

27. Equality and Social Justice

One person *can* make a difference

Young people who are concerned about equality and reducing hunger and poverty may not know what life is like for those who suffer these conditions, but they do understand it's important to care for people—all people. They care about people they don't know, who live a world away, and who may have critical needs. And they want to do something to make the world a better place. Equality and Social Justice is Asset 27 of Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, the qualities, experiences, and relationships that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Here are the facts

Research shows that young people who place a high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty are more caring and more willing to help people who are less fortunate. They also grow up healthier and become better leaders. About 52 percent of young people, ages 11–18, place a high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty, according to Search Institute surveys. Even tiny steps—if enough people take them—can make a big difference in providing food and shelter for others.

Tips for building this asset

Ask young people how they feel when others treat them unfairly. Use their answers as a springboard to help them find ways to make a difference in the world. Encourage them to give time, money, or talent to an organization that seeks to reduce hunger, poverty, and injustice.

Also try this

In your home and family: Find out which injustices in the world most concern your child. Help her or him develop a plan to personally help address the problem.

In your neighborhood and community: Donate canned goods and other non-perishables to your local food shelf. Volunteer to serve food at a nearby homeless shelter.

In your school or youth program: Choose a social issue that either directly affects or troubles the young people in your class or program. Have them write letters about the issue to the local newspaper or state representatives.