



NCCA An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curraim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

How the World Works

Transition Unit

Overview

The unit provides learners with the opportunity to explore how structures of poverty and inequality have emerged and are being perpetuated on a global level. Distributive questions of justice underpin the approach, as 'who gains' and 'who loses' are questions central to the resource. Critical thinking as applied to local and global power relations is developed as students are encouraged to interrogate the 'taken-for-granted' status of many elements of society. Connections are made between injustice in Ireland in other countries in order to foster a sense of solidarity. Students will also consider the role that they play in the world, and how they can help change the way the world works by stepping into their role as active global citizens. A strong emphasis on audio visual resources and active learning makes this a fun, accessible and impactful TU for all Transition Year students.

Key themes:

- Political economy
- International relations
- Inequality
- Colonialism / neocolonialism
- Solidarity and historical empathy
- International organisations
- Climate change, sustainability
- Development models
- Rights and responsibilities
- Tax justice
- Debt justice
- Macroeconomics
- Globalisation
- Power
- Decision-making / policy-making
- Intersectionality
- Global interdependence

Aims:

THIS TRANSITION UNIT AIMS TO

- promote awareness about the causes of global inequalities.
- create an understanding of how individuals and organisations can bring about change through their actions.
- cultivate empathy towards people in the Global South linked to a sense of responsibility towards working to support justice in the world.

Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this unit students should be able to:

- Critically evaluate their own perceptions of the world in which they live
- Critically analyse why people continue to experience poverty in a world of plenty
- Understand the complex interdependencies endemic to a globalised world
- Analyse and critique images and texts related to global development as presented in the media
- Recognise the impact of racist and stereotypical media images of the Global South
- Identify some of the historical reasons for the gap between the rich and poor world, and between the rich and poor within countries too
- Investigate different responses to tackling poverty and suggest solutions that can make an positive impact on tackling poverty
- Clearly articulate their response to debate topics related to global inequality
- Demonstrate an ability to work cooperatively in group and project work
- Collect and present data in a way that is interesting and challenging to their peers
- Build their communication skills both orally and verbally
- Demonstrate skills associated with research, communication and presentation.
- Design and carry out an action that will raise awareness about global inequality and make a difference
- Feel a sense of their own personal power and agency

Related Learning

JUNIOR CYCLE

- History: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.11, 3.2, 3.12
- Geography: 1.6, 2.4, 2.6, 2.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7, 3.9
- Business Studies: 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11
- Religious Education: 3.6, 3.9
- Home Economics: 1.15, 2.7, 2.8, 2.11

SENIOR CYCLE

- Social Education in Leaving Certificate Applied: Contemporary Issues 1 and 2
- Politics and Society: Power and Decision - Making, Active Citizenship, Globalisation and Localisation
- Geography: Core Unit 1: Patterns and processes in the physical environment, Core Unit 2: Regional geography, Elective Unit 4: Patterns and processes in economic activities, Unit 6: Global interdependence
- Business: People in Business, Domestic Environment, International Environment
- History: Early Modern Europe and the wider world, Colonialism
- Economics: 1 - What is economics about?, 2 - How are economic decisions made?, 3 - What can markets do?, 4 - What is the relationship between policy and economic performance?, 5 - How is the economy influenced by international economics?

GENERAL

- ICT: For research and presentation of project work

Outline of the unit

[A Teachers' Handbook is available to support teachers in working through this unit.](#) This includes all the lesson plans, worksheets and resources needed to help teach each topic. Contact Financial Justice Ireland by emailing education@financialjustice.ie, or download a copy at www.financialjustice.ie for any assistance.

It is important to begin this TU by asking the student to get a special journal that will be used each week to record their personal reflections on what they have learned.

THE RESOURCE IS STRUCTURED INTO FIVE SECTIONS:

1. OUR SHARED WORLD provides an introduction to the global South, uneven Global development, and some key statistics and facts relating to our shared planet. It also explores the images and stories which often depict our planet. The activities provide an opportunity for initial reflection on the values and assumptions which we all hold about our planet.

- Students participate in a table quiz to stimulate thinking about global issues by offering a light introduction to the area via interesting facts.
- Students participate in an activity to identify and illustrate links between social justice issues using concrete materials and an interactive process.

- Students participate in an activity to experience to understand some of the key attributes of the composition of the world's population, in particular in terms of unequal access to basic services and necessities.
- Students examine different maps of the world to encourage critical thinking about the ways maps represent the world and influence our thinking. They will consider why different maps show the world differently. Which one is correct? Or is there a correct map? How does Eurocentrism affect the way we see the world? Students will also examine maps that reflect incidence of poverty and inequality across the globe.
- Students examine visual images to encourage active and critical engagement with media images, and to challenge stereotypes related to rich and poor countries.
- Students are provided with an opportunity to critically interrogate journalistic pieces by exploring 'lines of enquiry' such as: source and evidence; fact and opinion; viewpoint and objectivity
- Students explore media representations to understand that a variety of perspectives and ways of viewing the world exist, and that these are often present in different parts of the media.

2. AN UNEQUAL WORLD takes a closer look at our shared planet, and introduces students to how different countries are affected differently by global phenomena. It looks at the issue of global inequality, and the historical roots of inequality. It enables students to question who has power in the world, and why.

- Students use chocolate bars to illustrate how unevenly the world's resources are distributed.
- Students use chairs to visualise how income is distributed in Ireland, and increase their awareness of income inequality in Ireland.

- Students use a ranking game to think critically about the causes of poverty and inequality.
- Students are facilitated to engage critically with the concepts of Gross Domestic Product and of the Gini index, as two alternative ways of measuring progress.
- Using poetry and song, students gain an historical perspective on contemporary global inequalities.
- Students use their bodies to reflect on who has the most power in making the big decisions that affect all people on the planet.

At least a few activities from parts 1 or 2 should be carried out before progressing to parts 3, 4 and 5.

3. FINANCING OUR WORLD builds on the previous sections to develop students' understanding of the reasons behind global economic inequality, and the structures of power that perpetuate global economic inequality. It begins with an opportunity for students to reflect on global economic inequality and what it means. It then introduces a series of activities on three aspects of global inequality: debt justice, tax justice, and trade & investment

- A walking debate is used to introduce students to the ideas of sovereign debt and debt justice
- Documentary footage is used to help students understand the impact of sovereign debt in the Global South from a variety of perspectives.
- Case studies and a problem tree are used to facilitate students to understand the root causes and the consequences of sovereign debt crises in the Global South.

- Role play and the concept of human rights is applied to a case to explore the human rights issues that arise in the context of global trade.
- The trading game is used to enable students to experience how unfair and unequal some trading relationships are.
- Small group work and discussion are used to support students to explore the role of tax in society.
- A case study is used to help students debate the power relationships between multinational companies (MNCs) and people living in the Global South regarding tax.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD sheds new light on the familiar topic of climate change, by introducing ideas of climate justice - locally and globally. The section sets out the unequal impacts of climate change and encourages students to consider the issue in light of their understanding of global inequality.

- Striking cartoons are used to introduce students to the links between climate change and global inequality, and the concept of climate justice.
- A compass rose is used to encourage students to consider multiple facets of climate change and facilitate them to think critically about sustainability and climate justice.
- A world café is used to encourage students to consider their environmental impact as consumers, and to reflect critically on the potential and limitations of ethical consumerism.

- Shapes are used to encourage students to reflect critically on what is and what is not within their control when it comes to climate change.
- Role play is used to develop students' awareness of how solutions to tackle climate change can have social and economic impacts which are unjust, and to consider the implications of this.

This part of the unit might also include inputs from guest speakers.

Arranging a guest speaker.

This might be a good time to invite someone involved in working for change to talk to the students. The students should arrange the venue, time and date suitable with the speaker and school timetable. If the talk is to take place outside of the school, arrange appropriate transport and obtain permission from parents for students' attendance. Students and teachers should prepare questions for the speaker in advance and take notes on points of interest during the talk. These notes will create a basis for reflection and discussion of the issues raised in a debriefing session during the next class.

5. REFLECTING & TAKING ACTION encourages students to reflect on what they have learned and examine how they can take action to bring about change on the topics they have encountered. The resource in its entirety can be followed through in succession as part of an entire unit.

This is an opportunity to get students developing their own collective action project!

- Students explore the connection between their fundamental needs being met and their personal power to deepen their understanding of power, facilitate reflection on

the individual power of each student, and connect the satisfaction of fundamental human needs to the potential to exercise power.

- Issue ranking is used to support students to determine together which issue to work on collectively.
- Power mapping is used to help students identify targets and focus their change strategy.
- Different types of activism are explored to support students to acknowledge the power they have and begin considering how to take systematic, strategic and effective action for global justice

For teachers who do not wish to follow the entire module, we recommend using 1-2 activities from the first and second sections, to introduce the general ideas of global citizenship, development, and inequality, followed by one or more of the subsequent thematic sections. Within section 3, there are three themes; debt justice, tax justice and trade & investment, while the first activity in the section provides a good general introductory activity to move from sections 1 and 2 into each of the themes in section 3.

Section 4 focuses on climate change and inequality. The final section encourages students to consider how to affect change on the issues they have explored.

Breakdown of the unit

The unit can be taught over a fifteen-week period (e.g. September – Christmas) timetabled as follows:

- One double period a week (twenty hours class time)
- One single period a week (ten hours class time)
- The remainder of the time will consist of independent research and project work, organising guest speakers, journal work, etc.

This unit could be greatly enriched by team-teaching. If it were not possible to timetable 2 teachers to be available to teach the unit at the same time then one teacher might teach the double period each week and another might teach the single period—each one focusing on different aspects of the unit, depending on the interests and expertise of the individual teachers—e.g. history, geography, economics, R.E.

Alternatively the teachers could choose a theme to focus on each week, for example debt, tax, international organisations, colonialism, climate change or collective action (see ‘themes covered’ for more ideas).

Key Skills

INFORMATION PROCESSING

Students will learn how to navigate the internet to find information in relation to global issues. They will develop the ability to record, organise, and summarise information and evaluate it from different perspectives. They will also have to think about how best to present it to their peers and to a wider audience in order to motivate action for change.

CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

Students will analyse global poverty issues, challenge assumptions, examine evidence and reach conclusions. They will be encouraged to think imaginatively about solutions to global inequality and their creativity will be fostered as they plan and carry out an action. A safe space for open and respectful dialogue is created in order to build confidence in working with complex and controversial issues.

COMMUNICATING

Students will engage in listening and dialogue around global justice issues; expressing opinions, discussing, speculating, challenging, reasoning, and engaging in debate and argument.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

Students will become more sensitive to the views of others through a strong emphasis on dialogue and group work. The use of role-plays and other active learning will give students the chance to learn how to work together as will the research and project work.

BEING PERSONALLY EFFECTIVE

Students will become more confident in presenting their views, learn how to evaluate their performance and those of their peers, learn how to give and receive feedback. They will also set personal and collective goals by their involvement in class activities and independent research and project work. Students will learn how to reflect on their own personal growth as a person and as a learner through the journal work. They will also explore their own personal power as a potential agent of change; a global citizen.

Learning Approaches

The resource takes a Development Education (DE) approach to exploring these themes. Development Education, also known as Global Citizenship Education (GCE), is an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, DE helps students critically explore the root causes of global justice issues and how they interlink with our everyday lives. The DE key skills of critical thinking and analysis are fostered throughout this resource in the application of participative and student centred methodologies. Students are encouraged to question and challenge the messages and information that they receive.

KEY METHODOLOGIES USED

Experiential learning, large and small group discussion, free-frames, cartoons and imagery, case-studies, moving debates, world café, roving conversations, role-play, ICT based learning, and independent research work.

Assessment approaches

THE ASSESSMENT WILL COMPRISE TWO PARTS.

1. The first part will involve the completion of a journal. The journal will contain reflections on the student's response to each of the sessions. Five minutes should be allocated at the end of each class for students to record their thoughts and observations on each of the lessons. In some cases, students will need more time to complete their journal at home. Journal records should not be limited to the students' personal responses and questions should also be given by the teacher asking the students to consider key issues and challenges that arise. On occasion, these questions could be prompted by the group discussion in debriefing sessions. The journal will also allow students to identify what they have learned, what skills they have gained, and how the Unit has impacted on their attitudes and behaviour.
2. Students can also undertake a mini-project related to one of the topics which can be assessed by the teacher.

Resources

A full set of teaching resources to support teachers in teaching this Unit is available in the Teachers Handbook entitled 'How the World Works'. This resource can be downloaded from www.financialjustice.ie, via [this link](#) or hardcopies are available by completing the form at bit.ly/in_the_post.