

THE DYNAMICS OF DIFFERENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social Justice is....

- both a process and a goal
- The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs.
- ...includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure ...self-determining (able to develop their full capabilities) and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others).
- Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others, their society, and the broader world.

What is Social Justice Education?

- Learners understand the meaning of social difference and oppression both in the social system and in their personal lives.
- To develop critical tools necessary to understand their own socialization within oppressive systems.
- To develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive behaviors in themselves, institutions, and communities we are apart of.
- A process with a goal of full and equal participation of all groups in society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs.
- Focuses on understanding social power dynamics that result in some social groups having privilege, status, access, while other groups are disadvantaged, oppressed, and denied access.

“Diversity” vs. “Social Justice”

- *The terms “social justice” and “diversity” have been used interchangeably, but there is a difference...*

Diversity....

- recognizes the broad scope of dimensions of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, socio-economic class status, education, religious/spiritual orientation, and other cultural and social identity dimensions.
- focuses on *appreciating* social differences.

Difference between Social Justice Education and other diversity programs and trainings:

- Diversity Programs focuses on appreciation of differences, without an emphasis on power dynamics or deferential access to resources (employment, housing, education) to live safe, satisfying, productive lives.