

Why teach about social justice?

All human beings, no matter where they live, have certain basic needs in common. These include the need for food, shelter, health care, affection, identity, education, and self-expression, to name but a few. Each individual is entitled, simply by the fact of being human, to have these needs met at the appropriate stage of their development.

But in industrialised and developing countries alike, there are too many instances of injustice, when these basic human needs are not met. Poverty is perhaps the most fundamental and widespread injustice, for it limits access to almost every other basic need, such as a reasonable standard of living, proper nutrition, medical treatment, a clean environment and fair employment. Similarly, discrimination interferes with the chances of individuals to develop to their full potential. This is equally true whether such discrimination is based on race, gender, class, religion, language, nationality, or physical ability.

Justice, then, is essential to development, not only of individuals but of communities and countries as well.

The denial of justice is closely linked to conflict issues in both industrialised and developing countries. Injustice, real or perceived, is one of the most common sources of conflict and violence between individuals, groups, and nations. And violent conflict in turn can perpetuate further injustice.

In view of the importance of justice to long-term global development, the growing international consensus on the need for teaching about justice is a promising sign. The 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* states that education shall be directed to, among other things, 'the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms'. The 1990 *World Declaration on Education for All* states that one of the reasons for meeting basic learning needs is to empower the individual 'to further the cause of social justice'.

But learning about social justice involves more than becoming familiar with certain legal texts, and absorbing abstract concepts of rights. It requires that students see the relevance of justice issues to their own lives and immediate environment – home, school or community. It demands that they move beyond reactions of guilt, blame, or resentment and instead make an active commitment to promoting justice and equality on all levels, whether personal, institutional, national or global.

Social justice



Some key concepts

RIGHTS

Central to the issue of social justice is the concept of human rights. Rights may be defined as those things – both material and non-material – which one is, in fairness, entitled to have or to do. Human rights are sometimes thought of in terms of *freedom from* and *freedom to*.

Freedom from

All people have the right to protection from obvious forms of injustice, such as violence, exploitation, abuse, and torture. They also have a right to have their basic survival needs met, to be free from the more subtle injustices of poverty, hunger, lack of health care, and environmental pollution. It is essential that children are aware that such injustices occur not only in developing countries, but in the wealthier nations as well.

Freedom to

Everyone has the right to participate in those human activities which allow one to develop fully, such as education, the practice of one's religion, culture, and language, the freedom to express opinions, to be part of associations and to have access to information.

RESPONSIBILITIES

With every right come responsibilities. A person who desires the right to health, for example, cannot at the same time mistreat his body with illegal drugs. Perhaps the broadest responsibility borne by each person who wishes to have her rights respected, is the responsibility to uphold and promote others' rights, to ensure that justice is available to *all* members of society.

MAJOR DOCUMENTS

Three documents on justice issues are especially important for teachers and students. The ground-breaking 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* set forth a list of basic human rights to be observed worldwide. In 1959, the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of the Child* focused on ten clauses which particularly have to do with the welfare of children. In 1989, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* went even further in establishing global recognition of children as a group of persons entitled to special rights. Its 54 articles detail rights relating to the survival, development, protection and participation of children. The Convention is legally binding, and has been ratified by over 150 countries.

A number of activities in this chapter refer to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. To obtain copies, contact the UNICEF office or National Committee in your country.

Teaching about social justice: Aims and objectives

<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Attitudes</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of widely accepted principles of human rights and justice (such as those contained in the <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i>). • Understanding that personal, institutional and societal behaviours, attitudes and structures can have the effect of either promoting or denying social justice. • Knowledge of current situations in which human rights are not recognised and social justice is not available to all, both locally and globally. • Understanding that along with rights come responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to apply ideals such as freedom, equality and respect for diversity in the classroom and in the learners' daily lives, as well as seeing them in the global context. • Skills of being an effective advocate for the rights of oneself and others (including discussion, negotiation and assertiveness). • Ability to take responsibility for one's own actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy with those who have been denied justice. • Willingness to take constructive and realistic action on the part of others. • Commitment not only to defending one's rights, but to accepting and fulfilling one's responsibilities as well.

Age level 1:
7–11 years

Activity 25

What's fair?



OBJECTIVES

To help students clarify their ideas about what is 'fair' and what is 'unfair', as a way of introducing the ideas of justice and injustice.

MATERIALS

For each pair of students: a set of four **What's fair?** situations (on pages 154 and 155), scissors, large paper with columns headed **Fair**, **Unfair** and **Not Sure**, glue.

PROCEDURE

Step 1

Working in pairs, the students read through their four **What's fair?** situations. They cut the situations into separate strips and sort them into three categories: those in which they think the student is being treated fairly, those in which they think the student is being treated unfairly, and those they are not sure about.

Step 2

When this is done, each pair joins with another pair that had four *different* **What's fair?** situations. As a group of four, they discuss their opinions about each of the situations. When they have reached a consensus as to whether a situation is fair or unfair to the child involved, they glue it onto the large paper under the heading **Fair** or **Unfair**.

Step 3

The whole class then discusses the activity:

- What kinds of situations were described as fair? Why?
- What kinds of situations were described as unfair? Why?
- Were some situations difficult to decide upon? Why?

VARIATIONS

- 1 The activity can be done using photos instead of the situations.

- 2 Younger students may be given only one situation per pair. They decide if it is fair or unfair. The whole class then makes one large chart to show how the situations were classified.

FOLLOW-UP

- 1 Each pair of students selects one of the unfair situations, and uses it as the beginning of a story. They complete the story in such a way that the ending is fair to the student.
- 2 Students discuss how families, schools, groups, the community, and the nation prevent unfair occurrences from happening. Some possible ways might include having rules or forming laws.

IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity involves reading, analysing, categorising, decision-making. By using situations derived from literature or historical events, it could be linked with English or humanities.



'What's fair?' situations (1)



- 1 Gina wants to play football with a group of boys at break time, but they won't let her play because she is a girl. Is this fair to Gina?



- 2 Saleema's grandfather gave her some money for her birthday. Saleema wants to use it to buy sweets. Her parents say that she cannot, because that would be bad for her health. Is this fair to Saleema?



- 3 Ali is ten years old, and likes to go to school. But his family needs him to get a job to earn some money, because there are younger children to feed. So Ali does not get to finish primary school. Is this fair to Ali?



- 4 Marta comes to school without having done her homework. The teacher makes her stay indoors at break time to do it. Is this fair to Marta?



'What's fair?' situations (2)



worksheet

- 5 Lee lives in a country which is at war. It is dangerous to travel. He cannot go to the health clinic to get his immunisation shots. Is this fair to Lee?



- 6 Chris doesn't like school, and wants to leave. His parents say he can't leave because he is only ten years old. Is this fair to Chris?



- 7 Rose and Tahira have come to live in a new country, and are learning to speak a new language. Sometimes in school, they speak their home language. The teacher makes them stop, and says that they must learn to speak like everyone else in the school. Is this fair to Rose and Tahira?



- 8 George, who is white, tells a joke about black people. The teacher tells George that he must stop, that saying cruel things about people of another race is not allowed in this school. Is this fair to George?



Activity 26

The toy contest



OBJECTIVES

To give students a simulated experience of injustice; to help them understand the range of reactions people may have to incidents of injustice.

MATERIALS

Art materials for each group of four as described in the **Procedure** section.

PROCEDURE

Step 1

The students are divided into groups of four. Their task is to use the art materials they will be given to design the best toy they can; if possible, it should be one that really works.

The small groups receive art materials as follows:

Small groups 1 and 2 – A large sheet of sugar paper and four pencils for each small group.

Small groups 3 and 4 – A large sheet of sugar paper, four pencils, two erasers, and one set of coloured pencils for each small group.

Small group 5 – A large sheet of sugar paper, four pencils, two erasers, one set of coloured pencils, four sheets of coloured paper (different colours), two pairs of scissors, glue.

Small group 6 – A large sheet of sugar paper, four pencils, two erasers, one set of coloured pencils, four sheets of coloured paper (different colours), four pairs of scissors, glue, four sheets of coloured card (different colours), craft sticks, toothpicks, a ruler, a hole punch, a length of wire, glitter.

The materials used may vary according to what the teacher has available; however, it is important that the distribution of materials is unequal, with one small group being particularly favoured over the others. If it is necessary to have more than six small groups, additional groups can be given the same materials as groups 3 and 4.

*Age level 1:
7–11 years*

Step 2

After the students have worked for ten to 15 minutes, the teacher should announce that they have ten minutes remaining to work, and that when all the toys have been designed, a contest will be held to select the best one.



Designing a toy with limited resources

If students object to the unfair distribution of materials, they can be told that the class will discuss this later, and to try to do their best with what they have.

Step 3

At the end of the work period, the small groups come together. One member of each small group shows the toy that the group designed.

Step 4

The teacher then invites discussion of the results. The following points should be raised:

- How did you feel when you realised that the small groups had different materials?
- How did it feel to be in a group that had lots of materials? How would you have felt if you had been in one of the other groups?
- How did it feel to be in a group that had few materials?
- Did any small groups try to do something about the inequality? If so, what? Was this effective?
- What would have been a fair way to distribute the materials?

- Would it be fair to hold a contest and give prizes when the students had different materials to begin with? Why or why not?

If strong feelings have been raised by this activity, it may be necessary actually to redistribute the supplies, and allow each small group an equal opportunity to create their invention.

VARIATION

The task may be varied according to the age and interests of the group so that students must create their ideal house, a school they would like to attend, an invention that would make the world a better place, or a poster promoting world peace, etc., rather than a toy.

FOLLOW-UP

Encourage the students to discuss situations in real life in which people have different resources (money, clothing, shelter, access to health care, food), and yet are judged by the same standards. Is this just?

IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity requires imagination and divergent thinking, group decision-making and problem-solving. It could be incorporated into an art class, or a science lesson on inventions.

Activity 27

The obstacle course



OBJECTIVES

To help students understand the inequality that arises when some people receive privileges which others do not; to enable them to see that not everyone will reach the same goals when opportunities are unequal.

MATERIALS

Four benches of the same size; one long piece of rope; copies of the **Instructions for teams** cards (on page 161).

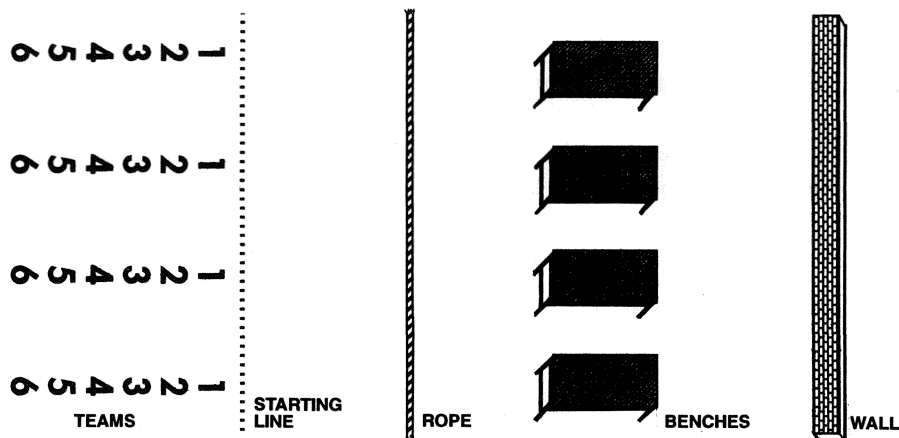
*Age level 1:
7-11 years*

PROCEDURE

Step 1

The class is divided into four teams of equal size; the teams should be equal in terms of athletic ability.

Prior to the activity, the teacher should prepare an obstacle course in the gymnasium (or on the playground) as follows: the one long piece of rope should be placed at right angles to the direction in which the students will run, at a location one-third of the way between the starting line and the opposite wall. A bench for each team should be placed two-thirds of the way between the starting line and the opposite wall:



The obstacle course

Step 2

Each team is given one of the **Instructions for teams** cards. Team members read their card together and make sure that they understand how to run the race. They should not look at any of the other teams' instructions, or be told that the cards are different.

Step 3

At a signal from the adult, the students run the obstacle course as a relay race.

Step 4

When all teams have finished, the class as a whole discusses the results:

- Which team finished first? Why?
- Which team finished last? Why?
- Was the race fair?
- How did it feel to be in the team that had the advantage? How did it feel to be in the team that had the disadvantage?
- What could be done to make this race fair?

The class may choose to repeat the race, so that each team has the chance to experience both advantage and disadvantage.

VARIATIONS

The obstacle course can be made longer, or different types of obstacles used, depending upon what equipment is available. **Instructions for teams** cards can be rewritten accordingly. Regardless of what types of objects are used, the teacher should ensure that each team has different instructions, with one team being placed at an advantage, and one team placed at a particular disadvantage.

FOLLOW-UP

Students discuss or write about real life situations in which people must compete despite the fact that some have received advantages or disadvantages (obstacles) which place them on an unequal footing. These may be due to race, gender, physical ability, language, social class, etc. They may occur in the school, in the larger community, or on a national or global level.

IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity uses skills in following directions, comparing and analysing, anticipating outcomes and drawing analogies. It is suitable for a physical education lesson.

The obstacle course: Instructions for teams



Team 1

In turn:
Jump over the rope.
Jump over the bench.
Touch the wall.
Jump over the bench.
Jump over the rope.
Touch the next person in line.

Team 2

In turn:
Jump over the rope.
Run around the bench once.
Touch the wall.
Run around the bench once.
Jump over the rope.
Touch the next person in line.

Team 3

In turn:
Jump over the rope.
Run around the bench twice.
Touch the opposite wall.
Run around the bench twice.
Jump over the rope.
Touch the next person in line.

Team 4

In turn:
Lift up the rope and crawl under it.
Run around the bench three times.
Touch the wall.
Run around the bench three times.
Lift up the rope and crawl under it.
Touch the next person in line.

Activity 28

A journey to a new planet



Age level 1:
7–11 years

OBJECTIVES

To help students differentiate between things that they want, and things that they need; to introduce the idea that people's basic needs are considered rights.

MATERIALS

A set of 20 **Wants and needs cards** (pages 164–5) for each pair of students, pencils.

PROCEDURE

Step 1

The students form pairs, and each pair is given a set of **Wants and needs cards**, cut into individual cards.

Step 2

The students are told that they have been chosen to go and live on a new planet. Since they will be setting up a new society there, Mission Control wants them to have all the things they need and want in order to live and grow. Mission Control has made a list of 16 things it thinks the students should take with them. The students are allowed to bring four more that they choose. They draw these four items onto the four blank **Wants and needs cards**.

Step 3

Announce to the group that because space is limited on the spaceship, students can take only 14 items, instead of all 20. They must decide on six items to eliminate. They can draw an X through these, place them in an envelope, or give them back to the teacher.

Step 4

Inform the students that Mission Control has found that there is still less available space than they had realized. Students will only be able to take eight items with them, instead of 14. Have them eliminate six more items, leaving only the eight that they consider most essential for their survival.

Step 5

Discuss the following questions with the entire class:

- Which items were most commonly eliminated in the first round? Why?
- Was the second round of eliminations more difficult than the first? Why?
- Did you and your partner have any disagreements over the items to eliminate? Which ones, and why?
- What is the difference between wants and needs? Which items on the list were wants, and which ones were needs?
- What are some of the things you want in real life? What are some of the things you need?
- Do you have everything you want? Do you have everything you need? Why or why not?
- Do wants and needs differ for different people? Why or why not?
- Do all people in your country have everything that they need? What about people in other countries?

Explain to the group that people's most basic needs – to survive, develop, be safe, and participate in their communities – are often referred to as *rights*. Rights can be thought of as those things that it is fair and just for all people to have, or to be able to do.

VARIATION

With younger children, the number of cards can be reduced.

FOLLOW-UP

- 1 Ask students to come up with their own definition of rights.
- 2 Have them make a list of rights that they think are basic for people of their age, using the **Wants and needs cards** as a starting-point. Encourage students to think about non-material needs – such as the right to express their opinions – as well as material needs. Would their list be similar to or different from a list drawn up by a class in another country?
- 3 Have students compare their own lists of rights with the articles of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

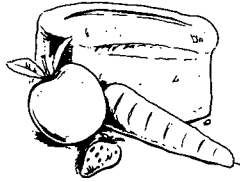
IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity involves imagining, anticipating consequences, prioritising and negotiation skills. It can be used as part of an English or science class.



Wants and needs cards (1)

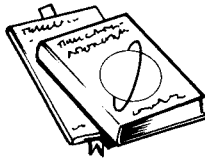
Healthy food



A personal stereo



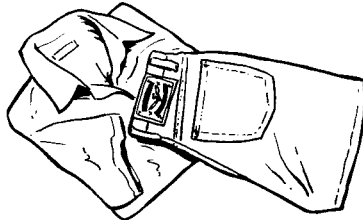
Books that will teach you what you need to know



Toys



Nice clothes



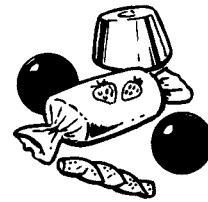
Medical supplies



The opportunity to practise your own religion



Sweets



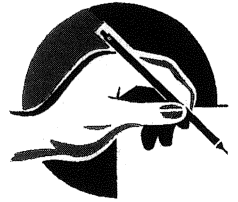
A computer of your own



Clean water

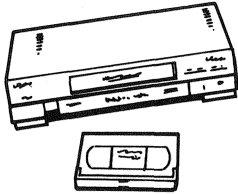


Wants and needs cards (2)



worksheet

Videos and a VCR



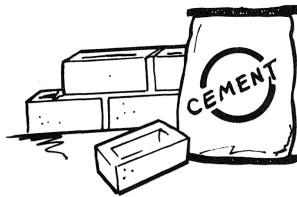
Someone who will love and care for you



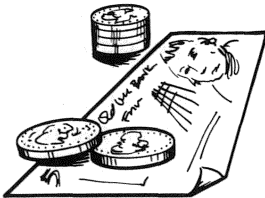
Friends



Materials you need to build shelter



Money



The chance to say what you think is important and be listened to



Activity 29

Rights and responsibilities



OBJECTIVES

To help students see the link between rights and responsibilities in their immediate environment.

MATERIALS

Blank index cards (or slips of paper) of two different colours; pencils.

PROCEDURE

Step 1

The students form groups of four. Each small group is given a number of blank index cards or slips of paper (all of one colour). The students write down all the rights they think they have, one right per card.

If students have difficulty in deciding what their rights are, the teacher may suggest some of the rights covered in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Step 2

The teacher then explains that with every right come certain responsibilities:

- Adults who have the right to vote, for example, have the responsibility to use their vote to express their opinions in elections.
- Persons who have the right to drive a car also have the responsibility to do so safely and obey traffic laws.
- Students who feel they have the right to be listened to also have the responsibility to listen to adults and other students.

Once the students grasp the idea of responsibilities being linked to rights, the teacher distributes cards or slips of paper of the contrasting colour. The students write down one responsibility to go with each right that they have thought of.

Step 3

Each group of four mixes up its set of rights and responsibilities cards, and exchanges the entire set with those of another small group. Students then work together to match the rights and responsibilities on this new set of cards. When they feel they have completed the task, they ask the other small group to check their work.

Step 4

As a class, the students discuss the activity:

- Did any small groups list rights you hadn't thought of?
- Was it easy or difficult to think of what responsibilities go with different rights?
- Do you think most of the rules in schools, home or the community exist to protect students' rights, or to ensure that they fulfil their responsibilities (or is there a balance between the two)?

VARIATION

Students list the rights they think they *should* have, and then list the responsibilities that those rights would entail. Are there any rights they feel they should have which are denied to them? Why might this be so?

FOLLOW-UP

- 1 Students consider times when they feel rights and responsibilities have come into conflict; they write a story about this, or illustrate it as a comic strip.
- 2 Students discuss rights that adults have in their community or nation, and responsibilities that go along with those rights.
- 3 The class examines the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and thinks of responsibilities that relate to each of the articles.

IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity requires seeing relationships, making associations and anticipating consequences. It could be used in a humanities class.



Age level 2:
12–15 years

OBJECTIVES

To enable students to understand that injustice – in this case, unfairly distributed educational resources – can place certain groups at a disadvantage in attempting to succeed in society; to explore possible responses to injustice.

MATERIALS

A **Vocabulary Words** list for each student (page 172; these words are taken from articles 28 and 29 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*; any other words may be substituted, according to the level of the class); one sheet of paper, a pencil, and a dictionary for each student.

PROCEDURE

Step 1

Students use chalk or tape to mark a rectangle on the floor of the room equal to one-eighth of its area. (This can be quickly done by measuring off a rectangle whose length is one-half the width of the room, and whose width is one-quarter the length of the room.)

Step 2 (Optional)

Students move one-eighth of the total number of desks and chairs into the area which is one-eighth of the floorspace, and leave the rest in the larger area.

Step 3

The students then distribute the vocabulary lists, paper, pencils, and dictionaries so that one-eighth of them are in the smaller space, and the rest are in the larger space.

Step 4

The class then divides into two groups, with one-eighth of the students in one group and seven-eighths of the students in the other. The *smaller* group of students is told to take seats in the *larger* area of the room. The *larger* group takes seats in the *smaller* area of the room.

In a class of 32 students, for example:

4 students would have:

- 7/8 of the floorspace
- 7/8 of the desks and chairs
- 28 vocabulary lists
- 28 dictionaries
- 28 sheets of paper
- 28 pencils

... while 28 students would have:

- 1/8 of the floorspace
- 1/8 of the desks and chairs
- 4 vocabulary lists
- 4 dictionaries
- 4 sheets of paper
- 4 pencils.

Step 5

The students are told that they will now take a vocabulary quiz. They must look up the words on their lists in the dictionaries, and write the definitions on a *separate* piece of paper. Each student must turn in her *own* word list.

Students are told that if they score 80 per cent or better on the quiz, they will be given a privilege, such as being allowed to have extra break time, go to the library to read, etc. Those who score under 80 per cent will be required to stay indoors at break to continue working on the quiz.

The students can then be given ten to 20 minutes, depending on their skill level, to complete the quiz.

While they are working, the teacher can give attention to the smaller group, while giving as little as possible to the larger group. Any objections should be ignored or dismissed by saying something such as 'Do the best you can with the materials you have', or 'This is how it's going to be for this lesson'.

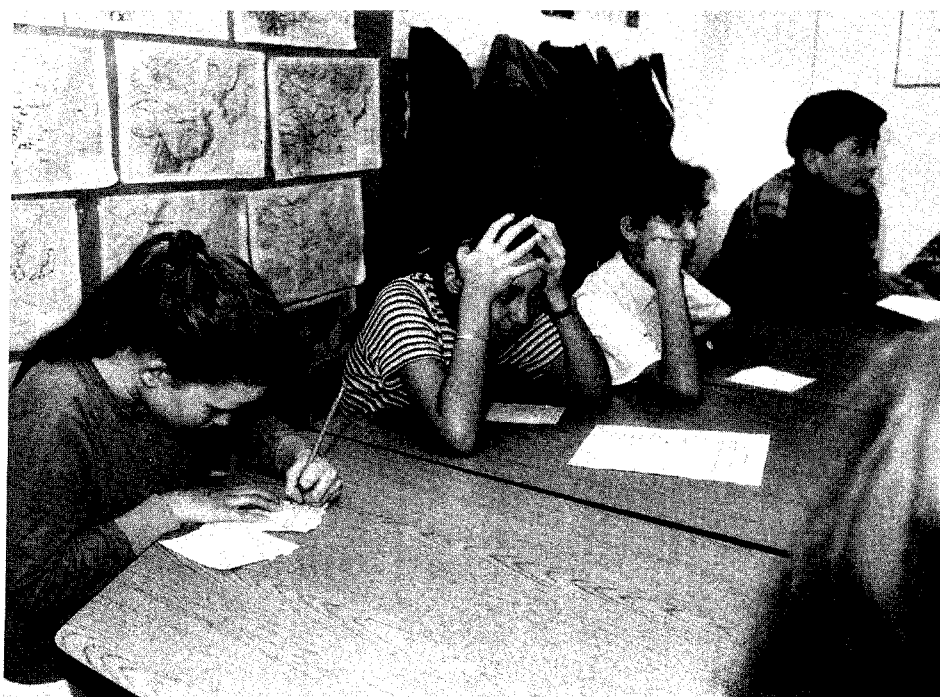
Students from the larger group should be forbidden to leave their assigned area, or take materials from the smaller group.

Step 6

When time is up, the teacher collects the students' papers and quickly checks them. In all likelihood, all of the students in the smaller group will have passed, while few, if any, in the larger group will have correctly completed 80 per cent of the definitions. The teacher announces which students will receive the privileges, and which will have to stay indoors during recess.



When educational resources are unfairly distributed . . .



. . . does everyone have an equal chance to succeed?

Step 7

At this point, the students will have strong feelings about the activity that they will want to express. The teacher should explain that this has been a simulation, and that neither group will be receiving a privilege or a punishment. The following questions can then be discussed:

- How did the larger group feel during the activity? Why?
- What strategies did the larger group use to attempt to complete the quiz?
- How did the smaller group feel during the activity? Why?
- Did anyone in the smaller group attempt to do anything about the unjust situation? Why or why not?
- Did anyone in the larger group attempt to do anything about the unjust situation? Why or why not?
- How would the distribution of resources have interfered with school success for the larger group, both in the short-term and in the longer term?
- How would the distribution of resources have placed the smaller group at an advantage, both in the short-term and in the longer term?

At some point in the discussion, the teacher may wish to let the students know that this simulation is based loosely on statistics on South Africa under apartheid laws in the mid-1980s. At that time, whites made up 15 per cent of the population. The per capita school expenditure for black South African schoolchildren was approximately one-eighth the amount spent on white students.

VARIATION

Any subject matter can be substituted for the vocabulary quiz, as long as it involves the use of resources which can be unfairly distributed.

FOLLOW-UP

- 1 Students can use this activity as a basis for researching the effects of apartheid on black South Africans.
- 2 They may also wish to explore how funds for education are allocated on a local or national level in their own country. Is the allocation equal? If not, what groups are potentially disadvantaged by the present system? What might the long term impacts of this be?

IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity requires skills in mathematics, decision-making and anticipation of consequences. While it might logically be used in a humanities class on the treatment of minority groups, it could also be incorporated into a mathematics lesson.



Vocabulary words

Use a dictionary to look up the meaning of each of these words. Write each word and its meaning on a separate sheet of paper.

- 1** rights
- 2** culture
- 3** compulsory
- 4** illiteracy
- 5** fundamental
- 6** tolerance
- 7** construe
- 8** accessible
- 9** discipline
- 10** potential

Activity 31

Linking rights



OBJECTIVES

To introduce students to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*; to help them see the links between various justice issues, and how they affect the lives of real children; to encourage thinking about the consequences of rights denials; to introduce the idea that rights denials can occur in any part of the world.

MATERIALS

For Step 1

Eight cards summarising selected articles from the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (pages 176–7). Eight **Children from around the World** cards, each describing a violation of the corresponding right from the Convention (pages 178–9).

For Step 2

Eight extra copies of each card with an article from the Convention on it.

PROCEDURE

Step 1

The students form pairs. Each pair receives either a) a card on which is written a summary of an article from the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, or b) a **Children from around the World** card, with a child's story illustrating a violation of one of those rights. (If the class size is under 32, some students may be asked to work on their own.)

Step 2

The pairs move around the room together, reading each others' cards. When they match an article from the Convention with its corresponding story, they form a group of four.

Step 3

Once groups of four are formed, the pair holding the card with the article from the Convention sits down. They are given eight additional copies of the article from the Convention that they are holding.

*Age level 2:
12–15 years*

Step 4

The other two people, who represent the child, walk around to each seated pair in the room, and discuss with them whether there is any sort of link between the child's story and the other articles of the Convention. (See the example in the box below.)

Each time a link between a child's story and another article of the Convention is established, the seated pair gives a copy of that article to the pair representing the child.

Step 5

Once all possible links have been established, the class discusses the types of links that were found.

AN EXAMPLE OF LINKS BETWEEN RIGHTS

In this activity, one child's story reads:

Because my family lived so far from the health centre when I was a young child, I was never vaccinated. Now I am eight years old, and I have polio.

This story illustrates article 24 of the Convention, the child's right to the highest possible standard of health, and to access to health and medical services.

In negotiating with other class members, links between this story and the following articles might be found:

Article 28, the right to education: because if the child does not receive adequate health care, his or her ability to take full advantage of educational opportunities may be impaired.

Article 32, the right to be protected from economic exploitation: because if a child has to work at an early age, he or she may be unable to get to a clinic for treatment, and may be exposed to situations which threaten the child's health.

VARIATIONS

- 1 Use other rights from the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Students could write their own **Children from around the World** cards.
- 2 The students write stories which demonstrate ways in which children's rights have been upheld, rather than denied, and carry out the activity using these.

FOLLOW-UP

- 1 Students discuss ways in which these basic rights have been upheld or denied in their own lives.
- 2 They use newspaper and magazine articles to find local and global examples of violations of children's rights, as well as steps that are being taken to protect them.

IN THE CURRICULUM

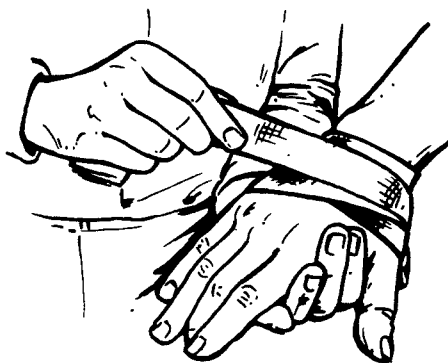
The activity involves reading and thinking analytically, seeing relationships, understanding consequences and developing empathy and concern for others. It could be used in a history or geography class, or in an interdisciplinary study of human rights. It could also be used as a basis for a creative writing assignment; students could be asked to extend further their ideas about the effects on the imaginary students of a particular rights denial, and develop them into a story.



Selected articles from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1)

Article 24

Children have the right to the highest possible standard of health, and access to health and medical services.



Article 30

Children have the right, if members of a minority group, to practise their own culture, religion, and language.



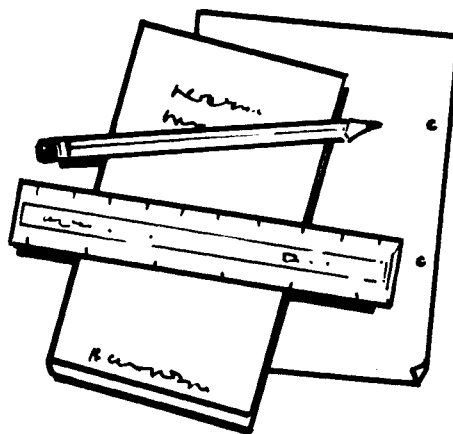
Article 27

Children have the right to a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.



Article 28

Children have the right to education.



Selected articles from the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (2)**



worksheet

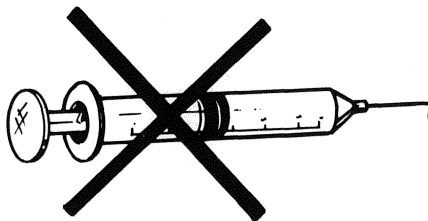
Article 31

Children have the right to rest, leisure, play, and participation in cultural and artistic activities.



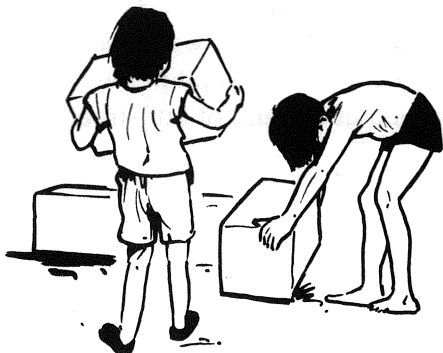
Article 33

Children have the right to protection from the use of drugs, and from being involved in their production or distribution.



Article 32

Children have the right to be protected from economic exploitation, from having to participate in work that threatens their health, education, or development.



Article 38

Children have the right, if under the age of 15, to protection from taking part in armed conflict.





Children from around the World cards (1)

worksheet

Because my family lived so far from the health centre when I was a young child, I was never vaccinated. Now I am eight years old and I have polio.

My brothers go to the local school, but I am the only daughter, and my family needs me to help out with work in our home. So I cannot go to school. I am seven years old.

I am 11 years old, and I go to school every day. When I get home, I help in my parents' shop until the evening. Then I eat dinner, and wash the dishes, and look after my younger brother and sister while my parents finish their work in the shop. After the younger children go to sleep, I try to do my homework, but usually I am too tired and I just fall asleep.

I am six years old and my family doesn't have much money. We live in two small rooms; we have to carry our water from a well a kilometre away. The houses in our village don't have indoor toilets, so we use a pit in the ground at the end of our street.

Children from around the World cards (2)



worksheet

I am 13 years old, and my country has been fighting over a boundary with another country for three years. A captain from the army came to my home to tell me that because I am so big and strong, I should join the army and fight for my country.

I am ten years old, and I speak the language that my parents and grandparents and all my family have always spoken. In the local school, none of the teachers speaks my language, and they don't allow me to speak it either – they say we must all learn how to speak *their* language.

I am 12 years old and I started to work at a farm picking fruit in the summer when I was nine years old. Now the owner of the farm wants me to work there every day, all year long. The money I would earn would help my family buy a little extra food.

I am 15 years old and I live in a big city. A man on my street told me I could make a lot of money if I would help him sell a drug called crack. He let me try some, and now I buy it from him all the time.



OBJECTIVES

To help students think specifically about injustices that could occur in their school, and to consider changes that will lead to greater equality.

MATERIALS

Paper, pencils and copies of one of the cards from the **Think of a rule . . .** sheet (page 182) for each group.

PROCEDURE

Step 1

Students form groups of four. They are told that they will be drawing up a list of rules for an ideal school, one in which everyone is treated fairly and equally.

Each small group is given *one* of the cards from the **Think of a rule . . .** sheet, and asked to devise some rules that will ensure that the statement on their card will be true.

Students should be urged to think creatively, and not to limit themselves to ideas that they judge to be practical at this stage. They can be encouraged to think not only of rules or practices that *prohibit* certain types of behaviour, but ones which *encourage* certain behaviours as well.

Step 2

Once the lists are completed, they are read aloud to the class, and suggestions from other students may be added.

Step 3

As a class, students then classify the rules as follows:

- ones they think they could carry out themselves, and would be willing to adopt as class rules;
- ones they think could be carried out with the cooperation of other people (either students or adults in the school or community);
- ones they think could not be carried out, or are not good rules to have.

Age level 2:
12–15 years

Step 4

Students return to their small groups, and select one of the rules which would require the cooperation of others in order to be effective. Together they devise a plan for how they would go about informing others of the need for this rule, and encouraging their participation. Plans might involve letter-writing, presentations at assemblies, articles in the school or local newspaper, or meeting with significant individuals or groups. The teacher should be prepared to enable the students actually to carry out these plans.

When people are bullying other people in the playground, they should have to do something to help other people in the school. They could help younger children in their classes, or they ~~should~~ could do some cleaning.

Rules for justice

VARIATIONS

- 1 Students examine existing school rules and discuss how they promote fairness and equality. Are there any rules whose effect is to create injustice or inequality?
- 2 After making the list of ideal rules, students make a list of the responsibilities they would have in relation to each rule.

FOLLOW-UP

A teacher reads summaries of the articles of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (available from UNICEF) to the class. Which items on the students' list of rules are similar to articles of the Convention?

IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity requires discussion, negotiation, classification, anticipation of consequences and planning skills. It could be used in a humanities class as a way of introducing the function of laws or the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.



Think of a rule...



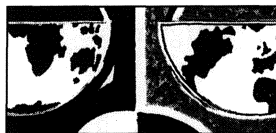
Think of a rule that will allow all students to feel safe and protected from all kinds of dangers.

Think of a rule that will allow all students to feel that they are respected and valued.

Think of a rule that will allow all students to have an equal chance to take part in everything that goes on in the school.

Think of a rule that will allow all students to have the same amount of the resources and materials that they need (supplies, clothing, food, etc.), and ensure that these materials will be of the same quality.

Think of a rule that will allow all students to have an equal chance to learn and to succeed.

**OBJECTIVES**

To help young people understand that there may be differing perspectives on justice issues; to explore the relationship between rights and responsibilities with regard to two particular issues: freedom of speech and child labour.

MATERIALS

Copies of the **Perspective A** and **Perspective B** sheets (pages 185–6) for *one* of the rights issues; blank paper and pencils.

PROCEDURE*Step 1*

The teacher chooses *one* of the rights issues to focus on, either freedom of speech or child labour.

Step 2

Students divide into groups of four to six. Within these small groups, two or three members are given the **Perspective A** sheet. They meet together to prepare as many arguments as they can in support of the statement on their sheet.

The other two or three group members are given the **Perspective B** sheet. They also meet to prepare their position, justifying the statement on their sheet.

Step 3

After these sub-groups have prepared their positions, they come back together to meet as the original group of four to six students. The As spend five to ten minutes presenting their point of view to the Bs, who should listen carefully and take notes. The Bs then present their point of view while the As listen. The presentations can be followed by five to ten minutes in which members of either sub-group ask each other questions.

*Age level 3:
16–18 years*

Step 4

The teacher then announces that the As and Bs are to change roles (they should *not* be informed of this part of the activity in advance). They are given a few minutes to rethink their arguments.

Step 5

Then the As present what was formerly the Bs' perspective, followed by the Bs presenting what was formerly the As' perspective.

Step 6

When both sides have finished, they work together to attempt to write a consensus statement on the issue debated.

Step 7

The consensus statements are read aloud to the whole class and discussed. Questions to consider might include:

- What difficulties were encountered in trying to write the consensus statement? Is it possible to reach a consensus on this issue?
- Did reversing roles make it easier or more difficult to write the consensus statement? Why?
- What instances do you know of in your community, nation, or the world in which the freedom of speech issue (or child labour) is the subject of controversy?
- How do responsibilities and rights interact? Do some responsibilities by their nature impose limits on certain rights?

VARIATION

The format of this activity can be used to explore other justice issues on which there might be opposing perspectives: for example, the right to freedom of association versus the responsibility to restrict the actions of organisations which might violate the rights of others.

FOLLOW-UP

Students collect stories from newspapers, radio or television which describe situations in which perspectives on rights are in conflict, or in which rights and responsibilities are in conflict.

IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity involves the skills of preparing and presenting positions, listening, critical thinking, taking alternative perspectives, negotiation and consensus-building. It can be used in a humanities or English class.

Perspectives on freedom of speech



worksheet

PERSPECTIVE A: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

In a just society, freedom of speech is one of the most basic human rights, and should not be limited.

Consider such points as:

- the negative effects of censorship;
 - the political implications of limited free speech and dissent;
 - the conditions in other countries where free speech is limited;
 - the importance of free speech to democratic societies;
 - any other relevant issues.
-

PERSPECTIVE B: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

In a just society, sometimes it is necessary to limit freedom of speech in order to protect the rights of others.

Consider such points as:

- the effect on minority groups of racist speech;
 - the way that speech can be used to encourage violence;
 - conditions in other countries where free speech is unrestricted and results in rights violations;
 - the need to promote responsibilities as well as rights;
 - any other relevant issues.
-



Perspectives on child labour



PERSPECTIVE A: CHILD LABOUR

In order to protect the right of children to play, learn and develop into healthy adults, laws against child labour must be strictly enforced.

Consider such points as:

- the loss of education that occurs when children are forced to work;
- the fact that children often labour under unhealthy conditions;
- the way that child labour is often exploited because children are not organised to protest unjust treatment;
- any other relevant issues.

PERSPECTIVE B: CHILD LABOUR

In order to help families that struggle to survive in difficult economic conditions, and to help children grow up to take a useful role in society, children should be allowed to work to help support their families.

Consider such points as:

- the fact that in some societies where jobs are scarce, children may be one of the only sources of income for a family;
- the fact that in many societies, children have traditionally worked alongside adults;
- the point of view that keeping children from doing productive labour isolates them unnecessarily from the adult world;
- the fact that working can be an educational experience for children;
- any other relevant issues.

Activity 34

'The world is just'



OBJECTIVES

To help students realise that there may be a range of perspectives on any situation involving justice and injustice, and that certain groups may benefit from injustices done to others.

MATERIALS

One copy of the **'The world is just'** cartoon (page 189) for each group of four students; blank sheets of paper and pencils for each small group.

*Age level 3:
16–18 years*

PROCEDURE

Step 1

Students form groups of four, and are given a copy of the **'The world is just'** cartoon. They take five to ten minutes to look it over, and to write a short statement saying what they think the message of the cartoon is.

Step 2

The students then work together to write a conversation between the three fish that clarifies and explains the message of the cartoon. Or, rather than write a conversation between the fish, they can write a conversation between individuals or groups in society that they feel are represented by the fish.

Step 3

As a class, students explain what they felt the message of the cartoon was, and read aloud their conversation.

Step 4

The class then discusses the following questions:

- Did everyone agree on the meaning of the cartoon, or were there different interpretations?
- Do you know of any situations involving people in your community that have something in common with the one depicted by the cartoon? In your country? In the wider world?

- What are the conditions that have led to these types of injustices?
- What factors might bring about change in these unjust situations?

People in this city who have a lot of money think everything is fine and don't understand why poor people are complaining. But people who are poor have lots of reasons to think things are unfair.

Points of view on justice

VARIATIONS

- 1 Students present their interpretations of the cartoon in the form of a role play or drama.
- 2 They extend the cartoon into a comic strip, and show events leading to a situation of greater justice and equality.

FOLLOW-UP

Students look for newspaper, radio or television accounts of current situations in which injustice is occurring, and is viewed differently by different groups; or accounts which indicate that certain groups are benefiting directly or indirectly from an injustice being imposed on another group.

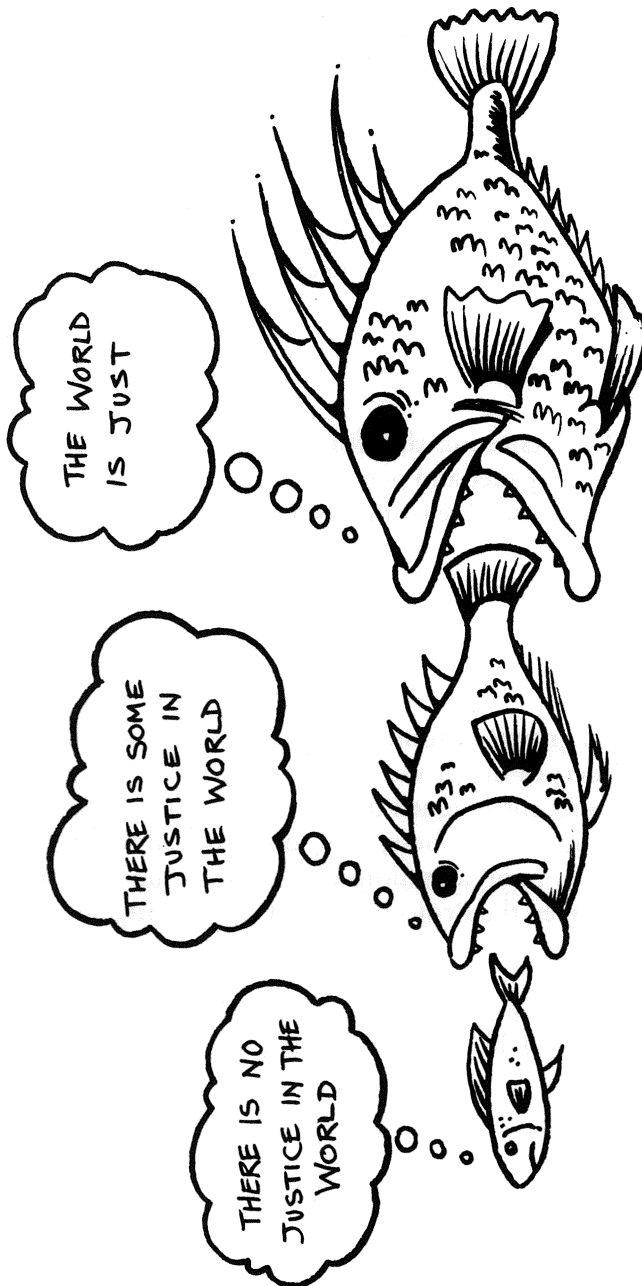
IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity develops skills of analysis, evaluation, negotiation, consensus-building, and applying information to new contexts. It would be appropriate in a humanities class on human rights or the experience of minority groups. It could also be used in the context of an English lesson.

'The world is just'



worksheet



(Hicks and Steiner, *Making Global Connections*, 1990, Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh.)

How much is justice worth?

Age level 3:
16–18 years

OBJECTIVES

To encourage young people to consider whether certain rights should take priority over others; to help them reflect on the ways in which different rights are linked.

MATERIALS

Copies of the **Projects requesting funding** sheets (pages 192–5) for each group of four; blank paper and pencils; copies of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (available from UNICEF) should also be at hand for reference.

PROCEDURE*Step 1*

Participants form groups of four. They are told that they are the newly-appointed members of the Justice Commission for an imaginary country. This country has recently signed the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. As Commission members, their job is to read the eight different funding requests from organisations that are working on children's rights issues. They are given the **Projects requesting funding** sheets.

Step 2

In small groups, students decide which projects they feel should receive funding. They discard descriptions of any projects they feel should not be funded.

Step 3

Students are then told that the Prime Minister has allocated one million units of currency to funding for these projects. The students are to decide how much money to give to each project. In making funding decisions, they must consider both the short- and long-term impact of each project.

Step 4

Small groups report back to the whole class on the ways they have allocated funds. Alternatively, groups may prepare large charts showing

their funding decisions, post these on the classroom walls, and have an exhibition session in which other students view the plans, while one group member remains with the chart to answer questions.

Step 5

The whole class then discusses the following questions:

- Which children's rights were considered the highest priorities? Why?
- Which rights were given the least priority? Why?
- Did any small groups decide that all or some of these projects should receive equal priority? Why?
- Did any small groups decide that certain rights were closely linked with others? Which ones? How were they linked?
- Can you think of any other rights projects that should have been on this list?
- In your own country, which of the rights issues addressed by the imaginary projects do you consider to be most critical? Least critical? Why? Do you think the views of your current government on rights and justice issues agree with your own? Why or why not? Which projects do you think would be most likely to receive funding? Why?
- Would children's rights priorities be different in different countries? Why or why not?

VARIATION

Pairs are each assigned a different article from the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and asked to outline some ways to put its goals into practice. These are reproduced and distributed to the entire class, which then carries out the funding activity as above, using these outlines as possible projects.

FOLLOW-UP

Young people investigate whether or not their country has signed the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. If not, they can contact an appropriate member of the government to ask why the Convention has not been signed, and to express their opinion on this issue.

If their country has signed the Convention, they can research what measures are being put into place to see that its provisions are implemented.

IN THE CURRICULUM

The activity requires anticipating consequences, prioritising, negotiation, decision-making and consensus-building. It can be used in a humanities class on rights issues, or in an economics class.



Projects requesting funding (1)



1 THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION PROJECT

Helping students to express their opinions, and giving them access to information about justice issues, is the best way to ensure that they will be able to participate in democratic decision-making as adults. This project will work with schools to ensure that students' opinions are heard on issues of importance to them. It will:

- produce a free magazine for students informing them about rights issues;
- fund regular television programmes for students on social justice;
- set up legal counselling for students on issues relevant to them;
- establish a hotline to the Justice Commission so that students may directly express their views and receive information.

2 THE CHILD LABOUR PROJECT

Many children in our country are forced to work at hazardous jobs from an early age. This project is essential to protect children from abuses, and ensure that they grow up in a situation which will allow them to develop all their capabilities. It will:

- work with the government to establish a minimum working age and regulate conditions of employment;
- provide support services to families who need their children's income;
- establish a confidential reporting system for children and young people who are being forced to work at an early age;
- provide parent education on this subject;
- pay special attention to the situation of minority children, who are more likely to be involved in child labour.

Projects requesting funding (2)



3 THE STANDARD OF LIVING PROJECT

A decent standard of living is essential to the healthy development of children, and their future ability to contribute positively to society. This project will raise the standard of living in our country so that children can develop adequately. It will promote:

- construction of affordable housing with sanitary facilities;
- distribution of food to the hungry;
- setting up of agricultural programmes to enable families to meet their basic nutritional needs;
- organisation of food cooperatives to make basic food items more affordable.

4 THE PROTECTION FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROJECT

All forms of abuse and neglect prey on the most defenceless members of society, the children, who may grow up physically, mentally, and emotionally handicapped as a result. This project aims to eliminate physical and mental abuse and neglect of children and young people; this includes drug abuse, sexual and other forms of exploitation. It will:

- set up programmes in schools and youth groups on coping with abuse and neglect, resisting drug use, and dealing with sexual abuse and exploitation;
- establish drop-in centres where young people may receive advice and counselling;
- set up education and counselling for parents on issues of abuse and neglect, and train social workers, police, and health care workers.



Projects requesting funding (3)



5 THE EDUCATION FOR ALL PROJECT

A basic level of education is essential to participation in a democracy, maintenance of good health, and economic well-being. High levels of literacy and school attendance are essential if the citizens of this country are to prosper in a global society. This project will:

- build primary schools in every community;
- lobby the government to make primary education compulsory;
- provide financial support to secondary schools and work to enable more children to attend;
- set up financial assistance programmes to increase university attendance.

6 THE NON-DISCRIMINATION PROJECT

Concern for the rights of children and young people is meaningless if those rights are only bestowed on certain privileged groups. This project will:

- set up a monitoring board in each county to ensure that all children and young people are being treated equally, and having their basic needs met;
- investigate all charges of discrimination, especially those brought by young people themselves;
- pay special attention to the needs of minorities, girls, and the disabled.

Projects requesting funding (4)



worksheet

7 THE AIMS OF EDUCATION PROJECT

While many issues may seem more urgent in the short term, changes in education are needed now in order to lay the foundation for a stable and prosperous future. This project will work on producing constructive change in the educational system. It will:

- produce curriculum materials on human rights and social justice issues, understanding of students' own culture and the cultures of others, peaceful conflict resolution, and environmental education;
 - educate teachers on these issues;
 - advise the Ministry of Education and inform the parents on how young people can be helped to develop the skills and attitudes needed for life in a diverse and interdependent society.
-

8 THE HEALTH SERVICES PROJECT

Unless children can be assured of survival and healthy development, they will never be able to take full advantage of their other basic human rights. This project will:

- establish health care centres in every community;
 - provide care for pregnant women;
 - offer education on children's health and nutrition, breast-feeding, and hygiene;
 - ensure that all children receive basic health care, including immunisations;
 - monitor the availability of clean water and levels of environmental pollution.
-