



**SOCIAL
ACTION
SUPER
STAR**



YOUNG SVP CSPE RESOURCE PACK

Introduction

The Society of St Vincent de Paul is an international voluntary Christian organisation. Members of the Society is open to anyone who can respectz our ethos. We draw our inspiration and energy from the Gospels and Catholic Social Teaching and attempt to live the core values (Love of God and Love of our neighbour) through an action orientated programme, working directly with people in need. Members of the Society come from all walks of life, giving, as Frederic Ozanam challenged, of their time, their talents and themselves, to serve people in need and to work for Social Justice. Many respond to the Vincentian Spirituality of Christian love, compassion and justice, through friendship based on mutual respect and caring.

Others are drawn to social action and the creation of a more just society. All are united by a vision of social justice, which Frederic Ozanam described as

“a fixed star which human societies try to follow from their uncertain orbits. It can be seen from different points of view but justice remains unchanged”.

Young SVP

The Young SVP Programme is a youth development programme designed for use in school/youth groups.

The programme focuses on social action within the ethos and mission of SVP. Young people are offered opportunities to learn about SVP, social justice and how to engage in social action in a positive, meaningful way.

Our Youth Development Team are here to support schools and groups, teachers and leaders, students, pupils and young people through their engagement. The Young SVP Programme aims to *“provide opportunities for young people to engage in social action in their own communities, encouraging personal and social development”.*

SVP & Citizenship

The lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Ireland are affected by low income and the effects of debt, unemployment, educational disadvantage, poor health, relationship breakdown, bereavement, addiction, violence, loneliness, disabilities, overwhelming caring responsibilities and other challenges.

Poverty, homelessness, lack of opportunity, isolation, the increasing gap between the rich and poor, long waiting lists for health services, the high cost of housing, energy, childcare and education are some of the social injustices that SVP is challenging. We are working to make Ireland a fairer place; where caring for each other and our children, older people and people with disabilities is valued and supported; where individuals, families and communities can participate fully in work and society; and where an adequately resourced state, a strong economy, employment and business support the type of society that we wish to live in.

The activities in this resource will facilitate students to develop the following skills: Identification/Awareness, Analysis/Evaluation, Communication and Action. Students will also be encouraged to reflect on their attitudes and values. This resource will also make some suggestions for social actions to undertake. Where links can be drawn between the work of SVP and the core concepts of CSPE, these will be highlighted.

AWARENESS. EVALUATION. COMMUNICATION. ACTION.

Please note:

This resource is designed to be adapted as appropriate for your group. The activities may not be suitable for every setting. There may be students for whom some topics have particular resonance. Please use your discretion and adapt this resource as necessary for your group.

Links to external sites are for information purposes only. We do not take responsibility for the content of external sites. Please review all external content before use with your group.

Feedback

We hope you find this resource helpful. Your feedback is appreciated. If you have any questions or comments please email

youth@svp.ie

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Forward

As the National Youth Committee of the Society of St Vincent de Paul we are delighted to introduce the latest Young SVP Resource 'Social Action Superstar'.

SVP was founded in Paris in 1833 by a group of young people, principally Blessed Frederic Ozanam. Inspired by the example of St Vincent de Paul and motivated to tackle inequalities in their own communities, Frederic and his friends began looking for ways they could take action to help others. Today members of SVP continue to be 'Social Action Superstars' serving people in need and working for social justice.

In 1834 Frederic wrote "I wish that all young people might unite in head and heart in some charitable work and that there be formed, throughout the whole country, a vast and generous association for the relief of the people".

Through the Young SVP programme we have had the privilege of meeting thousands of young people across Ireland who are also passionate about addressing injustice. We hope this resource will support CSPE teachers, students and others to learn more about how SVP works for social justice and to explore ways they can make a difference in their communities.

**Grainne, Ciara, Sarah, Ruairi, Aislinn, Aine and Hugh
National Youth Committee**

The facts!



The poverty facts and statistics in this resource are republished with thanks to the **Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice** and are correct as on October 2017. Please see justicematters.ie for more information.

justicematters.ie

Time required



These lessons are designed for delivery over a **40 minute classes**. Please use your own discretion regarding the use or adaptation of exercises as appropriate for your class. Timings for exercises are estimates only, they may take longer depending on the level of class engagement. Additional time may be needed for action planning.

*Note:



For videos & animations see <http://www.svp.ie/news-media/videos.aspx> or the SVP Ireland youtube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnYD74vzgGdkfkx4iIWj-w> unless directed elsewhere.

"Electric Ireland is very proud to be partnering with the Society of St Vincent de Paul to support their National Youth Development Programme. We, and the broader SVP Group, have a strong track record of working with communities and charities throughout Ireland and have had a very successful partnership with SVP for years. I would like to wish every success to participants in the programme and I am confident that it will inspire secondary school students to understand and help prevent poverty and social exclusion in their local communities."

Jim Dollard, Executive Director, Electric Ireland

**electric
Ireland**

SVP

Thank you to Ciara Reid for her support in developing this resource.

Lesson 1: The Origins & Work of SVP

1.

Aim of Lesson: ✓

To provide an overview of the origins and work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Students will have a better understanding of why SVP originated. Students will have a better understanding of the work of SVP and how it is relevant in today's society.

Methods Used:

- Wordstorm
- Audio visual
- Discussion
- Group work

For more information on the SVP Mission Statement please see: [svp.ie/about-us/mission-statement](https://www.svp.ie/about-us/mission-statement).

Lesson Guide

ACTIVITY 1.

1. "What do you already know about SVP?"

Resources: Whiteboard & Markers

Timing: 5 minutes

- > Wordstorm: 'What do you think of when you hear SVP?'
- > Write all words that the students come up with on the board, refer back to the relevant words as they come up again throughout the session.

ACTIVITY 2.

2. Origins & History of SVP

Resources: 'Origins & Work of SVP' animation, 'Origins of SVP Info sheet'

Timing: 10 minutes

- > In class show the 'Origins & Work of SVP' animation
- > **Use the 'Origins of SVP' info sheet as an additional support. Ask the class the following questions:**
 1. How old is SVP?
 2. Who was it founded by?
 3. Why was it founded?
 4. Is the work of SVP still relevant today?

ACTIVITY 3.1

3.1 Current Work of SVP in Ireland

Resources: Whiteboard & markers, 'The work of SVP' handout

Timing: 10 minutes

- > Ask the class to list all the work/ activities they think SVP is currently involved in. List their answers on the whiteboard. Refer to the 'List of SVP Activities' handout
- > **Ask the class the following questions:**
 1. Were there any activities the students did not name?
 2. Are there any activities not listed that they would like to add in?
 3. Based on the list of activities, what sort of roles/responsibilities do you think people have within SVP?

ACTIVITY 3.2

3.2 Work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul

Resources: 'The Work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul' youtube clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pzqvXX9ZMo>

- > Show 'The Work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul' video clip
- > **Ask the students to discuss the following questions from the 'Current Work of SVP in Ireland' handout:**
 1. What services are the volunteers providing?
 2. Is the work of the volunteers important? Why?
 3. How do the volunteers ensure the dignity of the people they help?

For more information see: <https://www.svp.ie/about-us/mission-statement.aspx>
youtube clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pzqvXX9ZMo>

Mission Statement

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) charity is a Christian voluntary organisation, working with poor and disadvantaged people. Inspired by our principal founder, Frederic Ozanam, and our patron, St. Vincent de Paul, we seek to respond to the call every Christian receives to bring the love of Christ to those in need: *“I was hungry and you gave me food”* (Matthew 25). No work of charity is foreign to the Society. We are involved in a diverse range of activities characterised by:

Support and friendship

Through person-to-person contact, we are committed to respecting the dignity of those we assist and fostering self-respect. We assure confidentiality at all times and endeavour to establish relationships based on trust and friendship.

Promoting self-sufficiency

It is not enough to provide short term material support. Those we assist are also helped to achieve self-sufficiency in the longer term and the sense of self-worth this provides. When problems are beyond our competence, we enlist the support of specialised help.

Working for Social Justice

We are committed to identifying the root causes of poverty and social exclusion in Ireland and, in solidarity with poor and disadvantaged people, to advocate and work for the changes required to create a more just and caring society.



Inspired by our principal founder, Frederic Ozanam, and our patron, St. Vincent de Paul, we seek to respond to the call every Christian receives to bring the love of Christ to those in need
“I was hungry and you gave me food”
(Matthew 25).



The Origins of SVP

In the beginning...

The Society was founded by Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his friends in Paris in 1833; originally it was called 'Conference of Charity.' Frederic Ozanam and his college friends often discussed the needs within society and were challenged to act upon their discussions. It was from this that they set up their group (Conference) in order to tackle inequalities in their own communities. Overall they "wanted Christianity that would influence everyday life; one that would help create a peaceful and just society for all."

St Vincent de Paul was adopted as patron of the Conference in 1834, and the group was renamed Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and has been called this ever since. St Vincent de Paul was a French Catholic Priest and dedicated his life to helping those in need. Therefore, he was chosen because of the example he set and he was the type of person that Frederic and his friends aspired to be.



Action...

Some of the actions undertaken by Society of St Vincent de Paul at this time (1800's) included;

Charity.



Distribution of food and fuel to those impoverished in Paris. They worked closely with Sr Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity who lived among those suffering with poverty and was able to point out those who were in the greatest need of assistance.

Political Action.



They recognised the need to take an active part in political debate; social reform was needed and would not be achieved through revolutions and violence but rather by trying to influence the political and social systems. Their mission was to achieve social justice for all.

1844.

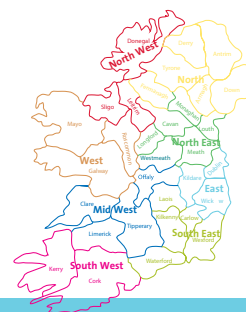


SVP came to Ireland in 1844 when the first Conference was set up here. 'Conference' is the name given to a SVP group / unit.

2018.

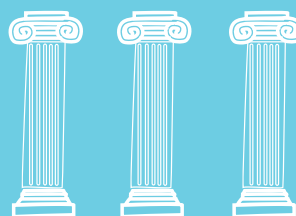


In 2018, there are approximately 1300 Conferences and over 11,000 volunteers across the country!!!



Ethos & Mission...

SVP are involved in a diverse range of activities which are characterised by 'The Three Pillars' which are as relevant today as they were 200 years ago:



Support & Friendship

Promoting Self-Sufficiency

Working for Social Justice

For more information see 'The Origins and Work of SVP' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bmpi_RHdgJw

The Work of SVP

The range of activities SVP are currently involved in include:

- Visits to people (home, hospital, prison..)
- Accommodation- Hostels and Housing
- Family Resource Centres
- Vincent's Shops
- Holiday Centres
- Preschool and Creches
- Education Programmes & supports
- Social Justice Campaigns
- School Conferences & groups
- Social Action Projects
- Twinning
- Lobbying Government

*Please note this is not an exhaustive list & does not include all the work of SVP



Rights & Responsibilities:

In 1848 Frederic Ozanam wrote "I ask that we take care of people who have too many needs and not enough rights..."

Today SVP's focus is on a practical approach to dealing with poverty, alleviating its effects on individuals and families through working primarily in person-to-person contact by a unique system of family visitation and seeking to achieve social justice and equality of opportunity for all citizens.



Democracy:

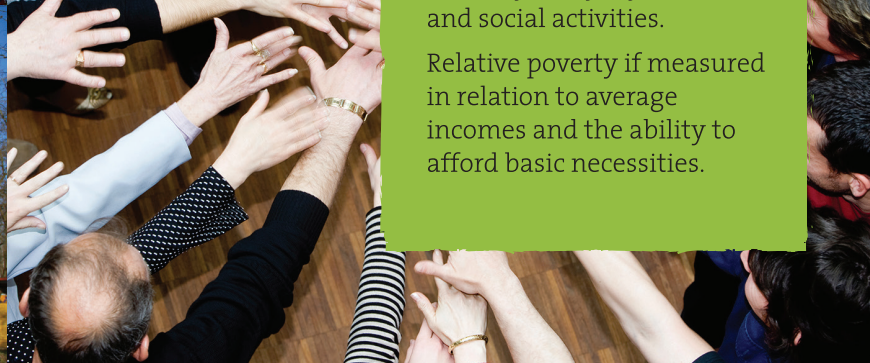
Conference is the term for a group or unit within SVP. Every SVP conference has a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer who are democratically elected by members of the conference.



Poverty Facts

Relative poverty is where a person's income and standard of living is so much worse than other's (in the country where they live) that they struggle to live a normal life. They cannot take part in ordinary everyday economic and social activities.

Relative poverty if measured in relation to average incomes and the ability to afford basic necessities.



Lesson 2: Social Justice

2.

Aim of Lesson: ✓

Students will explore social justice and develop a better awareness of the complexities of social justice issues and how they can impact on an individual's equality in society.

Expected Learning Outcomes:



Students will develop an understanding of what social justice/injustice means and explore how this impacts on individuals in a variety of ways.

Methods Used:



- wordstorm
- Audio visual
- Case studies
- Group work
- Reflecting



Lesson Guide



1. "What is Social Justice Wordstorm?"

Resources: Social Justice wordstorm

Timing: 10 minutes

- > Divide the class into groups (4-6 in each group)
- > Pass out the wordstorm sheets to each group and ask them to add comments using the prompt questions
- > Ask the groups to feedback to the whole class



2. SVP Case Studies

Resources: Video clip or written case studies

Timing: 15 minutes

- > Divide the class in to groups of 3 or 4
- > Watch the SVP video clip 'Building an Equal Nation' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-2tS6g7QMk>
- > **Ask each group to consider the following questions in relation to the video or case studies:**
 1. What are the issues for this person/ family?
 2. What is the immediate effect on the person/ family?
 3. If the situation continues what might happen over the longer term?
 4. What does this person/family need most right now?
 5. What do they need in the longer term?
 6. Whose responsibility is it to make sure that the social justice issues identified are addressed?
 7. Who can help make sure these issues are addressed?
 8. Can you imagine what it would be like to be this person/ part of this family?



3. The Star Fish Story

Resources: The Starfish story worksheet

Timing: 10 minutes

- > **Ask the students to read the Starfish story and answer the accompanying questions**
 1. Does it sometimes feel like issues are too big for us to make a difference?
 2. What do you think the message of the story is?
 3. Can you think of any examples of small actions that can make a big difference to people?

SVP video clip 'Building an Equal Nation' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-2tS6g7QMk>

Social Justice

What do you think social justice means?

Do you think we live in a just & fair society in Ireland?

**What can we do to create a more
just & fair society for everybody?**

What people are most vulnerable to poverty?

What do people need to live a fulfilling & healthy life?

SVP Case Studies

We might just make it

SVP is helping a family of two adults and three children, 17, 12 & 11 years. Last year the father lost his job and as a result the family also lost their Family Income Supplement payment. The father had to wait almost 4 weeks for the first social welfare payment. They have a mortgage but have negotiated a break with the bank, reducing their payments from 1500 euro per month to 600 euro.

At home the mother is moving tinned food from the cupboard to the fridge to make it look full in front of the children. The mother says "I used to think nobody cared, the SVP members listened and gave us hope. With their assistance in giving us a hand up, we might just make it".

Not knowing where to turn

Tony is an elderly man who lives alone. He originally contacted SVP to get help paying for his wife's funeral. SVP volunteers used kind contributions to help Tony with the funeral costs. Then they organised an appointment for him to see the Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS). Tony's wife had always managed the bills and when she passed away, they started to mount up.

What also stands out about Tony is that he has no one there for him but the volunteers. Loneliness is often the biggest problem faced by older people living alone. SVP volunteers now visit Tony each month and are trying to encourage him to become less isolated. "I have gotten the greatest comfort from SVP," says Tony, "not only by the financial help, but by the fact that I have someone to talk to and someone who has shown that they actually care."



Questions

1. What are the issues for this person/ family?
2. What is the immediate effect on the person/ family?
3. If the situation continues what might happen over the longer term?
4. What does this person/family need most right now?
5. What do they need in the longer term?
6. Whose responsibility is it to make sure that the social justice issues identified are addressed?
7. Who can help make sure these issues are addressed?
8. Can you imagine what it would be like to be this person/ part of this family?

For more information:

Development: www.svp.ie/whatwe-do/educationgrants.aspx

Interdependence: www.svp.ie/whatwe-do/twinning.aspx

Stories about people supported by SVP:
www.svp.ie/Get-Involved/The-Difference-You-ve-Made.aspx

Development:

SVP recognises the importance of education. Every year conferences help families with back to school expenses. The Higher Education & Training Bursary helps support people in further education. For more information see: <https://www.svp.ie/whatwe-do/educationgrants.aspx>

Interdependence

The original rule of SVP states "We should love one another now and ever, far and near, from conference to another, from town to town, from nation to nation". Today the 8 regions of SVP in Ireland are 'Twinned' with 11 countries in Africa. For more information of twinning see: <https://www.svp.ie/whatwe-do/twinning.aspx>

Poverty Facts

16.9%

16.9% of the population of Ireland (804,755 people) are living on an income below the poverty line.

25.5%

1 out of 4 people living in Ireland (25.5%) must do without basic needs.

8.7%

8.7% of the population of Ireland (414,282) have an income below the poverty line & experience deprivation.



Justice is a fixed star which human societies try to follow from their uncertain orbits. It can be seen from different points of view but justice itself remains unchanged.

The Starfish Story

Once upon a time, there was a wise man that used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man and that what he was doing was not dancing at all. The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up small objects and throwing them into the ocean.

He came closer and called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young man paused, looked up and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean". "I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the somewhat startled wise man.

To this the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die".

Upon hearing this, the wise man commented, "But, young man, do you not realise that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"

At this, the young man bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, he said, "It made a difference for that one."

Adapted from 'Peace Out' developed by the St Vincent de Paul Society, Australia



Questions

1. Does it sometimes feel like issues are too big for us to make a difference?
2. What do you think the message of the story is?
3. Can you think of any examples of small actions that can make a big difference to people?

Poverty Facts

46.3%

Social Welfare helps to reduce poverty. Nearly half the population of Ireland (46.3%) would be at risk of poverty if there were no social welfare payments (e.g. pensions, job seekers, child benefit, disability)

19.5%

1 in 5 children in Ireland (19.5%) are at risk of poverty. 3 in 4 of those at risk of poverty live in a household with children and children make up almost one third of the people at risk of poverty.

1 in 7

1 in 7 people at risk of poverty are at work. People in this situation are sometimes referred to as 'The Working Poor', as income from work is not enough to prevent poverty.

2 in 5

2 in 5 unemployed people in Ireland (43.5%) are at risk of poverty. People in this situation are seeking work, but social welfare payments are not enough to prevent poverty.

What does deprivation mean?

648,000

people without heating at some point during the year.

429,000

people unable to keep their home adequately warm.

548,000

people go without adequate food (missing meals and not being able to afford proper meals)



The work of Vincent de Paul never grows old: who would not wish to continue it?

Lesson 3: Taking Social Action

3.

Aim of Lesson:

Students will gain an understanding of a variety of ways to engage in social action and the processes used to ensure any action taken is successful and effective.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Students will understand what is meant by Social Action and explore a variety of ways in which action can be taken. Students will understand the process involved in effective Social Action projects.

Methods Used:

- Wordstorm
- Discussion
- Exploration
- Group work
- Planning

Please note:
This lesson may require a double class plus additional action planning time!

Lesson Guide

ACTIVITY 1.

1. "What is Social Action" wordstorm

Resources: Social Action prompts list

Timing: 5 minutes

- > Wordstorm with the class what social action means to them
- > Ask them for some ideas/ ask them if they think that certain items could be considered social action (use prompt list if required)

ACTIVITY 2.

2. Action Matrix

Resources: Post it notes, Action Matrix & accompanying questions

Timing: 15 minutes

- > Hand out post it notes and ask everyone to write down an idea for an action they could take to raise awareness of an injustice or an issue that affects them (or a group of their choice).
- > While they are doing this ask them to consider the points a-i below.
- > Ask them to hand up all the post it notes
- > Draw a copy of the Action Matrix on the board
- > Now ask the students to take random post it notes from the pile and read out what it says to the rest of the group. The group then decides where to put it on the matrix. Stick the post it in that section.
- > Allow the group to vote on which of these actions they think would be most useful/ realistic for them to take part in.

Consider the following:

1. Think about the issue you want to address the most
2. Use one post it note per idea
3. Think about the different people who are affected by the issue
4. Think about how this issue affects people locally/ nationally/internationally
5. Think about what they want to happen
6. Think about what you can do to make this happen
7. Be realistic
8. Identify people to ask/talk to for advice
9. Use the skills and resources you have available

Adapted from NYCI 'Just Us or Justice'

ACTIVITY 3.

3. Guide to Taking Action

Resources: Guide to Taking Action

- > Divide class into smaller groups
- > Ask each group to collect their post-its from the Action Matrix exercise (they can use these for ideas)
- > Ask them to spend some time working on an idea for a social action project
- > They should consider the actions on the 'Guide to Taking Action' while doing this
- > Ask each group to create a 10 point plan of things they should do before they start their social action project
- > Ask the groups to feedback to the larger group

Adapted from NYCI 'Setting Our Sights on Rights'

Taking Social Action

Social Action Prompts

- > Campaigning
- > Lobbying
- > Writing to a TD/Councillor
- > Signing a petition
- > Organising a fundraiser
- > Voting in an election
- > Volunteering
- > Talking about problems in your community
- > Abiding by the law
- > Create a newsletter
- > Planning an awareness raising event
- > Petitioning your local authority
- > Making a short film
- > Donating to charity
- > Researching an issue
- > Designing a poster
- > Create an art mural
- > Host a debate
- > Hold an assembly
- > Write a play
- > Set up a Young SVP Conference

Action Matrix-Consider the following:

- Think about the issue you want to address the most
 - Use one post it note per idea
 - Think about the different people who are affected by the issue
 - Think about how this issue affects people locally/nationally/internationally
 - Think about what they want to happen
 - Think about what you can do to make this happen
 - Be realistic
 - Identify people to ask/talk to for advice
 - Use the skills and resources you have available
- Adapted from NYCI 'Just Us or Justice'*

Human Dignity:

In addition to providing direct assistance to those in need, caring for the homeless, providing social housing, operating holiday homes and other social support activities, the SVP promotes community self-sufficiency, enabling people to help themselves.

Any assistance offered by the SVP is given in a non-judgemental spirit, based on the needs of the individual or family seeking help. SVP respects the dignity of those who contact us, offering assistance and advice when sought, maintaining their dignity while assisting them towards long-term self sufficiency in a relationship of friendship, trust and confidentiality.

Poverty Facts

8,000

Over 8,000 people are homeless in Ireland

nowhere to go

Homelessness is more than just sleeping rough; it is staying in emergency hostels or shelters, in temporary B&B accommodation, staying with friends & relatives when there is nowhere else to go

3,000 children

In August 2017 the number of homeless people in Ireland passed 8,250, this included over 3,000 children

2015

The number of homeless children has tripled since the start of 2015, increasing by 2,183

1,442

There are 1,442 homeless families in Ireland

watch...

Watch this video to hear young people talk about their experience of taking part in social action <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rqjg5YowkG8>

Development:

The aim of the Young SVP programme is to support young people to engage in social action in their own communities encouraging personal and social development.

What do you hope to learn from volunteering?

For more information on Young SVP see: <https://www.svp.ie/whatwe-do/young-svp.aspx>



No work is great if it is not organised

Information on Young SVP see: www.svp.ie/whatwe-do/young-svp.aspx
Watch: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rqjg5YowkG8

Action Matrix

	High Effect	Medium Effect	Low Effect
Simple			
Needs some work			
Quite tough			

Guide to Taking Action

Sometimes learning about social (in)justice issues can leave you frustrated, you want to see things change but you aren't sure what to do or where to start. As young people there are lots of things you can do to make a difference in your own community and on behalf of others.

Here are the key steps in taking action on social justice issues:

1. Identify the issues that matters most to you:

- > You have over the past few weeks explored many different social justice issues
- > Was there an issue that you felt strongly about personally or as a group? Discuss this
- > In your group ask questions about: What you think the problem is? How does it affect people in your community/elsewhere? What should/can be done about it?

3. Think about the sort of action you want to take:

Before you decide what type of action to take, see if you can answer these questions:

- > What are some of the things that can be done?
- > What solutions have been suggested or tried before? (Do you know? Can you find out?)
- > What seems to have worked best? What do you think might work best?
- > Who is in a position to make decisions that can bring about change?
- > Who is preventing change?
- > What is the most effective action that you could take to improve the situation?

2. Inform yourself about those issues:

Research is an important part of taking action-the more you know, the more effective your action is likely to be. Think about the issue you want to address and ask the following:

- > Who is affected directly and indirectly?
- > Is there a particular group that is vulnerable?
- > Why are these people more affected by the issue than others?
- > How are these people affected?
- > What is the social justice issue/ what rights are being violated?
- > How does this impact/ change people's lives?
- > Why is the situation happening?
- > What are the underlying/ root causes of the problem?

The answers to these questions will help you shape your social action project.

4. Get organised!

Now that you have decided what the issue is, are informed about it and have decided what action to take, it's time to get organised!

- > As a group, list all the things that you will need to do to carry out the action and decide who will work on each one. Make sure everyone is clear about what they have to do.
- > Do a timeline; Draw this on large sheets of paper and display it clearly. This will say when certain jobs have to be done. It can be used throughout the project to keep track of what has been/needs to be done.
- > As a group, draw up an action plan saying what has to be done, when and by whom. Think about what the different skills in the group are and allocate roles/jobs according to this.
- > Once you have a clear plan drawn up you are ready to start taking action.

Ideas for Taking Action!

Befriending Activities

- > Visit elderly groups, groups with disabilities, groups with special needs
- > Mentoring and support for younger students (e.g. 1st years/ Buddy programme)

A wide variety of activities can be used to support these groups and reduced social isolation in your community e.g. reading, chats, baking, sports, music, dance, film, art...

Education Projects

- > Shared reading projects
- > Study support groups
- > English language supports
- > Music/ language/ sports based activities
- > Homework club
- > Maths club

Campaigns and Debates

- > Design and run a campaign on a topic/ issue important to the group
- > Host debates within the school to explore issues of social justice/ exclusion

Direct Aid

- > Provide direct support to groups in the school or wide community
- > Fundraising for specific topics
- > Collections for Hampers/ clothes drive

Research and Action

This type of project involves selecting a topic of interest to the group, exploring the issues, gaining a greater understanding of the causes and impact of the issue, examining possible solutions and taking action to address the issue based on the research.

Awareness Raising

- > Organising events/ activities that raise awareness of a chosen issue within the school or community
- > Ensuring accurate and appropriate information is provided to others about issues

Hold an Event

- > Organising events/ activities that raise awareness of a chosen issue within the school or community
- > Ensuring accurate and appropriate information is provided to others about issues

Other

- > Develop a mini Social Enterprise
- > Set up a mini Vincent's shop
- > Make a short film
- > Advocacy
- > Lobbying

Our class decided to set up an intergenerational choir with our local nursing home to try to reduce social isolation

Our class visited local primary schools to talk to 6th class pupils about secondary school to help them get ready for 1st year!

Our class taught local older people how to use Skype so they could keep in touch with their relatives abroad

Our class organised 'Say No to Racism' week in our school

Our class organised a petition about homelessness

Our group organised a clothes drive and donated the clothes collected to our local Vincent's shop

What will your class decide to do?!



Remember!

All activities require adequate and appropriate supervision and parental consent. Please contact us (youth@svp.ie) if you have any concerns, questions or require any support establishing activities. Please note there are some activities SVP does not support Young SVP volunteers to engage in. Please see Activities for Young SVP volunteers leaflet for more information.

Time to Reflect



Think about the CSPE core concepts How did your action relate to these concepts?

Why did you chose this action?



Think about the 3 pillars of the SVP Mission Statement. How did your action relate to these?

Who was helped by your actions?

What skills did you use/gain through your action?

What were the different steps involved in your action?

What have you learned?

Did you find anything difficult or challenging?

What advice would you give to someone else undertaking this action?

What have you enjoyed about planning and carrying out this action?

Has undertaking this action changed your thoughts or opinions?

1.
things I have learned....

2.
questions I have....

3.
opinion I have now....

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Social action

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The publication has been produced by the Youth Development Team of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, July 2018.



Society of St Vincent de Paul

