

JUSTICE & ADVOCACY TOOLS

AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO RUNNING A CAMPAIGN IN A SCHOOL OR
COLLEGE SETTING.



The Justice Desk
A Human Rights NPO



SOCIAL INJUSTICE

Social injustice is when individuals, families and communities are deprived of their basic human rights. Human rights represent basic necessities needed to live a healthy, adequate standard of living. People are deprived of their human rights for a variety of reasons.

Governments and oppressive laws may deprive certain groups of people from accessing opportunities and services such as education or fair employment. Factors such as corruption, economic crises, natural disasters and violence can result in the violation of human rights for a short or extended period of time.

Societal structures and institutions can marginalize and dis-empower groups of people by denying them access to basic rights such as housing, water and nutrition. Societal structures often favour certain groups over other people, making it easier for them to access opportunities and succeed.

People may be discriminated against on the basis of their race, gender, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or other factors. This inequality can be so deeply embedded that we see it as normal or acceptable. The denial of human rights deprives individuals, families and communities from developing their capacities, accessing opportunities and services as well as every day needs that some people take for granted.

Denial of human rights not only inhibits their ability to thrive but sometimes even to survive. Suffering as a result of not having one's human rights can seem normal or acceptable because communities have been experiencing it for so long.

Poverty, unemployment, and children not receiving a decent standard of education are some of the most prevalent forms of social injustices in our society today. While things such as poverty may seem inevitable, it is not justified or okay. The inability to gain employment, have running water or access to basic nutrition is a violation of their human rights.



INTRODUCTION



SYSTEMIC INJUSTICE

Injustice often embeds itself into the very way that we operate as a country and community, therefore making it systemic. Systemic injustice can be found in the interpretations of our laws, the running of institutions, organisations and companies, as well as in the ways in which we interact with each other.

Many, if not most, people operating within this system are unaware of the injustice caused by their daily interactions. However, there are others who are aware, but do not wish to sacrifice the benefits they receive from the system in order to correct it. An example of systemic injustice was the Apartheid system of South Africa.

Systemic injustice does not only exist in past systems of oppression. Historical patterns of unfairness, discrimination and unfairly distributed allocations of social, political and economic goods, within the various social and economic structures, are all problems of injustice faced within many African countries today.

If we consider the ways that economic, political and social assets are allocated in society today we can clearly see that certain structures are set in place favouring certain groups of people over others. Injustice by nature is systemic and this is why it is important that we become aware of the structural injustice that is inherent in our daily lives and begin to challenge and change the unjust structures that favour certain individual over others. In order to truly start to change we need to break down the core systems that keep the cycle of injustice running.



PLANNING SOCIAL JUSTICE & ADVOCACY WORK

When planning your social justice and advocacy work you need to identify the following in order for your campaign to be a success:

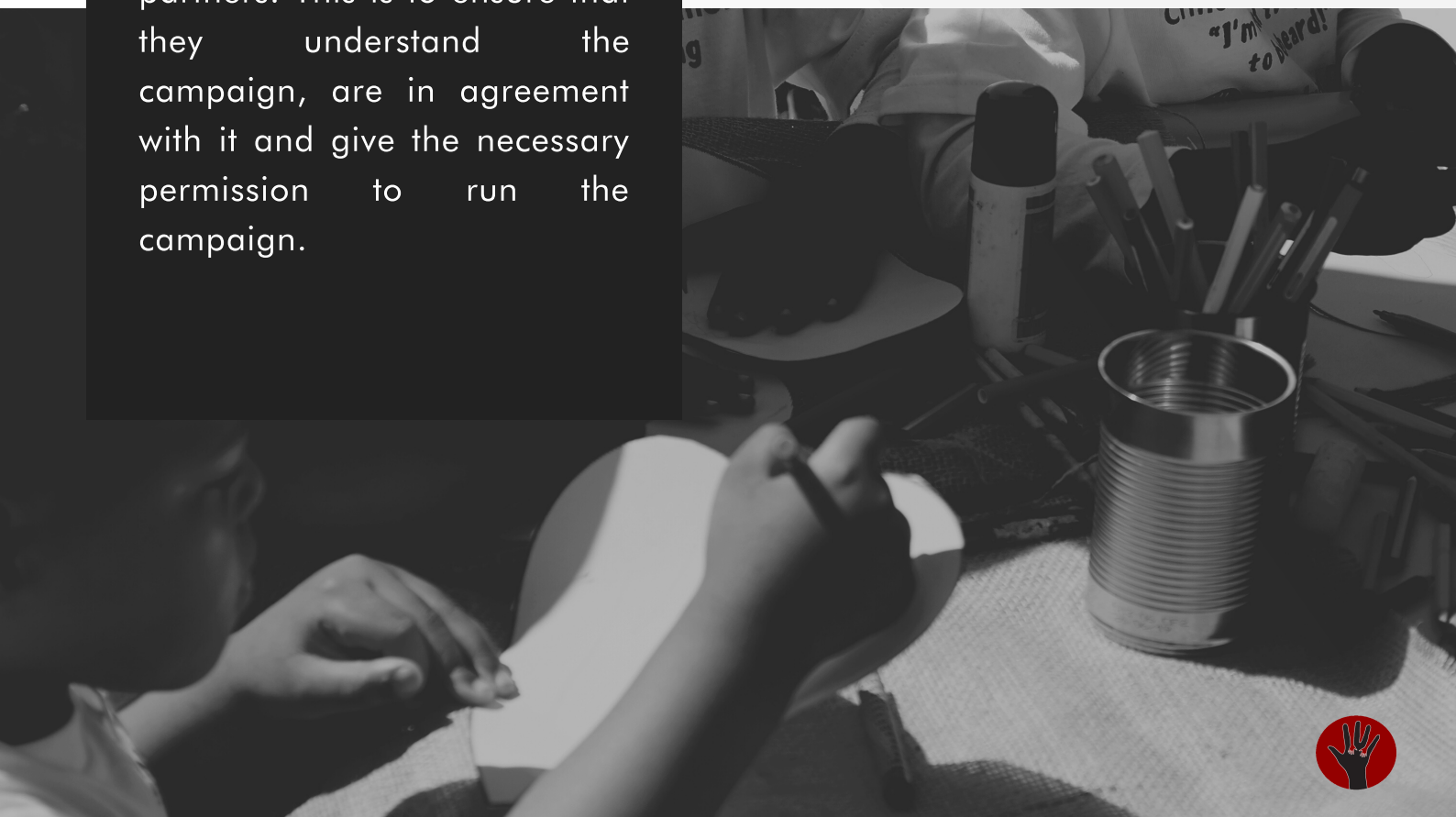
1. Purpose
2. Goals
3. Time-frame
4. Method

Throughout this planning process, ensure that you are in communication with key partners. This is to ensure that they understand the campaign, are in agreement with it and give the necessary permission to run the campaign.

Advocacy

Advocacy in all its forms seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, are able to:

- Have their voice heard on issues that are important to them.
- Defend and safeguard their rights.
- Have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.



Purpose

You need to identify the purpose of your campaign, as this will shape how you plan and carry out your campaign. Your purpose will help you determine what the goals or the outcome of the campaign should be.

There are three purposes for Campaigns.

1. Raising Awareness

Raising awareness campaigns aim to increase awareness and understanding of a particular human rights or social justice issue. The goal of the campaign is for the school /community to be informed about a particular issue, why the issue exists and what can be done to address the issue.

Example: Human Trafficking is taking place in your town but many people do not know what is happening, what it is, or why it is happening. Your school is running human trafficking awareness month with the purpose of increasing awareness on the issue. The goal of the campaign is that by the end of the month, each student in the school will know 1) what human trafficking is, 2) why it exists, and 3) ways to protect themselves from human trafficking.

2. Acts of Charity/Service

Acts of charity / service campaigns aim to meet a particular physical need that you have identified. This type of campaign is focused on short term, material goals and is often driven by an emergency or suffering. Most charity campaigns have the purpose of meeting basic needs through providing goods. Note: These campaigns are important because without them, people may go without the necessities they need to survive. However, these campaigns do not address root causes of inequality and poverty. While people may receive necessities through this type of campaign, their livelihoods are not improved in the long-term nor is the root cause of their suffering truly dealt with. As a result, we cannot do these types of campaigns in isolation.

Example: A local safe house for victims of human trafficking has run out of funding and cannot afford to buy food. Your school runs a drive to collect food parcels to give to the safe house. Learners and teachers donate food, which is given to the safe house.

3. Justice & Advocacy

Justice and advocacy campaigns aim to address or challenge a specific human rights / justice issue. When schools / communities identify human rights violations or injustices, they often feel compelled to do something about it. Justice and advocacy campaigns have the purpose of trying to tackle an issue so that it may be improved or resolved. These types of campaigns are focused on action and being a part of the solution.

Example: Your school /college/ community has come to know about the prevalence of human trafficking in your community. Currently, your country does not have any legislation (laws) prohibiting human trafficking. Your school decides to take on a letter writing campaign urging the government to adopt legislation outlawing human trafficking. By doing this, police are forced to protect your people, traffickers are properly sentenced for their crimes, and government will have to cater to the needs of survivors/victims.



Goals

Once you have identified the purpose of your campaign, it is time to set goals for the campaign. Goals are the things that you hope to achieve by the end of the campaign. When setting goals, keep the following in mind:

When setting goals ask yourself/ your team whether your goals can realistically be achieved by the end of the campaign.

Setting goals that are unlikely or too big can be discouraging as they may feel too difficult to achieve. There may be feelings of disappointment if the goals aren't achieved. At the same time, do not underestimate the power of your campaign and set goals that are too small.

Example: If your school is doing a letter-writing campaign to urge your government to adopt anti-human trafficking legislation, it may be unrealistic to expect that by the end of the campaign, there will be anti-human trafficking legislation. Legislation takes years to happen. Goals that are more realistic would be: to get a response from government to promise to look into establishing these laws.

Are your goals realistic?

As far as possible, try to ensure that your goals are practical. The more practical a goal is, the easier it is to measure whether the goal was achieved or not.

Are your goals practical?

Ways to make your goals practical

- Identify the number of learners that you would like to have participated in the campaign.
- If it is a charity drive, determine how much food / goods / money you would like to raise.
- If it is an awareness campaign, identify the types of knowledge or information students/ people should have by the end of the campaign.
- If it is a justice & advocacy campaign, identify what activities or actions should have taken place by the end of the campaign.





TIME-FRAME

Once you know your purpose and have set your goals, a time frame for the campaign must be established. Within a school or college setting there will generally be three available time frames:

One Day
One Week
One Month

Occasionally a campaign will be so successful that it may be developed into a longer campaign, i.e. one term. However, it may be easier to limit new campaigns to a maximum length of one month.

Note: Your campaign goals may have to be modified based on your time frame.



There are a number of factors that will determine the length of your time frame. Ask yourself:

1) What has the school/college/management given permission for?

Permission from the school /college/ management will determine how long you need for your campaign to be successful. If you have access to use an assembly, break-times and even lessons in a class, you may be able to run your campaign quicker.

2) What else is taking place in the school/college during that time?

Your time frame needs to take into consideration other activities happening in the school. If exam time is approaching, it may not be practical to run a campaign for an entire month. If there are other campaigns taking place, you may need to finish your campaign before the next one starts.

3) How can I work at a sustainable pace?

When determining the time frame of the campaign, you will need to consider how many other campaigns and activities you plan to run in the year. It is not practical or sustainable to run twelve 1 month campaigns. You will not have time to prepare between campaigns or rest. Set a pace that is sustainable and achievable.



METHODS

Once you have set your purpose, goals and time frame for the campaign, it is time to start designing the campaign. Below are different methods that you can use to run your campaign. The methods are divided according to their different purposes. Before deciding on any of these methods, ensure that you have permission from the school/college/management.

A. Raising Awareness

1) Social Media Campaigns

Social media can be used to raise awareness on a particular issue. This can be done by getting groups of people / learners to post pictures, news articles and information. Effective ways of using social media include making profile pictures an awareness image or using specific hashtags when posting on social media

2) Create and Use Visual Materials

Awareness can be raised through the creation of visual materials such as posters, banners and artwork. Learners can creatively engage in the campaign through the creation of materials. Posters and artwork can raise awareness on an issue in a powerful, emotive manner. You can also use visual materials to raise awareness through wearing specific coloured clothing on a day or wearing solidarity bands. You can use this method to shine a light on the student's creativity. The school can be decorated with posters or an exhibition of the artwork can take place.

3) Presentations and Performance

Presentations and performances can be used to raise awareness within a school and community. Presentations and key speakers can be used in assemblies, after-school societies and in classrooms. Students can create performances as a way of raising awareness. Theater performances (acting), poetry readings, dances and singing are powerful ways to raise awareness about an issue. Not only do they show the creativity of the students, but other students are more likely to engage and learn through these methods. You can be creative in how you use presentations and performance i.e. having a poetry competition among students to write poems about a certain issue.

4) Silent March / Walk Around

A walk around the school/ college or community with posters and visual representations can be a powerful way of raising awareness about an issue, particularly to the surrounding school. This is different to a protest, this is about standing in unity together to shine a light on a specific human rights violation / social injustice.



CHARITY & ACTS OF SERVICE

Remember, charity work alone cannot solve justice issues- charity is important but we must always look at the root causes of injustice.

1) Food / Goods Drive

A food or goods drive mobilizes the school / college/ community to bring in specific foods or goods for a community in need. This is generally a response to an emergency. You can run competitions between classes or houses to see who can bring in the most amount of food /goods. You can keep boxes in classrooms or specific areas where students can donate their food / goods. If there is something that can be made i.e. blankets, you can develop a project to create these after school.

2) Raising Money

If there is a project that requires funds or your campaign needs to buy something specific /donate money to a specific community in need (i.e. an orphanage), you can do various activities at school that can raise funds.- You can host a civvies day where learners pay to wear casual clothes. To make this more powerful, learners can be encouraged to wear specific colours / items of clothes as a form of solidarity to an issue.- You can have a bake sale where learners bake and buy sweet goods.- You can put on a performance and request donations from learners who watch it.

3) Acts of Service

If your campaign is focused on uplifting or improving a community in need, you can use your practical skills and time to do this. Ways you could do this include: (these are only some ideas, you can come up with your own):

- Giving spare time to tutor younger students from a vulnerable school.
- Going after school or on a Saturday to paint or repair buildings.
- Visiting the elderly

"Charity work alleviates a problem so that the symptoms are not as bad. However, if we only focus on charity work, problems will never be solved. The hungry person may be fed but the factors that led them being hungry in the first place will still be there. Justice work attempts to address the root causes of issues so that the problem will be resolved. Justice work asks the question 'Why is that person hungry?' and focuses on addressing the core issue so that they will not go hungry again. Justice work attempts to eradicate a problem so that it no longer exists."

Jessica Dewhurst, Founder and CEO of The Justice Desk



Justice & Advocacy

1) Letter Writing Campaign

A letter writing campaign can be used to urge the government or local community to take action against a specific human rights violation / social injustice issue. Ways that you can use a letter writing campaign:

- Students can be mobilised to write letters to a specific government department requesting them to take action on a specific human rights violation / social injustice issue.
- Students can be mobilized to write letters to companies / businesses requesting them to change their behaviour so that it is not harmful to people or the environment.
- Students can be mobilized to write letters to newspapers, community members, NGOs, encouraging them to take action against a specific human rights violation / social injustice issue.

When doing a letter writing campaign, ensure the following:

- The students are well informed about the issue before they write a letter.
- The learners request similar action be taken.

The letters are written in the correct format.

2) Protests / Demonstrations

Protests are a powerful representation of people coming together to stand against an injustice. Protests show the government, companies and the community that there are people who will not tolerate human rights violations / social injustices. Protests are used to object to specific behaviours and demand that action be taken by the government / companies / community.

Identify the following before the protest:

- Clearly identify the problem / harmful actions before the protests
- Clearly identify solutions to the problem / harmful actions

Planning a protest:

- Make sure the protesters are clearly informed on the issue.
- Create visual materials such as banners, posters and t-shirts.
- Gather as many people as possible to attend the protest.
- Protest in an area that will gather the attention of the people the protest is aimed at.
- Ensure permission from the school and police before the protest.

3) Petitions

Petitions are used to object to specific actions of the government / companies / community. A petition is a letter condemning specific actions and demanding change. It is accompanied by signatures of people. The more signatures on the petition, the more powerful and reputable the petition.

Planning a petition:

- Be clearly informed on the issue.
- Write a clear, concise letter.
- Create a table for the names and signatures of people.
- Ensure that people are aware of the issue before signing the petition. (Never write someone's name on the petition without their permission)



The Justice Desk

Promoting the Power of
Everyday Activists

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