Global learning – lenses on the world

Section 2:
Sustainable development

Project partners are Tide~ global learning and University of Exeter in the UK, FERE-CECA Madrid in Spain, A Rocha [Kenya] in Kenya and TANGO in The Gambia.

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Section 2: Sustainable Development

This thematic section shares teaching ideas for work on Sustainable Development.

There are many ways of explaining sustainable development. Teachers on the project's Gambia study visit drew on the 1987 Brundtland Report in describing it as follows: *"catering for the needs of the present generation using available resources, without compromising the needs of future generations."*

We offer some definitions from UK students in the box on the right.

Sustainable development matters wherever we live, on scales from the local to the global. It embraces all aspects of the environment, society and economy. It is also a question of justice. For example, the pollution created by industrialised countries doesn't stop at the borders, but creates health and environmental impacts in places that may have limited resources for addressing them [this is often true within countries, too]. Sustainable development touches on the other main themes in this resource: poverty and food production.

Sustainable Development is therefore a central idea in this resource. In 2015 governments across the world agreed to break this big idea down into specific areas of action: the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]. We say more about the SDGs later, and individual goals are connected to each thematic section. Indeed, they are at the heart of the communiqué produced by young leaders [see Section 5: From understanding into action].

Sustainable Development: some student definitions

"Making things and the environment improve and last longer."

"Continuous positive development for an organization, quite frequently there for good."

"Using resources that won't run out easily."

"Making what we have today last for those tomorrow, like looking after the world and not being selfish."

"Using and providing resources to countries that are in poverty."

"Something which happens around which is permanent that benefits us."

"Constantly making things better."

"The way our world develops without harming it, in an eco-friendly way."

"Development which you can keep and won't die away."

"When you respect the culture, heritage and natural environment."

Ask students: *Which are closest to your ideas? How would you explain the term?*

Key questions for teachers

✦ How can we use sustainability and the SDGs to motivate ourselves and young people?

✦ How can we make links to curriculum, perhaps balancing site visits or extra curricular activities with the use of lesson time to look more critically at themes? Can we make practicality a golden thread in all subjects?

✦ How can we make the link with parents and communities? Provide a real reason for our learning, making real decisions about the wider world and the future?

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development

1 NO POVERTY
2 ZERO HUNGER
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
4 QUALITY EDUCATION
5 GENDER EQUALITY
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
13 CLIMATE ACTION
14 LIFE BELOW WATER
15 LIFE ON LAND
16 PEACE AND JUSTICE STRONG INSTITUTIONS
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Downloads and links

- Download: Materials on sustainable development from a project workshop involving Gambian, German and British teachers [PDF]

- Download: Summary overview of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- The Bill Scott Challenge [in English only] supports critical thinking about sustainable development http://www.tidegloballearning.net/further-reading-reflections/bill-scott-learning-sustainable-development-challenge

- The Global Goals website http://www.globalgoals.org/global-goals

- Educating for sustainability [English only] is a teaching resource produced by Tide~ [UK] and NEA [The Gambia]. See: http://www.tidegloballearning.net/primary-early-years/educating-sustainability

Teaching about the Sustainable Development Goals

This lesson gets deeper into the questions as it goes along. It lends itself to work on a range of subjects, including Citizenship/Social Studies, Geography, Science, and RE/ethics. There is a summary of the SDGs on the previous page.

Starter

Watch a video of The World's Largest Lesson https://vimeo.com/138852758 Discuss what it is saying about development and how it can be achieved. Note key ideas.

Main

In small groups, look at a range of comments from the first few days following the announcement of the SDGs [a few can be viewed in the box opposite, with a full set available as a download]. These offer very different perspectives, including competing claims for priorities among the goals, and come from individuals and organisations from more than one country. Can we organise these into some sort of order, not necessarily of priority?

Read some news articles critical of the SDGs for different reasons. Try to summarise what is being argued and why. How does this differ from what was said on the initial video?

Examples:

Financial Times: *"Experts divided over value of UN sustainable development goals"* http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/1ac2384c-57bf-11e5-9846-de406ccb37f2.html#axzz3nClAJPZE

Pambazuka: "Why SDGs won't make the world a fairer place" www.pambazuka.net/en/category.php/features/95585

For younger students, abridged versions of both these examples are available as downloads.

ARE THE SDGS REALISTIC?

WORLD LEADERS HAVE PLEDGED TO EMPOWER WOMEN

**Can the UN meet its goal of eradicating extreme poverty, worldwide?**

BILLIONS TO TRILLIONS: HOW DO WE FINANCE THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

Plenary

Return to the initial notes from the starter activity: what do we want to change or add about development and how it is achieved? What do we want to keep?

Extension

It is a good idea to follow up this lesson with some practical activities that support work on sustainable development. This will help balance any pessimism arising from the critical appraisal of the SDGs. We offer several examples of activities on the following pages, and in Section 5: From understanding into action.
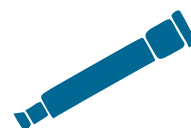
Downloads and links

- Download: Summary overview of the Sustainable Development Goals [PDF]

- Download: Social media responses to the SDGs [PDF and PowerPoint]

- Download: Abridged copies of the newspaper articles [PDF]

Some initial social media responses to the SDGs

Are the SDGs realistic? Yes -- but with one critical qualifier. The success of Goal 16 will determine the outcomes in 2030. The SDGs are the first major UN agreement to include action on governance in an acknowledgement of that fact. Goal 16 on peace, justice and the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels is a mandate for the firm political change that is needed. It is the key to unlocking progress on the 16 other goals for it will shape their implementation and management.

Sarah Mwikali Musau, Peace Ambassadors, Kenya [Facebook]

Can the UN meet its goal of eradicating extreme poverty, worldwide? #BBCGoFigure #SDGs

More than 1.2 billion live on less that $1.25 a day The UN target for 2030 is zero

BBC News, UK [Facebook]

Meeting #GlobalGoals worldwide starts with quality education for both girls and boys.

UN Development @UNDP [HQ: Nairobi, Kenya] [Twitter]

Education the catalyst for realizing each & every one of the 17 new #SDGs.
Put #EducationFirst http://bit.ly/1P4sv7v

UN GEFI, New York, USA [Twitter]

World leaders have pledged to empower women. Will it mean equal opportunities and pay, right to ed n healthcare? #SDGs @UN_Women @UNFPA @ilo

Zofeen Ebrahim, Journalist, Pakistan [Twitter]

More than half of the world's population lives in towns and cities, and by 2030 this number will swell to roughly 5 billion. And yet, the cities so important to our global commerce, culture, science, and more are waning because of congestion, and a shortage of affordable housing and funds.
"I am Mo Ibrahim, entrepreneur and Founder & Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. Goal #11 is to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable for all. Tell Everyone."

Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Senegal/ London [Facebook]

Billions to Trillions: How do we finance the global development goals?
http://wrld.bg/SCLTy #SDGs

World Bank, Washington DC, USA [Twitter]

We must reduce inequality within and among countries http://owl.li/SOfDT #globalgoals #Planet5050

UN Women, Worldwide [Twitter]

Forests of the future fundamental to achieving Sustainable Development Goals #SDGs #SDG15 @FAOclimate

Saskia Marijnissen, working with UNDP in Sierra Leone [Twitter]

"Chefs are the best weapons to bring about change." #Food4all

Gaston Acurio, Chef, Peru [Twitter]

I want youth to have job opportunities and be able to provide themselves, so that people don't have to ask for charity and we boost the economy

Hoda Marzouk, 22 years old, via UNICEF Egypt [Facebook]

Sustainable Development activities

"People from the developed world are conservationists. People from Africa think about what they need."

- teacher at Nairobi workshop

This page offers a brief overview of some additional teaching activities from our project that could be used to explore issues around sustainable development. We hope that these will serve as a starting point for your own professional creativity. We offer further action-orientated activities alongside the Young People's Communiqué in Section 5.

Going global gets the local

[Geography/ Citizenship/ Social Studies/ History]

You could use the following ideas as a basis for your own planning. Young people create video diaries about their own communities, looking at environmental, social and economic aspects. This includes how the area has changed in the recent past. They share these ideas with pupils in other schools. Next, they exchange ideas about positive and negative scenarios for the future, 20 years from now, and how they might influence changes positively.   Building on this, they take concrete action such as creating and managing an environmental area within the school. The ideas and actions are shared with parents, carers and the wider community, including key decision makers.

Girls at Karen C School, Nairobi, compost-making for their sustainable school garden

Creating a hanging garden

[Science/ Design Technology]

You will need an empty 2 litre drinks bottle [washed out with no label], scissors, compass or other sharp object, string or wool. Poke four holes in a rectangular shape in your bottle, with the compass. These must all be in line with each other and only in the top of the bottle, creating an opening. It cannot go below the halfway line. Next, take your scissors and cut in straight lines between the holes. This creates a cut-out rectangle on top of the bottle. Now, poke two more holes in the middle of the short sides on the rectangle, large enough to poke the string through. Pull the string through one of the holes. Tie it off, then cut it at about 40-50cm approximately. Push the cut end of string through the other hole. Tie it again with a double knot. Fill with soil and seeds and hang on a wall from a hook. Don't forget to water it!

Downloadable instructions for creating the hanging garden can be found as a PDF and a video file.

Shoebox project

[History/Science/Geography/Mathematics]

This looks at changes in the local area, including specific impacts such as changes resulting from migration. Over a term, students create and then change the contents of a shoebox to represent the past, present and future of their neighbourhood. What would they like the future to look like? How do we need to change now to make that happen? This is a good opportunity to develop work on history in the living community, not just in books. It helps develop confidence, but also - because it is memorable - it aids recall. It embeds young people's thinking in their local community, and opportunities to make real changes for the future. Work can be exhibited or images of it shared with parents and experts in the wider community. With young people aged 15+, we linked it to work on careers and personal choices for the future.

Global genius: ideas for tomorrow
[Design Technology/Citizenship]

Starting with one of the SDGs, young people research and develop an innovative sustainable technology, idea or activity. Having identified the SDG they wish to address, they brainstorm ideas [eg a solution to paper use might be more use of iPads or tablets]. They then begin to develop their solutions, and how they can be brought into effect. Ideas are presented to an 'expert panel' from the local community [eg made up of charities, residents, council officers], and the best ideas are awarded a prize that allow them to be developed further. This links big ideas about change over time to practical sustainability practice, and builds pupils' problem-solving, collaborative and presentational skills in a real-world context.

Wind farm on the Ngong Hills, Kenya

A few other ideas:

Decorate the classroom to resemble a rich and diverse eco-system [such as a rainforest] and then remove items, to illustrate the impact of loss of habitat or other events. How might they be protected?

Visit a local tourism enterprise [eg an eco-lodge]. and find out what they are doing to support local sustainability. Are there things that your class or school could learn from them?

Look into an award system such as Eco Schools for developing a whole school approach to sustainable development. See http://www.ecoschools.global

We offer a downloadable PowerPoint which supports teaching activities on turtle conservation in Kenya, linked to the work of A Rocha Kenya.

We offer ideas for teaching about cities and sustainable development in Section 1, and about school and community action in Section 5: From understanding into action - including ideas for action from the Young People's Communiqué.

Downloads and links

In addition to the downloads and links highlighted in the text above, we offer:

- Download: A report from pupil Kassim Walid on the Greenlight Club for sustainability activists at Lenana School, Nairobi [PDF]

- Download: Student proposals on waste management and water management from Braeburn School, Nairobi [PDF]. These include proposals for sustainable income generation for the nearby Kibera district [see Section 3, Poverty and wealth]. The reports could serve as case studies, or as a stimulus for your own pupils' ideas.

- Download: Examples of planning around sustainability issues using the global learning lenses.

- Solutions for the Planet [UK] support young people in developing practical 'big ideas' to address sustainability issues: see www.solutionsfortheplanet.co.uk