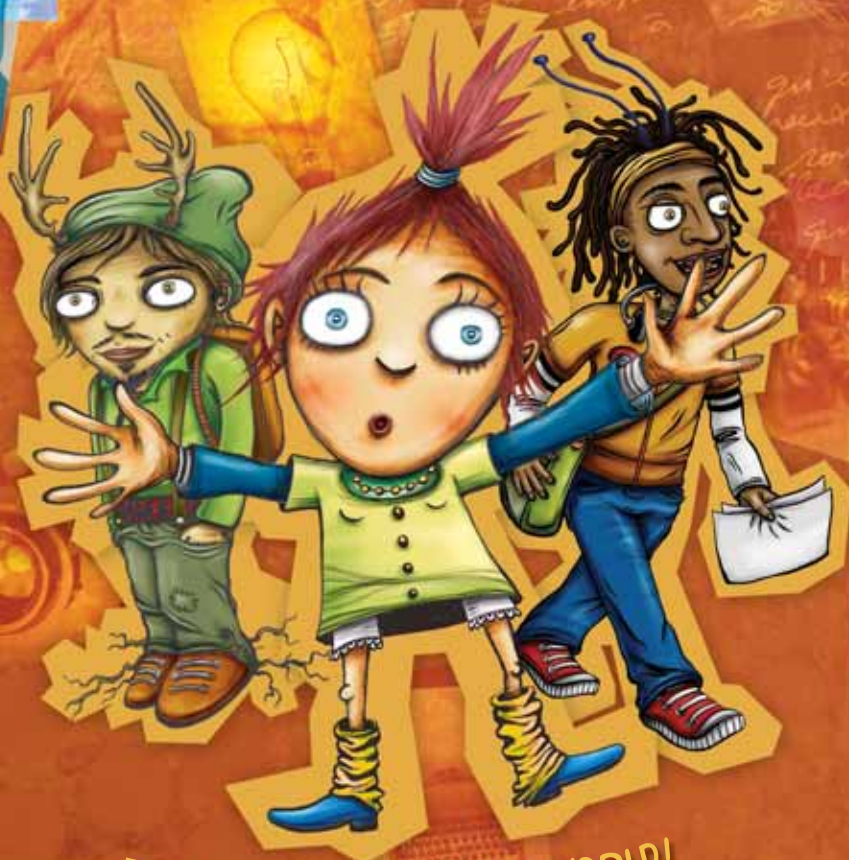



# THE STUDENT ACTIVIST GUIDE




TIME TO CHANGE THE WORLD!


# Why is a guide necessary?



"I'd like to get involved, but I'm not too sure how to go about it."



"I'd like to get involved too, but I need more information. Do you think someone at school could help us?"



"We could probably ask a teacher or a counselor."



"OK, let's start by reading the *Guide*. That should answer a lot of our questions."

OTHER GUIDES AVAILABLE ONLINE:


TAKINGITGLOBAL.ORG  
GLOBALISSUES.ORG  
SOUNDOUT.ORG  
YOUTHACTIONCENTRE.CA  
AMNESTY.CA/YOUTH





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# Give peace a chance!

In war, no one ever really wins. It's sad because every day we see and hear on the news about people being hurt and killed in wars. Most of the time, the victims are poorer and less fortunate than us. I need to remember that the year 2000 launched the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. I need to remember that less than one per cent of what the world spent every year on weapons was needed to put every child into school by the year 2000, and yet it didn't happen.

I'm going to do my part.

## I'm going to start changing the world! I'm going to...

- ❁ become better informed about the state of the world. This will also help me to inform my friends and the people around me;
- ❁ make a daily effort to bring about peace around me;
- ❁ find a way to support victims of war;
- ❁ invite peace activists to speak at school;
- ❁ remind everyone that it's the Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

 PEACEBUILD.CA UNESCO.CA  
NVPOCADE.ORG  
CYBERSCHOOLBUS.UN.ORG

Clean up my  
room? Are you  
nuts!



# I'd rather save the planet

Climate change is the greatest threat to the survival of living things. Everyone knows it, but some people still go on pretending that the problem isn't real. It's really weird that people still don't get it.

Well, I'm going to start changing the world!  
I'm going to...

- ❖ find out what my ecological footprint is and reduce my energy consumption; that means Reuse-Reduce-Recycle;
- ❖ tell everyone I know that we need to take action today. When it comes to the environment, we can't wait until tomorrow;
- ❖ encourage the use of public transit, bicycles, car pools and electric transportation. I won't just talk the talk, I'm going to walk the talk;
- ❖ participate in ecological gardening projects, tree-planting projects and projects to beautify my neighbourhood;
- ❖ invite environmentalists to visit our school to give us tips and information that will help us improve the world;
- ❖ become an environmental activist in my school and community.



GREEN-STREET.CA EC.GC.CA/EDUCATION  
DAVIDSUZUKI.ORG FREETHEPLANET.ORG  
MYFOOTPRINT.ORG PLANETFRIENDLY.NET



## Speaking out for

# Democracy!

# 6

Democracy means learning to live with one another. It means realizing we all have the same rights regardless of power or privilege. So then why does discrimination continue to exist? Why are some people still racist, sexist and homophobic? In some countries, human rights are completely ignored. People are mistreated because of their ideas and beliefs! Unfortunately, it happens here too.

**Well, I'm going to start changing the world!  
I'm going to ....**

- ❖ make my friends and family aware of racism, sexism and homophobia;
- ❖ invite groups that protest against discrimination and fight for human rights to speak at my school, and participate in their activities;
- ❖ inform people at school about the terrible situation that persists in some countries;
- ❖ get people to sign petitions to free people who've been imprisoned because of their opinions.
- ❖ promote democracy by living it;
- ❖ participate in my school's student council;

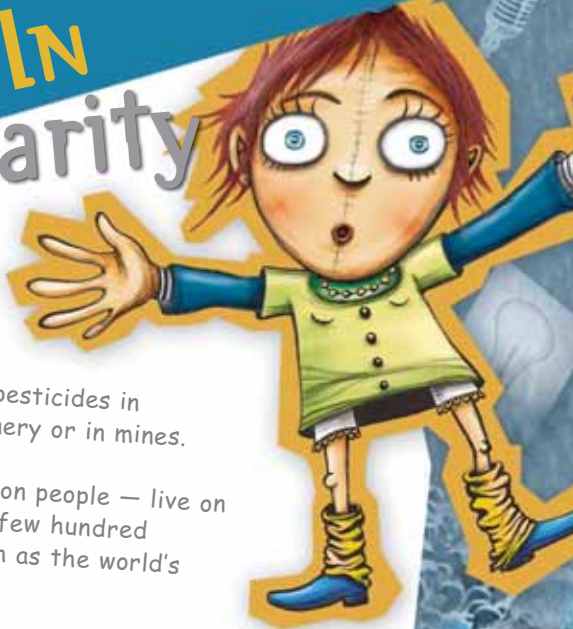
CCLA.ORG  
WWW.OHCHR.ORG  
AMNESTY.CA DD-RD.CA

# IN Solidarity

An estimated 171 million children - of whom 73 million are under 10 years old - are working in hazardous situations or conditions, including work with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture, with dangerous machinery or in mines.

Half the world - nearly three billion people - live on less than two dollars a day, and a few hundred millionaires now own as much wealth as the world's poorest 2.5 billion people.

Even today in Canada, 1.2 million children live in poverty; that's an increase of 20% since 1989.



## Well, I'm changing the world! I'm going to ...

- ❖ tell my friends at school about the consequences of globalization and poverty;
- ❖ participate in fundraising campaigns to help victims of natural disasters such as tsunamis and earthquakes;
- ❖ promote fair trade and encourage people to become informed consumers;
- ❖ stay informed to make a difference.
- ❖ invite solidarity groups to my school to talk about what they're doing to change the world, and take part in their activities;
- ❖ expose and boycott companies that use child labour;

UNICEF.ORG  
CAMPAIGN2000.CA  
AIPE-CCI.ORG  
MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY.CA  
EPALS.COM





# I'm going to change the world

"I feel like changing the world, but will I really make a difference?" I know how you feel, but remember what Ghandi said: "Be the change you want to see in the world."

If people didn't act on their beliefs, where would we be? Consider:

- ❖ the abolishment of slavery;
- ❖ women's right to vote;
- ❖ improved working conditions.

You're right! If I just think back a little, I realize how actions and collaboration have led to:

- ❖ the introduction of fair trade;
- ❖ increased recycling;
- ❖ human and equal rights for all irrespective of gender, culture, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Seriously, we have to stop saying nothing can be done, because it's just not true! It's simple; the best way to be convincing is to take action because:

- ❖ if we don't, things will get worse;
- ❖ it's dangerous to believe we can go on polluting the environment and consuming as many resources as we do;
- ❖ together we can change the world.

# Getting involved

## what's in it for me?

- ✦ IT WILL HELP ME TO LEARN ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD;
- ✦ IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN CREATING A BETTER WORLD;
- ✦ IT WILL TEACH ME HOW TO WORK WITHIN A TEAM;
- ✦ IT WILL TEACH ME HOW TO PUT TOGETHER SOME REALLY COOL PROJECTS;
- ✦ IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND HAVE FUN WITH OTHER PEOPLE MY AGE;
- ✦ IT WILL DEVELOP MY ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS;
- ✦ IT WILL MAKE ME FEEL USEFUL.



# Together we can make a difference!



Joining forces is the best way to change the world. You could form a committee or a group, then find various courses of action, make decisions and delegate tasks. A meeting is the perfect opportunity to bounce around ideas.

## Some things you can do:

- ❖ research your cause and find out who's doing what;
- ❖ look for support (at school and in your community);
- ❖ produce creative and informative material (e.g. posters, flyers);
- ❖ look for funding or do some fundraising;
- ❖ organize activities and mobilize people.

## Some tips for a successful meeting:

- ❖ prepare a list of topics in advance (agenda);
- ❖ begin the meeting by introducing the participants;
- ❖ listen to all opinions and take them all into account before making a decision;
- ❖ if a disagreement arises, don't worry; that will inspire creativity! If a consensus can't be reached, take a vote;
- ❖ ask all participants to write their phone number and e-mail address on a sheet of paper, make copies and distribute them to everyone;
- ❖ get down to business by identifying tasks, delegating them and setting deadlines;
- ❖ follow-up on the tasks after the meeting;
- ❖ keep everyone up to date on project developments between meetings;
- ❖ work as a team.

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## Tips for recruiting new people by phone:

First, have your questions ready and make sure you have a pencil and paper.

Example of an opening line:

"Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_."

"\_\_\_\_\_ gave me your name,"

or "I found your number in

the phone book."

"Right now, I'm working on (explain the subject)."

"Could you help me...?"



# Find out the facts

The best way to sound credible and defend your ideas is to know what you're talking about. Tell people why the cause means so much to you. You'll become much more convincing that way. You don't need to be an expert. The important thing is to stay informed. The secret to winning people over is to believe in the cause yourself!

**Before you set up a committee, here are some pointers:**

- ❖ start by checking at school if a committee or a teacher is interested in the same issue you are;
- ❖ visit the library and consult the various media to which you have access: newspapers, books, magazines, videos, etc. Don't hesitate to ask resource people for help; that's what they're there for;
- ❖ find out if there are already any active groups in your community. If so, give them a call to ask for information and documentation;
- ❖ go on-line and have a look at the various sites dedicated to the subject.

## Some useful Web sites

for current affairs and world news:  
[cbc.ca](http://cbc.ca)  
[newswire.ca/en](http://newswire.ca/en)  
[news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk)

alternative media:  
[rabble.ca](http://rabble.ca)  
[canada.indymedia.org](http://canada.indymedia.org)  
[adbusters.org](http://adbusters.org)

- ❖ Very important: When doing research, keep track of your sources by answering the questions: Where did you see the article? What was the publication date? What page was it on? This will lend credibility to your cause.
- ❖ Learn to look at both sides of the issue. This may help you to deal with people who disagree with your actions.
- ❖ Finally, try to focus on one specific topic, instead of trying to cover many topics at the same time. You'll sound more convincing and you'll hold your audience's attention better.

[UNICEF.ORG](http://UNICEF.ORG)  
[WWW.UN.ORG](http://WWW.UN.ORG)  
[MEDIA-AWARENESS.CA](http://MEDIA-AWARENESS.CA)  
[GLOBALISSUES.ORG](http://GLOBALISSUES.ORG)



# Open the floodgates: water for everyone

"I knew water was essential to all known forms of life, but did you know that every individual needs 20 to 50 litres of water free from harmful contaminants each and every day?"

"I almost fell off my chair when I found out that every day over 4,000 children are killed by diarrhea, yet rich countries still spend \$40 billion on pet food every year."

"We should find out more and share what we know about the world's water situation."

"Wow, so how come 1.1 billion people are denied the right to clean water and 2.6 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation?"

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP



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"Great idea! How about setting up a booth in March to highlight World Water Day, or in April to highlight Earth Day?"

"We could also talk about what we know at our lunchtime meetings."

"We should organize something at school as we can understand the importance of water."

## INTERNATIONAL CLUB



safewater.org  
www.unesco.org/water

It's World Water Day and you are invited to a discussion forum, tomorrow at noon! We're also organizing a walk, which will take place next week, to promote organic farming!

Here's this week's Jeopardy question: "On average, people in Europe use more than 200 litres a day of this; in the U.S. more than 400 litres a day."



# INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WEEK



"All right! The student council lent us their photocopier!"

"Would you like some water?"

"Drink up because a billion people don't have access to safe drinking water."

"I really liked the people from the Water for Everyone Coalition. I think I'd like to join their group."

"It took us quite a bit of time to carry out this project but it was worth it. I'm really pleased."

"It'll be great having some new members in our gang of global crusaders! Take some time to think about what you want to do, and we'll meet up again on Monday to discuss it."



"I agree! I think it's great, especially the class tour, even though it was nerve-racking at the beginning."

"The important thing is that we succeeded in making the students realize that our message concerns them too."

A picture is worth a thousand words.

# Post it!

A poster is a great promotional tool used to invite, inform and raise awareness. The simpler the message, the greater the impact!

## When designing a poster:

- ❖ answer the questions - What? When? Where? Why? How? and By whom?;
- ❖ summarize the information in a few words - the most important information should be in large letters;
- ❖ find an image that catches your eye and relates to your message;
- ❖ a nice colourful poster will have a greater impact;
- ❖ stand 3, 4 or 5 metres away and test it out. Ask your friends for their opinion;
- ❖ hang two different posters if you have enough space.

At school, the best places to put up posters are in public and high traffic areas such as central meeting places, the cafeteria, stairwells, washrooms and front doors. You can also put up posters in other places around your neighbourhood, but don't forget to ask permission from the people in charge. If you show them respect, they'll give you respect.

*Solidarity tip: Get in touch with other organizations that share your concerns. They may already have great posters. They'll be happy to give you some if you ask them, and it will save you some time and money. All you'll have left to do is to add an invitation for information on your own activity.*

## INTERCOM-MUNICATION?!

If you get permission, use the school intercom - ideally a few hours before your activity begins. It's a great way to give students a last-minute reminder. Be clear and concise. Write down all the information on a sheet of paper and read it slowly and naturally. Be enthusiastic and smile while talking into the microphone. That's what the pros do!

ANTI-ADVERTISEMENT CONCEPT:  
ADBUSTERS.ORG ALTAVISTA.COM/IMAGE  
GOOGLE.CA/IMAGES

(EXCELLENT FOR  
FINDING IMAGES AND  
PICTURES)

# Spread *the word!*

Before getting started, here are some basic terms.

## Flyer (handout)

A flyer is a small notice that can be used to invite people to an activity (1/4, 1/3 or 1/2 page).

## Brochure

A brochure is a sheet of paper that is folded into 4 or 6 panels or it can be several pages, stapled together to make a brochure. This type of document can be used to provide a brief description of the issue (its origin, the consequences and some intervention methods). A brochure can also be used to invite people to specific activities.

## Stickers

Used in strategic areas, like on a notebook, bicycle or backpack, these small signs can be very effective. As with posters, some partner groups could probably supply you with stickers.

You can distribute the flyers, brochures and stickers at your information booth (p. 18) or during your class tour (p. 16), or you can hand them out in public places like your school entrance or exit.

Come up with a really cool catchphrase that you can say

while handing out your promotional material. Just like ads, your slogan will create a buzz. For example:

Stop deforestation!

Meeting on Water for Everyone, today at noon.



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Become a star

# go ON tour!

Doing the rounds of classrooms is a very effective method of communication. It's the best way to reach a large number of people at the same time and to invite students to contribute in a real way.

To go on tour, you need to form a group and get support from the school administration and your teachers. It's a good idea to do the rounds in pairs.

## There are two ways to do the rounds:

1. Visit each class one after another, which means you will miss all your own classes; or
2. Visit all the classes teaching the same subject, which means you will miss the first part of several classes.

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Try to choose a time when your audience will be more attentive. You'll be heard better on a Tuesday morning than on a Friday afternoon.

If a class tour isn't possible, you can ask a student from each class to deliver your message.

Take the time to practise your presentation before speaking in front of the class. Try to be yourself, as if you were talking to your best friend. Practise in a group; it will be less stressful!

Don't forget to leave information about your project with the teacher (brochures, etc.). Your teacher could distribute it to whoever is interested.



UNICEF.ORG (VOICES OF YOUTH)

# Hey could you spare some change to change the world?

Here are two good reasons to organize a fundraising campaign:

1. To finance a project or help a community in need; and
2. To inform people about your cause.

So it's very important to explain how the money will be used.

"You could collect donations at your information booth or ask people directly. Don't forget to make a creative donation box."

"When asking people to donate to your cause, you have to explain to them where the money raised will go. You can ask for a donation outright or sell a product such as chocolate or fair trade coffee."

It's a good idea to get an adult to handle the finances.

Sir, Mrs., Miss

Another good idea is to approach groups such as the Rotary Club or Lions Club or institutions such as banks, government representatives, city councillors and religious orders. Talk to your parents, maybe they have connections. Prepare a personalized file that fully outlines your objectives.

UNICEF.ORG (VOICES OF YOUTH)  
FREETHECHILDREN.COM



17



# Ready to set up an information booth?

## Reasons for setting up an information booth or table:

- ❖ to hand out information;
- ❖ to get petition signatures;
- ❖ to recruit new members (remember to get their particulars);
- ❖ to rally participants for an activity;
- ❖ to raise funds.

## Where to set up the booth

It's best to set up your booth in busy areas so you can reach as many people as possible. Remember to get permission.

- ❖ At school: student lounge, central meeting areas, cafeteria, gymnasium.
- ❖ Outside of school: shopping centre, grocery store, library, etc.

## What to bring

Try not to bring too much so your booth doesn't end up looking messy. But don't forget to bring:

- ❖ a sturdy table and a few chairs;
- ❖ your promotional material and your visual tools (posters, photos, etc.);
- ❖ a CD or cassette player, a TV with DVD or VHS player, a laptop computer to display images, or any other tools that are visually interesting.

## To entice people to visit your booth, you should:

- ❖ have several people run the booth;
- ❖ stand up;
- ❖ interact with the people passing by;
- ❖ try to avoid chit-chatting among yourselves;
- ❖ distribute flyers (p.16) while inviting people to stop by your booth;
- ❖ look people in the eye and remember to smile!

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INTERNATIONAL  
SOLIDARITY WEEK





# Peddle your petition



## The purpose of petitions is threefold:

- ❖ they explain an issue and raise awareness about it;
- ❖ they offer everyone a quick and easy way to get involved;
- ❖ they put pressure on groups and elected officials.

Each petition sheet should have in its header, in bold letters, a brief explanation that outlines the reasons why people should sign the petition. The rest of the page should be reserved for people to fill in their complete address and provide their signature. The petition must contain a minimum of 25 signatures and addresses to be considered valid.

## Some tips:

- ❖ be at least two people;
- ❖ practise explaining your cause in one sentence;
- ❖ get petition signatures in public places where there is a lot of traffic (during peak hours, standing up and using a clipboard);
- ❖ be on the ball and smile;
- ❖ bring plenty of pens and promotional material (flyers, brochures, stickers);
- ❖ be positive in your reasoning;
- ❖ don't insist when faced with a hostile situation.

You can also get people to sign your petition at a booth (p.18). Another good way to get signatures is to ask your teacher to present the issue at the beginning of class and pass the petition around the classroom.

For more information on starting a petition, visit  
[http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/cesd\\_cedd.nsf/html/guide\\_e.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/cesd_cedd.nsf/html/guide_e.html)



Organizing lunch-hour meetings is another interesting activity. For example, you could show a documentary, and then discuss what you saw, or even present a guest's personal experience.



## Mass media

# mass audience!

Don't hesitate to make use of the media available at your school, such as the school paper, school radio or Web site, or other media available in your neighbourhood or community to help you spread your message.

Ask a teacher for help on how to go about using local media. In fact, don't ever hesitate to ask your English teacher to look over a document you've written to make sure it is flawless.

Other resources are also available, like your school board information officers, whose job is to approach journalists. The more developed your project is, the greater its chance of

making an impression in the media. To be successful you need to think ahead. Inform the media about an upcoming event; don't wait until after the fact.

To let people know about your ideas, you could send an e-mail to readers or join an on-line discussion forum or Web log.

### Broadcast a Radio-Active show!

Some schools have a student radio station. Why not be a guest on one of their shows? It's a good idea to get prepared and meet the show's host before an

on-air interview. Ask the host what type of questions you'll be asked. Or, even better, storm the radio waves with your own Radio-Active show!

20



MEDIA-AWARENESS.CA  
UNICEF.ORG/MAGIC/



## More tips and tools!

### Tips:

Once you decide to get involved, the most effective strategy is the example you set, so:

- ❖ be democratic by giving everyone the right to voice their opinion;
- ❖ respect majority decisions and the opinion of those who disagree with you;
- ❖ learn how to become well informed about the issues for which you stand.


### Tools:

- ❖ set clear objectives for yourself;
- ❖ use each activity as an opportunity to recruit new people, and then write down their telephone number and e-mail address. You can then invite them to your next meeting or activity;
- ❖ don't hesitate to ask for advice or help;
- ❖ talk to your friends and ask for their help with your endeavours! A great way to reach people is by word-of-mouth.

**THINK GLOBALLY,  
ACT LOCALLY.**



# Acknowledgements



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## Note to teachers:

Student Activist Guides are available from the:  
Canadian Teachers' Federation  
2490 Don Reid Drive  
Ottawa, ON, K1H 1E1  
info@ctf-fce.ca  
www.ctf-fce.ca

The English and French versions of this document may offer alternate resources and links.

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