

Charity vs. Justice

"And what is wrong with charity? What is wrong with charity is its personal, fickle nature; its air of dependence of the weak and poor on the will and disposition of the rich and powerful. What is wrong with charity is that it is the subject to the vagaries of short term funding. What is wrong with charity is that it should be a complement to, not a substitute for, concerted social, economic and political commitment and action for common welfare. What is wrong with charity is that personal moral agendas can be smuggled into action and remain unexposed to public examination and debate."

"AIDS in the Twenty-First Century: Disease and Globalization" by Tony Barnett and Alan Whiteside, 2002.

Charity Social Service	Justice..... Social Change
Private, Individual Acts	Public, Collective actions
Responds to immediate need	Responds to long-term need
Provides direct service: Food, shelter, clothing	Promotes Social Change in institutions
Requires repeated actions	Resolves structural injustice
Directed at the effects of injustice: Symptoms	Directed at the root causes of social injustice
Satisfying, non-controversial and Immediate gratification for giver	exciting, sometimes controversial, don't always see results of your work
Example: Homeless shelter, food Bank, clothing drive	Example: legislative advocacy, church based community organizing

“Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account...Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt themselves from the great duties imposed by justice.”

Pope Pius XI, Divini Redemptoris, #49

One solution is to barter – Equalizing the sharing of resources and acknowledging a true sense of exchange rather than a hierarchy based upon what I have and you don't.