

# EDUCATING FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

## Through a Children's Rights Lens

For Grades 8 – 12  
British Columbia Schools



**Every child.**

**Every opportunity.**

**No exceptions.**

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Rights Lens

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABOUT UNICEF CANADA'S GLOBAL CLASSROOM PROGRAM

UNICEF Canada's mission is to mobilize and empower Canadians to invest in the positive transformation of every child's future. UNICEF Canada's Global Classroom program is a partnership with Canadian teachers and their students to inspire, educate and promote action on social justice, humanitarian issues and human rights—especially the rights of all children. This acclaimed program provides educators with classroom-ready resources and engagement tools. Designed to foster global citizenship and understanding, the Global Classroom shows how each of us can create a better world for all children and the communities in which they live.

For more information about UNICEF Canada's Global Classroom program, visit [globalclassroom.unicef.ca](http://globalclassroom.unicef.ca).

## ABOUT UNICEF WORLDWIDE

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) is a leading advocate for children, helping to build a world where the rights of every child are realized. Unique among world organizations and among those working with the young, UNICEF has the global authority to influence decision-makers and the grassroots partnerships to turn innovative, life-saving ideas into reality.

UNICEF's work as a charitable foundation is carried out in 190 countries throughout the world. The heart of UNICEF's work is in the field with programs developed in cooperation with the host country. Guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Convention) UNICEF believes that the survival, protection, and development of children must be a global priority, and that every child has the right to health, education, equality, and protection.

In 1989 the Convention was created. World leaders decided that children needed a special convention just for them because people under 18 years old often need special care and protection that adults do not. The leaders also wanted to make sure that the world recognized that children have human rights too. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights—including civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights. The Convention has achieved near-universal acceptance, having now been ratified by 193 parties.

## ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This guide was developed with the University of British Columbia as part of a larger partnership with seven different university partners across Canada and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The guide supports these faculty units:

Curriculum and Pedagogy, Educational Studies, Language and Literacy Education.

Through this project, UNICEF Canada is seeking to increase the number of Canadian teachers and students practicing global education, by enhancing teachers' abilities to integrate curriculum-mandated teaching and learning for human rights, peace, social justice, cultural competency, environmental awareness, and global citizenship in their classrooms, while highlighting Canada's contribution to sustainable international development.

For more information about this guide or to make suggestions for future revisions, please contact: [globalclassroom@unicef.ca](mailto:globalclassroom@unicef.ca).

## ABOUT OUR PARTNERS

### University of British Columbia (UBC) Faculty of Education Mission and Vision

- To advance education's role in the well-being of people and communities
- Professional Excellence
- People and Community
- Ethics and Responsibility.

As countries around the world move into an era of global integration, citizenship can no longer be defined by national borders. For this reason, it is more and more important that we learn to see ourselves and that we educate our children to see themselves as responsible global citizens. By beginning today, we can help ensure young Canadians become informed about and engaged in global issues so that they understand and value Canada's international efforts.

The Global Classroom Initiative supports the development of school-based global education resources and activities. We look forward to supporting projects from the education sector that will help Canadian youth get to know their global neighbours, appreciate different world views, and understand the global impact of their choices and actions.

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# THE SIX STEPS TO SUSTAINABLE ACTION

This section outlines steps for putting students at the centre of planning, implementing and evaluating a sustainable action project. The Six Steps to Sustainable Action are:

**Step 1:** Choose an Issue

**Step 2:** Find out More

**Step 3:** Brainstorm Actions

**Step 4:** Plan

**Step 5:** Act

**Step 6:** Reflect



## The Six Steps to Sustainable Action and the Cycle of Learning

The Six Steps to Sustainable Action fit within the ‘taking action’ phase of the Cycle of Learning (see page 10). When students examine issues or topics of interest to the point of developing a personal connection or sense of empathy towards the issue, the next step is often a desire to act in order to restore justice.

Ensuring that students have adequate time to go through the steps of both exploring *and* responding to issues of social, environmental or economic injustice before they take action is important to the sustainability, authenticity and effectiveness of the action. For example, students who act based on a superficial or stereotypical understanding of the problem may undertake actions that do not address the problem appropriately. Sometimes when students act quickly in the face of an urgent or emotionally overwhelming problem, the motivation is fear or guilt. In these situations, students need to understand the full context of the situation, including the history. This will help ensure the students develop action plans derived from a genuine motivation to make change, resulting in plans that are successful and sustainable, and that do not fuel stereotypes or feelings of pity but rather view and treat all involved with dignity.

### Using the Six Steps

Keep the following things in mind when using these steps to action:

- The Six Steps to Sustainable Action are intended primarily for use by teachers in the classroom, but can also be used by teachers or student leaders working with extracurricular groups outside of class time, or in informal settings like youth groups and after-school clubs.
- The Six Steps to Sustainable Action are not meant to be rigid or prescriptive but rather a framework for guiding students through an action project.
- The steps were written to be facilitated with groups undertaking collective actions. In situations where the process of taking action has already been modelled or where the students are mature enough to undertake action on their own, teachers may wish to adapt the steps for individual use.
- It is important to remember that, generally speaking, the more democratic and student-led a project, the more time it will take. With appropriate teacher facilitation, this is time well spent. Students who are fully involved in making decisions about their action project are more likely to integrate the learning that takes place and develop a sense of confidence and empowerment through the process.
- The most exciting and significant action projects that children undertake are often the ones that they carry out in their own communities. When children show an interest in connecting with broader initiatives, consider elevating local action by observing days of international significance and joining in broader movements. For a full list of United Nations’ internationally recognized days and associated Web sites, use the Global Citizenship Calendar available on the UNICEF Canada Rights Respecting Schools Web site at [rightsrespectingschools.ca](http://rightsrespectingschools.ca).
- It is helpful for students to see all of the steps involved in their action project before beginning. Provide a list of the six steps on a flipchart paper, or create a visual aid such as:
  - A mountain with guideposts describing the six steps: a cut-out of a backpacker moving up each step on the mountain.



## OVERVIEW OF THE STEPS

For educators and facilitators undertaking action projects with students, the following guidelines provide a framework for working through the process. This framework reinforces the values and attitudes associated with democratic pedagogy and rights-based global education by putting students at the centre of the process.<sup>8</sup>

### Step 1: Choose an Issue

During this step, students will:

- Choose an issue and clarify goals
- Imagine changes to their community and world
- Make decisions democratically.

The first step in planning a sustainable action project is to determine the issues of concern that students feel most compelled to act upon. Students consider issues of importance to their peers and the reasons why they are compelling enough for action. During this step, students narrow down issues of importance to the group and work together to democratically choose one issue for their sustainable action project. Encourage students to consider choosing an issue that is occurring in their local community where their action can have the greatest impact. With the issue chosen, students should be encouraged to clarify their aims and make them as concrete as possible.

#### Try These Ideas:

To brainstorm potential issues of concern, students can:

- Peruse newspapers, and circle pictures or headlines that illustrate issues of concern to them.
- Watch and discuss the news at home and bring in ideas for topics.
- Close their eyes and visualize a perfect version of their school, community or world.
- Answer open-ended questions like:
  - What things do you see happening in our community or in the world that concern you?
  - What kinds of problems do young people face in our community or in the world?
  - What would you like to change about the world to make it a better place for everyone to live?

To narrow down a list of topics and choose one, have:

- Students use stickers to vote for the top three issues of concern to them. They can place them on three different issues or all next to one issue of particular concern.
- Two students act as ‘class accountants’ by counting the number of dots next to each topic. They circle the six ideas that received the most dots.
- The class use a secret ballot to vote for their top issue of concern. Two students act as ‘classroom returning officers’ to collect the ballots in a box, tally the results and present them.
- Students vote for one issue by raising hands (if time is an issue).

<sup>8</sup> The steps were adapted from guidelines in: Gibbs, S., G. Mann and N. Mathers, *Child-to-Child: A Practical Guide* (2002) and Fountain, S., *Education for Development: A Teacher's Resource for Global Learning* (1995).

## Step 2: Find out More

During this step, students will:

- Build on their existing knowledge
- Work cooperatively to conduct basic research.

Before students plan their course of action, it is important that they gather more information about the chosen issue. They should consider what they already know, what more they need to know and how they plan to get more information. Students should also be encouraged to explore the issue from different perspectives to anticipate how various stakeholders in the issue may perceive it. This will prove helpful when students take action and their efforts affect others in the community.

### Try These Ideas:

- Create a large diagram on the blackboard by drawing three large circles and writing one question in each: What do we already know? What else do we need to find out? How can we get more information? Write the issue being addressed at the top of the blackboard, and draw a picture of a student below with the circles as his or her ‘thought bubbles’.
- Remind students of the issue they chose to address and explain the importance of gathering information on this issue. Students may work in pairs to brainstorm one answer to each of the three questions. Students could be given post-it notes and a marker, and each pair could contribute their ideas to the diagram on the blackboard. Older students may choose to work alone.

## Step 3: Brainstorm Actions

During this step, students will:

- Brainstorm actions and think creatively
- Make decisions democratically.

At this point in the process, students have chosen an issue of concern and done some basic research to learn more. Now students will consider how they can take sustainable action to bring about change on this issue. Encourage students to think creatively and divergently about how they will achieve their aims. Consider every suggestion—even unrealistic ideas can inspire fresh ideas that turn out to be practical. After considering a number of action ideas, students work democratically to choose one action to pursue as a group. Identifying potential obstacles to different courses of action may help students narrow down the action that will best meet their goals.

### Try These Ideas:

To make a brainstorming session more interesting, consider using one of these creative approaches:

- Create a 'graffiti wall' on the blackboard or mural paper with a phrase written at the top for students to respond to with their own words, phrases and remarks (e.g., "We can speak out about children living in poverty by...").
- Provide pictures in a jar for students to pull out to spark an idea. These can be very simple images and not linked to any particular action idea (e.g., a tree, a newspaper, a mouth, hands, musical notes).
- Provide students with two or three post-it notes and a marker, and ask them to write down an action idea on each note. Invite students to post their notes on the nearest wall at eye level to create a 'taking action border' around the classroom. Invite students to walk around the classroom and read all of the ideas.

To vote for the best action idea, try using these democratic voting strategies:

- Thumbs up, thumbs down: Students give a 'thumbs up' to the ideas they like and a 'thumbs down' to the ideas they don't. The idea with the most 'thumbs up' is the one that moves forward.
- Marble voting: Each idea is described on a separate index card. The cards are set up around the room with a bowl or container in front of each. Students receive five marbles each. They use the marbles to vote for their favourite idea(s) by placing the marbles in the container by the idea(s) they like. They can put them all in one container or spread them around.

Students will probably have lots of ideas for fundraising and awareness-raising projects, and fewer ideas for influencing rules and policies (advocacy or lobbying). Encourage students to consider actions they can take in each of these areas (fundraising, awareness-raising *and* advocacy). Refer to the *Ideas for Taking Sustainable Action* list included in this guide (page 92) to help stimulate a brainstorming session or to add new ideas to their list. Allow students to exhaust their own ideas first, though, so they feel as much ownership as possible over the list they have generated.

### Step 4: Plan

During this step, students will:

- Work cooperatively to develop a plan
- Consider the necessary people, resources and skills.

In this step students work together to plan the action they will take. They should spend time considering the people, resources and skills they will need to be successful. If the project is complex, the class can divide into smaller groups to work on different tasks.

Students can ask:

- Which people are involved in decision-making around this issue?
- What resistance to change might they have? How can we enlist their support?
- Who will be affected by the project?
- What role will they play in the planning, executing, and evaluating process?
- What resources (money, equipment, supplies, etc.) do we need?
- Will these be borrowed or donated?

- Will we need to fundraise? If so, how?
- What new skills will this project require of us?
- Who will teach us these new skills?
- How can we track and measure our success?

### Try These Ideas:

Use the following ideas when planning your action:

- Use the *Action Planning Chart* handout (page 138) to guide the planning process. The class can work on the handout all together with students taking turns to lead the process. Or they may wish to break the chosen action into smaller tasks and have groups use the chart to plan their part of the class action.
- Have them write down their message, the action they plan to take, resources needed and a timeline. Remind students to refer to the information they gathered in step 2 when deciding on their message and best course of action.
- Each group should also list a few signs of success on their handout that they will return to in the evaluation step. For example, if students are writing a letter to their school newspaper about the rights of children affected by war, signs of success might be:
  - Getting the letter published
  - Receiving feedback from three or more readers
  - Inspiring a related action by another group at the school (e.g., the Film Club shows a film on this topic)
  - Learning something as a group.
- If the group writes, “All children are safe from war,” remind them that this might be one of the long-term goals, but that their project can still be considered successful if it achieves smaller goals along the way.
- You will want to check the *Action Planning Chart* of each group to ensure the activities are realistic and to offer suggestions. Support each group’s plan as necessary (e.g., providing supplies needed and talking to the administration for permission).
- Encourage students to think of ways to get feedback on their project from other students in the school or members of the community. For example, students doing a poster campaign could provide blank paper and pen next to the project and invite comments from viewers. A comment such as, “I love your posters! Thanks for opening my eyes to the importance of sports and play for children!” can show students that they have succeeded in building awareness around the issue of a child’s right to play.
- Consider asking each group to present their action plan to the rest of the class so everyone knows what their classmates are doing. If two groups are planning the same action, encourage them to discuss and problem solve how this will work.

### Step 5: Act

During this step, students will:

- Have fun taking action
- Record the project as it unfolds.

While students actualize their plans, your job as educators is to support the process with as little interference as possible. Help students anticipate and deal with unexpected obstacles, and encourage students to record the process with journals, art, photography and videos.

### Try These Ideas:

- Record the stages of your action using the *Recording Our Project* handout (page 137). Documenting what you do as you go will give you the information you need to reflect on your project after it is complete.
- Use photography and videos to document the stages and success of your action. This type of documentation is invaluable as you communicate your successes to your stakeholders when the action is complete.
- Consider sharing your photos on bulletin boards, in articles and newsletters and with letters of thanks to your supporters.
- Show videos of your action at an evening for members of the local community or at the school board to tell the story of your efforts to make change.
- Have students keep journals as they contribute to the action project. When it comes time to reflect on the project, their anecdotal reflections will be useful.
- Keep newspaper clippings of any media attention you get. Make a scrapbook when the project is complete.

### Step 6: Reflect

During this step, students will:

- Think critically
- Express their feelings about the process.

Asking students to reflect on what went well and what could have been done differently with their action project is an important final step in the process. Students will learn how to build on their strengths and learn from their mistakes. The process will consolidate their learning and prepare them to take more effective action in the future. Encourage students to voice the frustrations, challenges and rewards they experienced along the way.

### Points of Reflection

- What was a success?
- What did you learn?
- Did you achieve your goals?
- What did you do well?
- What needed improvement?
- What could have helped prevent these challenges from occurring?
- What would you do differently if you repeated this action?
- Did you share responsibility among your group effectively?
- What did you enjoy most about this experience?
- How did you make a difference in the short term (for next year)?
- How did you make a difference over the long term (for the world your children will live in)?

### Try These Ideas:

Using a creative approach can help keep students engaged during this final step. For example:

- Draw a picture of a person on the blackboard with arrows pointing to the head, and hands. Ask each group to reflect on their project based on what they learned (head), how they felt about the process (heart), and what they did well and could have done differently (hands). Ask each group to draw a similar picture on a piece of paper and submit their thoughts pictorially or in writing.
- Create a 'discussion cafe' in the classroom by arranging chairs in a circle and allowing each group a certain amount of time (e.g., four minutes per group) to reflect on their part of the project. If time permits, allow class members to ask one or two questions to each group.
- Draw a tree on a large sheet of mural paper and provide each student with three cutout apple shapes. Ask each student to write one positive outcome (or sign of success) from their activity on each apple and then attach their apples to the branches of the tree.
- Follow up your project by properly thanking all those that supported it. Write thank-you letters, hold a recognition evening or lunch, or publish their names in the school/board newsletter.

During this step, you will want to refer students back to the 'signs of success' section of their *Action Planning Chart* and have them write a comment beside each sign of success indicating to what extent it was achieved. Remind students that sometimes results aren't obvious or immediate, and that their project might have planted a seed for change in the future.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF MEANINGFUL CHILD PARTICIPATION

Use the following checklist when planning and supporting meaningful opportunities for children to participate and take action.

### The Project



Issue is of real relevance to children themselves

---

Capacity to make a difference—where possible, produce long-term or institutional change

---

Linked to children's direct day-to-day experience

---

Adequate time and resources made available

---

Realistic expectations of children

---

Clear goals and targets agreed with children

---

Addresses the promotion or protection of children's rights

---

### Values

Honesty from adults about the project and the process

---

Inclusive—equal opportunity for participation by all groups of interested children

---

Equal respect for children of all ages, abilities, ethnicity, social backgrounds

---

Information is shared with the children to enable them to make real choices

---

Children's views are taken seriously

---

Voluntary nature of children's involvement

---

Decision-making is shared

---

### Methodology

Clarity of purpose

---

Child-friendly meeting places, language and structures

---

Involvement of children from the earliest possible stages

---

Training provided to help children acquire necessary skills

---

Methods of involvement developed in collaboration with children

---

Adult support provided where needed

---

Strategies developed for sustainability

---

Source: Lansdown, G., "Characteristics of Effective and Genuine Participation", *Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision-Making*, UNICEF (2001). Available at: [unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf](https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf)

## IDEAS FOR TAKING SUSTAINABLE ACTION

Here are a few more ideas to contribute to the list of awareness-raising, fundraising and advocacy actions generated by your students.

### Action Ideas:

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper
- Create a video and post it on YouTube
- Sing a 'commercial' message over the P.A. system or during an assembly
- Create a bulletin board display
- Write a letter to an elected official
- Do a 'flash mob' dance or song in a public space
- Invite a guest speaker to your school
- Start a postcard campaign—create postcards with your message, get people to sign them and send them to elected officials
- Plan a neighbourhood soccer game and create t-shirts that say 'children have the right to play'
- Write and illustrate a book and read it to another class
- Create a physical or digital photo display
- Start a social action or environmental club at your school
- Create a poster campaign
- Perform a play
- Do an advocacy 'stunt' and invite the media (e.g., deliver a giant postcard to your local MP's office)
- Write a message for your local radio station
- Create a Web site
- Bring a petition or letter-writing campaign to your school
- Fundraise for an organization that addresses your issue of concern