

Access to Education

Topic Overview

In 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared education to be a fundamental human right. Today, however, 100 million of the world's children between the ages of six and twelve are not enrolled in school. The proportion of out-of-school children is even greater in the least developed countries of the world. At least forty percent of the world's out-of-school and an additional thirty-four percent live in South and West Asia. In all developing countries, many of the challenges associated with access to education are associated with high levels of poverty. For many families, school fees are an obstacle to sending children to school. Even in the many regions in which education is free, other costs associated with attending school, such as school supplies or transportation, are barriers. In addition, children living in extreme poverty may have to work to provide necessary income for their families.

Some groups of children are also disproportionately at risk for missing the chance to attend school. Three fifths of out-of school children are girls for several reasons, including gender discrimination and household duties. Orphans and other vulnerable children often take on financial and child-care responsibilities for their siblings or themselves. Children forced from their homes due to conflict and natural disasters face several circumstances that make continuing schooling difficult, including the destruction of schools in their home communities, the difficulty of adjusting to schooling in a new region or country, or the sudden or increased financial problems they may face. Disabled children or children living with diseases such as HIV/AIDS may not attend school if they do not receive adequate health care, if they face discrimination and stigma, or if their schools lack the resources to support them. Children who are part of marginalized ethnic minorities may also face discrimination, or may not receive instruction in a language they speak or understand.

Quality of education and access to educational resources are closely related for children in developing countries. When schools do not have enough teachers, children end up in overcrowded classrooms, making it much more difficult for them to learn. Many teachers do not have adequate training - and it is not unusual for schools to be staffed with teachers who have only a primary school education. Schools often lack adequate resources such as textbooks, or other necessary facilities such as private, clean latrines. In these cases, students or families may choose not to attend school because they are not receiving an education they believe will improve their circumstances.

Increasing access to, and quality of, education for all children can have significant benefits for all societies. Higher levels of education are correlated with higher incomes for individuals and families from most countries. Rates of overall economic growth are higher in countries that have a more educated population. In some countries, higher

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levels of schooling lead to an improvement in health indicators, such as a decrease in HIV/AIDS. People who have attended school for longer are also more likely to participate in civic activities, thus contributing to the development of stable democracies in their countries. Educating women, in particular, has been shown to have disproportionate benefits for societies. Mothers who have received more schooling are more likely to take advantage of health services for themselves and their children and are more likely to have smaller, more sustainable families. Their children are more likely to survive past age five. Children raised by mothers who have received formal education are also more likely to continue in their own schooling.

Pedagogy

These lessons are designed as inquiry-based activities, in which students are encouraged to think about how various challenges might interfere with children's education in developing countries, and the consequences of those challenges. Students should be encouraged to ask questions about how or why the hypothetical events in this game have the impact they do. They should also be encouraged to make connections between the experiences of the children in the community of "Tamil Nadu" and their own lives.

These lessons also employ cooperative learning and student-centered learning techniques, in which students are responsible for working collaboratively with a group of peers, and independent of immediate direction from the teacher, as they consider the impact of each hypothetical "daily life" event on their Global Friend.

Key Messages

- There are barriers that prevent children around the world from having access to education
- All children deserve the right to an education because it provides them with the knowledge necessary to develop their skills, reach their full potential, and contribute to society as a whole.
- We can all take action as global citizens to help give children around the world the opportunity to go to school.
- We now know more about global poverty and other problems. Some of our beliefs about these problems may have changed, and our knowledge gives us a new resource to respond to other people who express opinions based on misinformation.
- We can make important choices about how we discuss our ideas with other people, and those choices may have a significant impact on how receptive others are to what we have to say.

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Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the challenges students from Tamil Nadu, India face in gaining access to education.
- Explain how these challenges are connected with broader problems associated with global poverty and other global problems.
- Compare their own experiences to those of children growing up in Tamil Nadu.
- Develop and explain suggestions for how the challenges to education for children in developing countries could be addressed.
- Provide arguments for why young Americans should learn about and be concerned about global poverty and other global problems.
- Provide reasons why young Americans can and should contribute to solving global problems.
- State their argument persuasively.

Time Frame

Two 45-minute class periods

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Suggested Lesson Outline: Day 1

Timeline

One 45 minute class period.

Materials

- One copy each of **Handouts 1A-8A: Global Friends**
- Ten "daily life" cards
- Instructor's guide to "Daily Life" events
- Eight copies of the School Record and Global Friends Messages worksheet (Handout 2, one copy per group)
- Eight 8 1/2' by 11" sheets of paper or oak tag, each reading "In School" on one side and "Out of School" on the other in large print. Preferably, "In School" should be written in green, and "Out of School" should be written in red.

Preparation

1. Give students the following assignment before the lesson (ask students to write in their journal if they keep one in the class):

"What is one of your dreams for what you would like your life to be like when you are older? What are some of the steps you will need to take in order to achieve this dream? What will you need from your friends and your family to achieve this dream?"

2. This activity calls for students to work in eight small groups. Arrange the desks in eight small circles, so that each group can work together. If you wish, determine which students will be in each group in advance to save time during the lesson.

Activities

1. **Discussion: Dreams for the Future**
 - a. Divide the class into eight groups, and direct them to sit at the desks you've arranged. Identify which regions of the room will represent Districts A, B, or C.
 - b. Tell your students, *"In a few minutes you are going to meet your new Global Friends all of whom live in the state of Tamil Nadu in India, but first, let's talk about your dreams for the future."*

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- c. ***“What are some of your dreams for your future?”*** Elicit a few answers from students. Reference journal activity if you gave this assignment.
- d. ***“Will your education be an important part of achieving these dreams? If so, how?”*** Elicit examples: learn important skills, gain credentials, meet people who can mentor me, etc.
- e. ***How far will you need to continue in school to achieve these dreams?***

2. Meeting the Students of Tamil Nadu

- a. Distribute "Global Friends" handouts. Ask one member of the group to serve as the reader. Each reader should read aloud the key information from the handout to the rest of his or her group.
- b. Tell the students, ***“Now you are going to be a supportive friend as your new Global Friend works towards his or her goals, while facing some of the changes that come with daily life.”***
- c. ***Based on what you already know about global issues, what kinds of obstacles might make attending school difficult for children in developing countries such as India?*** Make a list on the blackboard, or on a piece of newsprint. You will refer to this list later in the lesson.
- d. ***Your group has a chance to support your friends by giving them a scholarship if they end up out of school, but you can only give a scholarship once. You can also support your friend by giving messages of encouragement.***

3. Begin the game

- a. ***To begin, how many of your Global Friends have a teacher? If he or she has a teacher, you will begin our game in school. If you do not have a teacher, you will begin out of school. Hold up your “In School/Out of School” card to show us how your friend will begin the game.”***
- b. Choose one student at random to stand and draw a "Daily Life" card from the sack. He or she should remain standing and read it aloud to the class.
- c. Each group should then determine whether their friends will stay in school, and hold up the appropriate side their "In School/Out of School" card to show to the rest of the class. Ask the class, ***“How many of your friends in Tamil Nadu were kept out of school by this change?”***

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- d. On their "School Year Cards," students in each group should note whether their friend stays in school or has to leave school. They should then write a brief e-mail message (a sentence or two, as per the instructions) from the point of view of their global friend describing how he/she feels about this change.
- e. Repeat this activity until at least one, but no more than a quarter of the "global friends" has achieved their dream jobs. Be sure to leave at least fifteen minutes for discussion.

4. Summary / Review

Ask students:

- a. *At the beginning of the game we asked you to predict what obstacles keep children in developing countries out of school. Which of your predictions turned out to be accurate?*
- b. *What were some obstacles that you found surprising, or that you didn't predict?*
- c. *In this game you could help your friend get back to school by giving him or her scholarship. Which obstacles did students encounter in this game that could actually be helped by giving a scholarship? What other kinds of support could help to resolve the problems the students encountered?*
- d. *Overall, how are the education opportunities for students in Tamil Nadu different from education opportunities in your lives? How did you feel about learning about this difference?*

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Handout 2: School Year Cards and Global Friends messages

Example:

<p>Dear American friends:</p> <p>This year I will not be in school, because my father lost his job and now we can't afford school supplies.</p> <p>I feel disappointed and frustrated, because I really want to stay in school and learn, so that I can have my dream job one day.</p> <p>Best wishes, [Name of your global friend]</p>	
<p>Dear [Name of your global friend]</p> <p>We are sorry to hear your bad news and we hope that you are able to go back to school soon. Don't give up hope!</p> <p>Best wishes, Your friends in New York</p>	
	<p><i>If your friend will be in school write A+ in the box to the left.</i></p>
	<p><i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i></p>

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Round 1

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

Round 2

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back ot school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

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Round 3

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

Round 4

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

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Round 5

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

Round 6

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

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Round 7

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

Round 8

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

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Round 9

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

Round 10

Dear American friends:	
Dear _____:	
Best wishes, Your friends in New York	
	<i>If your friend will be in school write "A+" in the box to the left.</i>
	<i>If you will give your friend a scholarship to go back to school, write a dollar sign (\$) in the box to the left. Remember, you can only do this once during the game!</i>

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Suggested Lesson Outline: Day 2

Timeline

- One 45 minute class period.

Materials

- Your class list of reasons why "Global Poverty is Important to Me" and "Global Poverty is Not My Problem"
- Handout 1: Powerful Message Delivery (enough copies for each student)
- Handout 2: Create a Poverty-Fighting Message (enough copies for each student)

Preparation

Post the list of the reasons why "Global Poverty is Important to Me" and "Global Poverty is Not My Problem" in the front of the room.

Arrange desks in a circle around the room, to allow students to have an open discussion, and to provide enough space for students to stand in a circle

Activities

1. Knowledge Growth activity

- “How many of you feel like you know more about global poverty and other global problems than many other Americans?”* (Depending on your knowledge of the students' context you could contrast to other groups of people: other high school students, other people in their community.)
- Say, *“Let's take an example of a global problem we've studied: access to education. Imagine you heard someone say, ‘It's impossible to get all children in the world to school, it doesn't really matter, and anyway, there's nothing I could do to make that problem better.’ Look quietly at the list reasons ‘Global Poverty is Not My Problem’ and ‘Global Poverty is important to me’ from our first lesson. Don't answer out loud - just think. What would be some reasons why someone might say that?”*
- Say, *“Now, make a few notes in your notebook. What would you say to someone who said that?”* Give students a few moments to write their answers.

2. Role Play

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- a. Ask for two volunteers to do a role play, in which "Student A" believes that access to education can be made available to all children and is important, and "Student B" needs to be convinced. Student B can begin with the statement given above: *"It's impossible to get all children in the world to school, it doesn't really matter, and anyway, there's nothing I could do to make that problem better."* If you feel it would be helpful, remind both students that they can be entertaining but they shouldn't mock either position in the debate through their acting.
- b. Appoint one student to be the "Director". He or she should stop the role-play if he feels that the Student A would benefit from suggestions from the rest of the student "audience." Once Student A and Student B are ready, the director will cue them to begin by saying, "Action!" He or she will cue them to stop by saying "Freeze!" When the actors have frozen, other students in the class can provide suggestions.
- c. Continue the role play for approximately three to five minutes.
- d. Repeat the activity with new students in the role of Student A or Student B.



Variation

If the students in the role play seem to be getting stuck in their dialogue, ask the director to say "**Freeze!**" Invite another student to substitute in the role of Student A, and to try to continue the dialogue from a different approach.

3. De-brief Role Play

- a. After you have repeated the role play three or four times, ask all the students to be seated. Ask, *"What techniques do you think were most effective in convincing Student B that access to education is an important problem and one that American students can help to solve?"* Elicit answers.
- b. *"Which was most important: The words Student A used, the tone of voice Student A used, or the way Student A looked (facial expression, gestures)?"*

4. Powerful Message Delivery

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- a. Distribute **Handout 3: Powerful Message Delivery**
 - b. Say, *“As you can see this information is from a study conducted by UCLA. Are these consistent with what you would have expected?”*
 - c. *“Let’s think about the role plays we just saw: Which techniques listed under ‘Vocal,’ ‘Visual,’ or ‘Verbal’ did one of the students use?”* Elicit answers and discuss.
- 5. Summary / Review: Deliver your message**
- a. All students write a brief, persuasive statement about the importance of access to education worldwide. (Students could also work in pairs on this activity)
 - b. Ask for student volunteers to stand and deliver their message, using the vocal and visual techniques from “Powerful Message Delivery.”