

Engaging Young People in Social Action

Social action teaching in the primary classroom

Youth social action is when young people/students work together to tackle common challenges that directly impact their lives and/or other people's lives in their community/city/world.

One aspect of quality social action teaching is developing a culture of asking 'effective' questions related to the study topics in the classroom. A good way to start is to simplify the planning of activities by engaging young people with simple resources that introduce them to the focus area and raise their awareness of how this affects their lives. As a rule of good practice, teachers should try to structure the activities that teach social action skills in a child-led manner by getting Young people to think about the problem they want them to think about rather than by telling them. This way, young people take ownership of their learning and are more likely to develop the intended skills.

With very young people, this work and attitude to learning can become part of the learning culture by getting young people used to making observations about the outside world:

- 'What is special about my school?'
- Who are the people working in my school?
- What do they do for us?

Look at what they are willing to investigate to inform their social action planning. This could start by taking notes of what problems they notice and allowing them to explore further and act. This way of educating young people promotes 21st-century knowledge and skills and builds their social-emotional competencies.