

Men and Women for Others in the Eyes of Gen Z: A Conjoint Analysis of Preferred Social Justice Attributes

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the social justice attribute preferences of 432 Generation Z college students in Davao City, Philippines. Employing Conjoint Analysis, the study revealed a significant preference for Hands-on Community Learning, Charity and Advocacy, Global Action Focus, Commitment to Service, and Divine Calling for Justice. The research addresses a gap in empirical literature by examining how this key demographic interprets the Jesuit ideal of Men and Women for Others. These compelling findings provide a clear directive for educators and policymakers who are guided by this ideal to design impactful programs. By integrating hands-on learning and a global action focus, initiatives can directly align with Gen Z's values, thus effectively fostering their active engagement in social justice and ensuring the ideal of service remains relevant.

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z (Gen Z), born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is the first generation to grow up fully immersed in the digital world. This environment has profoundly shaped their views on social justice, activism, and their expectations from educational systems and societal structures (Daffa et al., 2024; Wandhe, 2024). Values such as authenticity, inclusivity, and diversity resonate deeply with Gen Z, who also face challenges like mental health struggles, rising education costs, and an uncertain job market (Anggara et al., 2024; Wandhe, 2024). While many Gen Z individuals are passionate about addressing social issues, their engagement often takes the form of digital activism, enabling them to raise awareness and voice opinions on global and local causes (Fazrina et al., 2025).

The importance of understanding Gen Z's perspectives extends beyond mere academic interest; it is critical for shaping policies and educational strategies that address their preferences and values. Educators are particularly challenged to adapt their teaching methods to engage Gen Z in discussions surrounding social justice, a subject that they increasingly view as integral to their academic and personal development (Sun et al., 2021). Gen Z's priorities around social justice reflect broader societal shifts, but there is a gap in understanding how these priorities translate into actionable educational frameworks and social justice initiatives.

Fr. Pedro Arrupe's 1973 address, "Men and Women for Others," calls for the development of individuals who are not only academically competent but also committed to social change and justice (Lindemer, 1995; Ruankool, 2022). Arrupe's vision of education emphasizes the importance of integrating social justice into academic environments and forming students who understand their moral responsibility to both their communities and the world (Meyo, 2014). This idea has become a central tenet in Jesuit education, with schools worldwide prioritizing social responsibility alongside academic excellence (Combs & Schmidt, 2013). However, as we consider the implications of these educational values for today's generation, it is necessary to examine how Gen Z interprets these principles, particularly within the context of their unique cultural and technological environment.

While significant research has explored Gen Z's relationship with digital activism and social justice (Fazrina et al., 2025), a critical gap remains: there is a notable absence of empirical research that quantitatively identifies and prioritizes the specific attributes of social justice advocacy that resonate most strongly with Generation Z, particularly within the context of the "Men and Women for Others" ideal. Little is known about how these preferences can inform the development of educational programs, policies, and initiatives specifically tailored to their needs. This gap leaves policymakers and educators with limited tools for crafting programs that genuinely resonate with this generation's values and aspirations, and that effectively connect Gen Z's social justice preferences with Fr. Arrupe's transformative concept.

To address this critical gap, the present study seeks to explore Gen Z's preferred social justice attributes and how these align with key concepts in social justice education, particularly in the context of Davao City, Philippines. This study utilizes Conjoint Analysis, anchored by the Multi-Attribute Utility Theory (MAUT), to investigate the social justice attributes preferred by Gen Z in Davao City. Conjoint analysis is a well-established tool in decision-making research, particularly in marketing, where it is used to assess how individuals make trade-offs among various attributes (Green et al., 2001). By adapting this technique to social justice issues, this study aims to uncover the relative importance of different social justice attributes for Gen Z. MAUT will help assess how these preferences influence their attitudes toward educational approaches and social justice activism (Mateo, 2012).

The study will analyze Gen Z's social justice preferences across several key attributes, each with defined levels:

- a. Educational Approach
 - a. Academic Excellence Focus: Emphasis on core academic subjects such as math and science.
 - b. Social Issues Integration: Education that incorporates learning about social justice and community service.
 - c. Hands-on Community Learning: Learning through direct involvement in community-based projects and experiences.
- b. Social Justice Focus
 - a. Personal Charity Action: Direct acts of kindness, such as volunteering or helping those in need.
 - b. Systemic Change Advocacy: Advocating for broad, systemic changes to address inequality and social injustices.
 - c. Charity and Advocacy: Combining both personal acts of charity and advocacy for systemic changes.
- c. Type of Justice Engagement
 - a. Local Community Focus: Addressing social issues within one's own local community.
 - b. National Issue Engagement: Focusing on social issues affecting the entire country.
 - c. Global Action Focus: Taking action on global social justice issues.
- d. Personal Qualities of a "Man or Woman for Others"
 - a. Compassionate and Caring: Demonstrating kindness and empathy for others, particularly those in need.
 - b. Courage to Challenge: Standing up against injustice and confronting unfair practices.
 - c. Commitment to Service: A deep, long-term commitment to service and helping others.

- e. The Role of Faith in Social Justice
 - a. Justice as Morality: Justice is pursued because it is the right and moral thing to do.
 - b. Duty and Responsibility: Justice is both a moral and spiritual responsibility.
 - c. Divine Calling for Justice: Justice is seen as a calling from a higher power or God.

The findings of this study have practical implications for policymakers, educators, and social justice advocates. In Davao City, for instance, understanding the preferred social justice attributes of Gen Z could inform the development of community-based educational programs that resonate with the generation's values. Educational institutions could integrate more hands-on, socially relevant learning experiences, while policymakers could craft policies that reflect Gen Z's dual focus on direct charity and systemic change. Social justice activists could leverage the study's findings to tailor campaigns and initiatives that align with the values of this generation, ensuring greater engagement and impact. On a broader scale, the study's insights could contribute to the development of more effective, youth-centered social justice strategies globally.

This research seeks to fill the gap in the existing literature by examining Gen Z's preferred social justice attributes and how these preferences align with Fr. Arrupe's vision of "Men and Women for Others." Through the use of conjoint analysis and Multi-Attribute Utility Theory, the study will provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and social justice advocates in Davao City and beyond. The findings have the potential to shape educational strategies, policies, and social justice initiatives that are better aligned with Gen Z's values, ensuring their active and meaningful engagement in social justice causes.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the social justice preferences of Gen Z college students aged 18 to 29, residing in Davao City. This research approach uses numerical data to characterize and analyze phenomena without manipulating variables (Hedderley, 2002; Kotronoulas & Papadopoulou, 2023). Its primary goal is to provide a comprehensive summary of everyday events in measurable terms (Sandelowski, n.d.).

The study focused on Gen Z college students aged 18 to 29 who reside in Davao City. To ensure a representative sample of this demographic, a multi-stage sampling approach was utilized. Quota sampling was initially employed to determine the required sample size, which was set at 300 respondents to meet the needs of conjoint analysis (Orme, 2010). Participants were then identified through purposive sampling, specifically targeting Gen Z students within Davao City. Convenience sampling further facilitated the distribution of the survey via both personal and professional networks. To expand the study's reach and gather a broader range of responses within the target demographic, snowball sampling was also implemented, encouraging initial respondents to share the survey link with other eligible individuals in their networks. This approach aimed to ensure a broader and more diverse sample.

In total, 568 respondents completed the survey. However, after applying pre-defined exclusion criteria, only 432 valid responses were retained for analysis and interpretation. This final sample size of 432 is considered sufficient for conducting robust conjoint analysis, aligning with recommendations by Orme (2010), who suggests that samples for conjoint studies typically range from 150 to 1,200 respondents based on market research observations.

Data for this study were collected using an online survey platform, 1000minds, which is specifically designed for PAPRIKA Conjoint Analysis. The survey was administered from April 15 to May 18, 2025, and aimed to capture participants' preferences regarding social justice attributes. Participants were presented with a series of trade-off questions designed to elicit their preferences for various social justice attributes. Figure 1 shows each question followed by a format similar to: "Imagine you are supporting a social justice initiative. Please choose between the following two options: [Option A] vs. [Option B]." This type of trade-off question enabled respondents to make decisions based on their preferences for different attributes related to social justice, thus facilitating the application of conjoint analysis techniques. The survey was initially distributed through personal and professional networks, with participants encouraged to share it with other eligible respondents, leading to a snowballing effect.

Question 1 Progress: 0%

Gen Z's View on Social Justice: A Conjoint Analysis in Davao City

Imagine you are supporting a social justice initiative. Please choose between the following two options:

Option A	Option B
Educational Approach Learning through hands-on experience, such as community work.	Educational Approach Education that also teaches about social issues and helping others.
Personal Qualities of a "Man or Woman for Others" Being kind and caring to others, especially those who need help.	Personal Qualities of a "Man or Woman for Others" Standing up to unfairness and taking action to fix problems.

1000minds Restart Skip Tour Auto-complete

Figure 1. Sample Trade-Off Question in 1000minds

Upon collecting the data, the analysis was primarily carried out using the PAPRIKA method within the 1000minds platform. The PAPRIKA (Potentially All Pairwise RanKings of all possible Alternatives) method is a decision-making technique used in multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) and conjoint analysis (Hansen & Ombler, 2009). It helps determine the relative importance of different criteria (or attributes) by having users express their preferences through pairwise comparisons of hypothetical alternatives, where only two criteria are considered at a time. The analysis involved calculating utility scores for each attribute level, which quantitatively represented the strength of preferences and allowed for the identification of the most preferred attributes. Subsequently, relative importance scores were derived across all attributes, providing a detailed understanding of which social justice characteristics Gen Z prioritized. To complement the conjoint analysis and provide broader context, descriptive statistics were also employed

to summarize participant demographics and the frequency of attribute selections. The combination of PAPRIKA conjoint analysis and descriptive statistics allowed for a comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's social justice preferences.

Throughout the study, rigorous ethical considerations were given paramount importance. Participant privacy and data protection were central to the research process. Informed consent was obtained digitally from all participants, who were clearly informed of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. The study strictly adhered to ethical principles of transparency and autonomy, ensuring that all personal identifiers were excluded to preserve anonymity. Responsible data handling practices were maintained throughout the entire research process to safeguard participant information.

This study is framed within a conceptual framework that outlines the key attributes and their relationships in understanding Gen Z's social justice preferences. As shown in Figure 2, the framework emphasizes the integration of educational approaches, social justice focus, and engagement types, among other factors. The conceptual framework serves as the foundation for understanding how these elements contribute to the decision-making process of Gen Z when supporting social justice initiatives.

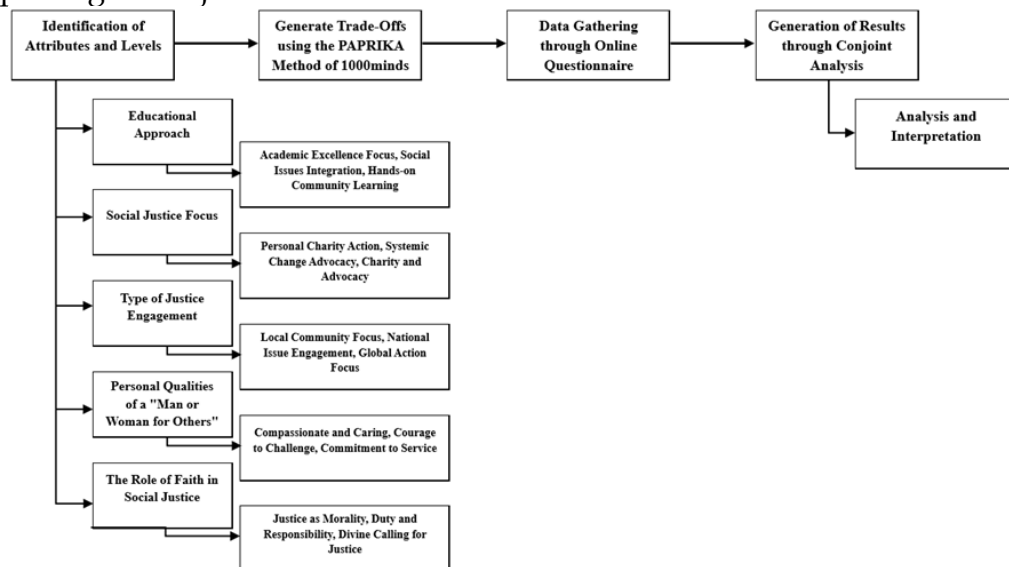


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondents

The survey initially gathered 568 participant responses, but a rigorous screening process ultimately validated 432 for analysis and interpretation. This refined sample size, as shown in Table 1, is deemed sufficient for the planned conjoint analysis. To ensure the quality and authenticity of the data, specific exclusion criteria were meticulously applied. Participants were filtered out if their responses indicated a lack of genuine engagement, such as consistently failing consistency checks (exclusion after two incorrect answers), repeatedly selecting the "they are equal" option, consistently choosing only one side of the trade-off scenarios (either left or right), or completing questions at an unusually rapid pace (less than one second per question or a median answer time under two seconds). These stringent filters were essential to ensure the captured preferences truly reflect thoughtful consideration rather than rushed or disengaged participation.

Table 1. Profile of 432 Valid Respondents

Category	Sub-Category	Count	Percentage
Age Range	18-20 years old	249	57.6%
	21-23 years old	170	39.4%
	24-26 years old	11	2.5%
	27-29 years old	2	0.5%
Gender	Male	152	35.2%
	Female	269	62.3%
	Non-binary	3	0.7%
	LGBTQ	8	1.9%
Current/permanent residence in Davao City	District 1 (Poblacion & Talomo)	212	49.1%
	District 2 (Agdao, Buhangin, Bunawan, & Paquibato)	174	40.3%
	District 3 (Baguio, Calinan, Marilog, Toril, & Tugbok)	46	10.6%
How familiar are you with social justice issues in Davao City?	Very familiar	114	26.4%
	Somewhat familiar	288	66.7%
	Not familiar at all	30	6.9%
Have you ever participated in social justice activities such as volunteering, advocacy, or community work?	Yes, frequently	38	8.8%
	Yes, occasionally	184	42.6%
	No, but I am interested in participating in the future	210	48.6%
Do you think schools should integrate social justice education into their curriculum?	Yes	417	96.5%
	No	15	3.5%

The profile of these 432 valid respondents paints a clear picture of the demographic primarily represented in this study. The vast majority, a commanding 97%, are young Gen Z college students between 18 and 23 years old, offering a deep dive into the perspectives of this specific age group within Davao City. The sample also features a notable predominance of female voices, comprising 62.3% of the respondents. Geographically, the participants are well-distributed across Davao City's key districts, with nearly 90% residing in District 1 and District 2 combined. Encouragingly, over 93% of the respondents expressed at least some familiarity with social justice issues in Davao City. While just under half have not yet actively engaged in social justice activities, a significant portion articulated a strong desire to participate in the future. Furthermore, a resounding 96.5% expressed their belief that social justice education should be woven into school curricula, highlighting a powerful sentiment among this generation.

The careful application of these exclusion criteria significantly bolsters the study's ability to draw meaningful conclusions, ensuring that the insights derived from the conjoint analysis truly reflect the nuanced preferences of this Gen Z cohort. While the focus on younger Gen Z and the higher representation of females suggest specific lenses through which to interpret the findings, the overall profile reveals a group that is not only aware and interested in social justice but also keen on its integration into their educational journey. This underscores the timely relevance of exploring how their values align with foundational concepts like Fr. Arrupe's vision for education, providing invaluable guidance for shaping impactful social justice initiatives.

Most and Least Preferred Social Justice Attributes

The conjoint analysis conducted in this study, which examined preferences across five key attributes, revealed a clear hierarchy of importance among Gen Z respondents. As shown in Figure 3, the “Educational Approach” emerged as the most significant attribute, accounting for 30.5% of their preferences. This highlights Gen Z’s strong inclination towards how learning and engagement are structured within social justice contexts, considering levels such as Academic Excellence Focus, Social Issues Integration, and Hands-on Community Learning.

Following in importance were “Type of Justice Engagement” at 17.6% (encompassing Local Community Focus, National Issue Engagement, and Global Action Focus) and “Personal Qualities of a ‘Man or Woman for Others’” at 16.8% (including Compassionate and Caring, Courage to Challenge, and Commitment to Service). “The Role of Faith in Social Justice,” with its levels of Justice as Morality, Duty and Responsibility, and Divine Calling for Justice, garnered 14.1% of the preferences.

Conversely, “Social Justice Focus” was identified as the least preferred attribute, representing 20.9% of the overall preferences. This attribute explored preferences for Personal Charity Action, Systemic Change Advocacy, and a combination of both. This finding suggests a nuanced perspective from Gen Z, where the methodology and character behind social justice efforts, particularly through an educational lens, resonate more strongly than the specific problem area itself. For policymakers and educators in Davao City and beyond, this emphasizes the importance of designing programs that prioritize engagement and development within an educational framework, aligning with Gen Z’s evident desire for learning-integrated social action.

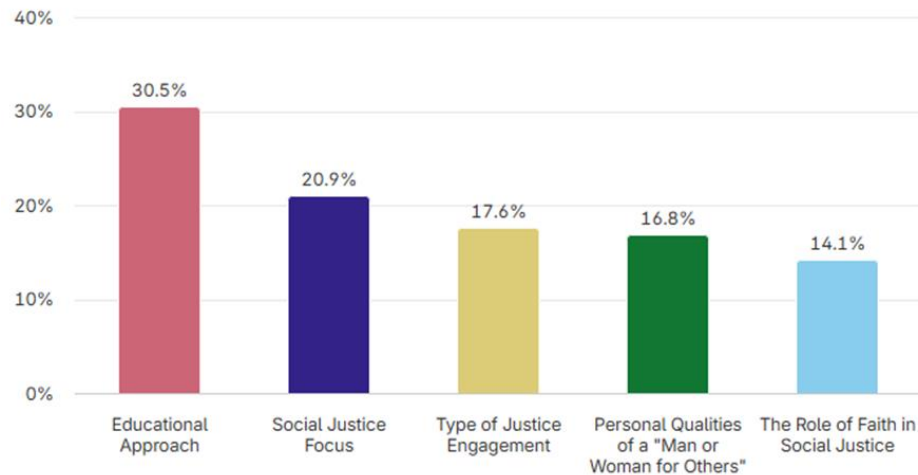


Figure 3. Chart of Attribute Weights

Most and Least Preferred Combination of Attribute Levels

The conjoint analysis yielded clear insights into what Gen Z values most and least in social justice initiatives. As shown in Table 3, the most highly favored combination, which garnered a perfect 100% total utility score, consistently pointed towards active, outward-looking engagement and a strong sense of commitment. Specifically, the top preference within the "Educational Approach" was "Hands-on Community Learning" (30.5%), highlighting that practical experience is paramount for this generation. For the "Social Justice Focus," "Charity and Advocacy" (20.9%) was strongly preferred, indicating a desire to combine direct help with efforts to change systems. When considering the "Type of Justice Engagement," "Global Action Focus" (17.6%) was the leading choice, suggesting a broad concern for worldwide issues. The most appealing "Personal Quality of a 'Man or Woman for Others'" was "Commitment to Service" (16.8%), underscoring their appreciation for sustained dedication to others. Lastly, "Divine Calling for Justice" (14.1%) was the favored aspect for "The Role of Faith in Social Justice," pointing to a spiritual basis for their pursuit of fairness.

In stark contrast, the least preferred combination of attribute levels registered a 0% mean utility score across the board. This combination included a focus on "Academic Excellence Focus" in education, signifying a disinterest in purely theoretical learning without social relevance. For "Social Justice Focus," "Personal Charity Action" alone was least preferred, implying that isolated acts of kindness are not seen as sufficient without broader efforts for change. Within "Type of Justice Engagement," a "Local Community Focus" was the least favored, indicating that a sole focus on local issues might be perceived as too limited. Among "Personal Qualities," "Compassionate and Caring" was the least preferred, suggesting that empathy, while important, must be coupled with action and enduring commitment. Lastly, "Justice as Morality" was the least favored aspect for "The Role of Faith in Social Justice," hinting that a purely ethical view of justice, without a deeper sense of duty or spiritual purpose, resonates less strongly.

Table 2. Most and Least Preferred Combination of Attribute Levels

Attribute	Level	Mean (%)
Educational Approach	Academic Excellence Focus	0.0%
	Social Issues Integration	18.6%
	Hands-on Community Learning	30.5%
Social Justice Focus	Personal Charity Action	0.0%
	Systemic Change Advocacy	8.8%
	Charity and Advocacy	20.9%
Type of Justice Engagement	Local Community Focus	0.0%
	National Issue Engagement	8.9%
	Global Action Focus	17.6%
Personal Qualities of a "Man or Woman for Others"	Compassionate and Caring	0.0%
	Courage to Challenge	8.7%
	Commitment to Service	16.8%
The Role of Faith in Social Justice	Justice as Morality	0.0%
	Duty and Responsibility	8.9%
	Divine Calling for Justice	14.1%

These findings offer significant insights into Gen Z's approach to social justice in Davao City. The strong preference for hands-on learning and a combination of charity and advocacy highlights a generation that values direct, integrated action over detached academic study or isolated acts of kindness. Their inclination towards global issues and a deep commitment to service suggests a desire for wide-reaching and lasting impact, aligning with the spirit of "Men and Women for Others" through tangible engagement. The preference for "Divine Calling for Justice" also indicates that for many, their pursuit of justice is deeply rooted in spiritual conviction. The clear rejection of the least preferred

combination reinforces Gen Z's desire for an active, comprehensive approach to justice, where passive understanding or limited engagement holds little appeal. The consistency in these preferences across the surveyed group is further demonstrated by a Kendall's W of the alternative rankings of 0.792, from which the mean Spearman rank correlation can be calculated as approximately 0.791.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study embarked on a crucial exploration into the social justice preferences of Generation Z in Davao City, seeking to bridge a significant gap in empirical research by quantitatively identifying the attributes that resonate most strongly with this digitally native cohort. Anchored in Fr. Pedro Arrupe's transformative call for "Men and Women for Others," the research aimed to understand how Gen Z interprets these principles within their unique cultural and technological landscape, and how their preferences can inform actionable educational frameworks and social justice initiatives. The findings from the conjoint analysis offer compelling insights, revealing a generation that prioritizes practical, integrated engagement and a profound commitment to service, often rooted in a spiritual understanding of justice.

The most striking finding is Gen Z's overwhelming preference for "Hands-on Community Learning" as the ideal "Educational Approach." This clearly signals a desire to move beyond traditional academic excellence alone, favoring experiential learning that directly addresses social issues and fosters community involvement. Coupled with this is their strong inclination towards "Charity and Advocacy" within the "Social Justice Focus," demonstrating a holistic view that combines direct acts of kindness with the pursuit of systemic change. Furthermore, their preference for "Global Action Focus" in "Type of Justice Engagement" underscores a broad, interconnected worldview, while "Commitment to Service" as a "Personal Quality of a 'Man or Woman for Others'" emphasizes the value they place on sustained, dedicated action. The significant preference for "Divine Calling for Justice" also highlights that for many, their pursuit of justice is deeply informed by spiritual conviction. Conversely, attributes such as purely "Academic Excellence Focus" in education, isolated "Personal Charity Action," a narrow "Local Community Focus," mere "Compassionate and Caring" without action, and "Justice as Morality" without deeper spiritual or moral duty, were consistently least preferred. These stark contrasts illuminate Gen Z's active, integrated, and globally-minded vision of social justice.

Based on these conclusions, the following actionable recommendations are proposed for educators, policymakers, and social justice advocates:

For Educational Institutions and Educators:

1. Integrate Experiential Learning: Educational curricula, particularly in Davao City, should pivot towards incorporating more "Hands-on Community Learning" experiences. This means moving beyond theoretical discussions to include mandatory service-learning projects, community immersion programs, and collaborative initiatives with local NGOs.

Actionable Step: Develop partnerships with community organizations to create structured volunteer opportunities and project-based learning modules that allow students to directly engage with social issues.

2. Foster Holistic Social Justice Education: Beyond teaching about social issues, educational programs should explicitly integrate both "Charity and Advocacy." This involves teaching students how to perform direct acts of kindness while simultaneously equipping them with the skills and knowledge to advocate for systemic change.

Actionable Step: Design courses or workshops that combine practical volunteering with lessons on policy analysis, community organizing, and effective advocacy strategies.

3. Cultivate Global Citizenship: Given Gen Z's preference for "Global Action Focus," educational institutions should broaden their scope to include discussions and initiatives related to international social justice issues.

Actionable Step: Incorporate global case studies into lessons, facilitate virtual exchanges with international organizations, and encourage participation in global awareness campaigns.

4. Emphasize Commitment and Purpose: In line with Fr. Arrupe's vision, educators should emphasize "Commitment to Service" as a core value. This involves fostering a long-term dedication to social justice rather than merely promoting fleeting acts of compassion. For students who identify with it, nurturing a sense of "Divine Calling for Justice" can deepen this commitment.

Actionable Step: Implement mentorship programs with experienced social justice leaders, offer opportunities for sustained engagement in specific causes over multiple semesters, and provide platforms for reflection on the deeper motivations behind service.

For Policymakers and Local Government in Davao City:

1. Support Youth-Led Initiatives: Policymakers should actively create platforms and provide resources for Gen Z to engage in social justice efforts that combine charity and advocacy.

Actionable Step: Establish youth councils or task forces focused on social justice, providing them with direct channels to propose and implement solutions for local and broader issues.

2. Invest in Community-Based Programs: Given the strong preference for hands-on learning, local government should invest in and support community-based programs that allow Gen Z to gain practical experience in addressing social challenges.

Actionable Step: Fund and promote local community centers, youth organizations, and non-profits that offer volunteer opportunities and skill-building workshops related to social justice.

3. Promote Global Awareness Locally: While Gen Z prefers global action, local policies can still foster this by connecting local issues to global contexts.

Actionable Step: Support public awareness campaigns that highlight the global dimensions of local social issues (e.g., climate change, poverty, human rights) and how local actions contribute to global solutions.

For Social Justice Advocates and Organizations:

1. Design Integrated Campaigns: Advocacy campaigns should be designed to offer Gen Z opportunities for both direct charitable involvement and systemic advocacy, reflecting their preferred "Charity and Advocacy" approach.

Actionable Step: Structure campaigns with clear pathways for participants to engage in both immediate relief efforts and long-term policy change initiatives, such as petitioning, lobbying, or public awareness drives.

2. Highlight Long-Term Impact and Commitment: When engaging Gen Z, organizations should emphasize the lasting impact of their work and the importance of sustained "Commitment to Service."

Actionable Step: Share success stories that demonstrate the long-term effects of advocacy and service, and create volunteer roles that encourage continuous engagement rather than one-off participation.

3. Leverage Digital Platforms for Action, Not Just Awareness: While Gen Z is digitally native, the findings suggest a preference for tangible action. Digital platforms should be used to mobilize for hands-on and advocacy efforts, not solely for awareness.

Actionable Step: Develop digital tools that facilitate sign-ups for community projects, provide clear steps for online advocacy, and connect online engagement to offline action.

By aligning educational strategies, policy development, and advocacy efforts with these identified preferences, stakeholders can more effectively engage Gen Z in meaningful social justice initiatives, fostering a generation truly embodying the spirit of "Men and Women for Others" in Davao City and beyond.

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