

The difference between Charity and Social Justice

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Edizioni Febbraio 2018

1. Read

Although Civil Rights campaigners have spent many years campaigning for equal opportunities for citizens everywhere, our society has still not reached a good level of social justice: some people still don't have a place to live, some people don't have enough money for food and there are still children who cannot access education. Social prejudice, discrimination, racism, sexism, corruption, addiction and violence all contribute to society's problems.

Often we try to help people by giving them money, or old clothes, or maybe even a place to sleep for the night but although these acts of charity help people AT THE TIME, they don't provide long term solutions to their problems. To try and eliminate these problems we need to fight for social justice. What does that mean? It means that we need to ask our governments to change their policies on key issues like housing, education, employment and poverty.

We need to ensure that everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, has a place they can call home; a safe place where they can take care of themselves and their families. We also need to ensure that young people are not prevented from entering further education because they can't afford it or because they have to work in low paid jobs to help pay household bills. We need to ensure that there are good, affordable childcare facilities so that parents who want to or need to return to work when they have babies can do so.

The above are only some examples of social injustice and we must all do our bit to bring about change. Young people have a particularly important role because you guys are the future. People don't want or need your charity, they want a fair society.

When we think of charity, we think of poor people who need our help. When we think of social justice, we see everyone as equal members of society who deserve equal opportunities to have an equal chance at happiness.

2. Look at these activities. Write 'C' for charity or 'SJ' for social justice next to each one.

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| a. Giving clothes to an association. | d. Giving money to a homeless person. |
| b. Volunteering in a soup kitchen | e. Writing a letter to a local politician. |
| c. Taking part in a protest. | f. Voting for a socially responsible political party. |

3. Write four examples of social injustice that exist in your town/city/country.

4. Talk to a partner. What can you do to bring more social justice to your town/city/country? Prepare a mini presentation outlining problems and potential long term solutions. These phrases could be useful:

Firstly, secondly, thirdly, finally

The key issues are...

We recommend...

5. Write a letter to your local newspaper outlining the key points of your presentation and the action you would like your fellow citizens to take about social injustice in your city.

Teacher's Notes

1. Lesson warmer: Ask students about any charity work they or their families are involved in. Ask them to outline the good things about charity (people get help) and the bad things (it's only temporary).
2. Write 'C' for charity or 'SJ' for social justice next to each activity.
 - a. Giving clothes to an association. **C**
 - b. Volunteering in a soup kitchen **C**
 - c. Taking part in a protest. **SJ**
 - d. Giving money to a homeless person. **C**
 - e. Writing a letter to a local politician. **SJ**
 - f. Voting for a socially responsible political party. **SJ**
3. Free answer
4. Students can work in small groups and then give their presentations to the class.
5. Before exercise 5, students should work in groups to structure their letters with an introduction to the topic of social justice, the main problems and the proposed solutions. Remember this is a formal letter so formal language should be used.

* Sarah Gudgeon

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