



INTERNATIONAL INEQUALITIES



BIG IDEAS & LEARNING OUTCOMES



REFLECTION TOOLS





curated by



in collaboration with Leeds DEC



The problem of inequality

1. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/global-inequality.pdf>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/may/08/life-expectancy-gap-rich-poor-us-regions-more-than-20-years>

Inequality is the state of not being equal, for example in terms of income or wealth. People with higher income will usually have better access to services and opportunities. They also have a lower chance of their basic human rights being violated. Whether an individual is born into a wealthy family or wealthy society is a matter of chance.

Income inequality can be measured between countries, identifying **high-income countries** and **low-income countries**. It can also be measured within countries. Currently **inequality**, in terms of income, is decreasing between nations. However, inequality within nations is on the increase – there is a widening gap between rich and poor¹.

Inequality can have a negative effect on both a person's well-being and their life expectancy. The difference in Life Expectancy between rich and poor regions in the US is more than 20 years.² The UN's **Human Development Index (HDI)**, is a tool to indicate the well-being/**quality of life** (including life-expectancy) of the citizens in a country.

Extreme inequality. Globally there are a tiny number of super-rich people. "82% of the wealth created last year went to the richest one percent of the global population, while the 3.7 billion people who make up the poorest half of humanity got nothing". (Oxfam 2018)



Students can explain what global inequality is. They can identify some current trends between and within countries.

Students can explain the function of the HDI.

EQUALITY

3. <http://economics.com/are-we-born-with-a-sense-of-fairness/>

Ideas of fairness & equality seem to be innate in humans. Research shows that even very young children have an awareness of and response to inequality.³ While inequality has been a feature of human societies throughout history, there have also been movements to redress this inspired by the **ideal of equality**. Across the world and through history *people have tried to equalise power and wealth* - from the Yellow Turban Rebellion (China 184 AD) and Mazkadamism (Persia 488 AD) to the French, Russian, Chinese, and Cuban Revolutions (C18,19 &20). People have also campaigned against other forms of inequality, such as for Race Equality in South Africa, and for Gender Equality.

Today, the main aim of our global economic system (Capitalism) is to create wealth, rather than equality or well-being. In theory, the money made by successful individuals will 'trickle down' to the poor. However, because many millions of people are living in poverty, organisations like the World Bank are looking to

- > 4. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/10/01/governments-focus-shared-prosperity-inequality-world-bank-group-president>
- > 5. <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/wolfson.institute/events/Wilkinson372010.pdf>

address the “need to find an economic growth model that’s inclusive, that lifts up the poorest citizens rather than maintains those at the top.”⁴ **Quality of life** indicators (such as the UN’s HDI) have been developed and these may help achieve this. They cover things like child well-being, drug use, mental health, crime, levels of trust and involvement in community life. Research shows these indicators improve when a society is more equal.⁵



Students know that ideas of fairness and equality seem to be innate in humans.

They can name some examples of movements that aimed to create less unequal societies.

They can present arguments for and against inequality in societies.

They can explain what a Quality of Life indicator measures.

ROOTS OF INTERNATIONAL INEQUALITIES

The economic inequality between high and low income countries today has its roots in **historic processes** (e.g. wars, colonisation and industrialisation), and also our **current** trade and financial systems. International inequality grew dramatically during and after the *Industrial Revolution*, when the industrial countries’ economies grew rapidly. The **global economic system** then locked Lower Income Countries into terms of trade and finance which were less favourable to them than to economically richer, more powerful countries. Today *industrialised* Higher Income Countries still buy cheap raw materials from Lower Income Countries to make expensive products (like mobile phones), which are then sold back to the Lower Income Countries. Lower Income Countries become *indebted* to financial institutions (e.g. World Bank), which are controlled by Higher Income Countries. It’s difficult for the Lower Income Countries to get out of debt because of the interest they have to pay. This money could be spent on developing the country.



Students can give examples of how past and current international relationships impact on global inequality.

INEQUALITY AND EDUCATION

- > 6. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/oct/20/two-thirds-of-worlds-illiterate-adults-are-women-report-finds>
- > 7. <https://ourworldindata.org/literacy>

Education is crucial to reducing the poverty gap because, among other things, it increases skills and levels of pay. However 264 million children don’t go to school (Unesco 2017) and 781 million adults are illiterate. Two thirds of these are women.⁶ Literacy reduces gender inequality and inequality overall.⁷ So UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to deliver quality education to all children, and eliminate Gender disparity. Training sufficient numbers of teachers is a key aspect of this.



Students know that many children are unable to go to school and can explain the role of education in addressing social and economic inequality.

INEQUALITY AND HEALTHCARE

- > 8. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_infant_and_under-five_mortality_rates
- > 9. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/12/13/world-bank-who-half-world-lacks-access-to-essential-health-services-100-million-still-pushed-into-extreme-poverty-because-of-health-expenses>

The **lack of access to healthcare** is an important social inequality. More than 3 million people die each year from diseases, which can be prevented by relatively cheap vaccinations. Lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene makes this worse. Mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa is 84 deaths per 1000 births, compared with Iceland which is 2.1 deaths⁸ per 1000 births. However things can improve. Under-five mortality rates fell rapidly between 2000- 2015, declining by 44% globally. Deaths from Malaria were halved in this period, but 1.34 million people die from Hepatitis which is increasing.

UN Sustainable Development Goal 3 aims to ensure healthy lives and well-being for all people. The WHO declared universal healthcare a basic human right in 1948. In 2017, half the world lacked access to essential health services.⁹

Research has found that citizens who have access to affordable healthcare form a more productive workforce, strengthening the local economy.



Students can explain the repercussions of inequalities on health, and the benefits of good healthcare.

They know that some countries can afford much better healthcare systems than others.

INEQUALITY AND POVERTY

- > 10. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/richer-array-international-poverty-lines>
- > 11. <https://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty>

Absolute poverty is where a household cannot afford basic necessities such as food, shelter and clothing due to insufficient income. Around 10% of the world's population live below the World Bank's **International poverty line**, \$1.90 per day¹⁰. However, things are improving. There are three times fewer people living in extreme poverty than in 1970¹¹.

Relative poverty is where household income is a certain percentage below average (median) incomes.

Millions of people in both rich and poorer countries are effected by relative poverty, which has a range of different types of impacts on people. For example, it can restrict tangible things, like access to healthcare, but also things that are less easy to quantify, such as how individuals and families feel about themselves.



Students can explain the difference between absolute and relative poverty.

INEQUALITY & ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- > 12. <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/jul/04/is-inequality-bad-for-the-environment>
- > 13. <https://unfccc.int/news/combof-climate-change-and-inequality-increasingly-drives-risk>

Research shows that more unequal societies are associated with higher carbon emissions.¹² It may be that because inequality increases 'status competition', it also increases **consumerism**. Manufacturing things to meet 'consumer demand' impacts on the environment. At the same time, environmental problems can exacerbate inequality, widening the gap between rich and poor. Poor countries (and people) are more vulnerable to the negative impacts of Climate Change and have fewer resources to adapt than richer ones, who produced much more of the CO₂¹³. Climate Change is causing more droughts and floods which increase poverty. In 2017, 124 million people in 51 countries faced hunger as a result of climate disasters and conflicts.¹⁴

- > 14. <https://www.wfp.org/content/global-report-food-crisis-2018>



Students can give some examples of the connections between global inequality and environmental issues.

GOVERNMENTAL ACTION ON INEQUALITY

- > 15. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-10-reduced-inequalities/targets/>

Following concern about rising inequality, governments worldwide came together under the **United Nations**, and 193 countries established the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Goal 10 is “To reduce **inequalities** within and between countries” by 2030.¹⁵ This includes: increasing the income of poor people faster than the national average, reducing the cost for migrants to send money home, and allowing poor countries export goods ‘duty-free’. It will also give poorer countries more say in the global institutions who set the rules, like the World Bank and the IMF. National governments are also supposed to give aid and invest more in poor countries. SDG10 works in tandem with targets on Health and Education to reduce inequality.

NB the SDGs are also known as the ‘Global Goals’.



Students can outline the significance of the SDGs, specifically Goal 10.

CITIZEN ACTION ON INEQUALITY

- > 16. <https://www.sendmyfriend.org/about/>

Many groups and organisations are taking action on income inequality.

The Jubilee Debt Campaign worked to cancel the debt of the poorest countries. It resulted in the cancellation of some of the debt of these **Highly Indebted Poor Countries**.

Fairtrade is a global movement, with a large presence in the EU, and is a more just and fair trade system. It pays higher prices for commodities produced in developing countries, such as coffee and cocoa. A **Fairtrade Premium** is paid into community funds for farmers and workers to use as they see fit, whether this is education, healthcare or infrastructure in the community.

The **Global Campaign for Education**¹⁶ (with members in 80 countries) is based on the idea that education brings more equality of opportunity. It works to ensure that all children have access to quality primary education.



Students can describe some actions to reduce global inequality and their impact.

Students understand that actions they can take as individuals are important as part of making a globally difference.

They are able to identify a small specific action that they can take (individually or collectively).



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REFLECTION TOOL INTERNATIONAL INEQUALITIES



NAME

SURNAME

W H A T
INTERNATIONAL
INEQUALITIES
W H Y

WHAT

➔ WHAT IS INEQUALITY?

Inequality is

➤ Which of these are often the consequences of inequality for the poor? (Tick ones you agree with)

- worse access to health care
- higher life expectancy
- worse diet
- better Human Rights

➤ Is inequality, in terms of income, more between countries or within countries?

- between within either neither

➤ 1% of people in the world own X % of the wealth created in 2017. (Tick as appropriate)

- 12.9% 35% 82%

➤ The Human Development Index shows:

- People's well being The difference between humans and chimps The level of one country's economic development

➔ WHAT COULD GOVERNMENTS WORLDWIDE DO TO FIGHT INEQUALITY?

➤ United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #10 aims to

- reduce inequalities within countries reduce inequalities between countries by 2030

➤ What actions can be taken to achieve this goal?

.....
.....



WHY / HOW

➔ WHY ARE THERE INTERNATIONAL INEQUALITIES?

➤ Inequality between Higher Income Countries and Lower Income Countries is perpetuated by: (Tick all correct causes)

- debt reduction
- colonisation
- an unequal world trading system
- young people using mobile phones
- lazy people

➤ How does the production process in higher income countries result in increasing international inequalities?

.....

➔ HOW IS INEQUALITY LINKED TO ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES?

Inequality increases decreases consumerism, because

.....
.....

Consumerism has good bad impact on the environment, because

.....
.....

Poor countries and people are more less vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change than the rich ones, because.....

.....
.....





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REFLECTION TOOL INTERNATIONAL INEQUALITIES



NAME

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W H O
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H O W

WHAT / WHO

→ WHO / WHAT IS FIGHTING INEQUALITY?

I feel inequality is

> Our current global economic system aims to lift up the poorest citizens:

agree disagree

Give reasons for your answer.....

> Name 2 movements that aimed to create more equality:

→ WHAT COULD CITIZENS WORLDWIDE DO TO FIGHT INEQUALITY?

> Name a campaign aiming to reduce inequality in the world:

Fairtrade is a trade system that pays higher lower prices for commodities produced in developing countries

I can help reduce inequality by.....

HOW

→ HOW IS INEQUALITY LINKED TO EDUCATION?

> Can you explain the connections between inequality and education?

> How many million children in the world don't attend school?

31.4 264 314

The United Nation Sustainable Development Goal #4 aims to deliver _____ education to _____ children.

→ HOW IS INEQUALITY LINKED TO HEALTHCARE?

> Is the lack of access to vaccinations and medical treatment a social inequality?

Yes, because.....
 No, because.....

> Access to good healthcare should be a human right.

agree disagree

> In which year did "half the world's 7.3 billion people" lack access to essential health services?

1901
 1945
 2017