

AUTHENTICITY & ACCESSIBILITY

IN SERVICE LEARNING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



VIRTUAL IMMERSIONS

Register your class or parish for a session during Lent.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



WHO WE ARE & OUR GLOBAL NETWORK

Caritas Australia is the international aid and development organisation of the Catholic Church in Australia.

Caritas Australia is part of Caritas Internationalis, an international confederation of 165 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations in over 200 countries and territories.

Caritas Australia works with marginalised communities in supporting 45 long-term programs, working with over 70 local partners in 18 countries.



Olivia teaches her son Tumaini (7) inside their home in Karatu District in Tanzania. Photo credit: August Lucky

WHAT WE DO

Our work can be summarised as:

- **HUMANITARIAN AID**
- **LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT**
- **EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY** within Australia and with our International Partners.



Arsad (right) cultivates rice in his community in Pandeglang District, about 150km west of Jakarta.
Photo credit: Laz Harfa

KEY QUESTIONS

How do we make community engagement and service learning more **authentic**?

More human?

More real?

More mutually beneficial?

More fair?

More dignity?

More honesty?

How do we make service learning and community engagement more **accessible**?

Who gets to participate?

Who doesn't?



PROJECT COMPASSION

This campaign occurs during the liturgical season of Lent in the Catholic tradition. It is major point of engagement with the Australian community.

- A fundraising campaign
- An advocacy campaign
- Our major contribution to social justice education for Australian Catholic schools, parishes, community groups



PROJECT COMPASSION
BE MORE

VIRTUAL IMMERSION PROGRAM

- Online engagement
- Localisation
- Opportunity to reach students and teachers in new ways
- 5 weeks
- 90 sessions (18 per week)
- 1 story/team per week
- Pre-immersion activities for classes
- Students able to submit questions
- Post-immersion sharing after Easter



UPPER PRIMARY (YEARS 4-6)

23 February

- 9.00am (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)
8.30am (SA)
- 9.45am (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)
8.45am (QLD)
9.15am (SA)

24 February

- 11.00am (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)
10.00am (QLD)
10.30am (SA)
9.30am (NT)
- 2.00pm (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)
1.00pm (QLD)
1.30pm (SA)
12.30pm (NT)
11.00am (WA)

LOWER SECONDARY (YEARS 7-9)

23 February

- 12.15pm (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)
11.15am (QLD)
11.45am (SA)
10.45am (NT)
9.15am (WA)

1.00pm (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)

- 12.00pm (QLD)
12.30pm (SA)
11.30am (NT)
10.00am (WA)

24 February

- 9.15am (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)
8.45am (SA)
- 10.00am (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)
9.00am (QLD)

SENIOR SECONDARY (YEARS 10-12)

23 February

- 11.45am (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)
10.45am (QLD)
11.15am (SA)
10.15am (NT)
8.45am (WA)

2.00pm (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)

- 1.00pm (QLD)
1.30pm (SA)
12.30pm (NT)
11.00am (WA)

24 February

- 12.30pm (NSW/ACT/VIC/TAS)
11.30am (QLD)
12.00pm (SA)
11.00am (NT)
9.30am (WA)

OUTCOMES

- 76 schools
- 8,242 students
- 104 teachers

- **95%** of teachers would recommend the program
- **5%** of teachers were not likely to recommend, based on technical/access issues

- Student engagement
- Structure and timing
- Authenticity
- Tech issues & pre-session resources



Catholic Regional College, Caroline Springs. Students reading the gospel.
Credit: Caritas Australia

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL

- 15 Caritas Australia international programs staff and partners were involved as speakers during the 5 week program.
- All of them enjoyed the experience and want to be involved again going forward.
- For many of them, it was the first time they saw the faces of the students and teachers who share their stories and support their work.
- They were able to share, but also to ask their own questions and get to know more about how the Australian community engages with Caritas.



Margret (left) teaching a student how to sew face masks as part of the COVID-19 prevention measures at the San Isidro Care Centre in the Solomon Islands. Photo credit: Neil Nuia

AUTHENTICITY

- Stories are told by people who are in those stories, or those close to them.
- Centre local voices and lived experiences.
- Stories are honest and complicated, as they should be.
- Inspires the movement beyond fundraising and other acts of charity, to long term advocacy and commitment to justice.
- Justice is presented as a conversation and a living dialogue, not a one-way transaction of money, sympathy or time from the 'helper' to the 'recipient.'



AUTHENTICITY

- How do we position people in the stories we tell? How do we refer to people? “the vulnerable, the disadvantaged, etc”
- Can we do more to dismantle the 'helper-recipient' dynamic and ensure our programs do not perpetuate existing societal power imbalances and inequalities?
- When we use people as educational tools, we deny their dignity. We may also reinforce racist, ableist, sexist and classist ideas – ‘othering’.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?



Bayan, with her classmates in her classroom in Jordan.
Credit: Caritas Australia

1. What does authenticity look like to you?
2. Where are the opportunities to do more to dismantle existing societal inequalities in service learning?

ACCESSIBILITY

- No cost to participants, financial barriers to accessing service learning are mitigated.
- Geographical barriers in accessing service learning opportunities are also mitigated.
- Flexible session times, resources and structure.
- International programs staff and partners are able to engage with the Australian community, developing a culture of reciprocity.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Access to appropriate technology, stable internet connection.
- Who is granted access to what?
- The 'leveling' ability of Zoom and other online platforms.
- Equity issues in community engagement – who do we exclude? Why?



WHAT DO YOU THINK?



Bayan, with her classmates in her classroom in Jordan.
Credit: Caritas Australia

1. Where are the opportunities to invite more groups and more diverse groups of people into service learning opportunities?
2. Who is excluded from service learning and community engagement? Why?

GOING FORWARD

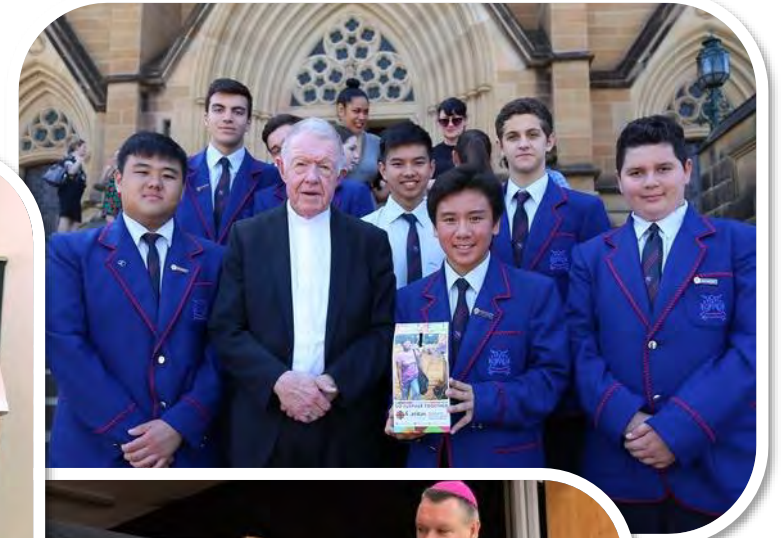
- Balancing the diverse needs of Catholic schools, the complexity of our development work and partnerships as well as the capacity of our small team.
- Asking inconvenient questions and discovering inconvenient truths.
- Building trust and rapport with the Australian community, not only to ensure their support, but to bring them with us and to learn from them on the journey from charity to justice.



STUDENT INPUT

Allowing for greater student input and feedback into the engagement opportunities we offer.

Working with schools to encourage young voices and cultivate enthusiasm and understanding in this space.



CARITAS Q&A'S

Caritas Australia is bringing the world of international development into classrooms or parishes around Australia through our Caritas Conversations. These are online Q&A sessions with Caritas staff and in-country partners and enable participants to deepen their understanding and connectedness with Caritas Australia's work.

These sessions are ideal for schools, parishes, youth groups and Catholic Education Offices, and focus on topics such as poverty, social justice and ecological justice.

LEARN MORE



more about Caritas Australia's work by talking to local and international staff about Caritas-supported programs.

DEEPEN



your understanding of the inter-connectedness of people and all of creation and the strengths found between and among communities.

BE CHALLENGED



by the lived experience of people experiencing poverty and marginalisation.

FEEL EMPOWERED



to not aspire to have more, but to BE MORE; taking action for a more just and fair world.

+ Thank You +



www.caritas.org.au