

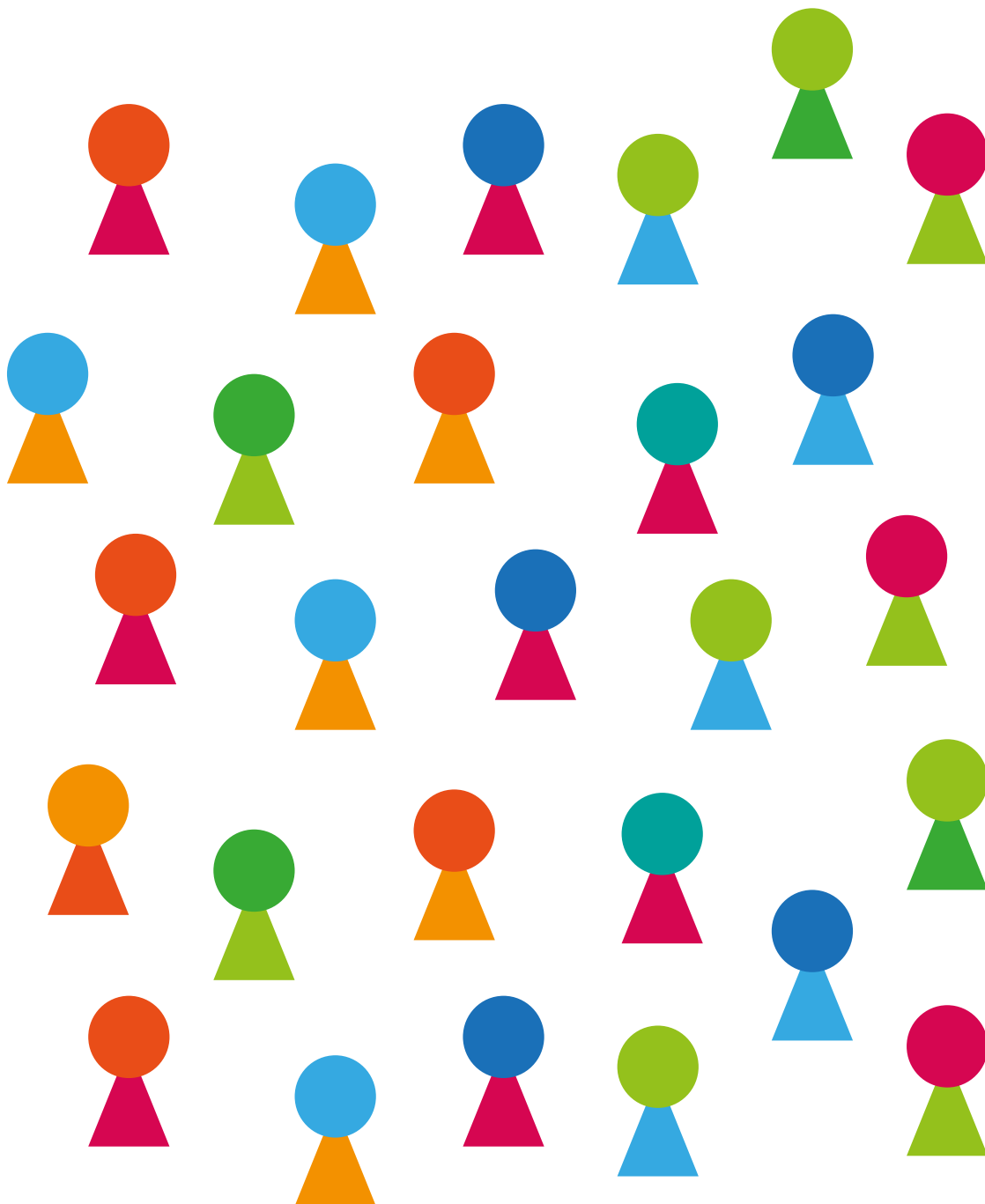
Education unlocks opportunities for girls

Activity pack for ages 7–11



About this resource

Every child has the right to an education, whatever their gender. Educating girls has huge benefits for individuals, communities and countries. However, millions of girls and young women in countries around the world are missing out on school. Although a lot of progress has been made, more needs to be done to help break down the barriers to education, particularly for girls. These cross-curricular activities for ages 7-11 encourage learners to think critically about some of the reasons why so many children and young people (and girls in particular) are still denied the chance to go to school. Learners will consider the impacts of gender stereotyping on people's lives and think about what action they could take to help make life fairer for everyone, whatever their gender.



Activity 1 – Agree or disagree?

This is a short starter activity that encourages learners to recognise some of the things they have in common with others, as well as celebrate the differences that makes each one of us special and unique.

Activity 2 – Thinking about gender

By considering whether certain careers are associated with particular genders, learners will reflect on how and why stereotypes about gender exist, and begin to explore the impacts of these on people's lives. Learners will find out how Theirworld is working in partnership with others to help break down some of these stereotypes and support girls to develop skills for the future.

Activity 3 – Challenging gender stereotypes

In this final activity, learners will think critically about how gender stereotypes might affect the rights that every child is entitled to, including the right to an education. They will learn how two Theirworld Global Youth Ambassadors are speaking up for education, and girls' education especially. Learners will then discuss possible actions they could take at school to help tackle gender stereotyping.

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Notes for educators

- These flexible activities are intended to support your teaching rather than direct it. Additional teaching may be required to develop learners' knowledge and skills, as well as their understanding of some concepts.
- 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 over a series of lessons, if possible, but educators may prefer to use a selection depending on their learners' needs and the time available. Some additional activity ideas are included at the end of the resource.
- Learning outcomes are provided at the start of each activity. 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.
- We have tried to make these activities appropriate and relevant for the 7-11 age range but educators may find that some of the activities are more suitable for ages 9+. Where possible, the activities 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 opportunities for girls resources for ages 11-16.
- This resource explores some of the barriers to education, including poverty and conflict. Learners will also investigate how gender stereotyping can affect people's lives and opportunities, and the rights of girls and women in particular. Some of the activities may need to be adapted if there are children and young people in the class with direct experience of these issues. If learners feel comfortable and the discussion complies with your school's safeguarding policy, it may be helpful to sensitively draw on these personal experiences to further develop the awareness and understanding of others in the group. Depending on learners' age and the context, teachers may also wish to acknowledge and discuss inequality issues connected to LGBTQIA+.
- We have also put together a list of useful links and resources to help support any additional teaching about this issue.
- We hope these materials will be of interest and use but ultimately defer to you to check and decide whether these materials are suitable. We do not provide any warranty or guarantee, or accept liability, as to the accuracy, performance and suitability of the materials or information provided for any particular purpose.

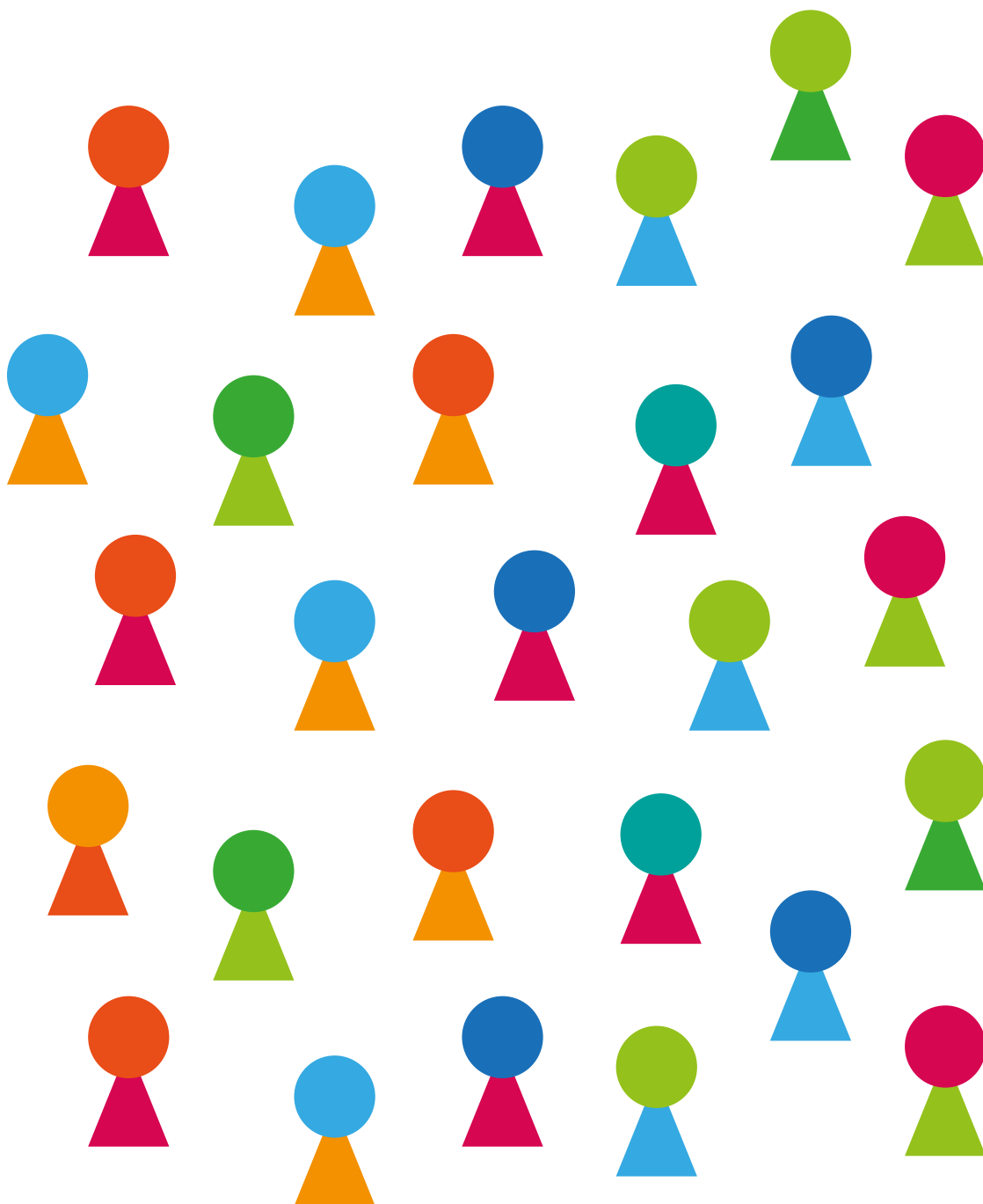
Curriculum links

England: Citizenship; English; Personal, Social and Health Education;

Northern Ireland: Language and Literacy; Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Scotland: Health and Well-being; Languages; Social Studies

Wales: Health and Well-being; Humanities; Languages; Literacy and Communication



Background information

Girls have the same right to education as boys. Educated girls can make informed choices – and from a far better range of options. Educating girls saves lives and builds stronger families, communities and economies.

However, girls and young women in many parts of the world miss out on school every day. According to UNICEF estimates, around 129 million girls are out of school. Although there has been an overall improvement in gender equality in education in recent decades, some parts of the world are falling behind in the progress being made. More than two thirds of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education but there are still many countries where girls are more likely to be out of school than boys. Some countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria, have seen attacks on girls' education and threats to close down schools.

The barriers to girls' education are many. Girls may be marginalised and are out of school simply because they are girls their education is not the cultural norm. There may be legal, religious and traditional practices that discriminate against girls having the chance to receive an education. Their chances of a quality education are even smaller if they come from a family living with poverty or displaced by conflict, live in a rural area or have a disability. Factors such as early marriage or pregnancy, work pressures, domestic duties and care responsibilities can all take girls out of school.

About Theirworld

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

A quality, inclusive and equitable education gives children and young people the skills and opportunities they need to succeed in life. There are 250 million children around the world who are not in school. Of those, 72 million have had their education interrupted by conflicts and emergencies. The pandemic affected the education of more than 90% of the world's children and further worsened the global education crisis.

Through our campaigning and advocacy work we are working to reshape the global mindset around the importance of education and development for young people. A total of 100,000 children and young people have been directly supported by our projects over the past 10 years. From double-shift schools for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, to computer skills for girls in Kenya; from supporting psychosocial support for displaced children in emergencies, to breakthrough scientific insights on the effects of preterm birth, Theirworld is proud to be agile, innovative and bold in our approach.

Activity 1 – Agree or disagree?

25 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- identify some of the ways in which they are similar and different
- appreciate that every person has a unique set of characteristics that makes them special
- develop collaboration and communication skills

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 2-7)
- A large open space such as the playground or a school hall. Alternatively, the classroom could be used by moving chairs and tables to one side.
- 'Agree' and 'disagree' signs (optional)

What to do:

- 1** Ask learners to imagine a line from one side of the space to another. Teachers may wish to label one side of the space 'agree' and the other side 'disagree' (see PPT slide 2).
- 2** Tell learners that you are going to call out a series of statements. For each statement, learners need to position themselves along this line to show the extent to which they agree or disagree. The closer someone is to an end of the line, the more they agree or disagree with that particular statement. An alternative approach is to ask children to each place a marker somewhere on the line to show their position.
- 3** Before starting, agree some ground rules as a class such as respecting and listening to the ideas of others. Explain that there are not necessarily any right or wrong answers. Everyone will have their own opinion that falls somewhere on the line.
- 4** Teachers may wish to call out a couple of practice statements to familiarise learners with using an agreement line, such as 'I love football' or 'I hate chocolate'.
- 5** Read out some or all the statements below. For each statement, allow some thinking time before asking learners to move into their position on the line.
Agreement line statement
 - School is important.
 - I love school.
 - Everyone has the right to an education.
 - Every child is able to go to school.
 - Girls are more likely to be out of school than boys.
 - More children go to school now than 15 years ago.
 - Young people who complete secondary school are more likely to live a healthy life.
 - Everyone should be treated the same, whatever gender they are.
 - Everyone is treated the same, whatever gender they are.
 - School is important.

- I love school.
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 - Everyone is treated the same, whatever gender they are.
-

6 Invite learners in different places on the line to share a few words about why they have chosen that position. Encourage learners to respond to the viewpoints of others, for example, through asking questions or by building on the thoughts and ideas of others. Teachers may wish to provide opportunity for learners to move their position on the line after listening to the reasoning of others.

7 The background information on PPT slides 3-7 could be used to support any follow-up discussion.

8 Finish by explaining that in the following activities, learners will be finding out more about the barriers to education that some children and young people face, and starting to think about potential solutions.

Differentiation

Make it easier or more difficult:

Some of the agreement line statements could be omitted depending on the time available, and the context and age of the learners they are working with. Teachers may also wish to replace some of the statements to support or challenge learners.

Activity 2 – Thinking about gender

30 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- identify gender stereotypes and question some of these views and perceptions
- start to consider how gender stereotyping might affect the opportunities someone has in life
- investigate ways in which people are taking action to tackle gender inequality

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 8-16)
- Copies of the Thinking about gender resource sheet
- Large sheets of paper, pairs of scissors

What to do:

- 1** Show PPT slide 8 and ask learners to draw a person doing one of these jobs (teacher, firefighter, construction worker and nurse). Explain that learners should just do a quick sketch, they could use stick people if they want. Alternatively, learners could be asked to come up with any words they would use to describe one of these careers (these could be written or shared verbally).
- 2** Ask learners to share and talk about their ideas with a partner. Why have they drawn/described the person in this way? Did they draw/describe someone of a particular gender and if so why?
- 3** Briefly discuss their ideas as a class. Point out that what we think about how something or someone is might be based on what we have experienced or seen in their own lives. For example, we might know a firefighter who is a certain gender. Our ideas might also be influenced by stereotypes.
- 4** Use PPT slides 9-10 to discuss what stereotypes are. Invite learners to share any examples of stereotypes they are aware of. If learners, feel comfortable, they may like to share any personal experiences they have had of being stereotyped.
- 5** Explain that learners are going to be thinking a bit more about gender stereotypes. These are commonly held views about how a person should be or act based on the gender they are perceived to be. Ask learners to share any examples of gender stereotypes they have heard of, some examples are provided on PPT slide 11.
- 6** Organise learners into groups and give each group a large sheet of paper. Ask learners to divide their sheet of paper into three columns, with the headings: 'Female', 'Male' and 'Any gender' (see PPT slide 12). Note that there are many different gender identities and teachers may wish to acknowledge and/or include other gender identities in this sorting activity.

- 7 Distribute copies of the *Thinking about gender* resource sheet. Ask learners to cut out the cards and then decide which heading to place each one under based on whether the career is perceived to be 'Female', 'Male' or 'Any gender'. Learners could be asked to sort these careers based on their personal views as a group or according to what they think the perceptions of society in general are.

- 8 Share and discuss learners' groupings as a class. Possible discussion points are provided on PPT slide 13.

- 9 Ask learners to think about what career they would like to have when they are older. Discuss how they would feel if they were told that they couldn't do that job because of their gender. Do learners think these gender stereotypes are fair? Ask learners to talk with a partner before discussing their ideas as a class.

- 10 Show PPT slide 16 and explain that stereotypes can lead to gender inequality – where people are treated differently and unfairly because of their gender or sex.

- 11 Share the statistics on PPT slide 15 and discuss learners' responses to these. Possible discussion questions include: How do these inequalities make you feel? What do you think are the causes of these inequalities?

- 12 Explain that people all over the world are taking action to challenge gender stereotypes and make life fairer for everyone, whatever their gender. Share the examples of the work Theirworld is doing in partnership with others to break down some of these stereotypes and support girls and women to develop digital skills for the future (see PPT slide 16).

- 13 Finish by reminding learners that gender stereotypes aren't just connected with the career that someone might have, they can affect many other aspects of people's lives. Explain that in the next activity, learners will be thinking more about the impacts of gender stereotypes on people's lives, as well as considering possible actions they could take at school to challenge gender stereotyping.

Differentiation

Make it easier or more difficult:

Challenge learners by asking them to think of their own examples of careers to sort.

Activity 3 – Challenging gender stereotypes

45 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- discuss and describe how gender stereotyping might affect children's rights
- recognise some ways in which gender stereotypes might be promoted
- consider possible actions that they and others could take at school to challenge gender stereotyping

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 3, 11, 17-20)
- Copies of the Challenging gender stereotypes resource sheet

What to do:

- 1** Recap learning from the previous activity by asking learners to talk with a partner about any examples of gender stereotypes they are aware of. For example, these might be things learners have heard people say, watched on television, viewed online or read in a book. If learners feel comfortable to do, they could also share with their partner any experiences they (or people they know) have had of being told they can't do something or treated differently because of their gender. Teachers may wish to first revisit the examples of gender stereotypes on PPT slide 11.
- 2** Briefly discuss learners' ideas as a class. Talk about the possible impacts of these gender stereotypes. How might they affect people's lives and opportunities? How do they make you feel? Do you think they are fair?
- 3** Remind learners that in 1989 almost all the countries in the world came together to agree the United Nations Convention on Children's Rights (see PPT slide 3). This is a list of rights that every child is entitled to. Ask learners to suggest what rights that they think all children should have.
- 4** Share the examples of rights on PPT slide 17. Ask learners to talk with a partner about how these rights might be affected by gender stereotypes. Discuss their ideas as a class.
- 5** Explain that stereotypes can affect the rights of people of all genders but girls and women are particularly affected. For example, in some communities, gender stereotypes might prevent or make it more difficult for girls to attend school. Gender stereotypes might discourage girls from studying certain subjects, taking part in activities or pursuing particular careers. In some communities, gender stereotypes might affect the opportunity girls have to make choices about their lives or participate in decision-making activities in their communities.

- 6 Discuss where gender stereotypes come from and how they are promoted. Some possible sources are provided on PPT slide 18. Invite learners to share any particular examples they have experienced or seen, for example, adverts targeted at boys or girls, books they have read or content they have seen online.

- 7 Share the story of Shazia and Kainat on PPT slide 19.

- 8 Discuss learners' responses. How did gender stereotyping affect the lives of Shazia and Kainat? What action are they taking?

- 9 Use the quote from Shazia to remind learners of the power each one of us has to create change (see PPT slide 20). Point out that every action, however small, can make a difference. It's a bit like the ripples that are created when a stone is dropped into a pool of water.

- 10 Explain that learners are going to be thinking about what action they could take at school to help challenge gender stereotypes. For example, in the language people use or their expectations about what someone of a particular gender can or can't do.

- 11 Organise learners into groups of three to four. Ask learners to work in their group to come up with a list of possible actions that could be taken. This might be actions people could take as individuals, things they could do in partnership with others, or whole-school changes. Some ideas are provided in the Challenging gender stereotypes at school resource sheet. See the useful links and resources section for some additional sources of information and inspiration.

- 12 Allow time for each group to share their ideas with the rest of the class. If possible, support learners to choose one or more of these actions (either as a group or a class) to develop further.

Differentiation

Make it easier:

Work as a class rather than in groups to think of actions that could be taken to challenge gender stereotyping at school.

Additional activity ideas



Learners could:



Create a board game that helps players learn about some of the barriers stopping children (or girls) from going to school and how these could be overcome, for example, an adapted version of Snakes and Ladders.



Find out more about the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and think critically about how these rights might be affected by gender stereotyping.



Investigate [SDG 4 \(Quality education\)](#) or [SDG 5 \(Gender equality\)](#) and the progress that has been made so far towards achieving these goals.



Explore other types of stereotypes such as those related to race, age, religion or physical appearance. Learners could consider what the impacts of these views and perceptions might be, and try to identify ways in which these stereotypes could be challenged.



Role play as different members of a community who have different views on girls' education to prompt discussion about gender stereotypes.



Consider how other aspects of someone's identity, as well as their gender, can intersect to affect a person's opportunities and experiences in life.



Investigate the life and achievements of people in their community or globally, past or present, who have taken action to speak up for the right to education or challenge gender stereotyping.



Plan an activity for [International Women's Day](#) or [International Day of the Girl Child](#).

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

These links and resources are a selection of available material 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.

- Check out [Theirworld's schools hub](#) to access other resources to help children and young people learn and think about the importance of education in unlocking big change.
- Use [Theirworld's The Key resource](#) to find talking points, facts and infographics to help make the case for inclusive education.
- In this [stop motion video from UNICEF](#), children explain who is not in school and why. The focus is on the Middle East and North Africa but these education barriers are relevant in other parts of the world as well.
- This [data from the International Labour Organisation](#) shows the breakdown of employment by sex and occupation across 121 countries and highlights the gender divide that still exists in many occupations.
- [Redraw the Balance](#) is a short video that could be used to support further discussion in Activity 3 about the impacts of gender stereotyping on career choices and opportunities.
- [Gender Action](#) is an award programme which promotes and supports nurseries, schools and colleges to take a whole-school approach to challenging stereotypes. Their website includes a [resource library](#) to help inspire and inform schools to take action.
- The [Gender Equality Charter Mark](#) is a framework that can be adopted by schools to help them consider and implement changes across the school and wider community in relation to gender equality issues. This [collection of resources](#) may be of use in supporting learners to identify possible actions they could take to challenge gender stereotyping at school.
- The [Gender Respect Project](#) aimed to help children and young people to understand, question and challenge gender inequality and violence in both a local

and a global context. Some of the teaching ideas and links on the project website may be of interest.

- This [useful collection of resources from the Institute of Physics](#) includes an animation, tips, classroom activities and career guidance and action guides to support gender-inclusive teaching.
- This [resource from EqualiTeach](#) provides advice, lesson plans and activities to support those working with young people ages 3-18 to promote gender equality across different education settings.



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.

Dancer	Hairdresser
Builder	Footballer
Scientist	Gymnast
Nurse	Web developer
Chef	Sales assistant
Teacher	Engineer
Firefighter	Surgeon
Police superintendent	Care assistant
Waste collector	Architect
Plumber	Dentist
Headteacher	Flight attendant
Marketing manager	Journalist
Scientist	Receptionist
Fashion designer	Lawyer
Chief executive	Accountant
Stay-at-home parent	Computer programmer
Bus driver	Librarian

Challenging gender stereotypes at school

Resource sheet

Work together to choose and carry out one or more of the actions below. Or come up with your own ideas of action to take!

- Look at the books in your school library. Do the stories have male or female characters? How are the characters described and what activities are they doing? Do you think the characters of different genders are treated in the same way or differently? Can you find any books that challenge gender stereotypes or have characters who like what they like and don't worry about what others think?
- Investigate whether certain areas of the playground are used more by boys or girls. What do you think might be the reasons for this? Think about what changes could be made to encourage everyone to make use of all of these spaces.
- Have a go at rewriting some traditional stories or fairy tales and switching the genders of the main characters.
- Think about the people you have learned about at school who are well-known and celebrated for something they did. Perhaps an explorer who climbed a mountain or a scientist who discovered a cure for a disease. Maybe they are famous inventors or sportspeople. What gender are they? Are there more people from a particular gender? What do you think the reasons for this might be? Try to find out about the achievements of other people in the past or present so that people of different genders are celebrated equally.
- Look at the posters and displays around your school, as well as your school's website and newsletters. Can you spot any gender stereotypes in the words and pictures used? Try to think of alternatives that could be used instead.
- Think about the words people use on the playground. Do you ever hear any examples of gender stereotypes? Work with others to come up with possible things you could say to challenge these stereotypes.
- Give an assembly, teach a younger class or design posters to share your learning about gender stereotypes with others in the school.
- Carry out a class or school survey to find out things such as what jobs people would like in the future, whether they have to help out with housework, or what sports they like to do. Compare the responses from different genders and think about possible reasons for any differences.
- Try to use gender neutral language. This means talking about people in ways that don't assume what gender they are. An example would be to say 'firefighter' instead of 'fireman'.



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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