

52 WAYS TO SAVE THE WORLD



**(WITHOUT GIVING UP YOUR DAY
JOB OR BREAKING THE BANK!)**

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INTRODUCTION

Many of us are aware of how much suffering many people and animals are under, the fact that global warming is increasing and that the environment is being destroyed. Many of us would love to make a difference, but what can we do about it? It seems like to really make a difference in the world, you have to have a lot of money and a lot of time, which are the two things very few of us have! You have all the time in the world if you're unemployed but no money, and a fair bit of money if you are employed, but no time!

This book is full of actions you can take; some are small and you've probably heard them before (but they do make a difference!) and some are quite big and the difference you make will be life changing to you as well as others! But they are all worthwhile and when done together, can change the world or make the world of difference to a few individuals if carried out by one person. It's split into 52 actions so it works out at one action a week within a year so it won't take up too much of your time and although some actions do take money, it won't be so much that it eats into your savings.

Of course, these are just a few ideas and there's nothing to stop you coming up with your own better ideas. With enough imagination, creativity and passion, anything is possible and the world is yours for the taking.

The Starfish Story

A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each star-fish, she would pick it up, and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement.

She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach!

You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!"

The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied, "Well, I made a difference to that one!"

The old man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined, and all the starfish were saved. - adapted from the Star Thrower by Loren C. Eiseley

ERADICATING POVERTY

1. Support Entrepreneurship In Third World Countries

Millions are given to charities working to help those living in impoverished countries, every year. However, there are growing concerns about whether this money is reaching those most in need. Most of the money given by other governments, goes directly to the government in Africa where it is unlikely to be spent on the people who need it. Some of it is spent on essential supplies such as mosquito nets and food which is sent from abroad. This poses two problems; a lot of this is taken by the army before it reaches the people who need it and it makes employment in Africa even harder. For example, someone who could make money selling handmade mosquito nets in Africa, can't, as many charities have them made abroad and then send them over to people for free. There's certainly nothing wrong with giving someone a mosquito net for free, but to help with the overall economy in Africa, it would be even better to ensure it has been made in Africa. Another problem is that the African government have no incentive to help the poor. As long as they have people struggling in their country, they can ensure they can get millions of pounds worth of aid. Of course, the people of Africa, don't want hand-outs and they want to be able to secure their own future but it's incredibly difficult.

Fortunately, there is a solution. The Grameen Bank has already proven successful in India, winning it's founder, Professor Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel peace prize. It was started in Bangladesh in 1976, giving people living in rural communities, the opportunity to take out a loan so that they could start their own business. Many Africans, being self-sufficient, already have some of the skills needed to start their own business, such as producing food, clothing, jewellery, repairing clothing and shoes, carpentry and much more. All that's needed is the capital, equipment and basic business skills.

There have been a number of microloan charities operating throughout Africa but if you want to support one of these charities, there are a number of factors to be aware of. Many Africans need the

money for immediate things such as food and clothing and sometimes end up unable to pay back the loan. Also, some microloan companies or the people who collect on their behalf, charge a high interest rate, making it harder for people to pay back.

GiveWell, an organisation set up to research particularly effective charities, recommend the charity, Give Directly (www.givedirectly.org). This charity gives money directly to very low income households in Africa to spend as they need. This ensures people can pay for the things they need immediately in order to survive and then go on to take out loans in order to start their own business. There is no pressure to pay the money back and while everyone wants the chance to get themselves out of poverty, this ensures that they can buy what is urgently needed for them and their families to survive, first. Give Directly has a strong track record where at least 90% of all donations go directly to the person intended and they continually evaluate their own work to ensure it is effective and cost-efficient. By supporting these groups, you won't just be giving charitable donations, you will be supporting people to get themselves out of poverty forever.

2. Buy Fair Trade Products

Despite many people in third world countries not being paid a fair wage, there is something we can do. By buying fair trade, you are ensuring there has been no unfair wages or child labour used to make our produce. Fair trade means more than just fairly priced coffee. It also covers clothing, jewellery and other foods such as chocolate and bananas. It's worth looking out for fairtrade and organic produce for all food in your local supermarket. Also, you can help particularly poor countries such as Africa, by buying African produce as often as possible. Due to a mixture of having little vote in international trading rules and African workers not getting subsidies like American and European farmers, Africa's economy can use our support.

Buy Fair Trade Clothing

When it comes to clothes, many people, including children, are made to work long hours for little pay and often in dangerous situations, so

that the clothes can be produced as cheaply as possible. In fact, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has estimated that 250 million children between the ages of five and fourteen work in developing countries. 61% in Asia, 32% in Africa and 7% in Latin America. Many of these children are forced to work. They are denied an education and a normal childhood. Some are confined and beaten. Some are denied the right to leave the workplace and go home to their families. Some are even abducted and forced to work. In India, children are often forced to thread individual sequins into clothing and beaten for making the smallest mistake.

Check out www.nosweat.com for more information and check out the following online stores which provide ethically produced clothing and shoes:

www.getethical.com

www.ethicalshopper.com

www.tenthousandvillages.com

www.globalsistergoods.com

www.ethicalsuperstore.com

www.killercotton.com

www.shopequita.com

Buy Fairly Produced Jewellery

The illegal mining and contraband selling of gold and diamonds has been responsible for a lot of violence and many brutal wars across Africa.

Check out these websites to buy jewellery that has been ethically sourced: www.greenkarat.com – gold that has been ethically sourced as part of a co-operative in Columbia without using any harsh environmentally damaging chemicals.

www.silverchilli.com – fair trade silver jewellery that has been made in Mexico.

www.welshgoldplc.co.uk – easily traceable gold available from Wales.

If you know of companies who do use slave labour or produce that isn't fair trade, write to them to complain.

3. Act Against Poverty

Keep up with legislation, news and potential ways to help people in poverty by regularly logging onto www.results.org, www.whiteband.org and www.markettradefair.com.

4. Surprise Someone!

Wrap An Extra Present For Christmas

Every year, the Samaritans collect Christmas presents to hand them out to children in developing countries. Have fun collecting up toys, stationery and some practical bits, popping them in a shoe box and dropping them off at your local Salvation Army base. If you register online, you also get updates on who has received your gift and how they're enjoying it!

Boxing Day

Traditionally, Boxing Day was so-called because the idea behind it was that after Christmas, you would box up any unwanted gifts or even new gifts, and give them to those who need them. Help keep the tradition alive and box up gifts for your local children's hospital, homeless shelter, soldiers or those in developing countries.

5. Volunteer Abroad With A Charity

A working holiday abroad can be an exciting experience and doesn't have to be a hard slog. Many charities who genuinely want your help, won't charge much for you to stay with them as long as you help out and you'll still have time to enjoy the sites, scenery and weather while you're there as well as knowing that you are making a huge difference to people who really need it. Here are a couple of opportunities which may be worth considering:

Childcare South Africa

This organisation does work to help children in a number of ways; orphans are given counselling and support, children with illnesses are given homecare, counselling and support, campaigns raise awareness of teenage pregnancy, aids and HIV.

If you wanted to volunteer, the minimum length of time to stay would be one month. You can stay with them for free and you would be given a food allowance.

Website address: www.childcaresa.org.za

Ghana UK

Ghana UK work on a number of projects including helping orphans, teaching children in Africa and supporting the community.

You would need to agree to volunteer for two weeks minimum and pay £65 a week for self catering accommodation.

Website address: www.ghanaukvolunteers.com

A Better World

A Better World is an orphanage in Africa.

You would be required to stay for a minimum of one week with free accommodation and meals will also be free.

Website address: www.abetterworld.cm.org

Kipepeo Community Empowerment Project

This project provides computer lessons, business training, microfinance opportunities, teaching of children, counselling and feeding orphans.

You will be required to stay for a minimum of three weeks at £150 a month.

Website address: www.kipepeo.yolasite.com

**WORLD
PEACE**

6. Support World Peace And International Democracy

"Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free." - 14th Dalai Lama

We all know democracy is far from perfect and even those of us living in a democracy often feel we have little say as to what happens in our country. However, the democracy we do have is still better than the dictatorships many countries are still forced to live under. Not only is democracy fairer on the people living under it, it can also prevent poverty and even wars. Inter-national democracy is probably the most effective route to world peace!

Most wars are caused by personal grudges or the fascist views of dictators or terrorists. Citizens don't want war – dictators do. Of the 353 wars between 1816 and 1991, Professor Rudy J. Rummel found that 100% of the 'international wars' involved undemocratic countries. Democratic countries rarely go to war with one another.

Not only are dictators responsible for a lot of wars, they are also responsible for a huge amount of corruption, murder, genocide, poverty and repression. One of the major reasons for poverty is dictatorships. Many dictators are very wealthy while the citizens of their country are left with nothing. While Iraq was suffering from a huge famine in 1991, Saddam Hussein built yet more palaces in his honour and used money obtained from oil sales to buy weaponry instead of food. India has often suffered from poverty but since it became a democracy in 1947, they haven't had a famine. National laws that ensure a minimum wage and free education all help to ensure wealth is shared among the people but there is no hope of laws like this until a country is a democracy.

What Can You Do?

If you live in a democracy, support these groups who work to help those fighting for democracy in their own countries.

Freedom House
Open Society
Institute

International Foundation for Election
Systems National Endowment for
Democracy
National Democratic
Institute Democracy
International Community
of Democracies

Check out www.achievethepeace.org for more ways to help.

7. Support Those Fighting For Democracy

Check out Amnesty International (www.amnesty.org.uk) to sign up to their action alerts to support those fighting for human rights and democracy in their countries.

8. Promote Non-Violent Resistance

Citizens of a dictatorship may often feel powerless, but no country or dictatorship can run without them. This is why non-violent resistance is one of the most effective tools available to citizens in a dictatorship. Some citizens living in a dictatorship have used violence to escape the oppression they're under but this has not proven as effective. As soon as violence is used by the oppressed, this is used as an excuse for the oppressors to use violence against them and unfortunately, they usually have more resources available. In Uzbekistan in May 2005, protestors used force against the authorities and many were shot.

The army is made up of people no matter how formidable it may appear, and it's harder for a person to shoot at innocent people protesting peacefully than people who are shooting at them. Non-violent resistance helped to democratise countries such as India, Georgia, Ukraine, Lebanon, Croatia, Serbia and Romania.

In fact, non-violent resistance has the power to stop wars altogether. Those who want wars are usually small terrorist groups or dictators and usually the majority will go along with their wishes through a mixture of manipulation and fear. If these people resisted,

dictators and terrorist groups would soon have to give up with not enough power on their side.

Of course, non-violent resistance is tough. There are, however, an increasing number of groups who are there to support those using non-violent resistance against their oppressors (as mentioned in action 6). Gene Sharp has also produced a lot of documentation detailing strategies and tactics to use non-violent resistance as a way to overcome oppression.

Remember non-violent resistance when you need to overcome oppression and support groups who help those who are forced to use it in countries less fortunate.

9. Promote Interfaith

*“God has made different religions to suit different aspirations, times and countries. All doctrines are only so many paths; but a path is by no means God Himself. Indeed, one can reach God if one follows any of the paths with whole-hearted devotion. One may eat cake with icing either straight or side-wise. It will taste sweet either way...As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope, so di-verse are the ways and means to approach God, and every religion in the world shows one of these ways...People in ignorance say “My religion is the only one, my religion is the best.” But when a heart is illuminated by true knowledge, it knows that above all these wars of sects and sectarians pre-sides the one indivisible, eternal, all-knowing bliss. As a mother, in nursing her sick children, gives rice and curry to one, and sago arrowroot to another, and bread and butter to a third, so the Lord has laid out different paths for different people suitable for their natures.” - Ramakrishna (Indian Holy Man
– 1836-1886)*

All religions teach peace and tolerance but still religious differences are the cause of much hatred and many wars. But what about the similarities be-tween the world's religions? What if there is no one right religion? What if every religion is right and they are all one of

many paths you can take to find God? By all of us focussing on the similarities between religions, we can end religious hatred and enjoy whichever path or religions we choose, and respect whichever religion another chooses.

The Akron Area Interfaith Council approved the following paper in 1993 which gives their position on hatred and violence.

We representatives of seven religious faiths, Baha'i, Islam, Jewish, Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Unitarian Universalists, join together in support of the following statements:

- 1. We condemn the use of violence and hatred by individuals or groups in any situation, but here we focus on those occasions where hatred and violence are used to express feelings of superiority, to overcome a feeling of inferiority, or to gain political control.*
- 2. Hatred is caused by many things, but it is an emotion that needs to be controlled. We denounce the preaching of ethnic or religious hatred and instead advocate living in peace and harmony with one's neighbours.*
- 3. We hold that all people are equal, both under God and under the laws in many nations. We support freedom of religion for all people in all nations and respect for all people of all races and faiths.*
- 4. Freedom of speech does not allow persons to tell untruths that harm others. Not only the law but many religions preach against making false accusations. We may criticise other's violations of moral laws in a constructive manner but we should continue to show concern for their welfare.*
- 5. Instead of putting others down, we should treat them as equals. Having respect for others as well as for one's self and not displaying feelings of superiority is the better method for making an enjoyable life and building a peaceful society.*
- 6. Joining with people of like interests and appearances is enjoyable and harmless in itself but trouble begins when members indicate they are superior to outsiders, are disrespectful of others and think they have the right to dictate who uses the public streets and parks in the area or make the laws that discriminate.*

7. Open emigration is a basic right but it is only a partial solution. The preferred solution to repression or famine in a foreign nation is the elimination of the problem with the help of the United Nations.

If all places of worship were to promote this statement and religious education and acceptance was taught in all schools worldwide, it would help towards a more religiously tolerant world. You can make a difference by asking for this to be promoted in your place of worship and publicising it wherever possible.

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