



**Synergos**

# **LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**

## **A Dialogue**

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## What do we mean by ‘social justice?’

- *Equal rights and equal dignity*
- *Realization of civic, social and economic rights*
- *A vision of a future more inclusive society in which the basic needs of all people are met*
- *A more equitable distribution of power and opportunity*

## What do we mean by ‘social justice?’

- *Empowering marginalized groups to advocate and defend their interests*
- *‘Not just giving starving people fish, or teaching them how to fish, but changing the terms of trade for fish’*
- *‘Doing good is different from changing things’... ‘and justice needs change’*

# What do we mean by ‘social justice?’

- *Changing power relationships between citizens, government, business and civil society*
- *Changing at source the causes of social inequities*
- *Taking risks, testing innovative approaches to social change*

## What do we mean by ‘social justice?’

- *Bringing stakeholders together to understand their role in an unjust system*
- *Transforming the people who are part of the problem to become part of the solution*
- *Access to assets and capabilities to reverse poverty and injustice*

## What must leaders for social justice be?

- *Self-aware of our own character, world view and values – ‘know who you are and what you bring’*
- *Able to ‘own’ the inequities and our own role in the system*
- *Have a strong sense of purpose – and know where that passion comes from*

## What must leaders for social justice be?

- *Capable of dealing with complexity*
- *Willing to transform ourselves, to work with others – unleashing the power of collective wisdom and collaborative solutions*
- *A ‘bridging leader’ – working across social divides with a wide diversity of people and institutions*

# What must leaders for social justice be?

- *Able to see and understand diverse interests*
- *Focused on underlying root causes*
- *Accountable for our leadership role and actions*



## What must leaders for social justice be?

- *Able to learn from failure and setbacks*
- *Humble and wary of those who offer 'one size fits all' certainties or solutions*
- *Alive to the knowledge, creativity and resilience of those most affected by injustice*

## What must leaders for social justice know?

- *How to apply a ‘systems thinking’ approach – looking beyond the parts to the whole*
- *How to build trust, ‘connectivity’ and safe space among a wide range of stakeholders*
- *How to listen deeply (with ears and heart)*

## What must leaders for social justice know?

- *How to be open to the future that may emerge in creative, unexpected ways*
- *How to live with uncertainty, take risks and innovate*
- *How to explore and inspire shared purpose (and be changed in the process)*

## What must leaders for social justice do?

- *Strengthen our will to lead by articulating our personal response, values and understanding of injustice*
- *Convene purposeful dialogue among diverse stakeholders to build a shared vision*
- *Accept conflict and difference as creative forces for change*

## What must leaders for social justice do?

- *Work to shift institutional arrangements and systems – towards participation, inclusion and equity*
- *Invest in the transformation of hearts and mindsets – as much as of material conditions*
- *Bear witness – call out and reveal the difficult issues, in all their complexity*

## What must leaders for social justice do?

- *Give priority to public policy and advocacy – especially advocacy by the poor and excluded themselves*
- *Expand access to knowledge and information*
- *Build community assets of leadership, organization and collaboration*

## What must leaders for social justice do?

- *Build on deeply rooted patterns of mutual aid, self-help, culture and community philanthropy*
- *Forge inclusive partnerships across sectors – with government, business and civil society*
- *Strengthen the capacity of those most excluded to speak and act for themselves*

## What must leaders for social justice do?

- *Strengthen the culture of giving and citizen participation*
- *Revive our traditions of the common good and public service*
- *Build new constituencies for social justice*

## What kind of society do we want?

*‘We want a new quality of society -  
compassionate, gentle and caring...A  
nation where all belong and know they  
belong; where all are insiders, and no-one  
is an outsider.’*

*- Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

## Questions for reflection

- *Which social inequity are you most passionate about? What explains your passion and where is it coming from?*
- *In your community, who are the key institutions and players involved in that social inequity?*
- *What leadership skills and approaches have you found most effective to forge common purpose with others for social change?*