



# Speak Out Now

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## What Kind of World Do We Want to Live In?

The school year is beginning. This year is another opportunity to shape the path that your life will take. But as we get ready for the hard work of the school year, we should ask ourselves: what kind of society are we inheriting?

- Today, young people are forced to deal with the stresses of an increasingly uncertain future. Rising unemployment, an education system that has been gutted by years of budget cuts, college costs often lead to thousands of dollars of debt and cuts to other social services push more and more of us to the brink. The suicide rate among young adults, ages 15-24 has tripled since the 1950s. Twelve people in that age group will commit suicide each day – that's about one every two hours. We deserve better.
- We see violence wherever we look. This year alone there has been close to a mass shooting each day. Homicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24 years old. Someone is killed by the police violence every 8 hours or an average of 3 per day. In Iraq and Afghanistan and now Syria and Yemen millions have died from the violence caused by the U.S. military occupation and bombing campaigns. Is this the world we want to live in?
- Inequality is reaching all-time highs. The average corporate executive earned 373 times what the average American worker earned in 2014. The ability to produce is greater than ever but many still live without access to basic necessities. According to UNICEF 22,000 children die each day due to poverty. This is unacceptable in a world where the resources exist to feed, clothe, and educate everyone. Are we going to perpetuate this disparity, or do all we can to create a more just and equitable world?
- The role of those who control the wealth and resources of the world is clear when we look at their impact on the environment. The extraction of oil and gas is creating unprecedented environmental destruction. Fracking, drilling for oil in the Arctic Ocean, the mining of Alberta tar sands and other insane efforts means profits for them and increased global warming for the planet. Their governments defend this insanity, waging wars to control oil resources and ignoring the impact of extreme weather – the droughts, storms and rising world temperatures.

Many pressures exist that limit our conception of what is possible. Imagine if the world's resources were put towards bettering humanity and the planet instead of generating profit. Our problem is not scarcity – it's inequality. Our society and planet are being run into the ground for the sake of profit. But we don't have to accept this.

Social movements begin with individuals deciding to stand up for what is right. When the atrocities of society make it no longer possible to remain silent, speaking out, organizing and fighting back is our only way to resist. Will you be one of those people who is ready to make this fight? Our future depends on this.