

Education

Why is this a Global Justice Issue (GJI)?

According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), education is a powerful tool in lifting children and adults out of poverty and levelling inequality. A recent Global Education Monitoring report ([UNESCO, 2026](#)) shows that education is not only a human right in itself, but also one of the ‘strongest tools societies have for strengthening fairness, trust and accountability’. Despite the right to quality education being firmly rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international legal instruments, approximately 273 million children and young people worldwide are denied access to education due to social, economic and cultural factors ([UNESCO, 2025](#)). Global justice issues such as war, child labour, climate justice, gender equality, health and more compound the inequalities of access to education resulting in marginalised individuals and groups becoming further excluded and disadvantaged.



Connected Global Justice Issues

Climate Justice, Migration, Racism, Child Labour, Trade justice, Waste, Fast Fashion, Poverty, Health, Wellbeing, Women’s Rights, Indigenous Rights and more.



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Education as a global justice issue and as an SDG (4: [Quality Education](#)) connects and overlaps with all other SDGs.

Topic	Teaching and Learning Activity	Resource for Activity
The Purpose of Education	In this WWGS lesson learners consider the purpose of education from various sources (discussion, article and survey). They do a Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-World activity , connecting their ‘new’ thinking to prior learning, their lived experiences and the wider world. The lesson includes a walking debate using statements created by learners on the ‘purpose(s) of education.	Unit 4: Education - A. Thinking about Education PowerPoint: Thinking about Education 
	Consider different perspectives on the ‘purpose(s) of education’ by using a de Bono Thinking Hats activity. Depending on your learner’s prior knowledge and the learning objectives this activity might be best suited as a closure to a full exploration of the justice issues surrounding education.	De Bono Thinking Hats activity 

Topic

Teaching and Learning Activity

Resource for Activity

The State of Education	Access the short article from the New Internationalist, display online or print and distribute to the class. Ask the class to answer the following questions: <i>Who remains marginalised from education? What progress was reported? Give specific examples from 2 different countries. What challenges remain? Identify some reasons to be hopeful in terms of education for all. If possible, add your own suggestions or ideas.</i>	New Internationalist (2017) article The State of Education: Leaving Many Behind. 
	Use a Concentric Circles activity to discuss the question, ‘What should universal equitable education look like?’ Encourage learners not to limit their thinking to current systems and approaches but to think ‘outside the box’ for solutions and new ideas. Suggested prompts for discussion: <i>What aspects are key for education to be equitable for all? Universal equitable education is built on what values? How does it connect with other aspects of a person’s life (e.g. gender, religion, class, ethnicity, i.e. the intersectional focus)? How can diversity and inclusivity be ensured?</i> For some ideas on ‘fixing’ education systems, see the suggested articles.	Concentric Circles discussion activity 
		New Internationalist article Bad Education: Why our Systems need Fixing. 
		World Economic Forum presents 5 steps to ensure quality education for all (2015). 

Topic	Teaching and Learning Activity	Resource for Activity
Problems and Solutions	Groups brainstorm the prompt: ‘the problems facing education today’. Use a snowball activity to share responses.	Snowball activity 
		Article: Ten of the biggest problems facing education (Concern Worldwide, 2024). 
	Carry out a Jigsaw activity based on the Concern article (5 groups -2 ‘problems’ each). Learners create bullet points or short essays on their learning.	Teacher Toolkit: Jigsaw 
	For a more active approach, try Each-One-Teach-One (each student is given one ‘problem’, they read it then move around the room explaining it or ‘teaching’ it to as many others as possible).	Each-One-Teach-One 
	Carry out a Problems and Solutions Tree activity to help learners focus on the solutions to the problems facing education and to bring hope to the discussion.	Problems and Solutions Tree activity 
Education as a Tool for Building Just Societies	Analyse all or some of the following from the UNESCO blog: images, headings, links to the justice system, 6 recommendations for governments. Learners identify (at least 3 points on) how education helps to build fair and just societies.	Article and cartoons: Education can help address today’s global justice challenges (UNESCO, 2026). 
	Use the Digging Deeper tool to critically explore the question: <i>In what ways can education address today’s global challenges?</i>	Digging Deeper Tool 

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Quality Education (SDG 4)	This activity focuses on education statistics and empowering learners to become ' fact-ivists ' (i.e use information to create meaningful change).	The World's Largest Lesson: Dive into Data on SDG 4 
	Use a Jigsaw strategy to analyse the Transforming Education Report (it has 3 parts which could be analysed across 3 distinct groups of learners).	Transforming Education Report : Views and ideas from the world's students on how to transform education. 
	Taking inspiration from the Transforming Education Report, learners create a survey on education for other groups or classes. Learners conduct the survey, collect the data, analyse and write a qualitative report.	Use SurveyMonkey or similar free tools 
Indigenous Education	This lesson challenges mainstream notions of education and includes a case study on Māori education in New Zealand. <i>*There are aspects of this lesson used in the first lesson on the Purpose(s) of Education above.</i>	Learning to Read the World Through Other Eyes : Chapter 2 Notions of Education (p.15-22) by Vanessa Andreotti and Lynn Mario T. M. de Souza (2008). 
	Based on a video and New Internationalist article on Indigenous education in Colombia, groups of learners create an Indigenous Charter on Education . The Charter should state the values, culture, music, clothes, food, etc. of their chosen community and how these relate to education and schooling.	Video: Wisdom of the Elders . Indigenous communities in Colombia refuse to occupy an empty space in history and believe their very cultural survival is at stake' (4.30mins). 
	Allocate groups an Indigenous community to research and represent, for example, Irish Travellers, Maasai People, Quechua People. Groups present their Charters to the class or other class groups.	Article: This is Cultural Genocide , in the New Internationalist (2017) by Hazel Healy.  Wikipedia list of Indigenous Peoples : there are estimated to be over 5000 distinct Indigenous peoples spread across every inhabited climate zone and inhabited continent. 

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Resource for Activity

Schooling the World	Analyse the images and discuss the messages - The political cartoons and photographs in the PowerPoint are taken from the documentary 'Schooling the World' by Carol Black. These draw attention to the use of education as a tool for colonial power and imperial agendas. - Follow the teacher notes in the PDF Unit 4: Education. Access the Analysing Activities resource for more ideas for this lesson.	PowerPoint: Schooling the World WWGS Unit 4 Education, Lesson D Schooling the World, pgs 9-13 
		WWGS Activity Analysis Images 
	This activity is based on 3 excerpts from the full documentary. Video start and stop times are given in the PDF and PP slides along with questions and tasks to explore the following themes: - Traditional v Modern forms of education - Education as a way of being - Mahatma Gandhi	Documentary Schooling the World (2010) by Carol Black. 
	Analyse the quotes presented in the PowerPoint slides. - Pose discussion questions: <i>What global justice issues do these quotes relate to? What questions do the quotes raise?</i> - Learners respond by journaling, in dialogue with a partner, by drawing, writing, posing a question or writing their own quote on education.	PowerPoint: Schooling the World 
		PowerPoint: Key Thinkers in Education 

Topic	Teaching and Learning Activity	Resource for Activity
Universal Education	Discuss, explore and critically reflect on the question ‘Is <i>universal education</i> a realistic and worthwhile aim?’ (think of education as a right- UDHR, as a goal -SDG 4, or as a global agenda- Education for All). Refer to the WWGS Guiding Principles for GCE to support a critical analysis of this question.	WWGS Guiding Principles for GCE 
	Use the Digging Deeper tool to allow learners to document their learning by engaging with a range of critical questions.	WWGS Digging Deeper Tool 
	A Socratic Questioning approach, educator or learner led (in groups) can be used to guide critical thinking, discussion and reflection on this question.	Socratic Questioning 



TAKE ACTION

- [Global Campaign for Education](#) is a global movement of activists, teachers, students, parents, and communities in over 100 countries working to defend everyone’s right to free, quality public education. Explore their ongoing campaigns and actions.
- [Send my friend to school](#): this is a UK based campaign aimed at prioritising and protecting funding for global education. Explore the website to get involved.
- [Flip the Script](#): an action lesson from the World’s Largest Lesson inviting students to take action for SDG4 by designing their own lesson and teaching it to others. It can coincide with World Children’s Day, UNICEF annual day of action for children, where children and young people raise their voices to call on adults to create a better future #ForEveryChild.
- Consult the [WWGS Teacher Handbook](#) p.16-18 for ideas on student action.
- For workshop facilitators on linked global justice issues, see the [WWGS Directory of GCE facilitators](#).