

Helping pupils move towards a social justice mentality at Sutherland Primary Academy, Staffordshire

Laura Whiting, Geography and GLP Co-ordinator, shares below how she led a lesson with her Year 6 pupils around the concepts of interdependence, development and globalisation, while encouraging a social justice approach to 'helping' other countries.

Challenging pupils' stereotypes

Children started the lesson by making a prediction about the resources around the world – are they evenly distributed? Do countries have the same resources? This aimed to develop:

- pupils' understanding of the distribution of resources around the world
- a social justice mentality. (What is fair? Should we try to make other countries similar to western countries such as the UK?)

This prediction formed the focus for the lesson. The children were then given differentiated data about a focus country (Ethiopia, UK or India) from the Oxfam teaching resource [Everyone Counts](#). They worked in pairs to pull apart the data and understand what it shows. They were surprised for example that in Ethiopia people had access to mobile phones (20 out of 100) as this somewhat contradicted their preconception of the country. Also, they started brilliant conversations about data that they initially didn't understand, e.g. in the UK there are 135 mobile phones on average for 100 people. This formed discussion about development and cultural differences.

Then they worked in pairs to create an issue tree – picking one piece of data and discussing what impact that could have on the individuals, the community, the world, etc.

In small groups (a pair focusing on India, a pair focusing on the UK and a pair focusing on Ethiopia), they taught each other about their findings. This was when the most significant amount of learning took place as the children were debating their opinions and explaining why they thought the way they did. Some children were really passionate when they heard about how low some of the resources were in certain countries. Some children's initial reaction was to suggest donating or raising money for them, or that we should send water – approaches that would help a small amount of people in the short term.

This discussion was later brought up again to form a Philosophy for Children (P4C) debate about what the best way to 'help' is, with the aim to move the children from a charity mentality to a social justice mentality. More able children made connections easily between resources. For example, when exploring the data for India, they noted that although the pupil enrolment to primary education was high, access to the Internet was limited. The children then discussed the effectiveness of education without the Internet: would they have the same opportunities as children who have access to the Internet? Would they be able to work as adults within a culture that uses computers? They were beginning to think about the long-term impacts of the data.

We shared our ideas as a class and discussed the concept of inequality in a P4C discussion. The children then wrote a concluding paragraph in their books answering the question: As the UK is a country with a lot of resources, do we have a responsibility to help those countries that don't have a lot of resources?

Some examples of Year 6 pupils' responses include:

'I think we should because if we support countries that are LEDCs (less economically developed countries) then we might help them to become an MEDC (more economically developed country). I think this support should go to people in poverty in particular so that they have equal opportunities. For example, only 13 out of 100 people in India have access to the Internet, which might impact on their education and their future lives.'

'We should support other countries so that they have the same opportunities as the people in England.'

'Money doesn't necessarily help the country. MEDCs should help LEDCs together to improve their lives.'

Monday 30th January

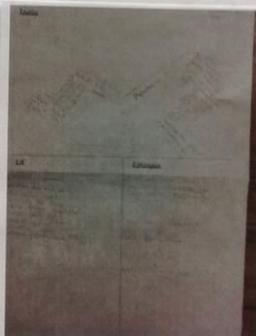
Can I investigate the distribution of resources around the world?

I predict that England will have more electricity than India. I think this because England have lots of big population are a LEDC (less economically developed country).

Ashleigh

Indicator	India
Life expectancy at birth (years)	66.21
Population (millions)	1252.14
Access to improved water source (% of total population)	92.60
Access to electricity (% of total population)	75.30
Mobile phone subscriptions (per 100 people)	17.55
Internet users (per 100 people)	15.10
Rural Population (% of total population)	67.98
Urban Population (% of total population)	32.02
Primary school enrolment (% of relevant age group)	93.34
Living in extreme poverty (% of total population)	32.68

Pair work



Group work

Conclusion

My prediction was correct because in the UK there is a high proportion of people that use the internet. However, India only have 75.30% of their population that use the internet. Therefore I am correct. This will have the following impacts: England will be able to communicate with other countries. India might not have enough internet to give them education or communication.

Challenge:

What will the distribution of resources around the world be like in 50 years time?

I think India's resources will decrease to about less than 50%. I think this because their internet per cent is 75.30% and I think that it will decrease by 25%.

P4C discussion: As a class we discussed the theme of fairness in relation to distribution of resources in the world. We focused on answering the following question:

As the UK is a country with a lot of resources, do we have a responsibility to help countries which have few resources?

I think we should because if we support a LEDC they could become a MEDC. However, India (which is a LEDC) doesn't use the money they are getting for poverty. I think that poverty should have the same equality so they have better choices. For example, only 13 out of 100 people in India get to use the internet. Therefore, we should

A Year 6 pupil's notes © Sutherland Primary Academy

Strengthening the social justice perspective

We discussed their role as global citizens, and what ‘help’ actually means. This is something that will need to be revisited as, although the children could reiterate the importance of having a social justice mentality rather than a charity mentality, I think they would possibly revert to the ‘raise money’ mentality. This is the first year that we have used global learning clearly within our school, so it may take a while for these Year 6 pupils to switch their perspectives fully.

Furthermore, the discussions also focused on whether a ‘western’ perspective is the best ‘model’ for all countries to try to adopt. They were very much of the opinion at first that other countries should be like ours, because they felt that we had an effective society. I decided to revisit this idea in another lesson to help pupils understand how interdependent the world is in terms of how much we rely on other countries. We looked at Fairtrade and how the products that we use connect us to other places in the world. This was something that surprised the children greatly. We revisited the P4C discussion that we had had previously, and the children began to muse about the fact that maybe trying to change other countries to be like the UK might not be the best thing to do. This led them to discuss what makes a society, e.g. cultural heritage, economy, education, human well-being, etc. These are concepts that the children are beginning to understand, but will need regular space to interact with and discuss in order to develop a fully rounded understanding.

The impact of global learning

The **positive impact of global learning** on pupils was demonstrated clearly when comparing their results in the GLP [Pupil Assessment Tool](#) – an evaluation of pupils’ global learning knowledge that they took before and again after the lesson. The overall average score progressed by 14% in the second assessment, and pupils reaching a ‘secure’ level (scoring 77 and above out of 100) rose from 4% to 19% between the two sessions.

Children **developed their knowledge of developing countries** – most of them hadn’t learned about Ethiopia before, but they had pre-judgements based on images relating to Africa. Looking at data about mobile phones and car use as well as access to clean water sources deconstructed a lot of their preconceptions.

By considering how we can ‘help’ other countries in an effective and sustainable way, pupils started to **understand their role in a globally interdependent world** and made links between different countries. They are now more aware of the concept of ‘world resources’.

By the end of the lesson, they were impassioned about helping and were able to **discuss approaches that would bring about sustainable change**, e.g. access to similar opportunities, giving the countries resources to help their economy, helping them develop new ways of making things, etc. This clearly showed a move towards a social justice mentality, which was sustained in further lessons. When we

‘It is important to not just send money to a country, because the people that need the money might not get it. We should help them with resources by donating things to them or by helping them with their education or how to get jobs.’

Year 6 pupil

later focused on Red Nose Day, children could **identify more effective ways to support other countries** than just donating money, e.g. looking at the resources in the country and how they could be recycled into things that they could use, and supporting people in job development in areas that are needed in that country.

Pupils were thoroughly engaged during the lesson and were able to **apply their learning and the critical thinking skills they had developed to other lessons**. For example, when they later compared the Indian village of Chembakolli to the Fair Isle in Scotland, some children were able to establish how and why the settlements had developed in the way that they have, and whether the settlements are effective in terms of meeting the needs of the people that live there.

Pupils **led their own learning and enquiry** throughout the session, and thought critically about data related to development and development issues. They **developed an understanding of impacts and consequences** – when talking about an action, pupils are now able to think about the impact not only on themselves, but also on their community and at times the world.

The school in context

Sutherland Primary Academy is a larger-than-average primary school in Stoke-on-Trent. The majority of pupils are from a white-British background. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is high compared to the national average. Some children have had minimal experiences of visiting other locations within England and the wider world. The school is a GLP Partner School to Seabridge Primary School, Newcastle-under-Lyme.