

Ten Steps towards solidarity

1. Start at home!

It has been said that if you have food in a fridge, clothes in a closet, a bed to sleep in and a roof over your head, you are richer than 75% of the world's population.

(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

Begin sharing the abundance with which you are blessed by going through your cupboards and gathering up the things you no longer need – maybe even some you think you still need! Take them to St Vincent de Paul for distribution for others who have less.

2. Buy fair trade products

About 70% of the world's cocoa comes from West Africa. Recent figures estimate that 1.8 million children in West Africa are involved in the industry as cheap labour and some are forced or trafficked. The Fairtrade movement advocates for the purchase, sale and consumption of ethically produced chocolate, and other staples such as coffee, tea, bananas, rice, sugar and nuts. By buying foods that are certified Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance or UTZ Certified, producers ensure their produce is not grown by forced or trafficked labour.

Join the Fairtrade campaign to ensure all chocolate processed in Australia is ethically produced. Look for Fairtrade chocolate, tea, coffee and other foods in your supermarket. If it isn't on the shelves, ask the management to get it.

For more information:

www.fairtrade.com.au

<http://fairtrade.asn.au>

www.wfto.com

www.cadbury.com.au/About-Cadbury/Fairtrade.aspx

3. Support just working conditions

Many people are kept in poverty by unfair trade arrangements. For example, some clothing workers in Bangladesh and elsewhere are forced to work long hours in unsafe and unhealthy conditions for a meagre wage. We benefit and thereby collude in this without knowing because we can buy the clothes they produce at a cheap price. When buying clothes, ask whether they were manufactured under fair working conditions.

To find out about producers and brands promoting fair trade, visit:

<http://www.ethicalclothingaustralia.org.au/consumer/accreditedbrands>

<http://www.fairtraders.org.au/content/fair-traders>

www.FairWear.org.au

Campaigning to see that trade agreements between countries are fair needs to be done collaboratively. Two organisations that do this are AFTINET (Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network) and Oxfam. For more information and to see how you can support their work go to their websites:

www.aftinet.org.au

www.oxfam.org.au/explore/trade/make-trade-fair

4. Donate

Organisations such as Caritas Australia, devoted to alleviating world poverty, can bring about enormous changes in marginalised communities and are a powerful means of working for justice worldwide. Consider how much you can commit to such organisations.

(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

Through its development projects, Caritas Australia helps the poorest of the poor become self-sufficient so they don't need to rely on charity. For information and to donate go to:

<http://www.caritas.org.au/donate>

Through their fundraising, Catholic Mission offers formation support to local churches and helps children and communities in need around the world. For more information and to donate go to:

<https://www.catholicmission.org.au/donate>

5. Start work in your parish – learn, form partnerships, reach out

Does your parish have a social justice group? If so, join it; if not, consider starting one. Most dioceses have a social justice office or commission; find out who your diocesan representative is:

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/about-us/diocesan-contacts

Find out more about Catholic social teaching and issues and campaigns that address the major issues of social justice. Visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website. To stay informed, become an ACSJC subscriber:

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

Find out about other organisations or campaigns that address the underlying causes of poverty around the world. For example, Jubilee Australia run campaigns on: third world debt, the 'Robin Hood' tax, corporate mining and 'vulture funds'. To find out more visit:

<http://www.jubileeaustralia.org>



6. Break the cycle of poverty for Indigenous people

There are approximately 370 million Indigenous peoples worldwide. Together they make up around 5% of the world's population, yet they constitute up to 15% of the world's poor and make up 300 million of the world's extremely poor rural population.

(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

Find out more about the challenges facing Indigenous peoples in Australia and around the world. Visit the Walk As One with Indigenous Peoples campaign and take action for a more just world:

www.caritas.org.au/act/walk-as-one-indigenous-peoplescampaign

Every part of Australia was/is part of an Aboriginal nation. See

www.aiatsis.gov.au/asp/map.html or

www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/2012-13

Who are the Aboriginal people in your area?

If there are none there now, what happened to those who used to live there?

What Indigenous language is/was spoken in your area?

What Indigenous cultural activities happen in your area – art, dance, music, literature? Attend a local event as a family.

Read books written by Aboriginal authors.

Watch a film about Indigenous Australians, such as *Rabbit Proof Fence*, *Ten Canoes*, *The Tracker*, *The Sapphires*, *Satellite Boy*.

7. Learn about and support refugees and asylum seekers

There are 45 million people worldwide who have been driven from their homes by war or civil violence. Eighty per cent of refugees are seeking protection in developing countries, making it even harder for those nations to lift themselves out of poverty. For millions, it will be many years before they can find a home again. Some never do.

Australia sees only a tiny proportion of these people. Find out if you or your parish can support organisations that help refugees and asylum seekers in Australia and overseas. Some are:

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office: <http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au>

Jesuit Refugee Services: <http://www.jrs.org.au>

Edmund Rice Centre: <http://www.erc.org.au>

Refugee Council of Australia: <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au>

8. Disabilities

Disabilities are both a cause and consequence of poverty. People living with a disability make up around 15% of the world's population and about 20% of the very poorest in the world. In both developed and developing societies, disabled people experience stigma, prejudice and discrimination.

(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

People living in poverty are at higher risk of having a disability, due to a range of factors such as unsafe living conditions and inadequate access to health services. 150 million children suffer from a disability and subsequently face reduced access to schools, health care, recreation and opportunities for work. For more information about Caritas projects with disabled people in other countries:

www.caritas.org.au/learn/global-poverty-issues/disability

9. Learn about Australian aid

According to the UN Millennium Project, '0.7% of rich world GNI [Gross National Income] can provide enough resources to meet Millennium Development Goals'. In 1967, and again in 2002, Australia joined with other developed nations in pledging to commit 0.7 per cent of its GNI to overseas aid. It has never achieved that goal.

(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

Learn more about Australian aid. Talk to your local federal member about Australia's commitment to 0.7% of GNI. Find out where Australian aid is going and what initiatives it supports:

<http://www.acfid.asn.au>

www.caritas.org.au/act/australian-aid

10. Learn about and support the Millennium Development Goals

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said that 'the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been the most successful global anti-poverty push in history.' Among significant achievements is the fact that the number of people living in extreme poverty has halved. However, 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty. Steady progress has been made towards equal access of girls and boys to education, but more targeted action is needed in many regions.

These eight MDGs are a global blueprint for breaking the chains of poverty. Their aim? To halve world poverty by the year 2015. To find out more about the MDGs and the post-2015 agenda, visit:

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

<http://www.blueprintforabetterworld.org>

