



Association of Catholic Tertiary Students

399 Paul Kruger Street

Pretoria

0001

Tel: 012 326 6458

Email: actsacbc@gmail.com

Website: <http://acts.sacbc.org.za>

International Movement of Catholic Students, IMCS South Africa.

PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE OFFICE OF
Social awareness and Lifestyle

EXECUTING OFFICER:

Lucky Moloji

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**Southern African Catholic
Bishops' Conference**

Description

- The social awareness and life style office is a new office made to establish and address social issues in the context of South Africa and its daily dynamics and matters pertaining to lifestyle of an individual living within the community of ACTS.
- It defines the reality of life aspects which affect young people across all ages,
- Looking at the signs of times, new concerns emerge and as ACTS we need to be vigilant and come up with models which address such matters.

Aims and objectives

- To raise awareness amongst ACTS members around issues which affect them as students and as members of the civil society of South Africa. Such issues being centred around physical, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and health in order to create a balanced well-being.
- To move the society more towards the ACTS vision and mission which is to discern the spirit of times by being involved in and not ignoring political, environmental, economic and common social issues which affect us on a daily basis. We strive to do this whilst remaining non-partisan so as not to bring about divisions within the society but still being able to be a platform to discuss issues which affect us as students and be change agents who bring about positive dynamics and solutions.
- To run applicable and practical programmes the local Church offers, i.e. Theology of the body, Tug of life, ABCD lifestyle rallies, Education for life, Life in the Spirit, etc.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle to all ACTS members.
- Coordinate with provinces and branches on how to address local social issues faced contemporarily by the nation and global village. I.e drugs, inequality, racism, alcoholism, gender based violence, promiscuity, HIV/AIDS and other STI's, youth unemployment and education.

Proposed year activities and methodology

- ACTS offers a united national voice to THE WORLD through our identity as Catholic Church (and tertiary students), that governs all aspect of individual and this should be adopted and recognised at branch and provincial level.
- We will consolidate the message of EDUCATION FOR LIFE AND all other programmes which the Church has. Education for LIFE as the main umbrella (UNDER which all other issues will fall) is a program that is chosen among other programs for the upcoming year . The Topic that we as ACTS members must focus on these year at all provinces is :

INEQUALITY AND HUMAN INJUSTICE

- With the theme : **WE TAKE A STAND AND ACT- AGAINST :**
 - Domestic violence
 - Youth unemployment
 - Financial exclusion

- Poverty

- And many other issues at hand can be included...

- Throughout our campuses we face different challenges such as being undermined for being who we are, the injustice of society, being abused and sexually assaulted by people. It is essential that ACTS attempts to look at the “signs of the times” which in some way affect the organisation as a whole.

The following is an attempt to list some of the challenges that are present within the South African context:

Injustice system that most people find themselves may lead to depression, academic exclusion, etc.

We cannot succeed in changing these social illnesses we are facing if we do not support each other in any form. As an association we should be a champion for their cause and ensure that we bring about awareness to this and bring about change.

- The topic for this year or main focus which is to be adopted in each province is inequality and human injustice.
- The theme has been chosen as it is broad and gets to deal with a lot of issues affecting us in society. Violence and crime statistics of South Africa are alarming; mind you these are statistics of crimes which are reported excluded the harms done and not reported. Many more go unreported. We all have been affected by inequality in different aspects at some point in our lives, be it directly or through someone we know.

Youth unemployment, financial exclusion, poverty and domestic violence are hindering drawbacks we as students should refuse to turn a blind eye to. We should stand in solidarity with all those who have been affected in one way or another.

- Let us also be aware that inequality and human injustice can be as a result of and can also lead to alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental health disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder, patriarchal mind-sets, etc.
- Each provincial social awareness and lifestyle officer is to liaise with national officer on how they have interpreted the theme and how they will convene a provincial rally which will raise awareness and also take a stand against such but promote the morals and values the Church teaches and keep it in the light of the Gospel. This also includes the ADCB Lifestyle campaign.



Suggested activities FOR provinces:

- *Arrange an open conversation session or talks with relevant stake holders of communities,
- *Arranging self-defence lessons,
- *Engaging with abuse centres and compiling a list of organisations which help survivors of abuse and distribute the list amongst ACTS and community members, youth in the diocese and other students on campus.
- *Try organising survivors of abuse to come speak to and share their experiences. If possible also try getting former perpetrators of such acts to speak to students. This may be uncomfortable but it someone's experience can help someone who is currently in that situation to finally take a step to leave.
- *Provincial reps should research on and distribute information to members on purpose of restraining order and how to obtain restraining order against abusers.
- *Have a workshop on alcoholism- how to identify it, seek help, its possible consequences and impact on one's health.
- *Mental health disorders is something we ignore. Depression and bipolar disorders are conditions which affect us and yet go undiagnosed. A workshop can be organised to discuss such with help from organisations who are passionate about mental health disorders and rehabilitation processes.
- * Focus on empowering survivors and current victims through referral to counsellors, clergy, psychologists and organisations whose main focus is providing empowering strategies and skills.
 - ACTS branches should try to participate in the "broad transformation forum" of the local Institution of Higher Education. The organisation should attempt to become an agent of transformation on the campus attempting to be part of the process of shifting local institutions from that of Eurocentric bodies to that of African centred institutions. Further
 - Many of the branches especially the "historically disadvantaged institutions" also referred to as the "historically black institutions" are still facing the effects of apartheid and are yet to catch up to their counterparts in terms of resource allocation and curriculum offered.

- Local ACTS branches are challenged to respond to the various situations so that the imbalances and inequities of the past can be addressed. Issues relating to curriculum development and student financing should especially be addressed by ACTS National on the level of Policy Development within the National Youth Commission.

COMPULSORY EVENT:

***Having a peaceful march/ rally which will be creating awareness and causing a mind shift to 'turning a blind eye' and invoke people to stand up together.**

From the proposed activities will like to encourage all the provinces to have their campaign or events more especially the march/ rally between 1 APRIL -7 MAY 2016

