing with poverty in Canada and related issues.

*Centre for Social Justice* – [www.socialjustice.org](http://www.socialjustice.org)

Canadian organisation active in advocacy for social justice.

*Change for Children* – [www.changeforchildren.org](http://www.changeforchildren.org)

Canadian international development organisation which also works to educate Canadians about global issues.

*Council of Canadians* – [www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org)

Citizens’ organisation that lobbies government, conducts research, and runs national campaigns on issues of importance to Canadians.

*Oxfam Canada* – [www.oxfam.ca](http://www.oxfam.ca)

International development organisation that also works in Canada to educate and advocate for social justice. Excellent resources – worth checking “education” link to see what’s new.

*Save the Children Canada* –

[www.savethechildren.ca](http://www.savethechildren.ca)

Community development and advocacy organisation working overseas for the rights of children. Website offers factsheets on issues including HIV/AIDS, child poverty, and food security.

*The Social Justice Committee* – [www.s-j-c.net](http://www.s-j-c.net)  
Canadian organisation dedicated to advocacy and popular education for social justice.

### **Youth Organisations and Networks**

*InterVarsity Christian Fellowship* – [www.ivcf.ca](http://www.ivcf.ca)  
Varsity Christian Fellowship groups on public university and college campuses across Canada bring Christian students together for fellowship, learning and outreach. Local groups may be interested in social justice activism or education.

*Development and Peace Just Youth Network* – <http://youth.devp.org>  
A network of Development and Peace (Catholic) youth groups at high schools and universities across Canada, active in justice work.

*Global Youth Connect* – [www.globalyouthconnect.org](http://www.globalyouthconnect.org)  
A global network of youth active in human rights and social justice activism.

*PWRDF Youth Initiative* – <http://lists.pwrdf.anglican.ca/mailman/listinfo/youthinitiative>  
Online forum for youth and youth leaders interested in social justice and international development, from the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (Anglican).

*Student Christian Movement* – [www.scmcanada.org](http://www.scmcanada.org)  
A Canadian network of student groups engaged in social justice work. Local units at universities hold events, lectures, retreats, etc.

*Taking It Global* – [www.takingitglobal.org](http://www.takingitglobal.org)  
Online network of youth addressing global problems and creating positive change. Descriptions of current projects, database of organisations, chatrooms and discussion boards about various topics.

*World Vision Youth ActionNet* – [www.worldvision.ca/home/GetInvolved/youth\\_actionnet.cfm](http://www.worldvision.ca/home/GetInvolved/youth_actionnet.cfm)

New nation-wide network of Christian youth informed about and engaged in global issues. Regular electronic newsletters on a variety of global issues.

*YouthActionNet* – [www.youthactionnet.org](http://www.youthactionnet.org)  
International online network for youth working for positive change. Includes library with resources and links on a variety of topics, lists of organisations.

*Youthfluence* – [www.youthfluence.com](http://www.youthfluence.com)  
Canadian online network of young people and youth organisations with the goal of bridging the gap between youth and decision-makers, building resources and networks within the youth community.

## ISSUE AREAS

This section will introduce your group to several social justice issues which you could choose to focus on. For each issue, there is a very brief explanation of the issue, its causes, and possible solutions. If you choose to work on any of these issues, we suggest checking out the resources and organisations listed for more information, current campaigns, and actions you could take. Please note that the positions taken in these introductions reflect the opinions of the author, and not necessarily those of the funders or supporters of *Just Basics*.

For quick reference, the issues covered are listed below. Keep in mind that there are many more issues you could focus on, or you may want to choose more specific issues that fall under any of these categories.

- Aboriginal Issues – Canada
- Biotechnology
- Child Poverty – Canada
- Environmental Issues
- HIV and AIDS
- Homelessness and Housing – Canada
- Human Rights
- Hunger
- International Debt
- International Trade
- Peace and Conflict
- Poverty and Inequality
- Racism
- Refugees
- Simple Living

## CHOOSING ISSUES

The broad scope of social justice means you may want to deal with a variety of issues during the semester or year. Or you could focus on one broad theme for the whole year and choose specific issues within that theme. Here are some ideas to help you decide which issues your group should focus on:

- **Brainstorm.** Make a list of all the possible issues you might want to deal with. Be creative and don't worry right now about which ones are possible.
- **Evaluate the ideas.** Pay attention to current events or campaigns to decide which issues give you a chance to co-operate with others or which are most timely. Think about what your community would be most interested in.
- **Think about your resources.** Do you have connections with organisations active on particular issues? Are members of your group already knowledgeable about certain issues?
- **Consider action opportunities.** The issues you choose should be ones which give people an opportunity to take real actions – personal changes in their lifestyle, writing letters, participating in campaigns, etc.
- **Be flexible.** You can work on a few issues at once, or you can divide the group into sub-committees dealing with different issues. Not everyone has to agree on which issue is most important.
- **Balance local and global issues.** Injustice happens all over the world, but it also happens right here in Canada. Help people realise this and take action on both kinds of issues.

*Shalom Seekers* (for ordering information, check [www.crcjustice.org/crjs\\_shalom.htm](http://www.crcjustice.org/crjs_shalom.htm)) has a helpful chart for deciding which issues to focus on.

## ABORIGINAL ISSUES – CANADA

The poverty and unemployment facing many Aboriginal people in Canada have their roots in a long history of injustice. Aboriginal people have lost their land and resources, faced the destruction of their economic and social systems, and been denied their right of nationhood. Specific injustices, resulting from national policies aimed at controlling and assimilating the Aboriginal people into mainstream culture, have included (among others) broken treaties, unsettled land claims, residential schools, and the continuing denial to Aboriginal peoples of their right to self-government. The 1982 Constitution Act recognised and affirmed the Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal people of Canada, but there is still no legislative framework in place to recognise this.

Aboriginal people claim an inherent right to self-government, a right based not on the agreement of the Canadian government but on their historical status as First Nations. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples upheld this right in its 1996 report, and the federal government claims to support it. However, Aboriginal nations are still under the control of the Indian Affairs Department of Canada and subject to the Indian Act, which governs all parts of life for on-reserve Aboriginal people.

As well, the land claims settlement process is flawed because the burden of proof for claiming rights to Crown land rests on the Aboriginal people, even though many of them never signed treaties giving up their rights; because the process is controlled by the federal government; and because Aboriginal people must give up their general Aboriginal rights in favour of specific settlement terms. This has resulted in great injustices for many Aboriginal groups with outstanding land claims. The federal and provincial governments have also allowed resource exploitation to occur on land which is still disputed.

Suggestions for change include working with Aboriginal people to build relationships, and lobbying the government for changed structures.

## Resources and Organisations

*Aboriginal Canada Portal* –

[www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca](http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca)

This government site has links to resources, information, and national aboriginal organisations.

*Amnesty International Canada* –

[www.amnesty.ca/IndigenousPeoples](http://www.amnesty.ca/IndigenousPeoples)

Page has updates, campaigns and links for issues facing indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world.

*Assembly of First Nations* – [www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)

A national aboriginal lobby organisation which deals with the relationship between the Crown and the First Nations of Canada. Website has helpful factsheets and information.

*Citizens for Public Justice* – [www.cpj.ca](http://www.cpj.ca)

Faith-based public justice organisation active in aboriginal issues. Check under “aboriginal issues” tab for articles and documents.

*Kairos: CEJI* – [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org)

This Canadian justice organisation has aboriginal peoples as one of its major focus areas. Browse the website for recent updates, campaigns and publications.

*Rainbow World* –

[www.web.net/~tendays/rainbowplay.htm](http://www.web.net/~tendays/rainbowplay.htm)

Play dealing with what Aboriginal people lost when settlers came to their land.

*Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* –

[www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/)

Read their “People to People, Nation to Nation” for a comprehensive overview of the history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada, how that relationship has been distorted, and how it can change.

*Wiciwetowin* – [www.publicjustice.ca](http://www.publicjustice.ca)

Print resource available from the Public Justice Resource Centre. Resources for individual or group study on aboriginal issues.

## BIOTECHNOLOGY

Biotechnology means using science to change the genetic character of an organism. Most biotechnology research on crops is carried out by a few big corporations (including Monsanto, Aventis, and Dow). The justice issues related to biotechnology include the patenting of crop seeds, the aggressive marketing of genetically engineered products, and the refusal to label foods containing genetically modified ingredients.

The biotechnology companies have patented many varieties of several staple crops, including corn, potatoes, rice, wheat, soya, and sorghum. Aside from the question of whether patenting life forms is morally acceptable, this practice has very damaging practical effects for Third-World farmers who, for generations, have saved the seeds of these crops and grown them every year. Because companies only have to “discover” new varieties, not necessarily develop them themselves, these farmers may now be prevented from selling or exporting their crops, denying them the income they need to provide for their families.

These biotechnology companies also use aggressive marketing techniques to convince farmers in the Third World to use genetically modified seeds. Using these seeds costs money every year as farmers must pay licensing fees, buy new seed, and pay for fertilisers and pesticides. However, these extra costs are disguised at first through cheap or free samples and government incentives; by the time the farmers realise that they were better off saving their own seed from year to year, that seed is often gone and farmers have no choice but to continue with the genetically modified seeds. This increases poverty and inequality.

In Canada, there are no regulations in place to require the labelling of foods which contain genetically engineered ingredients. Because of all the issues and uncertainties involving genetically engineered foods, there are organisations working to encourage mandatory labelling of all genetically modified foods so that customers can choose whether or not to purchase such products.

## Resources and Organisations

*Corpwatch* – [www.corpwatch.org](http://www.corpwatch.org)

This organisation works against corporate-led globalisation. Look for biotechnology in the issue library to find papers, reports, and articles.

*Council of Canadians* – [www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org)

The Council of Canadians biotechnology campaign can be found on their website and focuses on both genetically modified foods in Canada and on the broader problem of patenting life forms. Look for information and factsheets, as well as action opportunities.

*The Earth is for All* – [www.devop.org](http://www.devop.org)

This campaign package from Development and Peace (find it on their website) includes introductory information, background papers, and ethical reflections on biopatenting.

*Food First* – [www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org)

This think tank produces information resources about hunger and related issues, including genetically engineered foods.

*Genetic Resources Action International* – [www.grain.org](http://www.grain.org)

This international organisation deals with agricultural biodiversity. Their website offers information and position papers on patenting, biopiracy, genetically modified organisms and small farmers, and more.

*National Farmers' Union* – [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca)

This organisation argues against introducing more genetically engineered food crops to Canada, and for labelling all genetically engineered foods. Look for position papers and standpoints.

*The Ram's Horn* – [www.ramshorn.bc.ca](http://www.ramshorn.bc.ca)

A monthly journal about the food system, often focusing on biotechnology and genetic engineering. Highlights and some back issues available online, and subscriptions are inexpensive.

## CHILD POVERTY – CANADA

In 1989, the House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution to eliminate poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000. Since then, the number of children living in poverty has actually increased, from one in seven in 1989 to one in six in 2002. Canada has one of the higher child poverty rates among developed countries.

Canada also participated in the May 2002 UN Special Session on children and committed to developing a National Plan of Action for addressing the needs of children.

Although Canada has no official poverty line, the number of poor children is usually measured by the number of children living in families with an annual income below Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-off Lines, which vary according to household and community size. Other indicators of the worsening child poverty rate include the high proportion of food bank users who are children (40% in 2002), and the fact that the fastest growing group needing emergency shelter is families with children.

Besides the obvious fact that poor children lack some of the basic necessities of life – they may go hungry at times, lack shelter, be unable to buy clothing, etc. – they also are more likely to have learning, behaviour, health, emotional, and developmental problems.

Many poor children in Canada live in families where at least one parent works, but in unstable employment (part-time or temporary work). Poverty increased among working families during the 1990s.

Addressing the root causes of child poverty will require, among other things, governments to invest in children through increased child benefits for poor families, accessible and affordable child care so parents can work, affordable housing, and good employment for parents.

## Resources and Organisations

*Campaign 2000* – [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca)

This Canadian movement is meant to build awareness of child poverty and to suggest and lobby for public policy solutions. The website has articles, letters, reports, factsheets, and action opportunities, plus a yearly Report Card on Child Poverty.

*Campaign Against Child Poverty* – [www.childpoverty.com](http://www.childpoverty.com)

This national coalition works through public education and professional advice to governments. Check their website for powerful public education messages that ran in Canadian newspapers.

*Canadian Council on Social Development* – [www.ccsd.ca](http://www.ccsd.ca)

National research, advocacy and education organisation – look in research section for annual “The Progress of Canada’s Children” reports (highlights are available online) as well as background papers.

*Citizens for Public Justice* – [www.cpj.ca](http://www.cpj.ca)

National faith-based public justice organisation. Look for articles under “socio-economic issues.”

*A National Disgrace: Child Poverty in Canada photo exhibit* – [www.kodak.ca/go/photosensitive](http://www.kodak.ca/go/photosensitive)

Powerful photos and stories.

*Save the Children Canada* – [www.savethechildren.ca](http://www.savethechildren.ca)

Community development and advocacy organisation working to improve the quality of life of children in Canada and overseas. Look for factsheets on countries and issues in “what we do” section to connect to global children’s issues.

*UNICEF* – [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

Another global link. This United Nations organisation works in developing countries to make sure children’s needs are met and their rights protected.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

While people may not automatically think of the environment when considering social justice, one of the basic human needs is a healthy environment. Some of the most pressing environmental issues include climate change, biodiversity, water depletion, and environmental justice.

When Canada ratified the Kyoto Accord in 2002, it committed itself to reducing emissions that contribute to climate change. Most scientists agree that human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (from power plants and cars, among others) and other pollutants are resulting in a global temperature increase that may have devastating effects in the next century. These may include floods, drought, increased frequency of severe weather events, and the spread of insects and disease.

Human destruction of natural habitat world-wide, through practices including logging, urban sprawl, and poor farming practices that lead to desertification and erosion, is resulting in the loss of thousands of species of plants and animals every year. Other causes of biodiversity loss include poaching, the introduction of non-native species to fragile ecosystems, and pollution.

Some areas of the world are already affected by severe water shortages, and current practices are worsening the situation. All over the world, we are pumping water out of underground water supplies faster than it can be replaced by rainfall, polluting surface and groundwater, and draining wetlands. This has a direct effect on hundreds of millions of people living in dry areas of the world, as well as on important natural ecosystems.

Environmental justice is a term that refers specifically to the phenomenon that poor and marginalised groups of people are much more likely than wealthy people to live in heavily polluted areas. This is not because the poor pollute more; it is because governments and companies sometimes choose to dump waste in poor communities or poor countries because the people there have little power to protest.

## Resources and Organisations

*A Rocha* – <http://en.arocha.org>

International Christian nature conservation organisation. In Canada, they focus on environmental education.

*Climate Action Network Canada* –

[www.climateactionnetwork.ca](http://www.climateactionnetwork.ca)

Network of Canadian organisations working against climate change. Website offers information and links.

*Convention on Biological Diversity Website* –

[www.biodiv.org](http://www.biodiv.org)

Lots of information about the international Convention on Biological Diversity and biodiversity in general.

*Council of Canadians* – [www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org)

Several of the Council's campaigns are on environmental issues (including water). Website offers factsheets, reports, and action opportunities.

*Evangelical Environmental Network* –

[www.creationcare.org](http://www.creationcare.org)

Christian network working on environmental issues. Website offers biblical perspectives, worship resources, and more.

*Friends of the Earth Canada* – [www.foecanada.org](http://www.foecanada.org)

Canadian environmental organisation. Check website for current campaigns (including energy and water) and information.

*Sierra Club of Canada* – [www.sierraclub.ca](http://www.sierraclub.ca)

This organisation has regional chapters as well as a Youth Coalition for students. The website offers information, action opportunities, campaigns, and news.

*Youth Environmental Network* – [www.yen-rej.org](http://www.yen-rej.org)

Network for Canadian environmental youth groups. Website offers resources, links and more.

## HIV & AIDS

AIDS is a disease of the immune system which cannot be cured and spreads through the exchange of body fluids. In the last 20 years it has spread rapidly, and is now the fourth biggest cause of death in the world and the leading cause of death in Sub-Saharan Africa. The vast majority of people with HIV/AIDS are now found in developing countries, and many are young people.

AIDS is much more than a health problem; there are several justice issues related to AIDS. AIDS worsens poverty by killing workers, hurting the overall economy as well as individual families. It also puts great pressure on government health and social services. In many families both parents die of AIDS, leaving children on their own or with relatives who are already poor; they then have to leave school to work or care for siblings. Many people with HIV or AIDS experience discrimination and exclusion in their communities.

There are new drugs which can greatly improve the lifespan and quality of life of those living with HIV, but these are very expensive and therefore unavailable to most people. There is controversy over whether companies ought to provide them at lower prices to the poor or whether other companies should be allowed to produce cheaper copies of patented drugs.

Things which can be done to help solve these issues include: education to prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS, education to eliminate the stigma associated with the disease, international aid for poor countries dealing with the epidemic, forgiveness of international debt to increase the resources poor countries can spend on government programs, and affordable pricing for drugs.

## Resources and Organisations

*AidsChannel.org* – [www.aidschannel.org](http://www.aidschannel.org)

This website, part of the OneWorld network, has lots of good information about HIV/AIDS including a list of helpful links (look under the “Guide to AIDS” tab) and current updates.

*Canadian AIDS Society* – [www.cdnaids.ca](http://www.cdnaids.ca)

Check out this coalition of community-based AIDS organisations for Canadian and local links.

*How to Crush AIDS* –

[www.newint.org/issue346/title346.htm](http://www.newint.org/issue346/title346.htm)

This issue of *New Internationalist* is focused on HIV/AIDS.

*Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development* –

[www.icad-cisd.com](http://www.icad-cisd.com)

A Canadian coalition focused on AIDS. Check for factsheets and other information.

*Save the Children Canada* –

[www.savethechildren.ca/en/whatwedo/Campaign/worldaids.html](http://www.savethechildren.ca/en/whatwedo/Campaign/worldaids.html)

This is a very good introduction to the HIV/AIDS crisis, its social effects, and what can be done.

*Shalom Seekers* –

[www.crcjustice.org/crjs\\_shalom.htm](http://www.crcjustice.org/crjs_shalom.htm)

This print resource has a set of workshops dealing with HIV/AIDS.

*UNAIDS* – [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)

This United Nations organisation is the main international advocate for worldwide action against HIV/AIDS. Lots of in-depth information and statistics.

*We have AIDS* – [www.crcjustice.org/crjs\\_aids.htm](http://www.crcjustice.org/crjs_aids.htm)

The Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action HIV/AIDS campaign features a number of newsletters about HIV and AIDS.

[http://www1.worldbank.org/hiv\\_aids](http://www1.worldbank.org/hiv_aids)

This World Bank site has a helpful factsheet: look for “HIV/AIDS at a glance.”

## HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING – CANADA

Homelessness is a growing problem in Canada; in 1998 the mayors of our major cities declared the crisis of homelessness to be a “national disaster.” The issue includes three categories of people: those who are at risk of losing their housing (threatened by eviction or expiry of their lease), the concealed homeless (those living with family members or friends), and the absolutely homeless (living in places not meant for human habitation, like cars or the street).

The side-effects of homelessness include social exclusion, health problems, constant worry about meeting basic physical needs, harassment and physical assault, and difficulty finding employment.

The common stereotype of homeless people is of single men and women who are drug-addicted, mentally ill, or just too lazy to work. This is simply not true. There is a huge diversity in people who are homeless. Many hold jobs but don't make enough to pay rent. Many are families with children. Most people are not homeless by choice, but because of the lack of affordable housing.

From the 1960's on, the federal government did help provide lots of affordable social housing. However, in 1993 they froze expenditures and since then provincial spending has also dropped. Together this has resulted in a drastic decrease in the number of social housing units built. The problem has been worsened by cuts to employment insurance and social assistance, and the growing problem of under-employment (people with only temporary or part-time jobs), which means more people need affordable housing while there is less available. Agreements between the federal and provincial governments to increase funding have been coming slowly, but far more is needed.

The solution to the “national disaster” of homelessness includes more funding for affordable housing, providing people with enough income to live on (through good employment and social assistance if necessary), and support services for those who need them.

## Resources and Organisations

*Gimme Shelter* –

[www.socialjustice.org/pubs/gimmeShelter.pdf](http://www.socialjustice.org/pubs/gimmeShelter.pdf)

An excellent paper giving an overview of the problem of homelessness and what should be done about it.

*Hobson's Choice* –

[www.realchangenews.org/hobsons/index.html](http://www.realchangenews.org/hobsons/index.html)

An online game giving a taste of the limited options available to the homeless.

*Homeless Memorial* – [www.geocities.com/hommem/](http://www.geocities.com/hommem/)

Memorial to homeless people who have died in Toronto. Pictures and names make the problem real.

*Housing Again* – [www.housingagain.web.net](http://www.housingagain.web.net)

Site advocating for affordable housing in Canada. Has searchable database of resources and links, as well as current alerts.

*Raising the Roof* – [www.raisingtheroof.org](http://www.raisingtheroof.org)

Organisation dedicated to long-term solutions to homelessness in Canada. Lots of information – check out the “Learn” section to start.

*Shalom Seekers* –

[www.crcjustice.org/crjs\\_shalom.htm](http://www.crcjustice.org/crjs_shalom.htm)

This print resource has a set of workshops dealing with homelessness.

*Toronto Disaster Relief Committee* – [www.tdrc.net](http://www.tdrc.net)

Organisation advocating to end homelessness throughout Canada. Resources and national campaigns.

*UNHCHR* – [www.unhchr.ch/housing/fs21.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/housing/fs21.htm)

A Fact Sheet on the Human Right to Adequate Housing, from the UN Human Rights Commissioner.

[www.canadiansocialresearch.net/homeless.htm](http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/homeless.htm)

Lots of links of all kinds.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights violations cover a broad range of injustices including discrimination, persecution, slavery, torture, unlawful imprisonment, political killings, lack of fair trials, extreme poverty, child prostitution, and war-related abuses.

In 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated: "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." The Declaration goes on to lay out a number of rights and freedoms to which everyone is entitled. The Declaration itself is not legally binding but only gives countries who sign it a standard to follow. The two documents which followed it, however, are legally binding: the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (also 1966). Together the three make up the International Bill of Human Rights.

Because human rights abuses are so varied, the approaches needed to deal with them are varied as well. There are some organisations like Amnesty International and the (Christian) International Justice Mission which deal with individual cases of rights abuses through lobbying the offending governments and providing legal help. Other organisations approach the problem by publishing information about human rights abuses on a country by country basis, in an attempt to change the practices of those countries. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights monitors and publicly reports on human rights violations.

Human rights abuses occur in Canada as well. In 1990, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights charged Canada with a human rights violation for the way the federal government had treated the Lubicon Lake Cree Nation in Northern Alberta, stating that historical inequities and more recent developments threatened their way of life and culture. The Lubicon had been trying for decades to settle an outstanding land claim with the federal government.

## Resources and Organisations

*Action Guide on Human Rights* –

[www.unac.org/en/link\\_learn/hr\\_toolkit/index.asp](http://www.unac.org/en/link_learn/hr_toolkit/index.asp)

This kit from the Canada United Nations Association offers background information on universal human rights, as well as links.

*Amnesty International Canada* – [www.amnesty.ca](http://www.amnesty.ca)

Mass movement dedicated to the protection and promotion of human rights for people world-wide. Lots of up-to-date information on human rights situations around the world, and opportunities for action. Look for information about the Lubicon Nation as well.

*Human Rights Watch* – [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

International organisation which gathers information about human rights abuses and publishes it to prevent future abuses. Lots of information including reports, current events, commentary, introductions to global issues, country information and current campaigns. Look especially at the Annual World Report.

*Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* –

[www.unhchr.ch](http://www.unhchr.ch)

Website offers helpful factsheets on human rights issues, papers and reports, and an alphabetical index of human-rights related issues with links for more information.

*Rich Woman, Poor Woman* –

[www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/justice/twowomen/index.htm](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/justice/twowomen/index.htm)

Dramatic reading touching on rights abuses.

*Save the Children Canada* –

[www.savethechildren.ca](http://www.savethechildren.ca)

Works to improve the quality of children's lives through the realisation of their rights. Factsheets on issues related to children's rights, updates on current situations – look for "what we do."

[www.canadiansocialresearch.net/rights.htm](http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/rights.htm)

Links to human rights sites and information in Canada and world-wide.

## HUNGER

Hundreds of millions of people around the world suffer from chronic hunger. Every day, 35,000 people die of hunger-related causes – 3/4 of them children. Most hungry people are in Asia and Africa, but hunger exists everywhere in the world including Canada.

Hungry people can be undernourished (not enough total calories for their needs) or malnourished (not enough of the right kind of food). Chronic hunger has effects on health and development as well as social implications. While hunger is largely a result of poverty, it also worsens poverty since hungry people are less able to work.

The opposite of hunger is food security, which was defined by the 1996 World Food Summit: “Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”

Globally, enough food is produced to feed every person in the world an adequate and nutritious diet. The problem is that people lack access to the food, because they can't afford to pay for it; don't have land to grow it or have infertile, unsuitable land; can't get to markets to buy it; have no way to store harvests through the next season, etc.

The solution to hunger therefore does not lie simply in new technology, free trade, or reducing population growth. Food aid is not a satisfying solution, because it provides only temporary and unsustainable relief.

Instead, the solution to hunger involves a number of steps including land reform to make sure people have access to land, sustainable farming methods, adequate incomes to buy food if necessary, ways to store food until the next harvest, and access to local markets to buy and sell food at reasonable prices. Other issues that contribute to poverty also need to be addressed, like AIDS, debt, trade, etc. People can take action by supporting development and justice organisations and lobbying governments for change.

## Resources and Organisations

*Bread for the World* – [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)

American organisation seeking justice for the world's hungry through education and advocacy. Check “hunger basics” for statistics, and annual hunger reports.

*Canadian Association of Food Banks* – [www.cafb-acba.ca](http://www.cafb-acba.ca)

Public education and research activity include the “Hunger Count,” an annual survey of food bank use and hunger in Canada.

*Canadian Foodgrains Bank* – [www.foodgrainsbank.ca](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca)

Information on hunger, food security, myths of world hunger, root causes, and more.

*Daily Bread Food Bank* – [www.dailybread.ca](http://www.dailybread.ca)

This Toronto food bank does extensive research on hunger in Toronto which may apply to the situation in your own city as well.

*Hunger Notes* – [www.worldhunger.org](http://www.worldhunger.org)

An online publication with information about current situations, links, and action opportunities.

*Hungry Decisions* –

[www.churchworldservice.org/decisions](http://www.churchworldservice.org/decisions)

An online simulation of some of the choices facing poor men and women in developing countries.

*Shalom Seekers* –

[www.crcjustice.org/crjs\\_shalom.htm](http://www.crcjustice.org/crjs_shalom.htm)

This print resource has a set of workshops dealing with hunger and food security.

*World Hunger* –

[www.worldvision.ca/home/articles/Educational\\_Resources/Hunger1.pdf](http://www.worldvision.ca/home/articles/Educational_Resources/Hunger1.pdf)

An excellent introductory resource to hunger including its extent, impact, causes, and solutions.

[www.canadiansocialresearch.net/foodbkmrk.htm](http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/foodbkmrk.htm)

Links to sites dealing with hunger and food security (international and Canadian).

## INTERNATIONAL DEBT

Many developing countries, most of them in Africa, are struggling under huge debt loads which prevent them from spending money on improving their citizens' lives. They pay more money in interest to other governments, international institutions, and banks than they receive in aid.

In 1973 oil-producing countries raised oil prices, resulting in extra money being deposited in western banks. This lowered interest rates and developing countries were encouraged to take out large loans for development projects. However, much of the money went to corrupt individuals, oppressive regimes, and useless projects which did not benefit the poor at all. Then, when the value of the primary products exported by poor countries exports fell, the debts became impossible to pay back. Extremely high interest rates forced poor countries to borrow even more money to make interest payments. The original amounts of the loans have been repaid several times over, but many of the poor countries still have huge debt loads.

To get relief, countries have had to adopt Structural Adjustment Programs administered by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. These programs require them to spend less on health, education, and social services, cut jobs and wages in government industries, deregulate and privatise industries, and encourage large-scale farming of crops for export. The measures are meant to decrease public spending and increase export revenues, but they have harsh effects on the poor.

Organisations are now calling for the complete cancellation of what they call "illegitimate debt," which includes debt which cannot be serviced without harming people and communities, debts contracted to strengthen oppressive regimes, and debts which became unpayable as a result of creditors unilaterally raising interest rates. Some of these debts are held by rich countries like Canada and the United States. If these countries were to forgive the debts owed to them, the debt burden on poor countries would be much less.

## Resources and Organisations

*Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative* – [www.ceji-iocj.org/English/debt](http://www.ceji-iocj.org/English/debt)

This initiative was part of the global Jubilee 2000 campaign which pushed for debt forgiveness in the year 2000. The website still exists and offers an explanation of the biblical concept of Jubilee, factsheets on debt cancellation (especially relating to Canada), and worship resources.

*DebtChannel.org* – [www.debtchannel.org](http://www.debtchannel.org)

Links to lots of information about debt including current news and a searchable archive. If you're unfamiliar with the issue, start your research at their excellent "beginner's guide to debt."

*Drop the Debt* –

[www.newint.org/issue312/title312.htm](http://www.newint.org/issue312/title312.htm)

This issue of the *New Internationalist* focuses on debt.

*Halifax Initiative* – [www.halifaxinitiative.org](http://www.halifaxinitiative.org)

This Canadian coalition is concerned about the international financial system and its effects. Look under "issues" for their debt campaign.

*Jubilee Research* – [www.jubilee2000uk.org](http://www.jubilee2000uk.org)

Continuing the work of the UK Jubilee 2000 campaign, this organisation provides research, analysis, news and data on international debt and finance.

*Kairos: CEJI* – [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org)

Kairos continues the work of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative and partners with global Jubilee movements including Jubilee South. Check the website for updates and information.

*Social Justice Committee* – [www.s-j-c.net](http://www.s-j-c.net)

Active on debt issues (click on "debt campaign"). Website has articles, updates, resources and links on the debt issue and Canada's role in it.

[www.mcc.org/respub/occasional/22.html](http://www.mcc.org/respub/occasional/22.html)

A helpful paper on debt in Africa and a Christian response.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Trade between countries can improve people's quality of life by making more products available and letting people earn money by selling their own products. However, unjust trade rules and practices mean that increasing wealth for some people comes along with increasing poverty for others – especially in developing countries. Major justice issues include international trade rules, sweatshops, and fair trade products. Free trade and globalisation are also important themes, but are topics too broad to cover here.

The rules that govern international trade favour the rich. Rich countries can set policies that hurt poor countries (like subsidising their own industries and blocking goods from poor countries from their own markets). They also have unfair advantages in the major international institutions that govern trade (more voting power in the IMF and World Bank, more staff and resources to use in World Trade Organisation negotiations). Furthermore, there are few rules to govern transnational corporations based in the rich countries, which often engage in practices that harm the workers in their overseas factories. International trade rules therefore need to be reformed to give poor countries more say in making the rules, more control over their own economies, and more access to markets.

One specific issue is that of sweatshops, factories in North America as well as in developing countries where the workers are oppressed in a variety of ways. They may be paid very low wages, have to work long hours, be subjected to abuse, work at an early age, etc. Campaigns to stop sweatshops usually focus on publicising information on companies guilty of sweatshop practices, lobbying those companies, and boycotting them.

Fair trade products are those which are produced in socially and environmentally responsible ways. Products available in Canada include coffee, tea, cocoa, and sugar. Encouraging local businesses to offer Fair Trade products is one way to take local action on this global issue of trade.

## Resources and Organisations

*The Bead Game* – [www.united-church.ca/websight/games/pdf/beadgame.pdf](http://www.united-church.ca/websight/games/pdf/beadgame.pdf)

Interesting simulation game introducing participants to global economic systems and their effects.

*Fair Trade Coffee Resource and Action Guide* – [www.oxfamamerica.org/pdfs/coffeeresourceguide.pdf](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/pdfs/coffeeresourceguide.pdf)

Excellent resource about fair trade coffee, meant for campus groups. Check out the Canadian kit too (<http://www.oxfam.ca/education/index.htm>).

*Make Trade Fair* – [www.maketradefair.org](http://www.maketradefair.org)

Oxfam campaign. Check website for reports, background information, resources, education ideas, skits and songs, and action opportunities.

*Maquila Solidarity Network* – [www.maquilasolidarity.org](http://www.maquilasolidarity.org)

Canadian network building solidarity with groups organising to improve conditions in Third World factories. Look for campaigns, action opportunities, lots of up-to-date information, and help on making your school's clothing sweatshop-free.

*Oxfam Campaigner on Sweatshops* – [www.oxfam.ca/education/index.htm](http://www.oxfam.ca/education/index.htm)

Excellent resource on sweatshops, garment manufacturing, and trade.

*Peace on the Land* – [www.foodgrainsbank.ca](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca)

Available in print from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a good introduction to how changing international trade affects small farmers.

*Trade Justice: a campaign handbook* – [www.christianaid.org.uk/campaign/trade/handbook](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaign/trade/handbook)

This online resource has lots of information about international trade and how it can be improved.

*Transfair Canada* – [www.transfair.ca](http://www.transfair.ca)

Canada's fair trade certification organisation. Check for sources of fair trade products, as well as certification requirements.

## PEACE & CONFLICT

In 2001 there were 37 armed conflicts world-wide in which at least 1000 people were killed. Some of the justice issues related to peace and conflict are landmines, child soldiers, the small arms trade, and conflict diamonds.

Landmines are indiscriminate weapons that kill or maim civilians just as easily as soldiers. They may remain active for up to 50 years, long after the conflict where they were used is over. Landmines impede reconstruction and the return of displaced persons to their homes and prevent land from being used for farming. The Mine Ban Treaty was signed by 122 countries in 1997, and the Canadian government has been very active since then in promoting and supporting the Treaty. Nevertheless, some major powers, including the United States and China, have not signed the Treaty and continue to produce and use land mines.

Child soldiers are usually in their teens, although some may be as young as five or six. They can be abducted from their parents or given up because of poverty; they may serve with rebel forces or even with national armies. Child soldiers are often given drugs or alcohol before being sent to the front lines of battle; they may also be forced to commit or witness atrocities. A Child Soldiers Protocol was adopted by the UN in 2000, but by 2002 only 35 countries had ratified it.

Small arms are responsible for the deaths of millions of people, mostly civilians, in both wars and violent crime. They are easy to use and fairly cheap to obtain. They also encourage the use of child soldiers. Some trade in small arms happens between governments, but much is illegal. The trade of small arms must be controlled and monitored by international regulatory systems.

In several countries, diamond mines are controlled by rebel forces which smuggle the diamonds to foreign markets and use the profits to obtain arms and pay their soldiers. These rebel armies are guilty of human rights abuses and recruiting child soldiers. Better control and identification of diamonds is needed.

## Resources and Organisations

*Amnesty International Canada --*

[www.amnesty.ca/realsecurity/conflictdiamonds.htm](http://www.amnesty.ca/realsecurity/conflictdiamonds.htm)

Information about conflict diamonds.

*Canadian Peace Alliance –* [www.acp-cpa.ca](http://www.acp-cpa.ca)

Works for peace through campaigns and lobbying.

*Decade to Overcome Violence –* <http://www2.wcc-coe.org/dov.nsf>

Initiative of the World Council of Churches. Resources, links, study guide, and more.

*Human Rights Watch –* [www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp](http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp)

Information, action opportunities, and links about child soldiers.

*International Action Network on Small Arms –*

[www.iansa.org](http://www.iansa.org)

Global network with lots of information.

*International Campaign to Ban Landmines –*

[www.icbl.org](http://www.icbl.org)

Website offers lots of information and resources, including Landmine Monitor annual reports.

*Mine Action Workbook –* [www.mines.gc.ca/pdf/VI\\_F-en.pdf](http://www.mines.gc.ca/pdf/VI_F-en.pdf)

Excellent introductory resource, lots of links.

*Project Ploughshares –* [www.ploughshares.ca](http://www.ploughshares.ca)

National Christian organisation concerned with peace and conflict. Lots of information about conflict around the world and recommendations for change, including small arms control.

*Taking aim at small arms –*

[www.unicef.org/smallarms/exhibit](http://www.unicef.org/smallarms/exhibit)

Lots of information on small arms and child soldiers, links, and photos.

*World Vision –* [www.worldvision.ca](http://www.worldvision.ca)

Christian international development organisation also active on peace and justice issues. Look for information on small arms and child soldiers.

## POVERTY & INEQUALITY

The themes of poverty and inequality run through most of the other issues in this section. The poor are the people most affected by hunger, homelessness, international debt, and inequitable international trade; they are more vulnerable to the effects of HIV and AIDS and conflict; they are more likely to become refugees or victims of human rights abuses. And poverty is partly a result of inequality; some people are poor because others have far too much.

Increasing poverty and inequality in Canada results partly from the fact that there are fewer good jobs available; many new jobs are part-time or temporary, with low pay and few benefits. The provincial minimum wage levels have not kept up with inflation and minimum wage jobs are no longer enough to provide for a family. Cuts to social services and welfare have allowed the poor to fall even further behind the rich in terms of income.

Increasing global inequality has resulted from international debt, inequitable trade arrangements, and falling export prices for primary commodities (which make up the bulk of exports for most poor countries). These conditions also reinforce historical inequities and prevent poor countries from ever "catching up." Inequality weakens communities, alienates people from each other, and weakens democracy by weakening the poor. It results in economic and political insecurity and keeps getting worse deliberate action is taken.

One specific issue that deserves mention is the debate about how to measure poverty and inequality. The indicator often used to measure poverty is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which measures the value of all goods and services produced in a country. A low GDP per capita is taken to indicate poverty. However, GDP reveals nothing about the distribution of wealth in the country; furthermore, income and production are only part of well-being. A better way to measure poverty and inequality is the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), which takes environmental, social, and other factors into account.

## Resources and Organisations

*Atlas of Global Inequality* –

<http://ucatlas.ucsc.edu/about.html>

Maps and data relating to poverty and inequality.

*Canadian Council on Social Development* –

[www.ccsd.ca](http://www.ccsd.ca)

Organisation that does research and advocacy for social justice. Check under "research" for papers on poverty and inequality in Canada, and look for "free statistics" as well.

*Good News to the Poor* –

[http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/resources/resource\\_viewer.asp?Resource\\_ID=34](http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/resources/resource_viewer.asp?Resource_ID=34)

A paper giving a Christian framework for understanding and acting on poverty.

*in common* – <http://incommon.web.ca/anglais/>

This campaign, co-ordinated by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, is dedicated to ending poverty worldwide. Their Ten-Point Agenda to End Poverty ties together many of the issues related to poverty.

*Inequality.org* – [www.inequality.org](http://www.inequality.org)

Most of the information and opinions in this American-based network are American-focused, but they do have a great collection of quotes.

*Poverty Net* – [www.worldbank.org/poverty/](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/)

This site has lots of good information and resources about poverty – but beware the biases behind their conclusions. "Listen to the Voices" has some interesting quotes.

*RealityCheck* – [www.gpiatlantic.org/realitycheck](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/realitycheck)

Newsletter with information about a better measure of well-being than the GDP.

*Ten Chairs Share the Wealth* –

[www.web.net/~tendays/workshop/10chairs.html](http://www.web.net/~tendays/workshop/10chairs.html)

A play script dramatising the growing disparity between rich and poor globally.

## RACISM

Racism is the assumption, conscious or not, that one “racial” group of people is superior to another. It often involves individuals or groups using power to abuse or discriminate against others. Racism is found at both an individual and institutional level. Racism in Canada may be based on historical situations around the world (for example, there may be tension between immigrants from different areas of the world) or it may come from the situation in Canada itself (tension between the Aboriginal peoples and mainstream society).

Interestingly, most scientists agree that there is no biological basis for dividing the human species into different races. However, the concept of race still exists, and it has many social effects.

In the past, the government of Canada had some overtly racist policies. These included, among others, slavery, discrimination against Chinese immigrants, and the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War Two. Aboriginal people in Canada have also often been the victims of racist policies.

In 1985 the federal Multiculturalism Act committed Canada to preserving the diverse identities and heritages of all Canadians. However, racism still occurs in Canada. Besides individual attitudes, there have also been allegations of racist acts by police forces and in schools. Hate crimes (criminal offences motivated by the victim’s race, sex, language, religion, etc.) also happen: one example is the burning of some mosques after September 11, 2001.

The work of anti-racism addresses both individual attitudes and institutions or systems that are oppressive or discriminatory. Anti-racism work often is done through education and organising. It can also include advocacy when necessary, such as when racism is part of a government or institutional policy.

## Resources and Organisations

*101 Tools for Tolerance* –

[www.splcenter.org/teachingtolerance/](http://www.splcenter.org/teachingtolerance/)

101 simple, easy ways to promote equity and celebrate diversity.

*Antiracist.com* – [www.antiracist.com](http://www.antiracist.com)

Site maintained by the Canadian Anti-racism Education and Research Society. Offers information and links.

*Canadian Race Relations Foundation* – [www.crr.ca](http://www.crr.ca)

This is an organisation at arms-length from the federal government. The website offers factsheets and other resources.

*Crosspoint* – [www.magenta.nl/crosspoint](http://www.magenta.nl/crosspoint)

Lots of anti-racism links from around the world.

*Equality Today!* – [www.equalitytoday.org](http://www.equalitytoday.org)

An electronic magazine for youth, focused on multiculturalism and anti-racism.

*The KIT* – [www.unac.org/yfar/The\\_KIT.pdf](http://www.unac.org/yfar/The_KIT.pdf)

An excellent resource for combating racism. Includes lots of information, workshops, and resources.

*MCC Anti-Racism Program* –

[www.mcc.org/us/peaceandjustice/racism.html](http://www.mcc.org/us/peaceandjustice/racism.html)

A program of the U.S. Mennonite Central Committee.

*Share my world* – [www.sharemyworld.net](http://www.sharemyworld.net)

A powerful site with photographs and stories about racism in Canada.

*World Conference Against Racism* –

[www.un.org/WCAR](http://www.un.org/WCAR)

Website for WCAR, held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa. Has basic information and some factsheets (look for the press kit).

## REFUGEES

There are tens of millions of people in the world who have been displaced from their homes. Those who have left their home countries are refugees. Having escaped one bad situation, refugees still face a variety of obstacles and problems in finding another home.

The 1951 Geneva Convention defines refugees as people outside the country of their nationality, who are unwilling or unable to return to that country because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. The issue of refugees is therefore closely linked to the issue of human rights. Most people are refugees because of war, especially because in modern wars most of the casualties are civilian and because so many wars today are internal conflicts. People become refugees also because of political persecution and oppression, or because of economic and environmental conditions.

In Canada, refugees are those people who have been recognised as refugees by the Immigration and Refugee Determination Board. If their application is denied, a refugee may face deportation and has very limited options in appealing the ruling. After being recognised as refugees, they still have to pass a security review and other requirements to gain permanent resident status. In the meantime, refugees live in what has been called “limbo.” They need special work permits and are unable to get decent employment, cannot sponsor family members to come to Canada, are usually unable to leave the country and return, and are not allowed to vote. The limbo period may last for years, for a variety of reasons. Security reviews can be delayed for long periods of time, and some groups claim they are done in ways that violate the rights of refugees. Refugees who lack identity documents (a common problem, since they fled their home country) can now present two sworn declarations to prove their identity, but immigration officers have a lot of discretion in whether to accept these declarations as proof.

## Resources and Organisations

*Amnesty International* – [www.amnesty.ca/Refugee](http://www.amnesty.ca/Refugee)

Human rights organisation active on refugee issues. Look for current information and action opportunities, in Canada and worldwide.

*Canadian Council for Refugees* – [www.web.net/~ccr](http://www.web.net/~ccr)

National organisation committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and worldwide. Website has lots of information, statements, statistics and links.

*Citizens for Public Justice* – [www.cpj.ca](http://www.cpj.ca)

National faith-based organisation active on refugee issues. Website has articles and helpful “Getting Landed” factsheets with recent updates.

*Human Rights Watch* – [www.hrw.org/refugees](http://www.hrw.org/refugees)

Human rights organisation active on refugee issues. Website has information and links.

*In Exile for a While* –

[www.foodgrainsbank.ca/q4a\\_exile.php](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/q4a_exile.php)

A role-playing simulation that gives participants a taste of the daily experiences of refugees. Organiser’s kit available from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

*Love the Sojourner* –

[http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/resources/resource\\_viewer.asp?Resource\\_ID=71](http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/resources/resource_viewer.asp?Resource_ID=71)

A paper giving the history of Canada’s refugee policy, recent refugee-producing situations, and possible solutions.

*UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency* – [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch)

International agency responsible for protecting the rights and well-being of refugees. Lots of information, including documents, reports, and statistics.

## SIMPLE LIVING

Simple Living isn't exactly a justice issue, but it is an opportunity for students to take a look at their own lives and see how they can change their lifestyle to stop contributing to injustice. Those choosing to live simply often do it because they are aware of how their consumer choices contribute to increased poverty, inequality, unjust trade, conflict, hunger, and environmental degradation around the world. Simple Living involves making more responsible consumer and lifestyle choices and also taking action to help others make more responsible choices.

The first step in Simple Living is to think hard about what you buy. Do you need it, or just want it? Where does it come from and how does that affect other people or the environment? Who makes it and how does your decision affect their lives? Thinking about these questions every time you shop will help you make more responsible choices.

In general, people practising voluntary simplicity will buy: fewer products, locally-produced products, products made in an environmentally and socially responsible way, and products that have been traded fairly. They will avoid over-processed and over-packaged food. What they do buy will be reused or recycled whenever possible. They will shop at small stores instead of large chains, buy used, and refuse to spend more for brand-name products when cheaper alternatives are available.

For these reasons, Simple Living also involves opposing North America's consumerist, materialistic mainstream society. Encouraging other people to live simply probably means you have to remind them of the false promises made by much advertising today. Helping people make responsible choices probably involves working to limit the amount of advertising in our society. Campaigns might include keeping advertisements out of schools, promoting non-materialistic Christmas celebrations, and encouraging people to participate in Buy Nothing Day on November 29 ([www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd](http://www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd)) and TV Turnoff Week in April ([www.tvturnoff.org](http://www.tvturnoff.org)).

## Resources and Organisations

*Adbusters* – [www.adbusters.org](http://www.adbusters.org)

Global activist network (based in Vancouver). Campaigns and resources on anti-consumerism, rejecting corporate control, etc.

*Affluenza* – [www.pbs.org/kcts/affluenza/](http://www.pbs.org/kcts/affluenza/)

*Affluenza* is a great video about overconsumption and materialism. The website has information, a viewer's guide, and links to further resources.

*Alternatives for Simple Living* – [www.simpleliving.org](http://www.simpleliving.org)

Christian organisation encouraging simple living. Lots of resources, quotes, etc. (look under "information" for the free stuff).

*The Better World Handbook* –

[www.betterworldhandbook.com](http://www.betterworldhandbook.com)

Great book, giving do-able ideas for changing your lifestyle for justice and the environment.

*Living More With Less* (Doris Janzen Longacre)

This book has all kinds of ideas for living simply (also check out the *More With Less Cookbook* for food ideas).

*Responsible Shopper* –

[www.responsibleshopper.org](http://www.responsibleshopper.org)

Site where you can search for products or companies and find out what's behind the product.

*Simple Living Network* – [www.simpleliving.net](http://www.simpleliving.net)

Online catalogue of simple living resources you can buy.

*Spot the Difference Activity* –

[www.web.net/~tendays/spotdifference.htm](http://www.web.net/~tendays/spotdifference.htm)

Activity comparing the current consumerist lifestyle with an alternative.

*Wise UP or Rise UP* –

[www.web.net/~tendays/wiseup.htm](http://www.web.net/~tendays/wiseup.htm)

A simulation game drawing attention to global differences in consumption and waste.

## SAMPLE MANDATE

The following is the 2002/2003 mandate for Seminarians for Social Justice, the social justice group at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

### SCRIPTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS

In Psalm 11:7 the psalmist says, “For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice.” And again in Psalm 103:6 we read, “The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.” Because we are God’s image bearers, we are called to adopt God’s love for justice. Justice should permeate our relationship with ourselves, with others, with creation and with God. We hear this call in Amos 5:24 “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” and in Luke 4:18-19 where Jesus says, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

### MISSION STATEMENT

*Seminarians for Social Justice* is a group of Calvin Theological Seminary students who are committed to reflect God’s concern for those who are oppressed, underprivileged and marginalized in our own communities and around the globe. While issues of individual justice are important, we intend to focus on structural and institutional injustice.

### GOALS

In order to carry out this mission, *Seminarians for Social Justice* will:

- Raise awareness of social justice issues and their root causes.
- Encourage dialogue about social justice and related issues.
- Empower the seminary community for action in social justice areas.

- Explore the impact of justice issues on our current and future ministry.

Some methods that we will use to accomplish our goals:

- Write articles for publications like the Kerux.
- Invite guest speakers for panel discussions or forums.
- Publicize using mailings or posters on bulletin boards.
- Support and promote other organizations with similar goals.
- Provide avenues for response to social justice issues.

### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE/LEADERSHIP

*Seminarians for Social Justice* is composed of a chairperson, clerk and a core committee. Generally the core committee is composed of seminarians that desire to actively participate in the committee. The chairperson and clerk are each elected by the core committee, which meets regularly to discuss various topics, plan events and take care of any other business related to the committee’s purpose. Normally each issue/event is assigned to a subcommittee that is primarily composed of core members. The core committee makes decisions ordinarily by consensus. *Seminarians for Social Justice* is supported by the Student Senate.

## MEDIA RELEASES

You can gain publicity for your issue or campaign by sending a media release to your school or city newspaper. If they think it's important enough, they may use the release as the basis for an article or send a reporter to cover the story. Some guidelines for writing a release:

- Follow proper format: At the top, clearly title it "News Release" with the date. Include a headline that draws attention and briefly communicates the essence of the release. Put all necessary basic information in the first paragraph (who, what, when, where, why, how) and add more details in following paragraphs. Put contact information at the end, including a daytime phone number or email address. If there is additional information they should know (for example, about your group in general), put this at the end as well.
- Be brief – no more than two pages, typed.
- In the release, let the recipient know why the story is important or interesting. Communicate timeliness, how the issue connects to the paper's readers, human interest angles, important people involved, exciting conflict, creative approaches, etc.
- Include at least one direct quote from a spokesperson of your organisation. Include a good photograph, if possible. Make sure all your facts are accurate and up-to-date.
- Use good journalistic writing style: short sentences and paragraphs, language everyone can understand, correct spelling and grammar.

Follow up by phoning the reporter or editor to whom you have sent the release, to ask if they have decided to cover the story and whether they need more information.

## LETTERS

Here are some tips for writing an effective letter:

- Be polite and respectful. Assume that the recipient is open to a well-reasoned argument. Affirm the positive, if at all possible.
- Be clear and accurate. Don't use jargon. Include up-to-date facts and information. Be specific about what you are asking the representative to do, and request a response.
- Tell the recipient who you are and who you represent (for example, if you are writing on behalf of your group). If you have any personal knowledge or experience of the issue, you might want to mention that.
- Be brief – no more than one page, if possible.
- Keep a copy of your letter and any replies, for future reference.
- Spell the recipient's name correctly and use the proper form of address (check out [www.pch.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/pe/address2\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/pe/address2_e.cfm) for federal dignitaries; there are also links here for provincial and other dignitaries).
- Use correct format for writing business letters, with everything flush to the left margin:

Your name and return address (otherwise you won't get a reply)

The date

The recipient's name and address

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, (use correct title and spelling!)

Body of the letter

Sincerely,

Your signature

Your name (printed)

# PETITIONS

If you decide to write a petition to government, you must follow certain rules. Governments will only accept petitions that obey their guidelines for content, wording and format. If you are unsure of the rules, contact your elected representative. For all petitions, remember the following:

- Send the petition to the level of government (federal, provincial, or municipal) which has jurisdiction over the subject of your petition.
- Be respectful and clear. Include all the necessary information within the petition (you are not allowed to attach supporting material). Be specific in your statement of what action you want the government to take (the “prayer”).
- Do not alter the text of the petition by erasing, crossing out, or adding words.
- All signatures must be originals, signed directly on the sheet, not glued, stapled, or photocopied. Every page of signatures must begin with a statement indicating what the petition is about.

The following is a summary of the guidelines for drafting and submitting a petition to the House of Commons. You can get the exact rules online at [www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/petition/petition-e.htm](http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/process/house/petition/petition-e.htm).

1. Type the petition on letter-sized or legal-sized paper.
2. Title the first sheet “PETITION” at the top.
3. Begin the petition with the words “TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.”
4. Continue by identifying the petitioners: “We, the undersigned [citizens of Canada, residents of the town of . . . , etc.] draw the attention of the House to the following:”
5. Next, state your grievance: THAT [summarise the facts or problem which you want the House to consider, using several statements if necessary]
6. Finally, state your prayer: THEREFORE, [explain what you are asking Parliament to do or refrain from doing].
7. Include some signatures and addresses on the first sheet with the prayer. Names should be signed, not printed. Each petitioner should include either their full home address or simply their city and province.
8. Each of the following sheets with signatures and addresses should have the subject of the petition included at the top (Petition concerning . . .).
9. To be accepted, the petition must have at least 25 valid signatures, each with an address.
10. The petition must be presented to the House of Commons by a Member of Parliament. Contact your MP to ask if he or she is willing to present the petition for you. Any MP who is not a cabinet minister can present a petition, even if they do not represent the petitioners.

*Rules for submitting petitions to some provincial governments can be found online:*

Alberta:

[www.assembly.ab.ca/pro/petition.htm](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/pro/petition.htm)

Manitoba:

[www.gov.mb.ca/leg-asmb/house\\_biz/guidelines.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/leg-asmb/house_biz/guidelines.html)

New Brunswick:

[www.gnb.ca/legis/publications/petitions/petitions-e.asp](http://www.gnb.ca/legis/publications/petitions/petitions-e.asp)

Ontario:

[www.ontla.on.ca/Side\\_bar/about\\_the\\_assembly/out/index.htm](http://www.ontla.on.ca/Side_bar/about_the_assembly/out/index.htm)

Quebec:

[www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Publications/participation/petition.html](http://www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Publications/participation/petition.html)

# GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

## Federal (Members of Parliament)

Search for your MP and federal riding at:

[http://canada.gc.ca/directories/direct\\_e.html](http://canada.gc.ca/directories/direct_e.html)

Find Cabinet Ministers at: [www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=InformationResources&sub=ministry](http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=InformationResources&sub=ministry)

*Letters to any Member of Parliament can be sent postage-free to the following address:*

[name of member]  
House of Commons  
Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

*Send mail postage-free to Ministers at:*

Office of the Prime Minister/Minister of \_\_\_\_\_  
Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

## Alberta (Members of the Legislative Assembly)

Find your MLA at:

[www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/mla/index.asp](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/mla/index.asp)

Search for your district at:

[www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/mla/mla\\_help.htm](http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/mla/mla_help.htm)

Find ministers at:

[www.gov.ab.ca/home/Index.cfm?Page=25](http://www.gov.ab.ca/home/Index.cfm?Page=25)

## British Columbia (Members of the Legislative Assembly)

Find your MLA at: [www.legis.gov.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm](http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm)

Search for your district at:

[www.legis.gov.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm](http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm)

Find ministers at: [www.legis.gov.bc.ca/mla/3-1-4.htm](http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/mla/3-1-4.htm)

## Manitoba (Members of the Legislative Assembly)

Find your MLA at: [www.gov.mb.ca/leg-asmembers/members/alphabetical.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/leg-asmembers/members/alphabetical.html)

Search for your district at:

[www.electionsmanitoba.ca/EDsearch/search\\_link.htm](http://www.electionsmanitoba.ca/EDsearch/search_link.htm)

Find ministers at: [www.gov.mb.ca/leg-asmembers/members/cabinet.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/leg-asmembers/members/cabinet.html)

## New Brunswick (Members of the Legislative Assembly)

Find your MLA at:

<http://app.infoaa.7700.gnb.ca/gnb/pub/ListMLA1.asp>

Search for your district at:

<http://www1.gnb.ca/elections/provstreetkey/provskinformation%2De.asp>

Find ministers at:

<http://app.infoaa.7700.gnb.ca/gnb/pub/ListMinister1.asp>

## Newfoundland and Labrador (Members of the House of Assembly)

Find your MHA at: [www.gov.nf.ca/hoa/members/](http://www.gov.nf.ca/hoa/members/)

Search for your district at:

[www.gov.nf.ca/elections/districts/frmdistricts-1.stm](http://www.gov.nf.ca/elections/districts/frmdistricts-1.stm)

Find ministers at: [www.gov.nf.ca/hoa/members/](http://www.gov.nf.ca/hoa/members/)

## Northwest Territories (Members of the Legislative Assembly)

Find your MLA at:

[www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/Members/index.html](http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/Members/index.html)

Search for your district at:

[www.electionsnwt.com/constituency\\_map.html](http://www.electionsnwt.com/constituency_map.html)

Find ministers at:

[www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/Members/index.html](http://www.assembly.gov.nt.ca/Members/index.html)

## Nova Scotia (Members of the House of Assembly)

Find your MHA at:

[www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/MEMBERS/index.html](http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/MEMBERS/index.html)

Search for your district at:

[www.gov.ns.ca/elo/elections/maps/index.htm](http://www.gov.ns.ca/elo/elections/maps/index.htm)

Find ministers at:

[www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/MEMBERS/cabinet/cabinet.html](http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/MEMBERS/cabinet/cabinet.html)

**Nunavut (Members of the Legislative Assembly)**

Find your MLA at:

[www.assembly.nu.ca/english/members/MLAs.html](http://www.assembly.nu.ca/english/members/MLAs.html)

Search for your district at:

[www.assembly.nu.ca/english/members/ridings.html](http://www.assembly.nu.ca/english/members/ridings.html)

Find ministers at:

[www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/cabinet/](http://www.gov.nu.ca/Nunavut/English/cabinet/)

**Yukon Territory (Members of the Legislative Assembly)**

Find your MLA at: [www.gov.yk.ca/leg-assembly/mlas/](http://www.gov.yk.ca/leg-assembly/mlas/)

Search for your district at: [www.gov.yk.ca/leg-assembly/elections/maps.html](http://www.gov.yk.ca/leg-assembly/elections/maps.html)

Find ministers at: [www.gov.yk.ca/depts/](http://www.gov.yk.ca/depts/)

**Ontario (Members of Provincial Parliament)**

Find your MPP at:

[www.ontla.on.ca/Members/mailling\\_addresses/index.htm](http://www.ontla.on.ca/Members/mailling_addresses/index.htm)

Search for your district at:

[www.electionsontario.on.ca/fyed/en/form\\_page\\_en.jsp](http://www.electionsontario.on.ca/fyed/en/form_page_en.jsp)

Find ministers at:

[www.ontla.on.ca/Members/cabinet\\_ministers/index.htm](http://www.ontla.on.ca/Members/cabinet_ministers/index.htm)

**Prince Edward Island (Members of the Legislative Assembly)**

Find your MLA at:

[www.assembly.pe.ca/members/index.php](http://www.assembly.pe.ca/members/index.php)

Search for your district at:

[www.gov.pe.ca/civicaddress/locator/index.php3?showsections=b](http://www.gov.pe.ca/civicaddress/locator/index.php3?showsections=b)

Find ministers at: [www.gov.pe.ca/ec/index.php3](http://www.gov.pe.ca/ec/index.php3)

**Quebec (Members of the National Assembly)**

Find your MNA at:

[www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Membres/deputes\\_lst.html](http://www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Membres/deputes_lst.html)

Search for your district at:

[www.dgeq.qc.ca/anglais/vote/trouve\\_circon.an.html](http://www.dgeq.qc.ca/anglais/vote/trouve_circon.an.html)

Find ministers at

[www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Membres/Titulaires.html](http://www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Membres/Titulaires.html)

**Saskatchewan (Members of the Legislative Assembly)**

Find your MLA at:

[www.legassembly.sk.ca/members/members.htm](http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/members/members.htm)

Search for your district by contacting Elections Saskatchewan

Find ministers at:

[www.executive.gov.sk.ca/cabinet\\_ministers.htm](http://www.executive.gov.sk.ca/cabinet_ministers.htm)

## SPECIAL DAYS

The following list gives some days which may be useful in scheduling social justice activities throughout the year.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of September – International Day of Peace
- October 16 – World Food Day
- October 17 – International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- October 24-30 – Disarmament Week
- November 11 – Remembrance Day
- November 16 – International Day for Tolerance
- November 20 – International Children’s Day
- November 29 – Buy Nothing Day
- December 1 – World AIDS Day
- December 2 – International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- December 10 – Human Rights Day
- March 8 – UN Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace
- March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- March 22 – World Day for Water
- April 7 – World Health Day
- April 22 – Earth Day
- June 4 – International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression
- June 20 – World Refugee Day
- June 21 – Aboriginal Rights Day
- June 26 – International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
- August 9 – International Day of the World’s Indigenous People

## OTHER HELPFUL GUIDES

Both these guides are written from a Christian faith perspective and are meant specifically for social justice groups. They offer more detailed information and workshops on some of the topics covered in *Just Basics*.

*Kairos Network Handbook* (to order, visit [www.kairoscanada.org/english/resources/index.htm](http://www.kairoscanada.org/english/resources/index.htm))

This guide, produced by Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, focuses on building faith-based social justice groups and includes workshops, planning outlines, and other advice.

*Shalom Seekers* (for ordering information, visit [www.crcjustice.org/crjs\\_shalom.htm](http://www.crcjustice.org/crjs_shalom.htm))

This set of workshops on social justice, created by the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action and the Public Justice Resource Centre, includes information for focusing the workshops on specific justice issues, worship resources, advice for organising a social justice committee, and more.

# JUST BASICS EVALUATION

We would love to hear your comments about Just Basics, as we will be revising the guide over the next year. Please print out this page, fill in your answers and return to:

Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action  
P.O. Box 5070, STN LCD 1  
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

Fax: (905) 336-8344 (Attn: Social Justice)  
Email: [crcna@crcna.ca](mailto:crcna@crcna.ca) (subject line: "social justice guide")

1. How did you use *Just Basics* (for a social justice group, Christian fellowship group, individual use, etc.)?
2. Did you find *Just Basics* helpful for your purposes? If so, how?
3. What did you like about *Just Basics*?
4. What would you change about *Just Basics*?
5. Please rank the main sections of *Just Basics* on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very helpful/interesting to you and 5 being not at all helpful/interesting:

Biblical Foundations	1	2	3	4	5
Organising and Running a Group	1	2	3	4	5
Education and Action Strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Networking	1	2	3	4	5
Issues	1	2	3	4	5
Appendices	1	2	3	4	5

If you have any other comments, please feel free to add them below. Thank you for your input!