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ECAY5003: The Evolving Landscape of Advocacy Provision

Activism – A Historical Context 2023

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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"Millions of people in the world's poorest countries remain imprisoned, enslaved, and in chains. They are trapped in the prison of poverty. It is time to set them free."

- Nelson Mandela

"Every important change in our society, for the good, at least, has taken place because of popular pressure-pressure from below, from the great mass of people."

- Edward Abbey

Social Change

- How do movements contribute to social change?
- Movement outcomes can take various forms:
 - Acceptance,
 - Tangible gains,
 - Institutional changes,
 - Altered lifestyles,
 - Cultural change,
 - Confusion/clarity in identity politics,
 - and the redistribution of resources

(Shewly & Gerharz, 2023)

Research

- Research demonstrates that social movements should be recognised as sociopolitical processes themselves
- Produced in society
- Under specific social and political conditions.

(Shewly & Gerharz, 2023)

Social Movements

- Social Movements have changed the world in many ways:
 - By overthrowing dictatorships and monarchies
 - Establishing democracies
 - Triggering local policy transformations
 - Instigating change in people's views and perspectives
 - Regarding particular societal and political realms.
- This demonstrates the potential to transform and modify the state and society

(Shewly & Gerharz, 2023)

Social Movements

- Social movements do not simply vanish once their goal has been achieved,
- Being a product of society themselves, they are themselves subject to continuous change
- These changes may also vary depending on the nature of the movement

(Shewly & Gerharz, 2023)

Activism: Passion and Purpose

- Activism is a powerful force that has shaped societies throughout history.
- It represents the conscious effort of individuals or groups to promote social, political, or environmental change
- By advocating for their beliefs and values.
- Whether it is advocating for:
 - Civil rights
 - Fighting climate change
 - Promoting gender equality
- Activism plays a vital role in driving process and fostering a more just and equitable world.

(McKeever *et al.*, 2023)

Activism Roots

- Examples of activism can be dated back to ancient civilisations.
- In ancient Greece, Philosophers, including Socrates questioned social norms
- And advocated for critical thinking
- This laid the foundations for 'intellectual activism' on a global level.

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(McKeever *et al.*, 2023)



Multifaceted Activism

Civil Rights Activism

- Prominent figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks championed Civil Rights Activism through non-violent protests and civil disobedience
- Martin Luther King Jr. was a church leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, who was inspired by his religious beliefs to stand up for the civil rights of people of colour until his assassination in 1968.



Civil Rights Activism

- Rosa Parks famously refused to surrender her seat on a bus to a white person in America, at a time where racial segregation on busses was in place, resulting in her arrest.
- Both individuals' actions led to significant legal and social changes in America.



Environmental Activism

- Groups like Greenpeace and individuals like Greta Thunberg have raised awareness about environmental issues,
- Pushing for policies and actions to combat climate change and protect the planet.



Social Justice Activism

- Movements like Black Lives Matter and #METOO have highlighted systemic injustices and discrimination.
- Sparking important conversations about race, gender, and equity.



Humanitarian Activism

- Organisations such as Doctors without Borders and the Red Cross provide essential humanitarian aid during crisis
- Embodying the principles of activism through direct action.



The Power of Activism

- Activism is a catalyst for change in several ways:
- Raising awareness
 - Activists shine a light on issues that may otherwise remain hidden
 - Educating the public and policy makers about critical problems
- Mobilizing Communities
 - Activism brings people together
 - Fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose to effect change

(McKeever *et al.*, 2023)

The Power of Activism

- Influencing Policies
 - Activists can influence government policies and legislation through lobbying, advocacy, and public pressure.
- Changing Norms
 - Activism challenges societal norms and values
 - Pushing for more including and equitable standards

(McKeever *et al.*, 2023)

Challenges and Criticisms

- While activism is a powerful tool for change, there are many challenges and criticisms:
- Resistance and repression
 - Activists often face resistance from those in power, leading to arrests, violence or censorship.
- Divisiveness
 - Activism can sometimes lead to polarization and divisiveness
 - Hindering productive dialogue and cooperation
- Burnout
 - Activists may experience burnout due to the emotional toll and constant pressure of advocating for change

(McKeever *et al.*, 2023)

Key Differences between Advocacy and Activism

Advocacy or Activism

- Advocacy is using voice to support a specific cause by getting support from a person or group
- Advocates work on behalf of an individual, group or organisation
- Activism is using forceful actions to bring about change, typically social or political
- Activists use methods such as protests, street marches, rallies, and strikes to intervene in the social, political, or economic environment.

Conceptualising Advocacy and Activism

- Advocacy often focusses on individuals, groups or organisations who are vulnerable within society.
- Activism focusses on a more direct and sometimes vigorous approach.
- Suggesting that the nature of the goal or motivation for the behaviour can be a key factor in differentiating these two concepts.

Drivers of Change (DoC)

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- 'Drivers of Change' (DoC) is an approach to address the lack of linkages between a country's political framework and the work of development agencies.
- The approach focuses on "the interplay of economic, social and political factors that support or impede' poverty reduction".
- The evolution of this approach has gone hand-in-hand with an approach to development that emphasises that:
 - i) the way development happens, or does not happen, is shaped by political context; and
 - ii) to be effective, donors' country strategies must be based on a sound understanding of historical and political context.
- More specifically, DoC is rooted in a concern to better understand how to make change happen in specific country contexts: "It's this black box of lack of political will that DoC analysis unpacks."

'Intelligent Activism'

Drivers of Change (DoC)

- There are many factors that can influence change
 - People
 - Customers
 - Patients/residents/clients
 - The general public
 - Legislation
 - Incidents/accidents
 - Exposure of a rule failure
- And understanding the individual specific needs of each factor, can, and will influence the behaviour that is demonstrated (Advocacy or Activism).

Differences Explored

What are the main differences/similarities in these two individual factors?

Mental Health

Environment

Differences Explored

- Mental Health is:
 - Individual
 - Personal
 - Limited impact
 - Can be supported by individuals/teams
- Environment is:
 - Global
 - Multifaceted
 - Complex
 - Requires a global shift

TASK

- Consider the differences between Mental Health and the Environment.
- Discuss your viewpoint on the individual needs.

References

- Shewly, H. & Gerharz, E. (2023) 'Activism, Social Movements, and Social Change: An Incessant Societal Process' *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Societal Change* Available at: [\(1\) \(PDF\) Activism, Social Movements, and Social Change: An Incessant Societal Process. \(researchgate.net\)](#)
- McKeever, B. W., McKeever, R., Choi, M., & Huang, S. (2023) 'From Advocacy to Activism: A Multi-Dimensional Scale of Communicative, Collective and Combative Behaviours' *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 100 (3) pp. 569-594 Available at: [From Advocacy to Activism: A Multi-Dimensional Scale of Communicative, Collective, and Combative Behaviors - Brooke W. McKeever, Robert McKeever, Minhee Choi, Shudan Huang, 2023 \(sagepub.com\)](#)