

Social Protests

Aim

to demonstrate that people can achieve change, locally and globally by joining together to protest about injustice.

Age

All

Time

45 minutes

Materials

Copies of 'Land for Life' and 'Resistance isn't Futile' fact sheets, flipchart and markers, newspapers/magazines, art materials

Action

At the meeting of the G8 — USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and Russia — in Genoa in July 2001 (see the 'Resistance isn't Futile' fact sheet), the G8 committed to help poor countries to provide an education for all its citizens that were determined to do so but did not have the needed finance. So far they haven't lived up to their promises. You can help to keep up the pressure by logging on to the Global Campaign for Education website and filling in an email campaign postcard today at <http://www.campaignforeducation.org/EN/ecard.shtml> or contact ACTION-AID Ireland at 01 8787911.

What you need to do

Brainstorm on events, at home or abroad, where people have come together to protest about an issue? Who was protesting? Why?

Form small groups. Read out the Campaigning for Justice text. Explain that each group is to discuss a campaign or protest that they know about. What type of protest was it? Where and why did it happen? Who took part in the protest? What might the other side say? They then have to design a poster that highlights the protest. The posters can include headlines, images and/or drawings to illustrate the issue. Each group presents their poster. What do the groups like about the protests shown? Was there anything they didn't agree with in any of the protests? If they were to campaign on that issue, what would they do?

Alternatively, hand out copies of the fact sheets. Using the examples provided, design posters to support the action of the people involved.

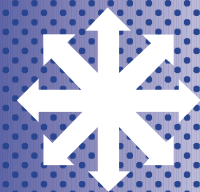
Campaigning for Justice

Worldwide, people are joining together to campaign for change. Thousands of landless people in Brazil have gone on long marches for the right to land. Using the Internet, people can learn about these protests and link up and work for justice. Twenty four million people signed the International Jubilee 2000 petition for debt cancellation for poor countries. Huge protests such as those at World Trade Organisation (WTO) meetings have made world leaders pay attention to issues like debt, poverty, environment, human rights and fair trade.

Many global campaigns have been successful: rich countries have cancelled some of the poorest countries' debts and a global ban on landmines has been achieved. Some protestors use violence to try to achieve change. However, it is important to ask whether violence is the right way to create a better world.

Source: Trócaire (2001), Trade and Globalisation





Social Protests

Global Justice/Local Justice

Resistance isn't Futile

In 1999, more than 5,000 villagers occupied the World Bank funded Pak Mun dam site in Thailand. The villagers were protesting against the destruction of their fisheries, their livelihoods and their communities caused by the dam.

In Ireland in 1999, the Jubilee Campaign to cancel Third World debt sent over 850,000 postcards signed by the Irish people to the G7 Summit in Cologne, Germany calling for debt cancellation.

In December 1999, around 50,000 people gathered in Seattle, Washington to protest the third annual ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

In 2000, more than 50,000 farmers gathered in Bangalore (in the south of India) to protest against the WTO and corporate control of agriculture. Seven years earlier half a million Indian

farmers had converged on Bangalore to voice their opposition to the forerunner of the WTO, the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs.

Also in 2000, more than 5,000 people protested against the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Okinawa, Japan.

In July 2001, around 300,000 people from around the world converged on Genoa, Italy to protest the globalisation policies being discussed at a meeting of the Group of Eight (G8) countries — USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and Russia.

Around 300,000 protesters marched in Barcelona at a summit of European Union leaders in March 2002. They were protesting against the free trade policies of the EU and in support of workers' rights.

Land for Life

On the island of Mindanao in the Philippines, land is rich, fertile and plentiful. In 1995, under an agrarian reform programme, 137 landless families in the Mapalad co-operative were awarded 144 hectares of privately owned land. When they attempted to claim the land, the landowner used physical force to prevent them. The farmers' attempts to change this fell on deaf ears, so 18 of the farmers resorted to going on hunger strike. After 30 days the President relented and the farmers were reawarded most of their land. The landowner objected and the decision was overturned in the courts. The farmers refused to give up. The struggle of the Mapalad farmers was supported by a campaign organised by Trócaire in

Ireland, where more than 10,000 postcards were sent to President Estrada of the Philippines in support of Mapalad farmers. The campaign generated widespread media coverage both in the Philippines and internationally. The Mapalad farming families were awarded 19 hectares of land in late 2001. Although only a tiny fraction of their original entitlement, it is a vital step in recognising their right to land. Campaign pressure played an important role in achieving the political decision.

The determination displayed by the Mapalad community, led to the wife of the landowner giving a further 47 hectares to the farmers upon the death of her husband in 2001.

