

'I WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE': SOCIAL JUSTICE AND YOUR CAREER

Session length: 2 hours

Audience: Open to all UoR students

Purpose: To increase understanding of social justice as it relates to career and inspire action to promote it.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this session students will be able to

1. Recognise different interpretations of social justice
2. Interpret two contrasting narratives about the labour market
3. Discuss the potential impact of these narratives on themselves and others
4. Apply strategies of individual or social change ('playing the game' or 'changing the game') to a labour market problem
5. Compare the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies
6. Propose actions they can take to promote social justice through their career

Room requirements

PowerPoint and projection, whiteboard, internet access and sound. Room set up cabaret style, with chairs around tables in groups of 5-8.

Materials and equipment

Flipchart & pens, post-its, powerpoint slides.

Handouts: Print outs of labour market 'stories' with headlines blacked out:

- Owen Jones: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/24/deliveroo-couriers-dystopia-union> (Talk to Deliveroo Couriers. See a Dystopia that could be your future)
- Annabel Denham: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/business/everyone-benefiting-gig-economy-apart-women/> (The Gig economy is the future and women can lead the charge)

Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpE8ttCEd-w> and copies of transcript.

Key evaluation tools to be used

- Evaluation and feedback form (immediate, and 6 weeks later follow up)
- Materials produced by students during the session (flipcharts from case study exercise, post-it action commitments)
- Trainer observation of students' participation in discussion and activities

Text used to promote the workshop

Should we embrace the flexibility offered by the 'gig economy', or be concerned about exploitation? When do we 'lean in' to compete in the labour market as it is, or 'lean out' and seek to change limiting systems and structures? If you see your career as a means of bring about positive social change, as well as personal fulfilment, then this workshop is for you.

This interactive workshop aims to raise awareness of the graduate labour market from a social justice perspective. We'll critically reflect on the stories told about the graduate labour market and how they relate to personal experience and values. We'll propose alternatives and explore practical ideas for how we can play the game or try to change it, through our actions and choices.

SESSION WALKTHROUGH

Introduction

10 minutes (slides 1-4)

Introduce self and purpose of session & LO1

In groups/pairs: Intro yourself to the table, Why are you here? What does social justice mean to you?

Collect ideas of social justice on white board – focus on key words/concepts rather than full definitions.

Facilitation questions (FQs): Did you all agree? Social justice means different things to different people, likely influenced by our experience in the world so far, people we've met etc?

Put forward 'starting point' definition of social justice: Fouad et al. suggest that a 'socially just' society is one in which there is an equal and fair distribution of opportunities, worth and resources, without individuals or groups being advantaged or disadvantaged in accessing these (2006). – explored further later.

Introduce learning outcomes

Activity 1: Labour market stories

30 minutes

LO2 & LO3 (Slides 5-6)

Distribute copies for the two articles so each group has a mixture of the two. Ask participants to read, individually, one of the articles, consider questions then discuss with others who read the same article, and the other article.

Key questions to consider for each article: What is the story here – can you suggest a headline? Key messages or themes? Who are the winners and losers? Who has the power? What is the call to action? (Who is telling the story? What informs this perspective?) Students feedback, then facilitate further discussion:

How do these stories affect your feelings about the world of work? (Option to collect feedback/thoughts on post-its, or Menti) What can we do about it?

Activity 2: Individual change v societal change debate

40 mins

LO 4 & LO5 (Slides 7-8)

Introduce Mignot's key concepts in anti-oppressive practice as a way to draw some of these ideas together. Explain one axis at a time, and the tensions that exist between them. Depending ideas shared in the previous discussion, it could be useful to give some further examples of other topical debates and how they relate to this framework – e.g. sugar tax, banning single-use plastics etc.

Introduce theme of the gender pay gap. Split room in half, one to focus on solving the problem from the perspective of individual change, the other from social change. Play the film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpE8ttCEd-w> then each group has 15 mins prep time and 15 mins to debate. Distribute flipchart paper and pens so groups can note their key points.

After debate, ask group for final reflections – which approach do they feel is most effective?

Summarising: Ronald Sultana suggested social justice as a stance, rather than a state – an all-or-nothing approach can be paralyzing. A state can never be reached, as history moves and any such state would necessarily be temporary... an 'unquenchable thirst that keeps us ever on the alert, and always on the quest for more equitable social relations' (Sultana 2014).

Activity 3: Personal actions

30 mins

LO6 (slides 9-15)

How does this link to you as an individual, your personal career, and how you might go about 'making a difference'? Introduce the idea of Plato and Socrates ideas of careers guidance – personal fulfilment through contribution to the greater good. What does it mean to contribute to the greater good, or 'make a difference'? And how can we go about it? (Ask to group in general)

In small groups: Think of a change you'd like to see. How does this relate to your personal aspirations? E.g. does it suggest a barrier you or others might face in entering the sector or progressing? Are there particular goals or themes relevant to an area of work or job role that interests you? Try to identify specific tools to help, networks to join, useful resources etc. (suggest ref to 80k hours, UN SDGs page to start with.)

Write down (on a post-it note) one specific action you will take within the next month inspired by what we've discussed today. All read out (encourage to at least) and stick on flipchart.