

# ABOUT ADVOCACY:

## Information for Secondary Students



Photo: Students participate in the Community Climate Petition in 2017. Credit: Jenifer Byrne



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## Subscribe for updates

Opportunities for taking action can sometimes arise and subside quickly - too fleeting to capture in this action kit.

The best way to keep informed and up-to-date is to subscribe to our campaigns and teachers' e-newsletters.

- For the latest advocacy actions subscribe to our campaigns list from our 'ACT' page: [www.caritas.org.au/act](http://www.caritas.org.au/act). (right-hand side of page.)
- Subscribe to Caritas Australia's Education e-news which is published each Term. To be added to the subscriber list, please email [education@caritas.org.au](mailto:education@caritas.org.au) with your name and State.



Children's ceremony, International Conference on the 3rd Anniversary of Laudato si' (Vatican City, 5-6 July 2018) Credit: Patrick Nicholson

# Curriculum notes for teachers

Poverty and injustice are created by the actions of people and this means they can be eradicated – it's not a question of if, but when. For this to happen, we must all work together towards the creation of a more just and fair world. Supporting students in advocacy activities equips them to make a stand and engage in leadership that is modelled upon justice.

There is a strong emphasis on nurturing a sense of civic responsibility across learning areas in the Australian Curriculum. The Humanities and Social Science subjects in particular, aim to develop a “broad understanding of the world in which we live, and how people can participate as active and informed citizens with high-level skills needed for the 21st century” (ACARA).

## Australian Curriculum links

### Personal and Social Capability

Students gain an understanding of the role of advocacy in contemporary society and build their capacity to critique societal constructs and forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism. In developing and acting with personal and social capability, students:

- appreciate diverse perspectives
- contribute to civil society
- understand relationships.

Students learn to negotiate and communicate effectively with others; work in teams, positively contribute to groups and collaboratively make decisions; resolve conflict and reach positive outcomes; and develop leadership skills.

### Humanities and Social Sciences

As students gain understanding about human experience, past and present, and about their own interconnectedness to people and places across local and global settings, they identify issues and others' perspectives which inform reflective practice, empathy, communication skills, teamwork and advocacy.

Students learn to appreciate the effects of civic, social, environmental, economic and business decisions, and the effect of these on their lives and those of others. They develop and use enterprising behaviours and capabilities such as leadership and initiative to make informed and responsible decisions, while working independently or collaboratively to achieve desired outcomes and make a contribution to their communities and society.

### Civics and Citizenship

#### Year 8

- What are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens in Australia's democracy?
- How citizens can participate in Australia's democracy, including use of the electoral system, contact with their elected representatives, use of lobby groups, and direct action (ACHCK062)

#### Year 9

- How do citizens participate in an interconnected world?
- How and why individuals and groups, including religious groups, participate in and contribute to civic life (ACHCK079)

#### Year 10

- How is Australia's democracy defined and shaped by the global context?
- The key features and values of Australia's system of government compared with at least ONE other system of government in the Asia region (ACHCK090)

Source:

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/personal-and-social-capability/>

# Introduction for students

## Together we can raise our voices and take action for justice!

Welcome! We are so glad you are here! Do you see things happening in your community – locally, nationally and even globally – that you wish you could change? Do you want to make a difference, but you're not really sure where to start or how to go about it? You're definitely not alone. The best way to start making a difference is by changing ourselves and the way in which we live in our world.

Advocacy is an exciting and effective way to be part of the change you want to see in your world.

At Caritas Australia we want to support you in your efforts to create a just and fair world. The content and examples in this document are designed to inspire and form your advocacy efforts. By taking action on all levels – personal, family, local, national and global – you can do your part in tackling the structures of poverty and bring about personal and global transformation.

*"Please, do not leave it to others to be protagonists of change... please, do not be bystanders in life. Get involved!"*

*Jesus was not a bystander. He got involved. Don't stand aloof, but immerse yourselves in the reality of life, as Jesus did".*

Pope Francis  
*Christus Vivit, #174*

## Finding inspiration from St. Oscar Romero

Inspired by the profound words of St. Oscar Romero, "Aspire not to have more, but to be more," Caritas Australia encourages all Australians to take up the challenge to Be More in their daily lives: to take action for social and environmental justice, and to create a more just and compassionate world.

An uncompromising determination to do what is right, true, and just became a guiding principle for Oscar Romero when he was Archbishop of San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador. In his actions and words, he demanded peace; a peace which could only be found in realising human rights and human dignity. He raised awareness globally about the people in his country who had suffered immensely at the hands of military forces; he spoke up for the rights of the poor and marginalised.

Like many great leaders who have fought for truth, Oscar Romero was assassinated in 1980 by those whose actions and authority he spent his life challenging. Although his life was taken, his voice could not be silenced. Romero became a symbol of hope in a country ravaged by poverty, injustice, and sorrow.

St. Oscar Romero's dedication to social justice and Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the Preferential Option for the Poor, has since earned him the title of Patron of Caritas Internationalis.

# What is advocacy?

## Advocacy puts faith into action

*"Advocacy offers us an opportunity to bring the realities of our sisters and brothers facing injustice throughout the world to those who hold positions of power in our government."*

Source: Ignatian Solidarity Network, School and Community Training Guide: Ignatian Advocacy 101

Advocacy means 'to add a voice.' To advocate is to take action to support a cause or person. It is about challenging the structures of society that create and perpetuate poverty and promoting the realisation of rights for marginalised communities around the world.

Advocacy is focused on creating change in governance, attitudes, power, social relations and institutions. It supports actions taken on a large scale and attempts to address the deeper underlying issues that lead to injustice.

Advocates and advocacy organisations often attempt to influence decision-making that will in turn have a ripple effect on the health and wellbeing of people and whole communities. Caritas Australia encourages social change by working to influence educators and policy-makers and empowering communities to exercise their rights and ability to influence decisions.

### Advocacy can take many forms:

- Education within schools and the wider community
- Individual or group meetings with politicians and elected officials
- Researching issues and publishing the results
- Use of the media to form public opinion
- Publicly supporting particular causes or policies
- Participation in social justice movements
- Supporting the work of social justice organisations such as Caritas Australia
- Organised campaigns that may involve letter writing or petitions

### Advocacy Process



Successful advocacy does not just identify problems or concerns but seeks to understand the problem and develop possible solutions. It involves seeking the advice and opinions of those who will be most affected by the issues.

Advocacy is typically an ongoing process involving planning, taking action and reviewing the results. Advocates will often work toward smaller goals over time, learning from any mistakes and successes and adapting their strategies for the future.



# Who can advocate?

You! Anyone can advocate. It's not just for leaders or adults. For example, anyone residing in Australia can sign a petition on a particular subject that can be sent to Parliament. Did you know that this is the only direct means by which someone can ask the Parliament to take action? The House of Representatives in Canberra receives on average 161 petitions each year calling for action on a range of issues.

Source: Parliament of Australia, 2019

## The power of advocacy

Shirley is an Indigenous Manide woman from a remote community high in the hills of the Philippines, who has experienced lifelong discrimination. Shirley joined a Caritas-supported program that became the turning point for her and the whole community.

Shirley has courageously learnt new healthcare skills to enhance her local community and, as Chieftain, she is now leading her community to take a stand against discrimination and pave the way for a better future. The program is also helping the Manide advocate for land rights, obtain better employment and improve their access to health, education, housing and sanitation.

Photo credit: Richard Wainwright



# Caritas Australia's advocacy approach

## We amplify the voices of our partners.

**Caritas Australia's advocacy approach is partner-led, evidence based and inspired by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.**

Caritas Australia recognises that there are structural impediments to people breaking free from the cycle of poverty. Our advocacy program helps Australians understand the connection of poverty and injustice to social, economic and political systems; it also encourages people to take action.

By working with over 100 local partners throughout the world, we are able to amplify the concerns of local communities through our advocacy work, as well as ensure our program work responds to the most urgent needs of communities.

We seek to have the voices and stories of the people we serve influence local practical and political decisions about their lives. We advocate for attitudes, policies and actions that uphold Catholic Social Teaching principles, particularly the principles of Human Dignity, Solidarity and Subsidiarity.

"Subsidiarity compels us to realise that the people closest to, and most affected by, the issues are the ones best placed to address them, with the help of the Government."

[Source: Joint Statement on Subsidiarity](#)

"A tension exists between giving a person a fish in order to survive, and teaching that person how to fish. However, that is not the end of the matter. There is no point in teaching a person to fish if that person is already well able to do so and someone else has stolen all the fish or polluted the water so that there are no fish to be had! Advocacy for the rights of those whose livelihoods are being destroyed is an imperative in social justice ministry. Advocacy and development need to operate hand in hand."

Excerpt from *Bonded through tragedy united in hope: The Catholic Church & East Timor's struggle for Independence, a Memoir*, by Hilton Deakin with Jim and Therese D'Orsa

## Our theory of change

At Caritas Australia we believe advocacy is important for creating long term change. Our mission is to end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity, so it's our responsibility to address structural injustice which is so often the root cause of poverty, rather than just the effects. Our approach and programs contribute to the goal of Integral Human Development in the communities where we and our partners are working. Integral Human Development is the holistic development of the human person, covering all aspects of life: social, economic, political, cultural, personal and spiritual.

Our advocacy approach calls for an end to injustice by encouraging people of influence and power to work for the common good, while at the same time offering ways to work for change and bring hope

**IF** Caritas Australia supports the communities we partner with to advocate on their priority issues, promotes their voices in Australia and supports Australian communities to raise their voice in solidarity,

**THEN** the communities we partner with will be more effective advocates, as will the Australian communities acting in solidarity with them, and more likely to achieve their shared social justice goals.



# Caritas Australia's advocacy highlights

## International Campaign to Ban Landmines

This initiative was enthusiastically supported by Caritas Australia with 219,000 signatures gathered to support a prohibition on land mines. The global campaign culminated in the passing of the 1997 mine ban treaty.

## National Day of Prayer for Burma

In October 2007, Caritas took the lead in organising a National Day of Prayer for the People of Burma in response to the peaceful demonstrations and military crackdown that had occurred in Burma in September 2007. This was a public interfaith gathering in Sydney with over 1000 participants and prayers from Buddhist monks, representatives of Islamic and Jewish faiths as well as Catholics and other Christians.

## Forsaken Voices Report

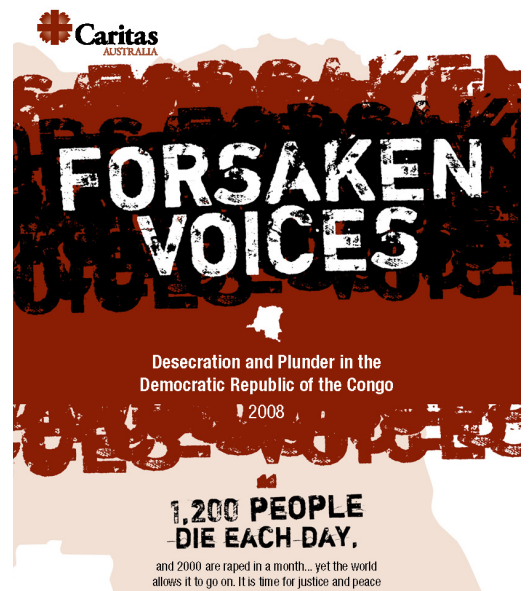
Forsaken Voices: Desecration and plunder in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was a research report released by Caritas Australia in 2008. The report had three major objectives: to secure government funding for the DRC where there was currently none; to increase the awareness in Australia of the issues in DRC by gaining mainstream media coverage; and thirdly to secure more funds from our supporters for our work supporting women who had suffered sexual violence. AusAID dedicated \$5 million to assistance in the DRC, the 7.30 Report and SBS covered the substance of the report and Caritas Australia received over \$200,000 from our supporters for our ongoing work there – an indication of our power in bringing justice and making a real difference.

## Aid Review

In 2010/11 Caritas Australia advocated for real and lasting change on behalf of the world's poor when we took part in the Federal Government's Independent Review of Australia's Aid program. At the conclusion of the Review, the government committed to a more accountable, transparent and effective delivery of aid in the world's communities.

## Stop for Poverty!

In March 2010, over 1,000 people froze-still for three minutes on the streets of Sydney, Brisbane and Perth to call for an end to global poverty, and an increase in Australia's Overseas Development Assistance to 0.7 percent of GNI by 2015. Caritas Australia's Stop for Poverty! campaign not only captured the attention of passers-by but culminated in hundreds of contributions to Caritas Australia's photo petition to the Australian Government.





# Caritas Australia's advocacy highlights



## Walk as One: Connecting with our World's Indigenous Peoples

- 100 film screenings were held nationwide by schools, parishes and individuals.
- 3,000 people watched the film online through the Caritas Australia website. This film helped to raise awareness about issues affecting Indigenous communities and inspiring people to take action.
- Over 780 people responded to our Walk As One petition, calling on the Australian Government and AusAID to prioritise Indigenous Peoples in their programs.



## Hearts 4 Climate

As part of Caritas' Hearts 4 Climate campaign, thousands of students and parishioners from around Australia sent heart-shaped 'love letters for climate' to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, urging him to have a Heart4Climate by thinking about future generations and committing to stronger emission reduction targets. A key campaign moment was when students from Daramalan college in Canberra presented them to his advisor in November 2015.



## Community Climate Petition

In 2017, Caritas Australia was part of a faith-based collective that supported over 200 volunteers to gather 31,000 'pen and paper' signatures in 110 electorates for the 'Community Climate petition'. In 41 electorates, volunteers met with their local MP, presented the petition and led a conversation on climate change. 17 MPs made supportive speeches in Parliament. The petition received strong media engagement and was the largest electorate-based climate petition in our country's history.



## Maryknoll Deaf Development Program (DDP), Cambodia

While most countries have had sign language for over one hundred years, Cambodia's formal sign language has only been taught since 2013. The DDP was instrumental in developing Cambodian Sign Language, and now aims to empower deaf people to develop their education, language, employment and community, and to raise awareness and understanding of deafness, deaf people and their culture within Cambodian society.



## Strengthening Traditional Village Governance

In 2018, Sakun joined a Caritas Australia-funded program, which is implemented by Caritas India and its local partner, Samarthan. One aspect of the program focuses on strengthening traditional village governance, to improve access to government entitlements. Sakun was supported to access a custom-made tricycle, which has helped her get around so she is less isolated. As well as learning how to earn her own income, Sakun is now a vocal participant in village governance meetings, sharing her opinions as an equal.

# Why advocate?

## Catholic Social Teaching guides our advocacy work.

Advocacy, although expressed in new ways, is an ancient aspect of faith. In the Hebrew Scriptures, God responds to the cry of the poor and sends prophets to proclaim a world of justice. For Christian people, the commandment to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22) means helping those in need through practical efforts of charity and working to end unjust practices and structures.

These efforts have found different expressions over time and have adapted to a changing world. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) has emerged to become a comprehensive set of guidelines on responding to social issues in the modern era. The principles of CST provide a vision for what a just world could look like and call us to assume responsibility with others by shaping a more just and compassionate social order.

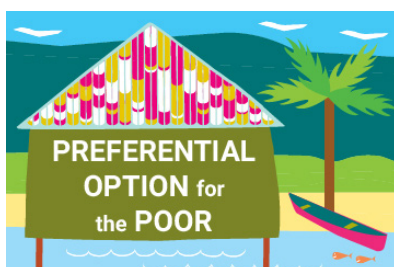
*We “must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice”.*

Pope Benedict XVI,  
Deus Caritas Est, #28a



*We are made in God's image and this means we each have a God-given dignity.*

Advocacy must have at its heart a recognition that all people possess dignity. Actions that address poverty, hunger, oppression and injustice restore human dignity.



*Preferential care should be shown to poor and vulnerable people, whose needs and rights are given special attention in God's eyes.*

Effective advocacy highlights and gives voice to the stories and experiences of the poor and marginalised.



*We believe we are part of one human family and have a responsibility to help each person achieve their full potential.*

Through advocacy, we can remove barriers, develop relationships and stand together with those in need.



*We believe in looking beyond our personal interests and working in a way that benefits everyone.*

Effective advocacy centres on addressing and improving the wellbeing of a whole community, not individual needs.



*We believe in every person's right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives, and that every person can be the architect of change in their own life.*

Advocacy must seek the advice and opinions of those who are most affected by the issues.



*We are called to respect and care for the world in which we live and share the resources the earth has given us.*

Since it is the world's poorest communities who are most affected by changes to the planet, advocacy that centres on the cry of the poor should also be guided by the cry of the earth.



# Ready to take action?

By taking action as individuals, as a group or as a school community, you can make a difference to the lives of those experiencing poverty and injustice.

Encourage your friends and family to get involved. Explain why the issues matter to you and use social media to inform others.

Determine if your school, parish or community has a group working for justice. If not, consider forming a group.



Photo: Climate March, Sydney 2015

## How to create a campaign

### Step 1: What needs to change?

- Use the See, Judge, Act process
- What is the key problem? Identify the root causes
- Identify what needs to change

### Step 2: Who is involved?

- Have you listened to those most affected? How are their voices included?
- Who are you targeting?
- Who are the relevant decision-makers?

### Step 3: How will you influence?

- Decide on the best advocacy strategy/ies
- Develop a set of clear, concise messages
- Prepare your tools
- Develop a plan of how and when you will use your strategies and tools

### Step 4: How can I make sure young people get involved?

- How can you get your message to the people who need to hear it?
- How can young people be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the campaign?

### Step 5: Who can I work with?

- Who will want to get involved?
- Who are allies?
- Who is already doing work on a similar campaign?

### Step 6: What obstacles might I face?

- What are potential obstacles?
- How will you overcome these?
- Prepare your strategies and arguments for opposing views

### Step 7: How will you know it is working?

- Develop success statements, such as 'at the end of the campaign we will have...'
- Decide when you will meet to evaluate

### Step 8: What do I need to change for next time?

- Think about what worked and what didn't work in your plan
- Adjust your plan accordingly, so that you can be more effective in the future

**NOTE - For more resources on how to advocate, download [Caritas Australia's Advocacy Toolkit](#).**

# SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR 2020 SECONDARY SCHOOLS

## JANUARY

1 World Day of Peace  
26 Australia Day / Survival Day

## FEBRUARY

1- 7 World Interfaith Harmony Week  
2 World Wetlands Day  
8 World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action Against Human Trafficking  
13 Apology Anniversary Australia  
20 World Day of Social Justice  
26 Ash Wednesday

## MARCH

1 Clean Up Australia Day  
8 International Women's Day  
21 Harmony Day Australia  
22 International Water Day  
24 St Oscar Romero - Anniversary of Assassination  
28 Earth Hour

## APRIL

7 World Health Day  
10 Good Friday  
12 Easter Sunday  
22 International Mother Earth Day

## MAY

22 International Day of Biological Diversity  
26 National Sorry Day  
27 - 3 National Reconciliation Week

## JUNE

5 World Environment Day  
14-20 National Refugee Week  
17 World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought  
20 World Refugee Day

## JULY

4 International Cooperatives Day  
5-12 NAIDOC Week  
30 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons  
31 National Tree Day

## AUGUST

Fairtrade Fortnight  
9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples  
12 International Youth Day  
19 World Humanitarian Day  
30 Social Justice Sunday

## SEPTEMBER

1 World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation  
5 International Day of Charity  
8 International Literacy Day  
15 International Day of Democracy  
16 International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer  
21 International Day of Peace  
27 World Day of Migrants and Refugees

## OCTOBER

2 International Day of Non-Violence  
5 World Habitat Day  
5 World Teachers' Day  
11 International Day of the Girl Child  
11-17 Anti Poverty Week  
13 International Day for Disaster Reduction  
15 International Day of Rural Women  
16 World Food Day  
17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty  
24 World Development Information Day

## NOVEMBER

9-15 National Recycling Week  
10 World Science Day for Peace and Development  
15 World Day of the Poor  
16 International Day for Tolerance  
19 World Toilet Day  
20 Universal Children's Day  
25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women  
29 First Sunday of Advent

## DECEMBER

1 World AIDS Day  
3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities  
10 Human Rights Day  
20 International Human Solidarity Day

For all resources visit: [www.caritas.org.au/schools](http://www.caritas.org.au/schools)



**Caritas**  
AUSTRALIA

End poverty  
Promote justice  
Uphold dignity