

Education unlocks big change

Activity pack for ages 11–16



About this resource

What are your hopes and aspirations for the future? What are the big challenges facing our world and what changes would you like to see happen? How can we make this ideal future a reality?

Education is one of the keys to unlocking a safe, secure and sustainable world for everyone. Tackling the climate emergency, narrowing the gender gap, combatting poverty, ending hunger – education is a critical tool in addressing many of the global challenges we face.

These cross-curricular activities for ages 11-16 help learners to appreciate the power of education in unlocking big change.

Activity 1 – Imagining the future

Learners will share their hopes and aspirations for the future and the change they would like to see happen in the world. They will consider the challenges facing our planet and start to think about what action is needed to create their ideal future.

Activity 2 – Education can unlock big change

This activity introduces the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the set of global goals and targets aimed at making our world a better place. Learners will investigate how education can help these global goals to be achieved and identify links between different SDGs.

Activity 3 – Making the case for education

In this final activity, learners will think about how education is funded and create persuasive messages to make the case for increased government spending on education.



Notes for educators

- These flexible activities are intended to support your teaching rather than direct it. The activities could be used as standalone sessions for a drop down (off-timetable) day or to enrich the teaching of different subjects and topics. An overview of potential curriculum links is provided below.
- The approximate timings given for each activity are a guide only. We recommend completing all the activities but educators may prefer to use a selection depending on their learners' needs and the time available. Some additional activity ideas are provided at the end of the resource.
- Learning outcomes are provided at the start of each activity along with a list of any resources required. No starters and plenaries are included as it is assumed that educators will want to plan these individually.
- All activity and resource sheets are included in this pack. An accompanying slideshow is provided as a separate download.
- Where possible, the activities and resources are differentiated to help you meet the needs of different learners in your class. This guidance might also be useful in adapting some of the activities for younger and older learners. It may also be helpful to refer to the Education unlocks big change activities for ages 7-11.
- We've also put together a list of useful links and resources to help support any additional teaching about the Sustainable Development Goals and the importance of education.

Curriculum links

England: Citizenship; English; Geography

Northern Ireland: Environment and Society/Geography; Language and Literacy; Learning for Life and Work

Scotland: Literacy and English; Social Studies

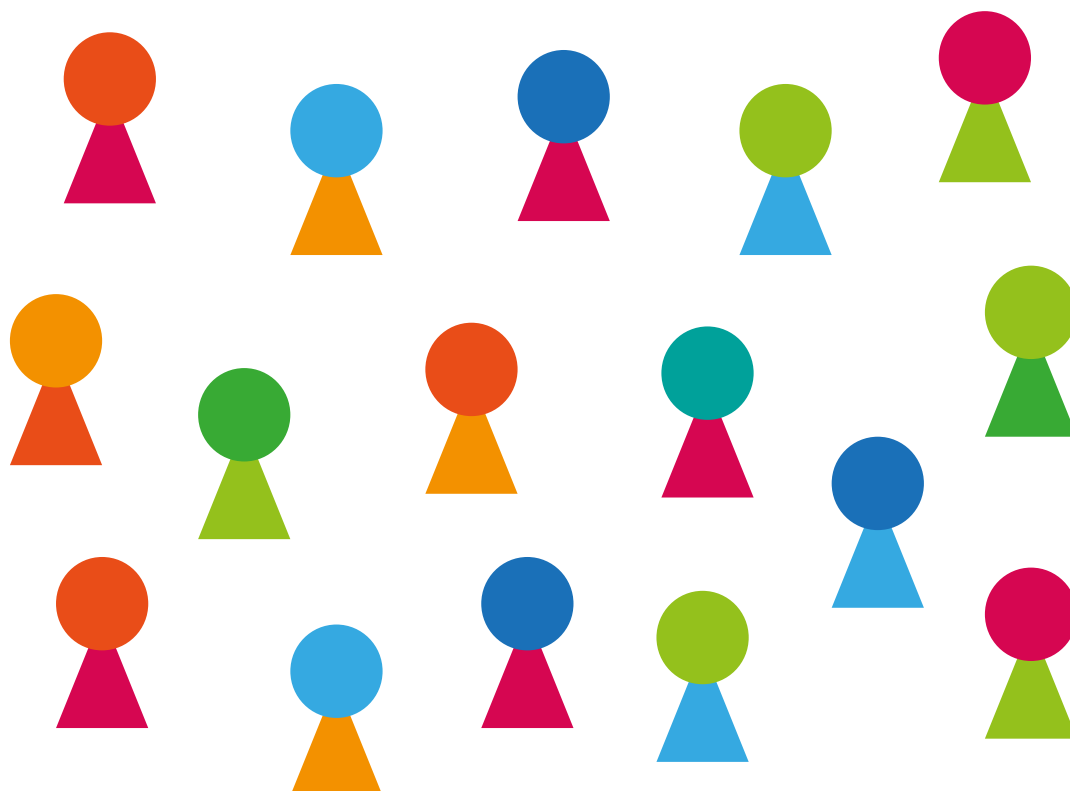
Wales: Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication

Background information

Our world is facing a global education crisis. 94% of the world's student population was affected by school and university closures after the outbreak of COVID-19. But even more the pandemic started, almost 260 million children and young people around the world were locked out of school. At least 39% of children aged 36-59 months do not attend an early childhood education programme. And it is the most marginalised children, especially the poorest children, disadvantaged girls, refugees and children with disabilities who are most likely to be out of school and missing out on learning.

About Theirworld

Theirworld's campaigns and projects deliver resources to ensure that every child has a safe place to learn. For example, we have been working in Lebanon to expand access to education, tackling the impact of the conflict in Syria which has left hundreds of thousands of refugee children out of school. In Turkey (which is home to 3.6 million Syrian refugees), our projects are supporting Syrian refugees to overcome the economic, cultural and language barriers that prevent them from getting an education.



Activity 1 – Imagining the future

40 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- describe what changes they would like to see in the world by 2030
- identify some of the challenges facing our world and start to think about what action is needed to overcome these
- discuss their ideas and work collaboratively with others

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 3-6)
- Paper, coloured pencils and pens
- Scissors, newspapers, magazines and glue (optional)

What to do:

- 1** Show slide 3 and ask learners to imagine that they were able to travel forwards in time to 2030. Click forward to slide 4 and ask learners what they would like the world to be like in 2030. What changes would they like to see happen? How would they be feeling in their ideal world of the future?
- 2** Organise learners into groups of three or four. Give each group a large piece of paper and ask learners to draw a big circle on it to represent the world.
- 3** Ask learners to fill this outline of the world with words and pictures to show what their ideal future would be like. Alternatively, they could cut out pictures from newspapers or magazines to create a collage to illustrate their thinking.
- 4** Now ask learners to write words or draw pictures to describe what they think the big issues in our world are. They should record these ideas in the space around their world. A template is provided on slide 5.
- 5** Encourage learners to talk about their ideas in their group before discussing their thoughts as a class. Possible discussion questions are provided below and on slide 6.
 - Do you think others share your hopes for the future? This might be other young people in your school, other people in your community or other people in the world.
 - Which of these changes do you think are most likely to happen? Which do you think are least likely to happen? Why do you think this?
 - What action do you think is needed to create this ideal future?
 - Who needs to be involved in taking action?

Activity 2 – Education can unlock big change

45min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- understand what the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are and be able to provide examples of these goals
- list ways in which education can help the SDGs to be achieved
- discuss their ideas and work collaboratively with others

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 8-12)
- Large pieces of paper, pens and pencils, scissors and glue
- Printed copies of the [SDG icons](#) and the [Education can...](#) activity sheet

What to do:

- 1** Show slide 8 and ask learners whether they have heard of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 2** Explain that in 2015, countries all over the world came together to commit to the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals are a set of goals and targets aimed at making the world a better place by 2030. The goals apply to everyone, young or old, in all the 193 countries that signed up to them.
- 3** Depending on learners' knowledge about the goals you may wish to use this [animation from the World's Largest Lesson](#) as an introduction to the SDGs. We've also put together a list of [useful links and resources](#) to help support any additional teaching about the SDGs that might be needed.
- 4** Say that many people around the globe have been working towards these goals. A lot of progress has been made but there is still much more to be done and the Covid-19 pandemic is pushing back some of the progress that has been made.
- 5** Show slide 9 and explain that an important fact about the 17 SDGs is that they are all interconnected – none of the goals can be achieved on its own without the support of the other goals.
- 6** Print off copies of the 17 [SDG icons](#). Cut out and stick each set of icons in the middle of a large piece of paper.
- 7** Organise learners into groups of three or four and give each group one of these sets of [SDG icons](#). Explain that these are the 17 global goals.
- 8** Talk through what the different goals mean. Ask learners to find and circle SDG4 (quality education). Explain that this goal is about improving the quality of education for everyone – children, young people and adults.
- 9** Show slide 10 and discuss learners' thoughts and ideas about what education means. Ask them to think about how, where and when they learn and who might help them to learn? Make the point that education isn't just about going to school, we learn in lots of different ways throughout our lives.

- 10** Explain that learners are going to investigate how education can help these Global Goals for a better world to be achieved. Show slide 11 and briefly discuss any initial ideas that learners have about how education can help to achieve the SDGs. You could prompt them by asking them to consider specific goals. For example, how do you think education could help the world to take climate action (SDG10)? How could education support SDG1 (no poverty)?

- 11** Now give each group a copy of the Education can unlock big change activity sheet and ask learners to cut out the statements. Explain that these statements describe some of the possible consequences of education. Learners need to stick the statements on the paper and draw lines to the goal or goals they think this consequence will help to achieve. Say that there are no right or wrong answers; the main aim of this activity is to just get learners thinking about the importance of education.

- 12** An example is provided on slide 12. Distributing food at school could help to achieve SDG2 (zero hunger) and SDG3 (good health and well-being). Learners may be able to think of other goals this consequence of education might help to achieve.

- 13** Encourage learners to then add their own ideas of how education could help the SDGs to be achieved. They should write or draw their ideas on the paper around the SDG icons, drawing lines to the relevant goal or goals as before.

- 14** Allow some time at the end of the activity for learners to feedback their ideas as a class. You might like to display the annotated icons around the classroom or learning space so that learners can first go around and explore the ideas of others.

- 15** Key points to bring out in the discussion:
 - All the SDGs are interconnected – they all depend on and support each other
 - Education is important to achieving all the SDGs
 - Achieving SDG4 (quality education) also depends on all the other goals. For example, children will not be able to learn effectively if they are hungry. Children forced to flee home because of conflict or climate-related disasters may not be able to go to school.

- 16** This activity could be extended by asking learners to consider how education might help to achieve the ideal future they imagined in the first activity. Learners could write their ideas on coloured sticky notes and attach these to the annotated worlds they created in this first activity.

Differentiation:

Make it easier:

Give each group a selection of the Education can... statements to explore rather than all of them. A differentiated set of this statements is also provided in the Education unlocks big change activities for ages 7-11.

Make it more difficult:

Challenge learners to come up with their own ideas of how education could help other SDGs to be achieved before giving them the examples in the Education can... activity sheet.

Activity 3 – Making the case for education

60 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- creatively communicate their ideas about the importance of education in unlocking change

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 14-17)
- Other resources will be dependent on the creative approach learners decide to take for sharing their persuasive messages

What to do:

- 1** Show slide 14 and ask learners where they think the money for education and schools comes from. For things like building and maintaining schools, paying teachers and buying equipment such as books and laptops. Explain that a country's government will produce a budget. This is a financial plan which sets out how public money (raised through taxes and other sources of income) will be spent. In the UK this process usually happens once a year.
- 2** Show slide 15 and explain that different amounts of money will be allocated to areas such as education, health, defence, transport, housing and the environment. Different countries will choose to spend the money in different ways. Some will decide to spend more on education and some will choose to spend less.
- 3** Ask learners what percentage of the UK budget they think is spent on education. Share that in the 2021/22 financial year the UK government is planning to spend about 12% (£111.5 billion) of public money on education. A budget breakdown is provided on slide 16.
- 4** Discuss learners' responses to this budget allocation. Do they agree with it? What would they spend more or less money on?
- 5** Explain that businesses may also invest money in education. This might be by donating money to help the government of a country to build more schools or train more teachers. Or companies might provide financial support to a school or group of schools. Many academies in the UK are sponsored by businesses.
- 6** Organise learners into groups of three or four. Show slide 17 and ask learners to imagine they are a team of advisers to the government of a fictional country. They need to work together in their group to make a case for education – to persuade a government to spend more of the country's money on education.
- 7** Tell learners that they need to come up with strong reasons to support their case. They could use the statements in the Education can unlock big change activity sheets to help them. Learners could also carry out their own research to identify other reasons (see the useful links and resources).

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Explain that learners will also need to decide how to present their ideas. Each group could allocate a spokesperson (or spokespeople) to present their case to the rest of the class. Alternatively, groups could create an infographic, video or presentation.

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Ideally, learners would be given the opportunity to present their ideas to others in the class or wider school community. Alternatively, learners could share their ideas with their local parliamentary representative to make the case for increased government spending on education.



Additional activity ideas



Learners could:



Think about the hopes and aspiration they have for their own life. What sort of person would they like to be? How would they like to be described by others? What job would they like to do? How might education help create this ideal future?



Investigate ways in which SDG4 (quality education) depends on the other goals, for example SDG5 (gender equality) or SDG1 (no poverty) to be achieved.



Decide as a class which of the SDGs they think are the most important and think of ways they could work together to take action for this goal.



Find out more about one or more of the goals. Investigate why this goal is important, what action has been taken to achieve this SDG (in the UK or elsewhere in the world) and what progress has been made. See the [useful links and resources](#).



Research what percentage of the UK budget is spent on other public services such as health, defence and transport and compare this with the spending on education. Alternatively, learners could [research education spending in other countries and compare this with data for the UK](#).



Talk to someone in their family or community about the difference that education has made to them, others and the world during their lifetime.

Share your learning!

Theirworld would love to hear how any schools have used these activities in the classroom. Please also let us know any feedback so that we can try to improve our resources and support for schools in the future. Email schools@theirworld.org or find @theirworld on [X](#) and [Facebook](#).

Useful links and resources

- Browse [Theirworld's other teaching resources](#) and investigate the importance of education in unlocking big change.
- [The Key](#) is a comprehensive information toolkit created by Theirworld with all the talking points, pitch decks, facts and infographics you need to make the case for education.
- UNESCO has a [helpful resource bank](#) with hundreds of ideas for classroom activities and resources to support education about and for the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The [World's Largest Lesson](#) has a huge selection of free resources to engage and inspire young people aged 8-14 to learn about and take action for the Sustainable Development Goals.
- [Reboot Education](#) is an online platform which lists hundreds of resources to support teachers in developing a global dimension in the classroom and across the school community.
- [Send My Friend to School](#) brings together young people, politicians, teachers, civil society and the media in join campaigning to demand quality education for all children across the globe. Visit their website to find out more and take part in this year's campaign.
- Packed with practical advice, useful information, cross-curricular activity ideas and inspiring case studies; [this guide from the charity Oxfam](#), aims to deepen teachers' understanding of education about and for the SDGs.

The links and resources [provided above] include and will take you to materials and sites that have been produced by third parties. We do not maintain or control these links, materials or sites and have no responsibility for the content or your use of the same. Please be aware that there may be separate terms and conditions applicable to your use of these materials and sites.

Sustainable Development Goals icons

Resource sheet



Develop teamwork and communication skills	Build houses or design cars that are better for the environment	Provide safe places for young people to talk about their thoughts and feelings
Explore different perspectives and viewpoints about current and historical events	Reduce crime rates - in the UK, <u>young people who drop out of secondary school are three times more likely to commit crimes than those who stay in school</u>	Distribute food - many children in the UK and around the world have their main meal at school
Develop entrepreneurial and innovation skills	Make it less likely that women will get married or have children at a very young age	Provide places for children and young people to play, make friends and have fun
Train doctors, nurses and other health workers	Motivate people to take action for the environment, for example by organising a beach clean	Raise awareness of how to keep clean and stay healthy, for example how to wash your hands properly with soap
Develop the skills young people need for work in the future	Encourage people to use less single-use plastic	Teach people about the importance of nutrition and healthy eating
Help people to develop empathy – to understand and have concern for the feelings of others	Teach farmers to adapt to the changing climate by growing different crops	Support young people to have more of a say in decisions that affect their future
Support refugee families to settle into life in a new community or country	Create structure and routine in the lives of children and young people, giving them a sense of belonging	Increase work opportunities for women

<p>Increase how much people might be able to earn in the future - <u>one additional year of school can increase a girl's earnings by up to a fifth</u></p>	<p>Connect people of different cultures and backgrounds within communities and the wider world</p>	<p>Encourage people to take part in sport and be physically active</p>
<p>Raise awareness of the impact of plastic on our environment</p>	<p>Increase the number of women in government and positions of power</p>	<p>Develop vaccines, medicines and treatments to fight diseases</p>
<p>Design and build water supply systems</p>	<p>Develop renewable energy technologies such as the use of solar power</p>	<p>Set up school wildlife areas</p>
<p>Make it less likely that children will have to work to help support their families</p>	<p>Support people to stand up and speak for others when things are unfair</p>	<p>Help people understand the causes and impacts of climate change</p>
<p>Encourage people to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste</p>	<p>Help people learn how to save money and plan for the future</p>	<p>Reduce a country's risk of armed conflict - <u>each additional year of schooling decreases the chance of a young person taking part in violent conflict by 20%</u></p>
<p>Decrease child mortality – <u>a child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live past the age of five</u></p>	<p>Reduce the number of people living in poverty - <u>if all adults had a secondary education, 420 million people could be lifted out of poverty</u></p>	<p>Help communities prepare for and respond to climate-related disasters such as flooding</p>
<p>Help people learn how to manage disagreement</p>	<p>Increase the decision-making power of women in their households and communities</p>	<p>Challenge prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination</p>



Theirworld

Theirworld is a global children's charity committed to ending the global education crisis and unleashing the potential of the next generation.

Registered Charity 1092312

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