

# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This resource is intended as a source of information that aims to provide students with an introduction into advocacy.

For more information about the process of advocating, please see our [Advocacy Toolkit](#).

If you do edit this resource, please ensure content and photos from this resources remain with the appropriate credit to Caritas Australia and the photographers.



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# STUDENTS

Learning about challenges to the health, wellbeing and safety of others and our earth can be hard. If you are feeling worried or upset about anything you have learnt about through this resource, make sure you talk to your teacher or trusted adult. They can share your concerns via our [website](#). You can also find out more about speaking up on our [page for young people](#)



Do you have an idea for how Caritas Australia can improve our school resources? We would love to hear it! Please email [education@caritas.org.au](mailto:education@caritas.org.au)

## Teachers

For more school resources, please visit: [caritas.org.au/resources/school-resources/](https://caritas.org.au/resources/school-resources/)

Stay up to date with events and resources! Subscribe to [Caritas Australia's Education e-newsletter](#)

First Nations people are advised that this resource and external links may contain images, voices and names of people who have died.

# ABOUT ADVOCACY: Information for Secondary Students



Ronita (22) in her school uniform, walks down a local street in Quezon City, Philippines, on her way to school. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

# Curriculum Links

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).

## 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

This area of the curriculum explores the study of human behaviour and interaction in social, cultural, environmental, economic, business, legal and political contexts. This learning area has a historical and contemporary focus, from personal to global contexts, and considers the challenges that may occur in the future. It plays an important role in assisting students to understand global issues, and building their capacity to be active and informed citizens who understand and participate in the world.

Students are provided a broad understanding of the world we live in, and how people can participate as active and informed citizens with high-level skills needed now and in the future. They provide opportunities for students to develop their own personal and social learning, and to explore their perspectives as well as those of others.

## Civic and Citizenship

*Year 9*

[AC9HC9K05](#) - how and why individuals and groups, including community, religious and cultural groups, participate in and contribute to civic life in Australia and to global citizenship

*Year 10*

[AC9HC10K02](#) - the Australian Government's role and responsibilities at a regional and global level

Source: [Australia Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority](#)

# 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 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.

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**“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* n174

## 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 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 in an attempt 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, including:

- Researching issues and publishing the results
- Education within schools and the wider community
- Individual or group meetings with politicians and elected officials
- 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



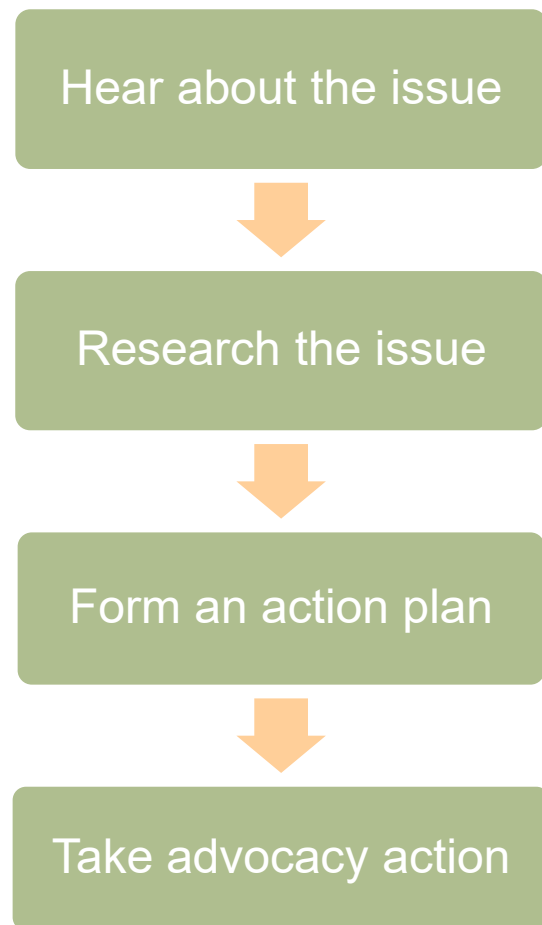
“Advocacy offers us an opportunity to bring the realities of our sisters and brothers facing injustice throughout the world to those who hold positions of power in our government.”

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



# What is advocacy?

## 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 are 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.

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“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 waters 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

# 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?** Over the past decade, the House of Representatives in Canberra has received between 329 and 780 petitions each year calling for action on a range of issues.

Source: Parliament of Australia



Laxmi (16) facilitating a wall magazine poster making session highlighting issues such as child rights, child protection, child marriage and labour exploitation. Photo: Richard Wainwright/ Caritas Australia

## The Power of Advocacy

Laxmi became actively involved in the child's club at her school. This helped her develop greater confidence, and she was elected as chairperson of her club.

Clean water had long been an issue at Laxmi's school. Laxmi and her child's club members discussed the need to build multiple water taps at the school so that all students could access clean drinking water. They advocated to the school administration, the ward office and the municipality office until they eventually agreed to construct a series of water taps on the school grounds.

"Now, I know where to speak, what to speak. However big the gathering might be, I'm not afraid to speak," Laxmi said.

Laxmi has since graduated from her school but continues to be involved in the child's club, serving as an advisor and mentoring the next generation of young leaders at her former school.

For more about Laxmi's story, please visit: [Laxmi - Nepal Case Study \(Secondary\)](#)

# 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 some systems and rules make it harder for people to break free from 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 74 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.

## 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 with influence and power to work for the common good, while at the same time offering ways to work for change and bring hope. Our current theory of change is:

**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

## Safer World for All

Australia is one of the safest, healthiest, and most generous countries in the world. Yet, our aid contribution is only 0.68% of the Federal Budget. Our fight for a just and fair world has increased since the pandemic. Communities are increasingly experiencing dangerous hot and unpredictable weather, fuel shortages, hunger, violent invasions and the mass movement of people. Now, more than ever, Australia needs to stand up and take action. By committing to a modest increase in Australian aid to 1% of the Federal Budget, we can have a huge impact. More details are available on [our website](#).

**SAFER  
WORLD  
FOR ALL**

## Climate Change Action



Monoranjon lives in a village in southwest Bangladesh that is highly vulnerable to climate change. Photo: Caritas Australia

The impact of climate change on vulnerable communities, in particular our neighbours in the Pacific, is extreme. Our voices, together, can persuade governments and polluters to take action to achieve climate justice and protect our common home. The displacement of people due to climate change is a growing humanitarian disaster. More details available on [our website](#).

## First Australians

We believe every person has a right to participate in the decisions that affect them. Too often, First Australians are denied this right. Caritas Australia has partnered with First Nations groups to promote subsidiarity. More details available on [our website](#).



Sheridan, one of the participants in Baabayn's Mums and Bubs group, painting an artwork. Photo: Caritas Australia.

## Women's Empowerment



Worknesh, a mother of three and member of Degebon Women's saving group is seen drying coffee beans at her house in Decha District, South West Region in Ethiopia. Photo: Maheder Tadese/Caritas Australia

Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, food insecurity, climate change, gender-based violence and abuse, as well as a lack of access to education, health care and employment. Our partners tell us that harmful social norms within patriarchal structures perpetuate discriminatory beliefs and practices and undermine human rights. More details available on [our website](#).

# 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 world.



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

Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* n28a 

## Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching



### HUMAN DIGNITY

We believe every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore has

inherent dignity that should always be safeguarded.

Advocacy must have at its heart a recognition that all people possess dignity. When we work to end poverty, hunger, oppression and injustice, we help uphold people’s dignity.



Manaini with her granddaughter in their garden in a small village in Fiji. Photo: Caritas Australia



### SOLIDARITY

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.



Leaia stands in front of her make-shift home with Rose (right) from Caritas Samoa. Photo: Caritas Australia

# Why advocate? continued

## Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching continued



### PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

We believe in prioritising the women, men and children most vulnerable to extreme poverty and injustice.

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

Ronita (22) smiles as she holds her sons in their small home in Quezon City, Philippines. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia



### SUBSIDIARITY AND PARTICIPATION

We believe all people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Subsidiarity requires that decisions are made by people closest and most affected by the issues and concerns of the community.

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

A community group in Bangladesh doing climate change activism through songs. Photo: Caritas Australia



### THE COMMON GOOD

We believe the good of each human person is intimately related to the good of the whole community. We are all responsible for each other.

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

Manaini and fellow community members sell fresh fruits and vegetables they have grown and packaged on their farms, by the roadside in a small village in Fiji. Photo: Caritas Australia



### CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

We believe that care for our common home is vital for the common good of all people. We believe a true ecological approach is a social approach.

We are to be protectors of creation and of one another. 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.



Sisilia watering her school garden. Photo: Caritas Australia

# 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 different communication channels to inform others.
- Determine if your school, parish or community has a group working for justice. If not, consider forming a group.

For more resources on how to advocate, download [Advocacy Toolkit](#).

You may like to utilise our [Social Justice calendar](#) to explore specific social justice days that are relevant to your school.



Caritas Australia CEO Kirsten Sayers with senator Penny Wong at the launch of the 'Anchors in a Crisis: Women's Humanitarian Leadership in Faith and Secular Contexts' report. Photo: Caritas Australia  
Report can be accessed [here](#)

# Ready to take action

## 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 these tools to achieve your strategies

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

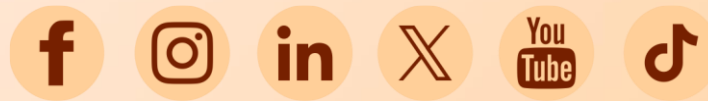
### Step 7: How will you know it is working?

- 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

**+ Thank You ✦**



[www.caritas.org.au](http://www.caritas.org.au)

