

# Social & Environmental Awareness

## Your Venture and Advocacy

When starting your Venture, teams often become focused on one issue or piece of the larger puzzle of social issues. This works well because we all take different pieces and, eventually, the puzzle gets completed.

**Advocacy** is a way of thinking about the entire puzzle, even if you're really focused just on your piece. It's a way of trying not to harm one area in order to improve another.

For example, the Venture team *Quit Now!* is focused on raising awareness about the harmful effects of smoking. As part of their Venture, they decided to create T-shirts covered with statistics about the negative impact smoking has on a person's health. When it came time to order the shirts, the team began to look at the larger, global

context of their choices. They researched T-shirt companies and decided, even though it was a bit more expensive, to hire a company that guaranteed they did not use sweatshops to create their shirts. The team felt good about being an advocate for the anti-sweatshop movement, even though the issue they're most interested in is smoking.

**MORE INFO:** Spending your money at a local business or organization helps to support your community.

**"We cannot live for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow human beings; and among those fibers, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes, and they come back to us as effects."** - Herman Melville

Doing a little research on the companies or products your Venture is working with can be an easy and effective way of making sure your team is an advocate for other causes. A simple Google search can often provide more information on a company's ethical practices, and often a company's website lists ways that they are socially responsible. More and more companies are seeing that there is consumer demand for a higher ethical standard, and are changing their policies to better protect workers, the environment, and communities. By spending your money in ways that reflect your values, you can support these companies and encourage others to follow their example.

### More Resources

Check out these websites on social awareness and responsibility:

- [www.worldchanging.com](http://www.worldchanging.com)
- [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)
- [www.consciouslifestyle.org](http://www.consciouslifestyle.org)
- [www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org](http://www.studentsagainstsweatshops.org)
- [www.transfairusa.org](http://www.transfairusa.org)
- [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org)
- [www.coopamerica.org/programs/rs/greenshift.cfm](http://www.coopamerica.org/programs/rs/greenshift.cfm)