Chapter 7: Getting Involved as a Global Citizen: Taking Action for Change

By Michael Charles, Kevin Julyan, and Dana Wallace

This chapter focuses on the importance of human rights in our everyday lives. The intent of the chapter is to make students aware of the multitude of issues involved in human rights, to equip them with specific values and skills, and to inspire them to create change. The performance task we use as an example of authentic social action is “Taking Action Against Child Labour: Developing a School-Wide Initiative.”

The chapter begins by facilitating the acquisition of information about the nature of human rights using child labour as an example. Each lesson builds on the skills from the previous, creating a scaffolding effect. The action plan, and its application, is a culmination of the skills and knowledge that the students have gained throughout the unit.

According to Hammond (1997), school programs often emphasize information acquisition at the expense of the larger purposes of developing knowledge and understanding. According to the research that Hammond presents, meaningful and challenging action projects, sustained over time, are one of the most powerful means of helping students negotiate the progression from information to wisdom.

David Orr (1992) makes the point that the types of crisis we face in global education cannot be solved by the same kind of education that helped create the problems. Schools are part of the problem, he asserts.

There are various curriculum theories about the role of action in global education. The behaviourist approach would suggest that if students are trained in the appropriate knowledge and skills they will ultimately change their behaviour. The research would suggest that students do ultimately engage in action when given the proper training (Hungerford-Volk). In this chapter, you will notice that students not only learn the basic skills but engage in a simulation of a multi-media presentation to the United Nations before they engage in their own action plan. This scaffolding ensures success.

Another curriculum approach is information-based or the transmittal of information to students. When one looks at statistics of student political action as a result of being fed a lot of information about a specific subject, action seems to be lacking. Perhaps the best example would be the apathetic voter turnout statistics in Canada, even though all students take some kind of civic action curriculum in most Canadian schools. Grossman (2000) argues that we have to reconceptualize citizenship education. He goes on to say that conventional “content-based only” approaches will increasingly be rendered obsolete.

Cogan also uses a transformational approach to curriculum. He says that there has to be increased attention to global issues and international studies in the curriculum and that
Community action and involvement are an important feature of the school curriculum. In his concept of *multidimensional* citizenship, schools would become active centers for community action and involvement would be an important feature of the school curriculum.

Cogan (2000) argues that an important attribute of citizenship is to be an active participant in civic and public affairs. He builds his argument that this is merely an extension going back to Ancient Greece which made the distinction between a “good person” and a “good citizen.” The good person lives his/her life virtuously while the good citizen is also committed to participation in public life.

In taking action against child labour, students in our project become, in Cogan’s view, “multidimensional citizens,” approaching problems as a member of global society, taking responsibility for their own actions, participating in public life at all levels of civic discourse, and making full use of information-based technologies.

**Strategy 1: Human Rights: Myth or Reality?**

*Reflections on the Strategy Applied*

The purpose is to inform students about the nature of human rights and to develop basic skills needed to perform the tasks necessary to implement the “Taking Action Against Child Labour” initiative. This strategy was effectively used in the Global Interactions unit in the grade 9 Geography course and in the Active Citizen unit in the grade 10 Civics course.

Our justification for selecting this focus and strategy is two-fold. First, we wanted to convey a sense of responsibility and interdependence on a global scale. Second, we selected a pedagogical framework that would encourage active learning, understanding, empathy, and the development of critical thinking skills in a non-threatening environment. The pedagogical framework ensured the accountability and participation of all students. The scaffolding design provided students with the necessary skills and knowledge required to meet the needs all students. The active nature of these lessons allowed students to draw from their own personal experiences and created an environment of interest and empathy within the classroom. These initial activities personalized the issue of human rights and created interest that continued throughout this unit. One of the students reported:

> It is said that children are the future. If we will be the ones building a better tomorrow, it is essential that we be better informed about such important issues as human rights. Without knowing the difference between right or wrong, freedom or slavery and life or death, the children will not be the citizens of the world, which the future requires most.

**Learning Expectations**

- Demonstrate an understanding of citizenship within a global context.
• Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizenship expected and practised in their school or classroom, explain why these rights and responsibilities were developed, and evaluate the extent to which they apply to all students;

• Analyse contemporary crises or issues of international significance (e.g., health and welfare, disasters, human rights, economic development, environmental quality) in the context of the global community.

• Summarize the rights and responsibilities of citizenship within the global context, as based on an analysis of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

• Explain the mandate of selected international organizations to which Canada belongs and evaluate their effectiveness in addressing global concerns (e.g., World Health Organization, North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

• Demonstrate an understanding of similarities among cultures and the need to respect cultural differences.

• Develop and use appropriate questions to define a topic, problem, or issue, and use these questions to focus a geographic inquiry.

**You Will Need**

- Newspapers, magazines
- Chart paper, Bristol board, glue
- Placemat organizer, signs – strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree
- Copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Suggested web sites:
  - [www.hrweb.org](http://www.hrweb.org)
  - [www.hri.ca](http://www.hri.ca)
  - [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)
  - [www.newint.org](http://www.newint.org)
  - [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

**Steps at a Glance**

*Step 1: What is a Human Right?*

Students will be asked to view a number of magazines and newspapers and cut out pictures that they think relate to any human right (in either a positive or negative way). In pairs, they will share their images and identify why they considered it either a human right or a challenge to a human right. Each group will paste their pictures on a Bristol board and the class will do a “walk-about” to see all of the pictures.
Think/pair/share
This is an excellent way to begin many of the co-operative learning strategies outlined in this chapter. It promotes an attitude of accountability and trust within your classroom, is easy to implement and demands total student involvement.

Before beginning any of these co-operative exercises you must promote a culture of trust within the classroom ensuring that all students feel safe. You also have to encourage active listening and carefully decide class groupings.

The teacher will then ask the students to individually create a definition of human rights. Each student will share his/her definition with a partner. Students should look for commonalities and differences, while creating a definition that incorporates both of the partner’s ideas. The newly created partner definitions should be put onto a piece of chart paper, posted, and shared with the class. A general class discussion, lead by the teacher, should ensue at this time.

Graphic organizer (placemat)
In groups of four, students will complete a placemat graphic organizer. A group of students will work on one piece of paper that has been divided into sections, based on the number of members in the group. The organizer will have a central square. On one single sheet of paper, each student will create his or her own image or logo for a human right that he or she has identified. As a group, in the middle of the sheet of paper, the group will then identify one image they can collectively use to display their commonality. They can then share this image or logo with the class in a variety of ways. This activity ensures accountability and the participation of all students.

Step 2: What are key challenges to human rights?
In a historical context, students will be introduced to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Specific details regarding violations to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be analyzed using case studies(see resource list for informative web sites).

Four Corners
As a culminating activity to this section, the teacher should put the following statement on the board: “Canadians should have an obligation to ensure that all basic human rights are protected globally.” The statement should be read aloud and the students should be given a few minutes to contemplate its meaning and to copy it on to a piece of paper. Individually, students should draw a “T” across the page. On one side of the page, students should brainstorm at least three arguments that could be used to support the statement. On the opposite side of the page, students should record three arguments that could be used to refute the statement.

The teacher will lead a four corners exercise based on the statement that the students have been contemplating. Each corner in the room will have a specific designation: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. After contemplating the statement, the students will move to the corresponding corner.
When all students have moved to a corner, each of the four groups will receive chart paper and a marker. As a cohesive group, the students will record the reasons for their opinion on the chart paper. The groups should consider using real life examples to strengthen their position. The group will select a spokesperson to convey their opinion to the class. The teacher should emphasize the importance of listening to the spokesperson without interrupting. A general class discussion may occur after all groups have presented. At this point, students who have changed their mind may move to a different corner. The chart paper should be posted on the wall.

Step 3: Why is the issue of human rights critical in my life?

- Mind mapping (concept map)
  Students will individually create a concept map that conveys a sense of responsibility and an understanding of our interdependence on a global scale. The concept map should clearly display the relevance of human rights to the student’s life. When creating the concept map, students should begin with the major ideas or terms. These ideas should be placed on cue cards that will be classified and sorted. Students should look for the relationships between the ideas. Lines should be used to connect concepts. Words should then be placed on the lines to illustrate their relationship. Cross links should be made between different concepts. Concept mapping is a highly effective analytical process that encourages students to organize and create connections between ideas.

  This concept map could then be used as a stimulus for students to write their own journal entries which could be their first step of taking action.

- Journal writing


Reflections on the Strategy Applied

This activity will give students the opportunity to become aware of the many instances of human rights violations occurring in countries around the world. In small groups, students will take on the role of the United Nations Commission whose role is to investigate one specific human rights violation occurring in the world today. Each group will create a multi-media presentation that provides information and recommendations on one particular human rights violation. The class will serve as the United Nations and will provide an audience for the presentations. As a class the students will select one of the human rights violations as the focus for their action plan. Throughout this activity students will acquire a variety of knowledge and skills that will enable them to be successful in the authentic performance task.

The human rights violation multi-media presentation developed the needed research, presentation, and co-operative learning skills that ensured student success in their authentic performance task. By selecting a violation of personal interest, the activity also
instilled a sense of vested interest which motivated each group to research and make change. This activity inspired students to contact various community organizations, NGOs, and members of the government. One student wrote:

Human Rights in grade 10? I could not imagine a better time to learn about them. At our age, we are mature enough to understand and comprehend the violations to human rights all over the world. It is time that adolescents like us are exposed to some of the horrors in the world and learn what we can do about them. The Human Rights multi-media presentation was perhaps one of our most tasking assignments, giving us the chance to see that all is not well in the world today and to see and feel the pain of those that are suffering. This assignment also managed to enlighten us, as we learned about how the United Nations tries to solve the problems that plague society and also what we, as a society, can do as well.

Due to the design of the strategy, teachers may encounter some challenges such as individual accountability and the availability of resources. Ensuring individual accountability within any group activity is essential. Student-led conferences with the teacher occurred at various points throughout the project to ensure that all members were successful. Continuous assessment and feedback was given to the group members. Each member of the group had a distinct role, and was evaluated on that particular aspect of the project. Groups that were the most successful, were comprised of students with a variety of individual expertise. Groups were established with strengths and weaknesses in mind. The assistance of the teacher-librarian is instrumental in the success of the presentation. The teacher-librarian should be contacted to ensure that the appropriate resources are available for the students. Effective research strategies should be emphasized and students should use “Evaluating Web Sites” (Support Resource #2) to analyze the quality and source of the information that they utilize.

**Learning Expectations**

- Demonstrate an understanding of citizenship within a global context.

- Research and summarize civic actions of individuals and non-governmental organizations that have made a difference in global affairs (e.g., Cardinal Paul-Emile Léger, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Craig Kielburger, David Suzuki, Jean Vanier, Red Cross, Frontier College, Doctors Without Borders, YWCA/YMCA).

- Demonstrate an understanding of a citizen’s role in responding to non-democratic movements (e.g., supremacist and racist organizations, fascism) through personal and group actions (e.g., actions of the Righteous Among the Nations during the Holocaust, Medgar Evers, Emily Murphy).

- Describe ways citizens can be involved in responding to issues in which contrasting value systems, multiple perspectives, and differing civic purposes coexist, and determine their own sense of responsibility in relation to these opportunities for involvement.
Demonstrate an ability to research questions and issues of civic importance, and
to think critically and creatively about these issues and questions.

Demonstrate an ability to collaborate effectively when participating in group
enquiries and community activities.

Demonstrate an ability to formulate questions; locate information from different
types of sources (e.g., texts, special references, news media, maps, community
resources, Internet); and identify main ideas, supporting evidence, points of view,
and biases in these materials.

Research and compare significant contributions made by individuals and groups
to their communities and assess the impact of these individuals’ and groups’
contributions.

Produce a research report on the contributions of public agencies (e.g.,
government bodies, service clubs, media, public interest groups) and evaluate the
value of these contributions to society.

You Will Need
- Web site evaluation sheets
- Resources dealing with human rights issues (internet, periodicals, videos, etc.)

Steps at a Glance

Step 1: Research—Evaluation of Web Sites
- Identifying fact, opinion, and bias
- Contacting and analyzing NGOs

After groups have selected a specific human rights violation they will further develop
their critical thinking skills by analyzing a variety of resources such as: newspapers,
magazines, books and periodicals, videos and the internet. Students will be provided with
a means to identify fact, opinion, and bias through appropriate evaluation processes. The
research will include: detailed information about the specific human rights violation, an
explanation of the specific articles that have been violated in the Universal Declaration of
Human Rights, specific information about what is currently being done to address this
situation (NGO’s and Government Agencies), and recommendations outlining what can
be done to improve the situation.

Step 2: Preparing a Multi-Media Presentation
This multi-media presentation may include interviews with victims or agencies that are
attempting to deal with the problem, video clips, a power point presentation, posters with
statistics and charts, photographs or pamphlets. Students must include both visual and
written information in the presentation. The presentation should be approximately 15
minutes in length. Teachers will prepare students for this presentation by discussing how
to create and deliver an engaging and inspiring presentation.
This presentation will provide students with the opportunity to become familiar with and
understand the importance of essential components of an effective presentation when
trying to engage an audience and promote change.
Strategy 3: Taking Action Against Child Labour: Developing a School-wide Initiative

Reflections on the Strategy Applied

The following is one example of an authentic performance task that will provide students the opportunity to experience the impact that local action plans have on a global scale. The issue of child labour can easily be replaced with a variety of other social justice issues that are relevant to your students and surrounding community.

The school-wide initiative authentic performance task inspires students to be active participants in their learning rather than passive receivers of information. This initiative empowers students to create change and help them to develop confidence that will inspire them to continue to take action throughout their lives. As seen through the following quotation, students discover the importance of human rights and their responsibility and obligation to become advocates for change:

We, in the Western World, have a tendency to take basic human rights for granted. As we are consumed by our everyday lives, we often overlook the atrocities against humanity which are being committed on a daily basis in places around the world. We are truly blessed that Canada steadfastly upholds its Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. But we, as Canadians, should be further promoting these principles beyond our own borders. There should be global initiatives established to eliminate human rights violations and pressure should be placed on certain nations to conform their policies to satisfy the standards outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The onus is on us to instigate serious changes in the social fabric of these ailing countries. If we are to make an impact, we must respond swiftly, and with the utmost resolve.

Many challenges may be encountered in the organization of this multi-faceted task. In order to instill a sense of ownership and accountability students must be empowered to select the focus of the action plan. Teachers must ensure that the necessary skills that will make the project a success are emphasized. These skills include: telephone simulations, preparing press releases, letter writing strategies, fundraising strategies, and developing a plan of action. Another challenge teachers may face is how to keep the momentum of the project rolling without taking over the project itself. The role of the teacher must remain that of facilitator and the ownership must remain with the students if true empowerment is to occur.

Learning Expectations

- Demonstrate an ability to research questions and issues of civic importance, and to think critically and creatively about these issues and questions.
- Demonstrate an ability to apply decision-making and conflict-resolution procedures and skills to cases of civic importance.
- Demonstrate an ability to collaborate effectively when participating in group enquiries and community activities.

- Demonstrate an ability to organize information effectively (e.g., using summaries, notes, timelines, visual organizers, maps, comparison organizers).

- Demonstrate an ability to effectively use strategies within the inquiry process when studying questions of civic importance in their school or local community.

- Participate effectively in a civil action or project of interest to them and of importance to the community (e.g., attend public hearings, plan religious or cultural event, join special interest group, write letters to editor).

**You Will Need**
- Human Rights Violations: A Multi-Media Presentation (Support Resource #1)
- Evaluating Web Sites (Support Resource #2)
- Letter Writing Strategies (Support Resource #3)
- Telephone Call Strategies (Support Resource #4)
- How to Write a Petition (Support Resource #5)
- Creating a Plan of Action (Support Resource #6)
- Preparing Press Releases (Support Resource #7)
- Fundraising Ideas (Support Resource #8)

**Steps at a Glance**

*Step 1: Fair Wear Policy*
Students will be encouraged to become involved in a campaign to raise awareness in their school about clothing and equipment that has been made by children in sweat shops. School groups will be encouraged to consider current practices, their implications for children, and to consider ways in which children can be protected from economic exploitation and ways in which the worst forms of child labour. Actions may range from encouraging students to check labels on their own clothes to schools checking out their uniform suppliers in order to determine the conditions under which clothing has been made. During this process students will learn investigation skills, letter writing skills, and other appropriate actions. These initiatives will culminate in a presentation to the appropriate school and community groups.

- Letter Writing Campaigns (Public Officials, Newspapers)
- Telephone Simulation
- Petition Writing

*Step 2: Fundraising*
In this strategy students will learn exciting ways to raise money for a specific NGO that has been previously researched and selected due to its effective strategies in dealing with child labour. Specific examples of how to develop and carry out an effective and appropriate fundraising strategy will be given such as: scavenger hunts, car washes, and fair wear putting contests. During the fundraising process students will learn how to
A Rubric For Writing A Letter

Learning Expectations/Results/Outcomes:
Students will…
- articulate clearly their personal sense of civic identity and purpose, and understand the diversity of beliefs and values of other individuals and groups in Canadian society
- demonstrate an ability to research questions and issues of civic importance and to think critically and creatively about these issues and questions
- demonstrate an ability to apply decision making and conflict resolution procedures and skills to cases of civic importance
- communicate the results of an inquiry using appropriate methods and technologies, and present viewpoints on issues affecting Canadians

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Level 4 Achieves the standard with distinction</th>
<th>Level 3 Achieves the standard</th>
<th>Level 2 Close to achieving the standard</th>
<th>Level 1 Has not yet achieved the standard</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge and Understanding</td>
<td>Writer makes detailed reference to documented evidence in building her/his case</td>
<td>Writer makes some reference to documented evidence in building her/his case</td>
<td>Writer analyses the impact of government policy on individuals and on communities</td>
<td>Little reference is made to the impact of government policy on individuals and on communities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Writer makes effective use of reference to current events in building his/her case</td>
<td>Writer makes some reference to current global events in building his/her case</td>
<td>Writer makes some reference to current global events in building his/her case</td>
<td>Writer makes some reference to current global events in building his/her case</td>
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<td>Thinking/Inquiry</td>
<td>Writer develops a convincing case in support of her/his point of view</td>
<td>Writer develops a convincing case in support of her/his point of view</td>
<td>Writer develops a convincing case in support of her/his point of view</td>
<td>Writer has yet to develop a case in support of a point of view</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Writer develops arguments by producing a variety (4 or more) of types of evidence, for eg. Statistics, case studies, quotes, personal experience</td>
<td>Writer develops arguments by producing 2 types of evidence, for eg. Statistics, case studies, quotes, personal experience</td>
<td>Writer develops arguments by producing 2 types of evidence, for eg. Statistics, case studies, quotes, personal experience</td>
<td>Writer develops arguments by producing 2 types of evidence, for eg. Statistics, case studies, quotes, personal experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Writer makes very few spelling or grammar errors</td>
<td>Writer makes very few spelling or grammar errors</td>
<td>Writer makes many spelling or grammar errors</td>
<td>Writer makes many spelling or grammar errors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writer organizes arguments and evidence for maximum effect.</td>
<td>Writer organizes arguments and evidence for maximum effect.</td>
<td>Writer organizes arguments and evidence with some effect</td>
<td>Writer organizes arguments and evidence with some effect</td>
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Human Rights Violations: A Multi-Media Presentation  
(Support Resource #1)

*Your Task:*
As you are aware, there are many instances of human rights violations occurring in countries around the world. For this assignment, you have been given the role of a United Nation’s investigator, whose goal is to uncover a specific violation and present the findings to the United Nations (your teacher and the rest of the class). You must convince the Commission to make your issue a priority on their agenda. The issue that is chosen will serve as our action plan for this semester. Consequently, it is important that you ensure that all of your facts and observation are accurate and are presented in as much detail as possible.

*The Presentation:*
In a group of three you will:
1. Choose a specific topic (for example, child labour in Pakistan). Identify the articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that are being violated by this action.
2. Research the topic in detail by consulting a variety of sources such as periodicals, books, videos, and the internet. Many sites on the internet do not contain reliable information. It is important that you analyze the internet sources using the “Evaluating a Web Site” handout to ensure credibility.
3. Investigate various NGOs (non-government agencies) that are attempting to improve the situation. Analyze their goals and success.
4. Plan the presentation that you will present to the United Nations. Your presentation must include:
   a. explicit information about the specific situation
   b. a list of the human rights that are being violated
   c. an assessment of the seriousness of the violations
   d. an analysis of what is presently being done by various NGOs
   e. recommendations detailing what we can do to improve the situation
5. The presentation must be engaging and informative. Both written and visual information must be provided. You may consider including video-clips, statistics and charts, a power-point presentation, and interviews.
6. Your presentation should be approximately 25 minutes in length.

*The Selection Process:*
During the presentations, members of the class will be carefully considering each issue. When all of the groups have presented, a general discussion about each topic will occur. After careful consideration, each member of the class will vote to select the issue that will become our focus for our action plan. Once the selection has been made, the class will be engaged in activities such as letter writing campaigns, organizing petitions, and fundraising. We can make a difference!
Evaluating Web Sites
(Support Resource # 2)

The Internet offers a vast array of information through web sites. When researching a topic, it is essential that you examine the quality of the information that is provided. Although many sites will prove valuable for your research, many others may be misleading and reduce the quality of your own work. It is imperative that you examine the value of the source and are aware of the author’s intent. Use the questions below to evaluate each Web site before you consider utilizing its information.

Authority:
- Who is the author?
- Are the author’s qualifications clearly stated?
- Is there any contact information, such as an address or phone number?
- Which of the following appear in the Internet address (URL)?
  o .gov (government – usually dependable)
  o .edu (educational – can be serious research or a student’s opinion)
  o .com (commercial – may be attempting to sell a product)
  o .net (network – may represent a commercial or individual’s postings)
  o .org (organizational – can be a non-profit organization – may be biased)
  o ~ (usually indicates a personal page)

Accuracy:
- Are there any references?
- Are there any grammatical or spelling errors?
- Can you verify any of the information from the other sources that you have consulted?

Purpose:
- What is the purpose of the site?
- Is the purpose of the site to inform, sell, persuade or entertain?
- Is the information free of advertising?

Currency:
- Are there dates listed that indicate when the page was posted or last updated?
- Is it clear when the statistics were gathered?

Bias:
- Does the site contain straight facts, or are the statements based on opinion?
- Does the source provide many viewpoints?
- Does the author make sweeping statements?

Links:
- Are the links current?
- Do they appear to be reputable?
Letter Writing Strategies  
(Support Resource #3)

*Purpose of letter writing:*  
It is important to let school officials, companies, and politicians know when they have done well and when they have fallen short. In a democracy, individuals can have an important impact on the final outcome of any event given the proper input. Letter writing is clearly important to this process.

*Identifying people to contact:*  
One has to determine who makes the decisions in any organization or group. Brainstorm possible people who have decision-making powers in school organizations. Your list may look something like this:

*Within the School:*  
- letter to student council  
- athletic council  
- principal  
- school council

*At the School Board:*  
- Local trustee  
- Chair of board

*Government:*  
- local M. P. P.  
- local M. P.

*Companies:*  
*Suppliers:* 

*Media:*  
- local newspapers  
- city newspapers

*Check List of Letter Writing Skills*  

- To write an effective letter, try to put yourself in the position of the reader and consider the type of letter that might have the greatest impact on you. Some points to consider are:

- Be positive, but direct and only address the issue of child labour in your letter. Too many issues might take away from your theme
• Be pithy…in other words get to the point and do not spend pages telling the reader what they probably already know (this applies especially to letters to the editor which will not be published if they are too long)

• Let your voice ring true (don’t try to write in the style of another person)

• Be accurate…any false or misleading commentary will only take away from the key point you want to make

• Be courteous and constructive and assume that you are the one receiving the letter as a good rule of thumb

• Give specific examples from your school and community to support your point and don’t forget to use stationary from either your school, interest group, or self. (it is easy to create your own stationary if you do not have institutional support)

• Promote a reply to your letter by asking the recipients what their opinion is

• Be appreciative in the tone of the letter

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**Example of Letter to a Retailer/Manufacturer**

Dear ________________________,

As a student at Advocacy High School in Anytown, I really care and am concerned about the clothes I wear. As a teenager in Anytown and as your customer, I appreciate the fact that you make fashionable clothes which I am happy to wear if the clothes were manufactured under decent conditions. By decent conditions, I am sure you are aware that I am talking out of concern for the workers who manufactured these clothes and specifically that they have fair wages, safe and healthy workplaces and are treated with respect both within your company and among your suppliers in Canada and abroad.

Can you assure me, a loyal customer, that you are concerned about the treatment of your workers both here and abroad and that you are working with others in your industry to create truthful meaningful labels so consumers can know exploited labour was not involved in making your products?

I look forward to continuing to do business with your company if you can assure me that the above conditions are met.

Sincerely,

Concerned Citizen
Most action plans require contacting various individuals for information. Telephone calls can be an effective method to retrieve specific information. In order to ensure the success of a phone call, you must learn effective telephone strategies and spend some time practicing the skill.

**Before the call:**
In order to ensure that you receive the information that you desire you must first:
- Identify your purpose in calling
- Know about the person that you are contacting (position, ability to make change, etc.)
- Create questions that you intend to ask
- Have a pencil/pen ready to take notes
- Ensure that you are prepared to answer questions by gathering relevant information
- Select a quiet location to make the call

**During the call:**
- Speak clearly
- Identify your first and last name
- Explain your purpose in calling
- Ask your preplanned questions
- Write down the response given by your contact
- Repeat the information that you have collected at the end of your call
- Be courteous
- Thank your contact for his/her time

**After the call:**
- Review your notes and add any missing information
- Identify any questions that were not answered
- Consider your next step

*Telephone Simulation*

Before you telephone your contact, you must practice the skills listed above.
- Form a group of three
- Decide on roles (one person is responsible for making the call, another is responsible for answering the questions, and the third should observe and take notes)
Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the conversation
Brainstorm strategies for improvement
Rotate positions

**How to Write a Petition**
**(Support Resource #5)**

A petition is an effective tool that can be used to effect change at various levels of your community. Petitions let the people, group, or organization know that there is a large collective concern that requires action and change.

The more professional your petition looks the more notice it will obtain. Be sure to use the following format when setting up your petition:

- Give your petition an informative title
- State who you are writing your petition to
- Identify the group that is sending the petition
- State the reason with evidence that supports your submission of the petition
- State what you want the person to do who is receiving this petition
- Collect as many names as you can
- Present your petition to a person that has the power to make change

Sample Petition

**Adopting a Fairer Wear Policy**

To: Ms. Unaware, School Board Trustee
From: Students of Social Conscience Secondary School

We, the students of Social Conscience Secondary School would like to promote a policy of Fairer Wear in our school. It is our belief that the promotion of such a policy will be one step towards abolishing the use of child labour in sweatshops around the world. Most sweatshops use child labour so they can pay them an extremely low wage or in most cases none at all. Thousands of children die each year from injury from machinery, abuse, and sickness due to unsanitary conditions. We strongly feel that our school must stop purchasing sports equipment, clothes, and any other materials made in factories that use and abuse the use of child labour.

**NAME:** ____________________  **ADDRESS:** ____________________  **GRADE:** ______

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Fund Raising-Creating a Plan of Action and Raising community Awareness
(Support Resource #6)

Rationale:

A good start is to consider where you want to end up with this plan. For example, the fair wear initiative is one component of freeing the world of child labour. As discussed in the second strategy, there are many NGO’s involved with this initiative using a whole range of initiatives to rid the world of child labour. Wouldn’t it be great to be able to make a major contribution to the NGO of your school’s or your class’ choice?

Helping Students Create A Plan of Action:

Happily, this can be the fun part. In our experience, students have always enjoyed creating ways of raising funds for a number of school initiatives. Because this is a world wide effort, we will be asking students to think more broadly about ways to raise and distribute funds.

To encourage students to create effective plans of actions the following steps may be followed:

- Promote the idea of starting at the end and encouraging students to consider their end goal or what they may wish to achieve by their fund raising efforts.
- Promote students thinking about what it is they want to do and why they want to do it which will encourage them to develop their own mandate which might include having their own school or class develop a fair wear policy, or promote student empowerment or put pressure on government and business for change, or more simply promote the work of the NGO they are supporting.
- Once the mandate has been determined by students, create appropriate timelines.
- Develop a strategy or strategies and determine who in the group is responsible for what.
- Continually assess and evaluate your action plan.
- Identify people, groups, organizations and contacts who will support and who may put up roadblocks.
- Develop a budget which examines overhead costs, supplies needed, and which local organizations may be approached for these funds.
- Develop a process for encouraging community awareness which may include media, newsletters, board outside the school, or morning announcements.
Engaging the School and the Local Community
Preparing Press Releases or News Advisories
(Support Resource # 7)

The purpose of the release is to:
- Raise public awareness in regard to the initiative which will hopefully promote community support.
- Engage the services of your board employees who may already have experience in dealing with the media.

What to include in your press release:
- Include the five W’s as you develop your release.
- List the name, address, and phone number of your group’s contact person.
- Appoint one person from your group to act as a press liaison and have this person follow through with faxing, phone calls and other means of personal contact to various media contacts.
- Prepare a list of media contacts in your area.
- Ensure that the story is self-explanatory by including as much of the story possible

Consider the photo opportunities and sound bytes

Sample Press Release

Child Labour Just around the corner

Aware Student
321 Fair Wear Street
Anywear, On
Tel 888-8765
Fax: 888-0987
E mail: free child labour@yahoo.com

January 12, 2003

What do many designer labels have in common? According to several recent newspaper articles, these companies regularly use sweat shop child labour. On March 27, the grade 9 geography class will be demonstrating outside of a clothing store on Fair Wear Street from 9 to 11 am to protest this abuse of children.

Public Support will be encouraged either at the demonstration or by donating funds to the Fair Wear Fund at Social Conscience High School. Cheques may be made payable directly to the name of the school.

For further information call Ms. Aware Student at the above number or E Mail.
Fundraising Ideas  
(Support Resource # 8)

Fundraising is a fun and engaging way of encouraging students to become involved in political action. The byproduct of fundraising is student bonding, empowerment, and funds to support a worthy N.G.O.

1. Paper Airplane Contest

Organize a paper airplane contest where students create their own airplanes and release them from an upper floor of the building. Charge students to participate and provide prizes for the longest and the straightest flight.

2. Fair Wear Putt Contest

Design and set up your own miniature golf course in the school. Charge each person to play and award a prize to the person with the lowest score. Put a sign at each hole with a fact about child labour.

3. Car Wash

Set up a car wash in the school parking lot. Ask local businesses to donate cleaning supplies. Advertise in the local community.

4. Karaoke Contest

Organize a karaoke contest after school. Invite people from the local community. Charge an entrance fee and have participants pay to enter the contest.

5. Scavenger Hunt

Create a map and a list of items that the participants will need to find in order to win. Advertise the hunt and charge an entrance fee. A prize should be given to the person who finds all of the items in the shortest period of time.
References


Grossman, D. *The Global and the local in partnership. Innovative approaches to citizenship education*.

