

Creative Activism

Thinking outside the box

Congratulations on pursuing that higher education degree. It's quite a commitment on your end. In spite of professors challenging your thinking, multiple all-nighters, a thriving social life, and the real-world job market on the forefront of your mind, have you thought about how you can integrate your passion and your sweat into global AIDS advocacy and activism? It's time to think outside the box and get creative with advocacy.

Advocacy is defined as actively supporting or pleading in favour of a cause, idea, or policy. The importance of governmental advocacy is covered in the "Advocacy Tools" document. However, being an advocate does not just include political advocacy; it reaches further than public policy and government relations. You do not have to go into medicine, ministry, or politics to care for those affected by AIDS. Though these fields are invaluable, you can use your voice, your time, and your talents in numerous other fields to be an advocate for those living with HIV and AIDS around the world. Here are some ideas to incorporate your talents and interests into radical activism and service right now:

The Arts and Humanities :: Creative expression is a highly effective tool for creating awareness and making an issue visually stimulating and emotionally gripping. As a discipline characterized by inspiration and imagination, there are limitless possibilities for advocacy. Here are some possibilities:

- Art auctions and displays
- Theatre productions, musicals, and dramas
- Writers' guild and other publications
- Visual activism or performance art such as the "Do You See Orange?" campaign



Business and Economics :: The spread of HIV is multiplied in poor countries. Micro-enterprise and social entrepreneurship have been effective tools to combat poverty and create a ripple effect that is reducing the spread of HIV. Business people play a key role that you can begin to exercise on campus. You can organize the following:

- Micro-enterprise and social entrepreneurship competitions with your peers and with other schools of business. Either individually or in teams, create a sustainable micro-enterprise strategy or product that can be incorporated into the daily lives of others around the world. When developing your concept, consider all factors that developing communities must face. Consider the strategy and sustainability of the social entrepreneurship project and its response to a social cause or injustice. All participants should present their concepts to peers, professors and other judges who are experts in these disciplines.
- Collaboration with the school of art on projects that can be utilized as income-generating activities. Possibilities include ceramics and clay, fabric and rug making, book designing and binding with natural resources, jewellery making, etc.
- Market research for non-government organizations and humanitarian relief organizations that can benefit from up-to-date trends and warnings in today's fast-paced market.

Medicine and Science :: Health professionals have a very obvious and extremely necessary role in the fight against AIDS. Scientific research, community development, and engineering are also key tasks that require preparation and practice in college. The following are some ideas to consider:

- Visits to developing countries to view first-hand how integral fields such as medicine, nursing, engineering, and agriculture are to creating sustainable development in poor nations.
- Educational forums for the campus community regarding the truth versus the myths and stigmas of HIV and AIDS.

Whatever faculty of study you are in, there are bound to be ways to use your passion, and the opportunities found in that area of study, in order to achieve something significant. Begin exploring. It may start with small steps, but they may lead you to exciting places. Let us know as you do! Send an email to actingonaids@worldvision.ca with some info on what you are up to. We'd love to know!

