



SPARKING ACTIVISM

**IMPACTFUL EDUCATION STARTS
WITH HUMAN RIGHTS**

This Teacher Resource is based
on a workshop developed by
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for the Global Teachers Institute
(GTI) Axis Summit of 2023



**GLOBAL
TEACHERS
INSTITUTE**



GLOBAL TEACHERS INSTITUTE
AXIS SUMMIT 2023
GLOWING UP LEARNING FOR ALL

AIM OF THIS RESOURCE

Social justice concepts are central to the South African constitution, and to the creation of a just and inclusive society. This resource gives you, the teacher, strategies and content to discuss social activism with your colleagues and learners.

Help your colleagues and learners understand and become active on human rights issues, in order to support social justice educational objectives such as the following:



Fostering independent and **critical thinking**, **empathy**, and a desire for social change.



Linking human rights education to the creation of a **just and inclusive** society.



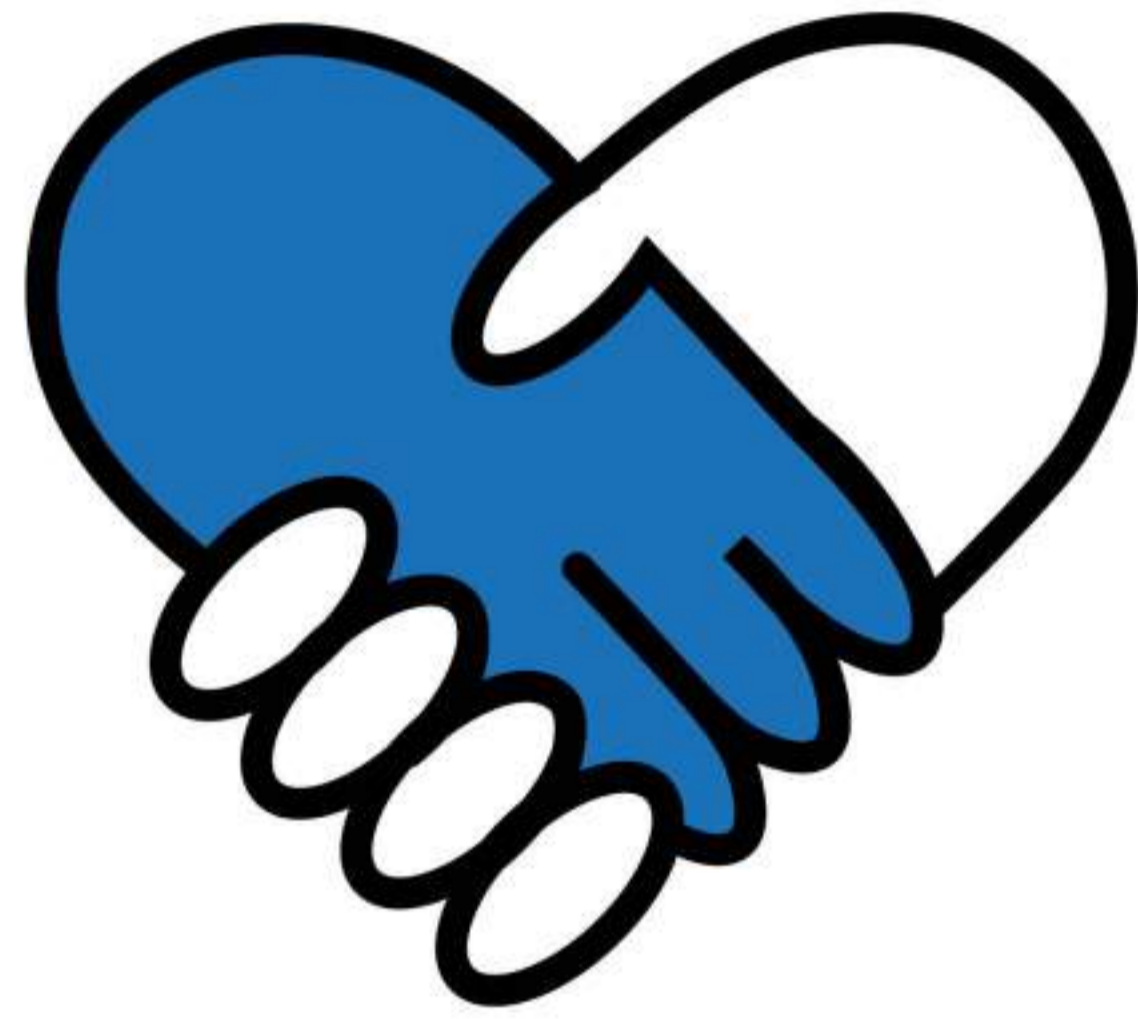
Inspiring learners to become **advocates for human rights** within their communities.



Social justice knowledge, and engagement through activism, helps learners to better deal with many of the real-world problems they may face at home or in school, both now and in the future.

SOCIAL JUSTICE & ACTIVISM TOPICS

As a teacher you will be aware of the most pressing issues for your learners in relation to their age groups and social contexts. Here are some examples.



RACE SOLUTIONS



VOTING



LGBTQ+



BULLYING



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT



GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

INTEGRATING ACTIVISM: TIPS & TECHNIQUES

1 WIDEN CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVES

Link mainstream subjects to social justice topics - e.g. Biology: how do social behaviours contribute to virus transmission such as HIV Aids or Covid? Geography: how do pollutants in rivers travel through cycles to affect marine life? English: explore stereotypical language by bringing in someone from the outside who can share personal experiences resulting from stereotyping (e.g. relating to gender or race identity).

2 FOSTER DIALOGUE & DISCUSSIONS

Create a safe, non-competitive space for open and respectful conversations on social justice issues. You, the teacher, are not the authority. Enable students to ask questions, challenge stereotypes and biases and express opinions. Give space to all voices.

3 EMPOWER STUDENT ACTIVISM

Support and guide learners in taking action on social justice issues they care about. Help them research, plan, and implement initiatives such as awareness campaigns, fundraisers, or advocacy projects. Encourage them to use their voices to create positive change both within and beyond the classroom.

4 TEACH CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Help learners analyse and evaluate information, media, and sources related to activism/moral topics, and to recognise pressures created by social media. Encourage them to be independent thinkers, to question societal norms, systems of power, and injustices they observe, fostering a deeper understanding of social justice issues. Be aware of your own assumptions and biases as well.

5 ENCOURAGE SERVICE LEARNING

Encourage learners to actively engage in their communities by taking part in service learning projects that address social justice concerns. This could involve volunteering, conducting research, or organizing events that raise awareness and contribute to positive change.



Teachers at the Axis Summit share ideas on promoting activism in the classroom.

CLASSROOM-BASED GROUP WORK

Here are some scenarios and activities to do with your learners.

FLIP CHART ACTIVITY

Prepare a set of flip charts, each with a social justice topic as a heading. Ask learners to go around the room, noting down their ideas on how they would do the following:

- Advocate on the issue with their peers.
- Campaign on the issue in their community.

DISCUSSIONS

Provide a set of hashtags and sticky notes, and get learners to write a tweet expressing their views. Examples include #LGBTQI, #GenderbasedViolence, #MyvoteMatters and #FreeEducation4all. Volunteers share their tweets.

Ask learners to suggest their own hashtags and social media campaigns.

ART

Organise an art competition that showcases artworks that promote activism. Products can take many forms, including murals, collages etc. Offer prizes for different categories. Involve parents and community members to help with advocacy on social justice.

STORIES

For younger children, use stories as a way to explore issue such as bullying. Talk about ideas such as kindness and hurting people's feelings. Use visual prompts along with stories. Use assembly or learning circles to reflect on inclusivity and kindness and find slogans such as 'buddy not bully'.

SURVEYS

For older students, you could introduce the skill of crafting surveys to gather data on views on an issue such as LGBTQ+ people. Respondents could fill in the survey anonymously. The data could serve as a springboard for further discussion and exploration of the topic.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Examples:

- Use PRIDE month as a starting point for LGBTQ+ discussions, with invited speakers who could share stories.
- Use Earth Day to raise awareness on climate change.
- Use Women's Month to provide a context for a discussion gender based violence.

FIELD TRIPS

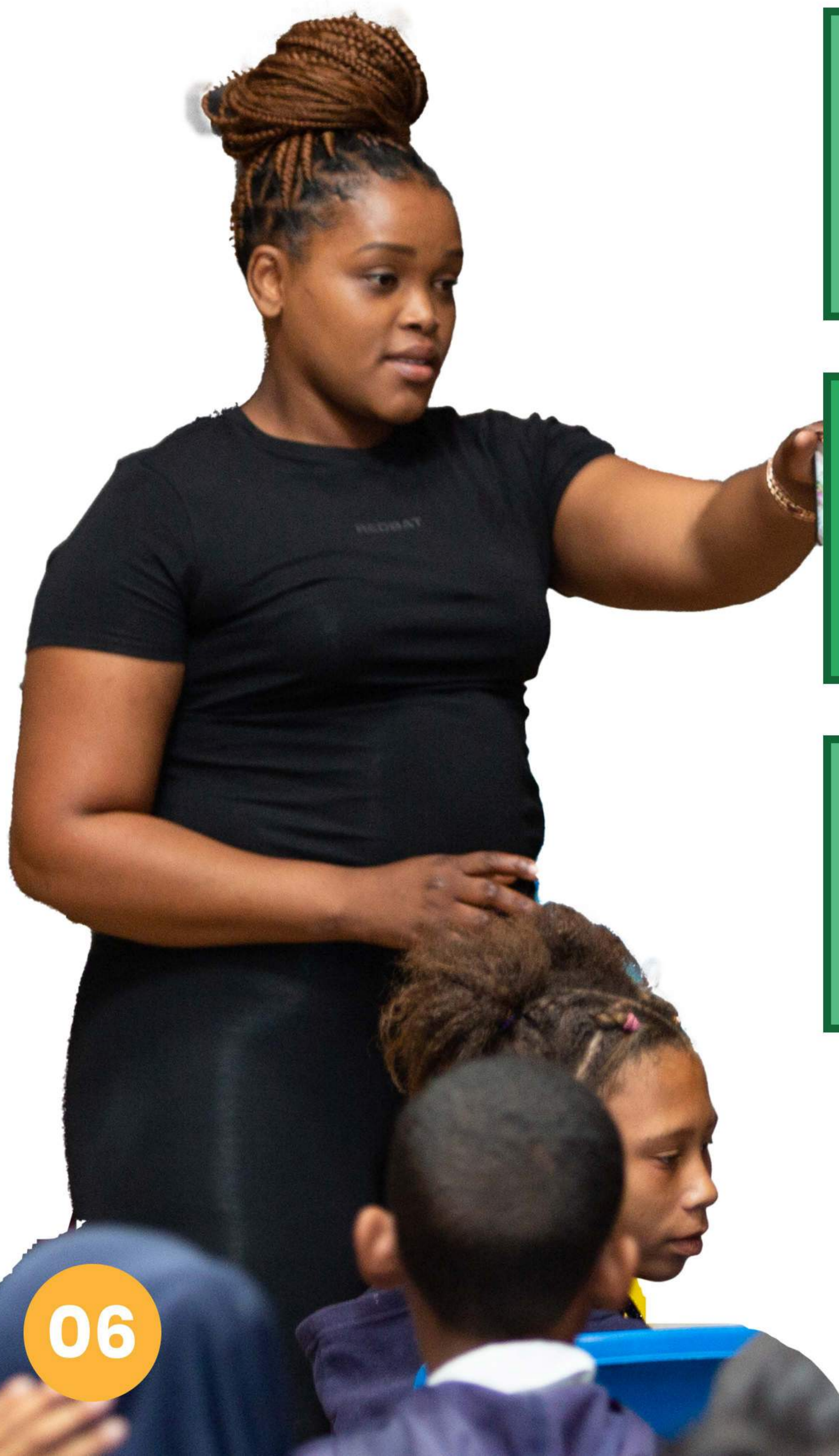
Field trips can help make issues real and concrete. Examples:

- Seeing dump sites or polluted rivers, and linking pollution to environmental damage and health issues.
- Going to sites where conservation efforts have been made, such as the use of renewable energy or vertical wall gardens.
- Visiting micro enterprises using waste in order to make new products.

Use report backs on field trips to kick-start discussions on social responsibility.

CHALLENGES & BARRIERS

Teachers at the Axis Summit recognised that it is not always easy to introduce social justice and activism into classroom discussions; there may be cultural and religious issues to deal with, not all learners will be willing to discuss some issues, and there may be push-back from parents or even other staff members. Below are some suggestions and comments made.



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Show willingness as a teacher to learn from learners. Social justice and activism conversations are dialogues.

Popularise and make available constitutional principles on equality and fairness to the school community and the wider community. Link to the school's core values and code of conduct. Take the personal element out by linking to a legal framework.

School is not a bubble. Life happens in and around schools, and many of these issues cannot be ignored or we are setting out children up for failure. Advocate for WHY we need to engage with social justice and activism in the classroom.

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SPREAD THE WORD

If you want to share these ideas with other teachers in your school or network, you will find a complete Workshop Guide and set of resources and handouts at:

globalteachers.org

These work on the principle of modelling what you would do with learners with other teachers. The workshop also gives all participants a chance to enrich these activities and resources with new ideas, and to help you address any problems you might have come across in using this approach.

WE WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR SPONSORS

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