

In the 32 years that I have worked with Concern I have observed the terrible human consequences of poverty and disaster. While the challenges are enormous, what has always struck me is the overwhelming resilience of the people we work with and their ability to overcome adversity with determination and courage. It is this resilience and the potential for transformative change that drives our mission and fuels the passion and commitment of our staff and supporters around the world.

From our earliest days Concern has held that an engaged and active public is vital to ensure long lasting and sustained commitment to the world's poorest people. On a global level, issues of aid and trade, hunger and poverty, peace and conflict, climate change and the environment, continue to demand that citizens not only seek greater understanding of the issues but that they hold politicians, decision makers, NGOs and multi-national corporations accountable for their actions.

Pacita Antonano explains to Dominc MacSorley some of the impact of Typhoon Haiyan on her community in the island of Panay in the Philippines. Concern 2014.

“Do as much as you can, as well as you can, for as long as you can, for as many as you can.”

Aengus Finucane, former CEO Concern Worldwide

Concern believes in **Everyday Activism**.

We recognise and are grateful for the efforts of the hundreds of thousands of individuals who each in their own way are seeking to build a world based on dignity, respect and equality.

The late Seamus Heaney who in a tribute referred to all those who worked with and for Concern as those who have chosen to live at that high level where they are bound to keep facing the challenge – clear, noble and exhausting – that WB Yeats formulated as follows: ‘to hold in a single thought reality and justice.’

His words must continue to inspire us all in our fight against poverty and hunger.

Dominic MacSorley – CEO, Concern



CONCERN'S BEGINNINGS

Concern, like so many organisations began as an 'activist' group – we became active for specific change, against hunger and famine (originally in Biafra) and for basic human needs and human rights. Today we remain active in the same struggles across many different parts of the world, especially in the Developing World where some of the most deep-seated and enduring human rights violations continue.

Concern continues to believe and argue that activism is a vital part of the agenda for eradicating hunger and absolute poverty, inequality and injustice and in building better and more just alternatives.

Today, Concern is active in four key areas:

- We respond to emergencies and to people's most immediate needs
- We invest in long term human development
- We undertake advocacy work on behalf of the world's poor
- We undertake education work here in Ireland to stimulate understanding of the issues and challenges

In order to build a better and more just world, fundamental change is needed and needed urgently. This change will not come about simply through the actions of organisations such as Concern and others or indeed simply as a result of the actions (and inactions) of governments. Fundamental change involves all of us.

This handbook sets out to explore and discuss what such change might look like!

Concern cannot do it alone
– we need **you** to do your bit too.



‘Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works.

Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.’

Eleanor Roosevelt,

1958 speech delivered on the 10th anniversary of the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Concern has produced this handbook to stimulate discussion and debate on the challenge of being active for economic, social and political change. We do not claim to have all the answers to the questions raised and we certainly do not have a set of simplistic answers to the challenges we all face. These challenges are both complex and contested – there is no one answer that all agree upon.

What we do know however is that doing very little or nothing in response to the challenges is not an option in any sense – we simply must do better.

Concern is part of a larger international movement that has contributed to the very significant progress made in recent decades on hunger, poverty, human rights and human development – progress that has literally changed the lives and life chances of millions of the world’s poor.

We need your continued activism to continue our journey and to realise our ultimate goals.

THE SPECIALS



MUCH DONE...



Between 1990 and 2013, the rate of maternal mortality worldwide was reduced by almost 50%



In the mid-1990s, landmines killed and injured about 30,000 people every year, 50 countries continued to make and sell them and over 125 countries stockpiled them. A ban was agreed in 1997 and in 2012 the number of new casualties was reduced to 3,268



In 1984, the UN approved an agreement against the use of torture and other cruel or degrading treatment, the agreement came into force in 1987 and has since been signed by 81 countries



Between 1970 and 2005, world adult illiteracy rates were halved and now 84% of adults (15 years +) are literate

MUCH MORE TO DO...



The richest 20% of the world's people now consume almost 60% of total energy worldwide



32:1 represents the ratio at which an individual in the 'developed world' consumes resources and generates waste when compared with an individual in the 'developing world'



Approximately 550,000 women die each year during or immediately after childbirth; the cost of resolving this scandal is approximately the same as the cost of just one stealth bomber



Economic inequality continues to grow worldwide in both Developed and Developing countries and some 1.4 billion people live in absolute poverty (less than US\$1.25 per day). Just 2% of world household wealth could resolve this issue

THE REALITY OF CHANGE



Nearly 800 million people go hungry every day yet the world currently produces enough food to feed 9 to 10 billion people.

All the world's hungry people could be lifted out of malnourishment on less than a quarter of the food that is wasted in the US, UK and Europe.



New Zealand became the first country to grant women the right to vote; today, after 121 years of campaigning only 3 states deny women the right to vote.

Yet, in no country worldwide are women treated equally with men.



In 1946 a small NGO in the Mennonite Church introduced fair trade items from developing countries. Today the 'fair trade economy' stands in stark contrast to the 'unfair trade economy' and is now worth billions to Developing World producers and offers consumers a real alternative.

Challenging 'unfair trade' is crucial to building a fairer world.

Campaigns initiated and led by individuals and groups for the rights of women and against slavery, for the right to vote, against the arms trade, small weapons and landmines, for the protection of the environment and the planet, against the abuse of children, for consumer rights, against corruption and for democracy, against dictatorships and for political independence and freedom etc., have formed one key backdrop to international history for centuries up to and including the present day.

Despite what is often stated and believed, change, big and small is an everyday occurrence and most often comes about because of ‘activism’ in many different shades and types.



Members of the public during Umbrella Action Day at Sandymount Strand, Dublin. Umbrella Action Day is a demand to the government to act on climate change. Photo: Gareth Chaney Collins (2008)

WHY ACTIVISM? 5 REASONS

1 MORALITY:

being active is the 'right' thing to do morally; being 'inactive' or 'neutral' on issues such as world hunger is 'not moral' (immoral) especially when effectively resolving the issue costs so little.

Insisting on our own rights while ignoring or denying those of others makes a mockery of the idea of human rights overall.

2 THE CURRENT WORLD ORDER IS NOT SUSTAINABLE:

the current model of 'development' is not just harming the poor and the hungry but is also harming everyone, including ourselves and our children's future.

Current levels of inequality, overconsumption and environmental damage are not sustainable into the future and need to change.

3 FOR POLITICAL AND 'SECURITY' REASONS:

political changes in Eastern Europe, across North Africa and other parts of the Arab World have highlighted that those denied human rights and freedom by regimes often supported by 'western interests' are no longer willing to wait for change.

Inequality and the denial of freedom threaten everyone.

4 A FUTURE@RISK:

we now know more than before that all parts of the world are interlinked and on no issue is this reality clearer than on the future of the planet. Our current patterns of production and consumption, waste and pollution cannot be defended and continued.

They threaten our future and quality of life and they deny others some of the most basics of life.

5 BECAUSE CHARITY IS NOT ENOUGH:

giving help and assistance to others in need is a basic human duty; sharing resources and time makes us all more human. But, charity alone is incapable of solving many of the issues we face – climate change, unjust international trade regimes, dictatorship, the continuing denial of women's rights etc.

These issues demand that we inform ourselves; that we make judgements on them and that we add our voice to those of others against injustice and in this way promote respect for all and the planet.



JOSHUA WONG: STUDENT
DEMOCRACY, PEACEFUL RESISTANCE



ALLISON ROBERTS: CHOCOLATIER
FAIRTRADE & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



DAVID, DARRAGH AND STEPHEN FLYNN: LOCAL FOOD BUSINESS
NUTRITION EDUCATION & HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



MARK O'KANE, KATIE KELLY, EMILY ROE, MARTHA ROE, SADHBH O'TOOLE, TADHG O'TOOLE
SYRIAN REFUGEES & COMMUNITY ACTION



GERRY DUFFY:
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
GENOCIDE & HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION



**ROSARIO DEL CARMEN
RODRIGUEZ VALLE: COFFEE FARMER**
THE RIGHTS OF SMALL PRODUCERS & FAIRTRADE

BECOMING ACTIVE

'All meaningful and lasting change starts first in your imagination and then works its way out. Imagination is more important than knowledge' ALBERT EINSTEIN



TAKING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY – don't wait for others to lead; there are lots of things you can (should) do; don't wait for the government, trade union, church, voluntary organisation; don't give up before you even begin.



LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT THE ISSUES – we cannot all be experts in everything but learn more about the issues that concern you; get beyond the clichés and into the substance of the issue



DON'T AVOID THE ISSUES – talk about them with family, friends, at work, in school, at church; you'll be surprised at how many also care.



START SMALL – whatever we choose to do, make sure it is doable with a bit of effort, so start small and build up.



ENCOURAGE YOUR GROUP TO DO SOMETHING – most of us are members of groups; schools, churches, trade unions, women's groups, work places; be heard.



CHALLENGE PREJUDICE AND LETHARGY – challenging prejudice and indifference is vital; don't let others argue nothing can be done about anything or that everything that is wrong is the fault of a particular group etc.



END FOOD WASTE – a third of the world's entire food supply could be saved by reducing waste - or enough to feed 3 billion people; and this would still leave enough surplus for countries to provide their populations with 130% of their nutritional requirements.



EAT LESS MEAT – current levels of meat consumption worldwide cannot be sustained into the future; the cost of producing the meat we eat (and waste) is too high; if everyone ate meat at the level of Europeans and Americans, the pressure on the earth's resources would be too great. Think about reducing your meat consumption by one day per week.



REDUCE, RECYCLE, REUSE – why waste when you don't need to, why not recycle, it makes sense and there is so much stuff we could re-use.



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

ORGANISATION – there are so many organisations in your community that could do with your help and or your skills, check them out.



WRITE A LETTER, SEND AN EMAIL, MAKE A PHONE

CALL – we all encounter situations where we say 'someone should...'; this time make that someone you – write a letter, send an email or make a call to ask for change, to support a cause, to make your views heard; governments, companies, voluntary organisations will respond if enough of us make our voices heard.



SUPPORT A CAUSE – there are lots of issues each of us care about – world hunger and poverty, women's rights, the environment. Become active in supporting something you believe in; share your income however small, share your time, share your skills, share your voice.



SUPPORT A CHARITY OR VOLUNTARY

ORGANISATION – most of us can afford to do more...stop making excuses and putting it off; choose a cause/organisation and support it, regularly.



RAISE THE ISSUES AT ELECTION TIME – politicians tell us issues of world poverty and hunger etc. are almost never raised with them at election time; why not change this...elections are when we get a chance to say what we think.



CHOOSE ETHICALLY – it is important to make sure that what we buy has been produced or sourced ethically – make sure that people, the planet, animals are not injured or damaged as a result of our 'choices'; demand that companies act ethically and responsibly. Buy preferentially from those that do.



VOLUNTEER – 4/5 hours per month won't hurt and you will get a lot from it too.



RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT – abuse of the planet through overconsumption and pollution hurts everyone especially the poorest and most vulnerable.



TELL THE GOVERNMENT to do better, much better on issues such as the environment, world hunger, women's rights – the list is endless; the more who say this, the more they will be forced to listen.



TURN STUFF DOWN OR OFF – switches, bulbs, TVs, heaters, engines etc., you know it makes sense.



POST, TEXT, TWITTER – social media provide us with a great platform upon which to be active; use them.

STORIES OF **ACTIVISM**

FOOTBALL...COLOMBIA...GERMANY...PEACE... FOOTBALL WORLD...

Jürgen Griesbeck, a German working in Medellín, Colombia was shocked by the murder of local soccer player Andrés Escobar whose death was linked to an own goal he had scored at the 1994 World Cup. Jürgen like so many others was passionate about soccer and wanted to use it to promote respect, tolerance and positive values rather than the violence illustrated by the murder of Escobar. This led him to set up a youth project entitled Fútbol por la Paz (Football for Peace) which used football to combat violence on the streets of Medellín. His initiative led to the foundation of an organisation named streetfootballworld in partnership with a German Youth Football Foundation in 2002. In turn, this project forged links with similar projects worldwide through streetfootballworld which began to unify and coordinate those seeking social change through football and an international network emerged.



MORE: SEE WWW.STREETFOOTBALLWORLD.ORG

DISCRIMINATION...RURAL WOMEN...INDIA... MANN DESHI BANK...

In response to ongoing discrimination and exclusion, Chetna Vijay Sinha decided to create a bank run entirely by women focused on the needs of poor rural women who earn their living as street vendors, weavers, wage labourers etc. Today, the bank she and others founded in 1997 – Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank has 140,360 clients whose average age is 36 and whose monthly savings are around 75 Indian Rupees (just less than € 1). The Bank now has two related organisations the Mann Deshi Foundation providing a range of services to clients including financial and business management training, community radio, as well as women's health and farming workshops. The second, Mann Deshi Mahila Bachat Gat Federation (Self-Help Group Federation) is a non-profit association to assist rural women entrepreneurs and now has more than 2,462 self-help groups.



MORE: SEE WWW.MANNDESHIBANK.COM

DUBLIN...HOMELESSNESS...VULNERABLE YOUTH...ADVOCATE...

Fr Peter McVerry SJ has been working with vulnerable young people in Dublin for the last 40 years and has become well-known nationally for his campaigning for their rights. Peter had worked in the Inner City in Dublin from 1974 to 1980 and met young people who were sleeping on the streets because of their home situation. In 1979, he opened a hostel for homeless boys, aged 12-16 (and later, for older boys) and since then, this has become his life's work. In 1980 Peter moved to Ballymun and by the end of 1983 he had founded the Arrupe Society, a charity to tackle homelessness. This charity later became the Peter McVerry Trust and had developed from having a three bedroom flat in Ballymun to now supporting 11 homeless hostels, over 100 apartments, a residential drug detox centre and two drug stabilisation services. In 2013 the charity worked with almost 3,600 vulnerable youths. As a social activist Peter is a strong advocate for those who have no voice in society; he speaks on issues of homelessness, justice and faith to groups around the country and is an outspoken critic of government policy on issues such as homelessness, drugs and criminal justice.



MORE: SEE WWW.PMVTRUST.IE

DISCO...POLITICS...2 EDLS... DON'T HATE GYRATE...

You may have heard about the English Defence League (EDL) which claims to be a *'human rights organisation protesting against Islamic extremism'*. For many however, it is a far-right organisation whose main activity is to protest in the streets against the UK Muslim community. Initially its leaders claimed they were against the rise of radical Islam, insisting they weren't against Islam, yet it targets the entire Muslim community and its actions routinely seek to create tension and violence between Muslim and non-Muslim communities.



However, there is another EDL - the English Disco Lovers. The English Disco Lovers is a counter movement to the EDL. They aim to promote equality, respect and the utopian vision of disco by subverting the hatred of the EDL with humour. When the EDL organise one of their infamous marches or protests, the English Disco Lovers attend also, in full 70s disco flash mob style with the call 'Don't Hate! Gyrate!'

MORE: SEE WWW.EDL.ME

STORIES OF **ACTIVISM**

HARRY POTTER...HORCRUXES... CIVIC ENGAGEMENT...YOUTH...

The Harry Potter Alliance (HPA) is a coalition of fans who feel passionate about the power of story to inspire and affect social change. Just as Harry and his friends fought the Dark Arts as 'Dumbledore's Army' in JK Rowling's books, the HPA strive to destroy real-world 'horcruxes' like inequality, illiteracy, and human rights violations. The HPA is a non-profit that takes an *outside-of-the-box* approach to civic engagement by using parallels from the Harry Potter books to educate and mobilise young people across the world toward issues of literacy, equality, and human rights.

Their mission is to empower members to act like the heroes they love by acting for a better world. By bringing together fans of blockbuster books, TV shows, movies, and YouTube celebrities the Alliance is harnessing the power of popular culture toward making our world a better place.

MORE: SEE WWW.THEHPALLIANCE.ORG



FEMALE CUTTING...SCHOOLGIRL...UK... EDUCATION SECRETARY...

Fahma Mohamed is 17 years old and lives in Bristol. Being from a small Somali Muslim family, she has seen first-hand among her friends and family the devastation caused by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). It has been estimated that there were approximately 66,000 victims of FGM in the UK with more than 25,000 girls under the age of 15 at risk. It was these figures and her own experiences which inspired Fahma and her classmates to campaign for the education system to do more on FGM. Fahma began a campaign to urge the English Education Secretary to write to all of the heads of primary and secondary schools highlighting the dangers of FGM before the summer holidays of 2014, when girls are at greatest risk. She gained support from British newspaper, the Guardian and began a petition on change.org which gathered well over 250,000 signatures. After a meeting with Fahma, the Education Secretary agreed to write to all schools on the issue.



CHILD SLAVERY...GRADE 7 STUDENTS... CANADA...AGENTS OF CHANGE...

In 1995, 12 year old Craig Kielburger was flipping through the Toronto Star looking for the comics section when he came across an article about a boy called Iqbal Masih. Born in South Asia, Iqbal was sold into slavery at four years of age and spent six years chained to a carpet weaving loom. Media coverage of his story caught the attention of those who wished to silence him, leading to his murder at just 12 years of age.



As a direct result of reading this story, Craig gathered 11 of his Grade 7 classmates (12-13 year olds) from his school in Thornhill, Ontario and began raising awareness in North America around child labour while encouraging other children to become involved. As a result, international charity and human rights movement Free the Children was born. The organisation fights for young people to achieve their fullest potential as agents of change. They work to empower young people to remove the barriers that prevent them from being local and global citizens.

MORE: SEE WWW.FREETHECHILDREN.COM

ART AND DESIGN...SEEDBOMBS... LIMERICK...GUERRILLA GARDENING...

Mary Conroy, a Masters Degree student at Limerick School of Art and Design decided to do an eco-art project and turned to the idea of 'guerrilla gardening' and the use of 'seedbombs'. Her aim is to engage the public with nature and to create green-way habitats in Limerick City; she designed local maps and distributed them (with seed bombs) and volunteers mark on the maps locations that have seed bombed. Along with others, she created the Wildroutes Project which engages in a range of different nature focused projects.



MORE: SEE WWW.WILDROUTESPROJECT.COM



AISHA: SCHOOL STUDENT
ACCESS TO EDUCATION



RAY O SULLIVAN: PRINTER
RECYCLING & SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FORESTS



**ABIGAIL ROONEY AND
HER DAUGHTER FERN: GEOLOGIST**
WOMEN'S RIGHTS & CLIMATE CHANGE



**CHUYA MIHANA:
ADULT EDUCATION TRAINER**
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE



DAMENECH DANSA: NURSE
PUBLIC HEALTH ACCESS AND EDUCATION



EUGENE DOYLE: ACCOUNTANT
WORLD HUNGER & COMMUNITY WORK



ALEJANDRO SOLALINDE: PRIEST
BASIC NEEDS OF EMIGRANTS, HUMAN RIGHTS



‘The global poor pose a morally inescapable question: what responsibilities do we have in regard to social conditions that blight their lives? We owe them a reflective answer.’

Thomas Pogge

Politics as Usual: What Lies Behind the pro-Poor Rhetoric (2011),
Cambridge, Polity Press

BEING ACTIVE PERSONALLY

We are all aware of the world's problems, both local and global - poverty and wealth; war and conflict; hunger and overconsumption; water and sanitation; climate change; the 'isms' (racism, sexism...); human rights and wrongs to name but a few.

We all have our own ideas as to what is 'wrong' with the world and will no doubt argue the case for what we believe to be the most important issues; chances are there would be plenty of disagreement as to which are the most important.

There is one thing that people **will** agree for certain – things could be done a lot better. But what can or should be done and who should do it? Is it up to the government, specialist or voluntary organisations, community groups? What is the role of the individual? What can we do that will make a difference?

Many issues seem so large and complex that it is hard to imagine how one person could make any sort of meaningful impact. But just as there are a lot of big problems or issues in the world, there are also people who care about these problems and issues.

Individuals and groups take action each day worldwide – in their day-to-day lives, making choices, making changes, small and large – stacking up small actions that can amount to big change.



ARGUE the issues, talk about them with family, friends, colleagues, school or club mates etc. Recognising the importance of the issues and talking about them is one of the most important things we can do.



BUYING ethically in itself won't change the world but it is an important step on the road. Certainly, continuing to buy unethically will change nothing.



WASTED food, wasted energy, wasted water, wasted resources, wasted wealth, wasted opportunities



FAR too much of the stuff we buy, we don't need, already our consumption rates and the rates at which we produce waste costs the world too much



SHARING our wealth a little more wouldn't hurt and could do a lot of good for others; donating to chosen charities and causes can and does make a difference despite what the cynics say



TASFAYE CHINASHO: FARMER
HUNGER & BASIC NEEDS



JULIA PINKA:
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT
STUDENT/YOUTH ORGANISER & GLOBAL JUSTICE



EWA OSTAPCZUK, LIAM MCGARRY AND "HENRY" XLIE: BAKERS
ANTI-RACISM & CULTURAL DIVERSITY



MONDE NALISHEBO: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE & NUTRITION EDUCATION



MAEVE TIERNEY:
PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & CULTURAL DIVERSITY



BABU: ASSISTANT CHEF
EDUCATION



- I am not responsible in any meaningful way for what happens to the world's poor...
- I am just one person, what can I realistically achieve...
- Issues such as world poverty and hunger are for governments really...
- Charity is not the answer, so I don't get involved in it...

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

- It's not that simple, it's very complex...
- The changes needed are impossible...
- People just don't care or are too busy...
- There's so much to do, where do I begin and how do I choose?



BEING ACTIVE WITH OTHERS



ACTING WITH OTHERS

Link up with others on the issues; in your school, church, trade union, community organisation, school, youth club, women's group



FAIRTRADE

Don't just 'do' fairtrade yourself; argue the case with others; remember 'we need fair trade because what we have most of the time is unfair trade; make your group, church, school, town a fair trade one



'BE GREEN'

Do something green for your local area; plant a tree, argue the case for the use of Forest Stewardship Council products locally and in your school / office / workplace (never heard of FSC, shame: check it out www.fsc.org)



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Join a group such as Amnesty International (pick a campaign say, on torture – learn about it, be active on it); there are lots of issue-focused groups who could do with you help and participation. Forget the buts...



BUILD AN AGENDA

Think about what is important for you – environment issues, women's rights, disability issues, young people, interculturalism; find others who think like you and want to do something about it; argue the case, build your agenda – it really is that simple.

MEDICINE AND DEVELOPMENT

Made up mainly of doctors and health sector workers, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is a private, international association founded by a group of committed medical personnel in 1971. MSF provides assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict irrespective of race, religion, creed or political convictions. The organisation observes neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance and claims full and unhindered freedom in the delivery of its agenda.

SEE: WWW.MSF.ORG

YOUR LOCAL CREDIT UNION AND POVERTY

The Irish credit union movement was founded by three individuals: a teacher, Nora Herlihy, from Ballydesmond, a baker Sean Forde and a civil servant Séamus P. MacEoin from Kilkenny. They had witnessed Dublin in the 1950s with the effects of high unemployment, malnutrition, money-lending, poor housing, and inevitably, emigration. State unemployment benefits were very low and did not last indefinitely leaving many families in abject poverty.

As Irish credit unions have developed and expanded (now 2.9 million members) they have also begun to play a growing role in fighting poverty in some of the most deprived and needy places in the world..., by expanding the credit union self-help idea and supporting credit unions in countries such as Ethiopia, Gambia, Sri Lanka, Peru, Kenya, Malawi, Guatemala, Nigeria, The Caribbean, Albania and even Russia.

Today, Irish credit unions are sending over €1m a year overseas in support of deprived local communities through the Irish League of Credit Unions.

SEE: WWW.CREDITUNION.IE

ACADEMICS STAND AGAINST POVERTY

Academics Stand Against Poverty is an international professional association focused on supporting 'poverty' researchers and teachers to increase their positive impact on severe poverty through promoting collaboration, interacting with 'policy-makers' and the broader public. The ASAP has branches in Austria, Brazil, Canada, India, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Oceania, Spain, the UK and the US but not in Ireland.

SEE: WWW.ACADEMICSSTAND.ORG

BEING ACTIVE PROFESSIONALLY



TEACH (AND LEARN) THE ISSUES

Education on the issues is vital; understanding them and how we ‘feel’ about them; their causes, potential solutions, challenges and choices. Debating and analysing the issues is vital for all our futures.



BE PROFESSIONAL, PLAY YOUR ROLE

Everyone has a role – doctors, bakers, lawyers, drivers, farmers; whatever area we work in is related in one way or another to the issues through trade, ingredients, law making, ecology etc. Just as we can make a difference at home and in our community, we can (and should) make a difference through our work places and practices!



CHALLENGE WRONG REGULARLY

‘Someone should do something about that, it’s wrong’; how many times have we heard or said that; speak out (about trade, torture, waste, pollution, women’s rights etc.); get colleagues to write that letter, send that email, make that post, support that cause (many organisations already do, does yours?).



BE POLITICAL

– ultimately, issues of inequality and injustice in the world are political; don’t leave it to others to take on the issues as you may disagree with them as to how they do so; make your thoughts, ideas and solutions heard politically. Organisations like Concern, Amnesty, Friends of the Earth cannot do the job alone.



ROMAN YBIERNES: FISHERMAN, FRESH WATER PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION WORKER
HEALTH, WATER & SANITATION



DESSIE O'TOOLE: BUS DRIVER
COMMUNITY ORGANISING
& SUPPORTING LOCAL CHARITIES



**FLORENCE HAGILDA: FARMER,
HEALTH CENTRE VOLUNTEER, COUNSELLOR**
HEALTH EDUCATION, HIV AND AIDS



**GODFREY MALEMBEKA: EX-PRISONER,
PRISON REFORM AND TEACHER**
HIV AND AIDS EDUCATION, PRISON REFORM,
WOMEN'S RIGHTS



**EMMY COFFEY NGUYEN:
LAW STUDENT,
TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETE**
ANT-RACISM, SPORTS & INTERCULTURALISM



TOMÁS BRADLEY: SPATIAL PLANNER
CLEAN ENERGY & SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

#ILLRIDEWITHYOU

Hashtag offers solidarity with Sydney's Muslims after siege

Following concern that people wearing Islamic dress would be harassed after an armed man in Sydney, claiming links to Islamic State, took hostages, local people used Twitter to offer to travel with them, spreading a message of solidarity and humanity.

One woman started what soon blossomed into a social media campaign to stand in solidarity with the city's Muslims.

Tessa Kum, a TV content editor and writer living in Sydney, acted after seeing a tweet that shared Rachel Jacobs' comments on Facebook in support of a Muslim woman who was removing her hijab riding the train with her.

Seeing this Tweet, Tessa Kum offers her company to anyone in religious attire on her route.



 #illridewithyou



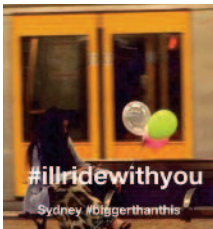
Fellow Twitter users swiftly joined in, offering their support...and actions.

According to Twitter Australia, there were 40,000 tweets using the hashtag #Illridewithyou in just two hours. In four hours 150,000 Tweets were posted.

Social Media 'clicktivism' on its own may not be transformative. As an amplifier of voices it helps to build community conversations and many individual actions.

Ultimately, actions speak louder than hashtags. In being responsible for the change you want to see in the world taking to social media can offer a useful starting point.

[#illridewithyou](#) radiates the beauty of Australian mateship. We are many, but together we are one. [#sydney siege](#)



If you need [#illridewithyou](#). I'll even drive you round if you need.

Practical thing: I've made a temporary sticker for my bag so people who need me can spot me [#illridewithyou](#)



[#illridewithyou](#) reminds me: Muslim Woman Covers the Yellow Star of Her Jewish Neighbor with Her Veil. (Sarajevo, 1941)



YOU ARE NOT ALONE...

One in every six people in Ireland supports, volunteers or is active in their community on social issues.

THERE ARE OVER

24,000

NOT FOR PROFIT
ORGANISATIONS
IN IRELAND

MORE THAN

560,000

PEOPLE ARE
INVOLVED AS
VOLUNTEERS

MORE THAN

50,000

PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED
IN MANAGING OR
GOVERNING NOT
FOR PROFIT
ORGANISATIONS

THE TOP

**5 AREAS OF
FOCUS** (IN ORDER):

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT,

CULTURE AND RECREATION,
SOCIAL SERVICES,

THE PROMOTION OF
VOLUNTEERISM AND
PHILANTHROPY,

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL
ASSOCIATIONS

SOME

850,000

INDIVIDUALS SUPPORT THE
WORK OF INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT NGOS AND
MISSIONARY GROUPS –
MEANING THAT **OVER 30%**
OF HOUSEHOLDS SUPPORT AT
LEAST ONE NGO

Sources: Central Statistics Office (2006, 2011) Census of Population: Principal Socio-Economic Results
Irish Non-Profits Knowledge Exchange (2012) Irish Non-Profits: What Do We Know
Dóchas (2005) Mobilising People for Development
The Advocacy Initiative (2012) Mapping Social Justice Advocacy in Ireland



Time is running out on Climate Change:

Stop Climate Chaos demonstration "Climate Countdown to Copenhagen" on Sandymount Strand
Dublin (2009) by Steve Ryan

A TIMELINE OF **ACTIVISM**

LAST **10 YEARS**

LOCALLY ▼

2007

CLOUGHJORDON

Ireland's first eco-village established in 2007 in Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary, which includes 100+ homes, a community farm, biodiversity walking trail, woodland of 17,000 trees and schools



2009

HOUSING AND HUMAN RIGHTS

A group of tenants from Dolphin Housing Estate (Dublin) use human rights language and ideas to challenge poor housing standards and conditions in state housing

2011

ART AS ACTIVISM IN EGYPT

Art historian Bahiya Shehab has long been fascinated with the Arabic script for 'no'. When revolution swept through Egypt in 2011 she began spraying the image in the streets saying no to dictators, no to military rule and no to violence as a way for her to participate in civic life. By sharing a public symbol of what the Arab Spring represented, she conveyed the sentiments of what many in her country wanted



NATIONALLY ▼

2008

THE APOLOGY

Following campaigning since the early 1980s, the Australian PM Kevin Rudd issues a formal apology in parliament for the past wrongs caused by successive governments on the indigenous Aboriginal population who had been forcibly removed from their families from 1909 until the 1960s.

2014

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION IN UK

A petition started by seventeen year old Fahma Mohamed in February 2014 called on the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, to put more pressure on schools to educate pupils about and stop the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). 234,375 people signed the petition, causing Gove to write to all primary and secondary headteachers about FGM.



▲ Fahma Mohamed

INTERNATIONALLY ▼

2004

POLLUTION DATA

The European Union issues its first-ever pollution register—containing a wealth of data on industrial emissions and representing a “landmark event” in public provision of environmental information.



2013

WOMEN DRIVERS

Women in Saudi Arabia are subjected to various restrictions, including needing a male guardian's consent in almost every aspect of their lives, including being banned from driving. More than 30 women staged a driving demonstration to challenge the driving ban law on women, following two demonstrations in 1990 and 2011 when dozens of women drove in opposition to the ban.



YES EQUALITY.

2015

IRELAND SAYS YES TO MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Following a popular grassroots campaign for civil marriage equality in Ireland involving families, the support of businesses, young people registering to vote and 500,000 YES EQUALITY badges, 62.4% of people voted in favour of the referendum. More well-known for being socially conservative, Ireland is the first country to vote by national referendum for marriage equality for all of its citizens.

LAST 20 YEARS

LOCALLY ▼

1997

the Freedom of Information Act has had a huge impact on how citizens can interact with government at all levels. Having access to official records allows anyone to inform themselves about key aspects of public life that always used to remain hidden. Citizens can access information that can help them with their issue or campaign.



2003

Coca-Cola products boycott voted in by students in UCD and Trinity College Dublin until 2010 after Coca-Cola became embroiled in a legal case with trade unions over its alleged involvement in paramilitary murders at two of its bottling plants in Colombia. UCD was the first institution in the world to put such a boycott in place.



2003

FAIRTRADE TOWNS
Clonakilty (Cork) becomes Ireland's first Fairtrade town in Ireland. There are now more than 50 Fairtrade towns and cities in Ireland today

NATIONALLY ▼

1998

GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT

The Good Friday Agreement, negotiated and signed by leaders of the British and Irish governments and eight political parties or groupings from Northern Ireland, brought to an end the 30 years of sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland known as 'The Troubles'. It was ratified in a referendum in May 1998. The agreement set up a power-sharing assembly to govern Northern Ireland by cross-community consent.

2000

WATER WARS - BOLIVIA

In response to the privatisation of water services and sharp increases in the cost of water in Cochabamba, Bolivia, local citizens formed the Coalition in Defence of Water and Life in January 2000; they issued a declaration for the protection of universal water rights for all citizens and an end to privatisation. Their demands were rejected, protests continued and finally the government was forced to back down and the US company which had been given the water contract, Bechtel left Bolivia. Bechtel filed a lawsuit against Bolivia demanding \$50 million in compensation; protests continued for four years and in 2006, Bechtel settled for a token 30 cent payment.

2003

THE WORLD MARCHES AGAINST WAR

On the 15th of February, an estimated 30 million people across the world protested against the war in Iraq. In Dublin, at least 100,000 people marched. For active citizens

INTERNATIONALLY ▼

1999

GOVERNANCE

Massive civil society protests in Seattle help shut down international trade negotiations and spotlight the environmental and social shortcomings of the World Trade Organization.

2000

MDGs

Ireland signed up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, along with 189 countries which came together at a landmark moment to insist that they would not tolerate the extreme inequality in the world and would do all in their power to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015.



this is an indication of how many people in Ireland and the world were prepared to join others to make their feelings heard.

LAST 60 YEARS

LOCALLY ▼

1962

SILENT SPRING

Rachel Carson wrote the book that launched a global environmental movement by documenting what then seemed like massive declines in bird populations. The silence Carson referred to came from fewer birds singing due to the negative effects of pesticides like DDT on bird populations. "Until you dig a hole, you plant a tree, you water it and make it survive, you haven't done a thing. You are just talking."



1974

Founder of the environmental conservation Green Belt Movement, Wangai Maathai plants her first tree in 1974 in Kenya



1978-79

Save Wood Quay 20,000 marched in Dublin against building of civic offices at Wood Quay which would destroy Viking heritage. Included high court case and a twenty day occupation of the site in June 1979 by a group which included the mendicant Friar - Professor Martin and politicians, academics, writers, poets and artists.

NATIONALLY ▼

1967

In a January 1967 *Irish Independent* article, Senator Garret FitzGerald described 'a need for the awakening of Ireland's social conscience in relation to development aid for overseas countries.'

By 1969 in a finance committee meeting, following his recent election to the Dail, Dr FitzGerald was arguing for Ireland to accept responsibility for the UN target of 1% of GNP as the public contribution which Ireland should deliver on. Garret FitzGerald was a key broker of Ireland's overseas aid programme, which started in 1973 when he became minister for Foreign Affairs.



1984

FREE NELSON MANDELA

Influenced by South African music with upbeat and ska rhythm melodies, the song "Free Nelson Mandela" is launched by UK band The Specials. Against the backdrop of the South Africa boycott, the song reached number six in the music charts in Ireland, prompting a whole generation to become aware of the horrors of apartheid.



THE SPECIALS



LAST 60 YEARS



THE ULTIMATE MEASURE OF A MAN IS NOT WHERE HE STANDS IN MOMENTS OF COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE, BUT WHERE HE STANDS AT TIMES OF CHALLENGE AND CONTROVERSY.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



INTERNATIONALLY ▼

1963

“I HAVE A DREAM”

The “I have a dream” speech was “the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation,” delivered by Martin Luther King Jr, would inadvertently set off a worldwide movement for racial emancipation from the American civil rights movement.



1968

THE YEAR OF THE STUDENT PROTEST

This year is famous in history for being a year of protests not just in Europe but across the world. These protests campaigned for many different ideas, from peace to women’s rights and were almost entirely led by students. It was the first time that younger generations had taken to the front lines of struggles for new rights and freedoms in such a major way. Television news had become a major new tool for campaigners. By creating the kinds of events that would get on the news, campaigners were able to get their message across to millions.

1994

NELSON MANDELA ELECTED IN SOUTH AFRICA

Following his release from prison and negotiating the terms of a new constitution for South Africa, Nelson Mandela is elected President by more than 19 million voters across 9,000 polling stations. Despite the long delays and queues, South Africa’s transition from a racist state to a democracy is delivered by the 87% voter turnout.

Where to begin?



Think about what issues, problems or challenges interest or concern you; do some research/reading about them; find out what others are doing locally or nationally; contact them and see if you can work together; prioritise what you want to do; be practical, don't try to do too much; start small and build...

MORE: WWW.STAKEHOLDERFORUM.ORG/FILEADMIN/FILES/POST2015ADVOCACYTOOLKIT.PDF
(SEE ESPECIALLY THE SUGGESTED TOOLS)

Finding out



Ok, you have decided what to focus on; find out more about the issue; read, use the internet, talk with others especially those affected by the issue; make sure you know the basics and what might need to be done as a priority; what skills, experiences or connections are needed...

MORE: WWW.CIVICUS.ORG/INDEX.PHP/EN/MEDIA-CENTRE-129/TOOLKITS
(SEE ESPECIALLY THE ACTION PLANNING MATERIALS)

Linking with others



Working with others is far more effective than working alone; it multiplies experience, skills and contacts; it helps make us 'smarter' by challenging our own ideas against those of others; linking up with other, like-minded people helps sustain energy and commitment; there are many others with similar concerns and visions...

A PLACE TO START: WWW.WHEEL.IE

Using social media



Linking and communicating with others has never been easier; use social media to build an agenda, links, networks, information etc.; there are many, many examples of people worldwide using social media creatively and positively...

MORE: WWW.SLIDESHARE.NET/EMEAHQ/HOW-TO-USE-SOCIAL-MEDIA-EFFECTIVELY
GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN VOLUNTEERING BY COMHLÁMH
WWW.COMHLAMH.ORG/RESOURCES/

Storytelling



Share your ideas, experiences, stories and results; far too many positive outcomes and results remain a secret; document what you do; take photos, record results, interview people, make a record of what you do for others to learn from etc.

FOR SOME EXAMPLE:

WWW.YOUNGSOCIALINNOVATORS.IE/INDEX.PHP/PROJECTS/FEATURED_PROJECTS

Making Policy



Your project/idea/experiences could change national (and international policy); think about writing a policy report to highlight the things that need to change based on your own or group's experiences; what obstacles did you face, what/who was helpful, what were the views of those you supported, how can their or your experiences be taken more into account etc.? Send this document to local, national and international leaders (not just politicians but also NGO, trade union, women's groups, church leaders, community associations etc.). There are many examples to assist you do this.

SEE: TASC'S SOCIAL ACTION TOOLKIT WWW.TASC.IE/OPENGOVTOOLKIT AND TRÓCAIRE'S CLIMATE JUSTICE ACTIVIST TOOLKIT WWW.TROCAIRE.IE/ACTIVISM

LINKING UP...WITH OTHERS... DIFFERENT

**SOME PLACES TO START...THERE ARE MANY, MANY MORE,
FOLLOW THE LINKS...IN EUROPE AND INTERNATIONALLY...**

www.disability-federation.ie

The Disability Federation of Ireland is the national support organisation for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions: it works to ensure that Irish society is fully inclusive of people with disabilities and disabling conditions so that they can exercise fully their civil, social and human rights.

www.dochas.ie

Dóchas is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations; it provides a forum for consultation and co-operation between its members and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues.

www.youth.ie

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for over 50 national voluntary youth work organisations in Ireland; it seeks to ensure that all young people are empowered to develop the skills and confidence to fully participate as active citizens in an inclusive society.

www.nwci.ie

The National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI) is central national women's membership organisation seeking equality between women and men; it seeks to lead and to be a catalyst for change in the achievement of equality between women and men.

www.ictu.ie

The Irish Congress of trade Unions is the largest civil society organisation in Ireland, representing and campaigning on behalf of some 832,000 working people; it has 55 affiliated unions north and south of the border.

www.wheel.ie

The Wheel is a support and representative body connecting community and voluntary organisations and charities across Ireland and has become a resource centre and forum for the Irish community and voluntary sector.

ISSUES...DIFFERENT STYLES...

www.ien.ie

The Irish Environmental Network brings together many organisations nationally to promote the well-being, protection and enhancement of the environment through practical conservation work, raising public awareness of environmental and conservation needs and campaigning and lobbying.

www.aontas.com

AONTAS is the National Adult Learning Organisation. It is a non-government membership organisation established in 1969.

www.creditunion.ie

The national league of credit unions dedicated to support people locally to save together and to lend to each other at a fair and reasonable rate of interest in order to increase people's control over their own finance.

www.developmenteducation.ie

An education website that explores global underdevelopment, overdevelopment and human rights issues since 1999. Includes blogs, cartoons, teacher and activist resources.

www.ncca.ie/en/

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is responsible to government for school curricula and assessment from early childhood to the end of second level; for research and innovation in Irish formal education.

www.glen.ie

The Gay + lesbian Equality Network aims to deliver ambitious and positive change for lesbian, gay and bisexual people (LGB) in Ireland, ensuring full equality, inclusion and protection from all forms of discrimination.

www.ihrc.ie

The Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC) was set up by government to promote and protect the human rights in Ireland; the rights that the IHRC is mandated to promote and protect are the rights, liberties and freedoms guaranteed under the Irish Constitution and under international agreements, treaties and conventions to which Ireland is a party.

CONCERN'S 5 POINT ACTION AGENDA

- 1 SPEAK OUT** – don't stay silent on the issues; let others know your thoughts and ideas; make this a public agenda; we must not be indifferent on these issues. Talk with family, friends, colleagues; learn the basics and share the arguments; make this agenda part of your life and what defines your journey...
- 2 SHARE** – your resources, time and skills; support Concern and likeminded organisations locally and nationally; most of us can afford to be far more generous than we often are; it is a powerful and realistic statement of support...
- 3 REDUCE** unnecessary waste (especially food waste); reduce your environmental footprint (there are so many simple but important ways to do this); shop ethically; avoid companies and products that damage people and/or the planet; challenge the idea that the more we consume, the better it will be...
- 4 BE ACTIVE** locally and nationally; volunteer some of your time weekly, monthly; there are many organisations focused on environmental, development, human rights, disability, equality etc. who could benefit from your skills (not just your time!); think about what you can offer and what issues concern you...
- 5 BE POLITICAL.** Concern already is – we argue that attitudes, behaviours and policies need to change and society needs to be challenged to make the changes that will benefit the poor and the hungry; governments, companies, organisations need to be challenged to 'do the right thing' ethically and environmentally; we need to build the movement that insists poverty and hunger are not inevitable; not only can they be tackled, they can be eliminated...now.

EVERY ACTIVIST JOURNEY
STARTS WITH A **story**

...WHAT'S **YOURS?**

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