

Social Justice in the BCTF



2016–17

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The Social Justice Program in the BCTF has the ultimate objective of building safe, equitable, sustainable, and non-discriminatory communities—places where social justice will define the quality of children’s lives.

What does it mean to be a social justice union?

As a social justice union, we:

- accept and act on our broad responsibility to be involved in the social development of the communities, province, and world in which we live.
- are responsible for being and creating active citizens who work for social change for the betterment of humanity.
- act in the interests of the children we teach, so they may live in a world that has enhanced equity, security, and sustainability.

We are:

- a province-wide network of social justice contacts and school-based social justice activists, including activists involved in the issues of the action groups.
- a provincial Committee for Action on Social Justice. These 24 members, who are regular classroom teachers, voluntarily co-ordinate zones meetings, help build and strengthen the social justice network, liaise with the social justice activists, and advise the BCTF Executive Committee on social justice issues. They are assigned to six action groups with four members each: Antiracism; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ); Peace and Global Education; Antipoverty; Environmental Justice; and Status of Women. The action groups’ purpose is to provide information, lesson ideas, and professional support for classroom teachers. For further information about each action group, go to the BCTF website bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=18432, and find their discrete web pages.
- BCTF administrative and support staff who provide information and support to the entire social justice network, design and edit the *Social Justice Newsletter*, co-ordinate social justice conferences, and facilitate the booking of social justice workshops.
- PSAs of the BCTF such as Peace and Global Educators and Environmental Educators.

What do we do?

- Act as advocates for social justice issues within the BC public school system and our local, national, and global communities.
- Develop and implement policies and contract language that aim to equalize opportunities for teachers, students, and their communities.
- Offer workshops and presentations to teachers, students, and the community in social justice areas.
- Participate in the BCTF and local teacher union activities.
- Provide social justice grants to individual teachers and local social justice committees to help bring social justice initiatives to life in classrooms and locals.
- Provide information and support to locals and teachers.
- Work with school-based social justice contacts to create a network of social justice activists.

- Raise awareness about social justice issues at the local, zonal, and provincial levels.

What can we do for you in the area of social justice?

- Act as an advocate.
- Help with skill building.
- Provide research and informational support.
- Provide free PD workshops for locals and schools.
- Provide web-based resources for classroom teachers.
- Provide access to the social justice calendar of national and international events at bctf.ca/uploadedfiles/Public/SocialJustice/SJCalendar.pdf.
- Provide access to the social justice lens.
- Provide Social Justice staff union rep training (SURT) for locals.

How do you access social justice grants?

Local social justice grants:

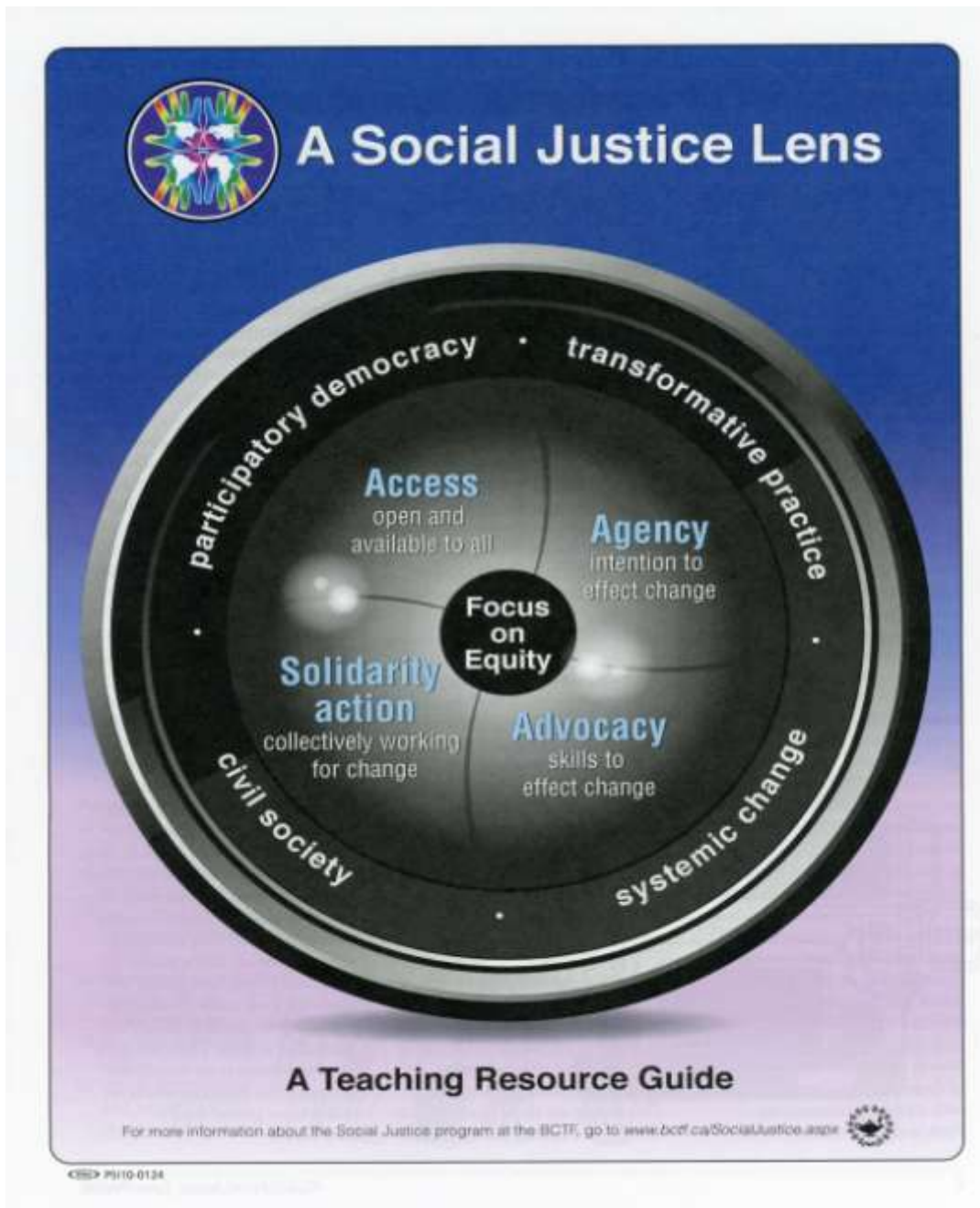
Local social justice committee members apply for these grants through their local. You can find information about these grants, including application forms and criteria, at bctf.ca/SocialJusticeGrants.aspx. Projects should help develop and sustain the social justice work and networks of the local through the application of the social justice lens. Federation staff will assist locals in developing social justice projects.

Ed May Social Responsibility Education Fund:

Individual members or school staffs may apply for funds to help develop school-based social justice projects and programs, or deliver support to promote student-centred social responsibility activities. For information about applying for these funds, go to bctf.ca/SocialJusticeGrants.aspx.

Staff responsibilities for social justice programs 2015–16

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| Aboriginal issues, Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee Employment Equity for Aboriginal teachers, Enhancement Agreements | Gail Stromquist 604-871-1854 gstromquist@bctf.ca |
| Local Social Justice Grants and Ed May Social Responsibility Education Fund | TBD |
| Social Justice Workshops and Newsletter | Susan Ruzic 604-871-1842 sruzic@bctf.ca |
| Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ) Social Justice Action Groups— Antiracism; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) issues; Status of Women | Susan Ruzic 604-871-1842 sruzic@bctf.ca |
| Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ) Social Justice Action Groups—Peace and Global Education; Environmental Justice ; Antipoverty | TBD |



The lens has four distinct interconnecting filters—access, agency, advocacy, and solidarity action. Each represents an aspect of social justice work, and, while we may focus on one filter at a time, the true potential of these filters lies in engaging with all four simultaneously. Participatory democracy, civil society, transformative practice, and systemic change found on the rotating outer ring of the lens are necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of equity found at the centre of the lens.

Access is the gateway to inclusion and participation.

Agency means that individuals know their rights. They have the capacity and the ability to voice their concerns and to take actions that create change for the better.

Advocacy is a deliberate process of influencing outcomes so that change can occur.

Solidarity action refers to working with others to act for the collective betterment.