

PATHWAYS FOR TEACHING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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INTRODUCTION

This teaching material supports you to introduce and explore the Millennium Development Goals with children. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) are a set of measurable targets that aim to reduce poverty, hunger, disease and inequality around the world. The deadline for achieving the Goals is 2015.

These pages present 3 sessions or proposals for lesson plans, each one building on the one before. The aim is to introduce children to the MDGs and use their exploration to introduce the concepts of development and sustainability. The third session explores one goal in more depth.

Support material is collated the end of the document. There is also a section containing a list of further resources to allow you to delve deeper into the topic.

Note: The material has been developed for use at primary level but could be adapted for use in other settings such as teacher education or in-service training.

CONTENTS

- I Aims of the Sessions
- II Session Outlines
- III Activities
- IV Background information for teachers on the MDGs
- V List of useful resources and websites referred to in resource and to allow further work on the MDGs

I. AIMS OF THE SESSIONS

- To introduce the MDGs as a means of exploring concepts of development and sustainability.
- To help children understand the context for the MDGs and become familiar with the eight goals.
- To look at one goal in more detail and make explicit the local–global connection.

II. SESSION OUTLINE

SEQUENCE OF LESSON IDEAS FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE MDGS

The suggested lesson ideas are divided into three consecutive sessions. Each step has one or more activities within it:

Session 1: Looking at the way the world is – setting the context for the goals

Session 2: Familiarisation with the goals

Session 3: Exploring one goal in detail (Goal 7 – focus on sustainable development)

III. ACTIVITIES

SESSION 1: LOOKING AT THE WAY THE WORLD IS

Objectives

- To set the context for an exploration of the MDGs.
- To make children aware of how the wealth of the world is not evenly distributed.

Materials required

Activity 1: Green and blue stickers

Activity 2: Atlases

6 cards with names of continents written on them

10 cards with 10% written on each one

SESSION 1 – ACTIVITY 1

Children Around the World

This activity is based on a class of 30 who represent the world's population. Activity 1 encourages children to reflect on the problems facing other children around the world. Activity 2 will explore the distribution of population and wealth.

Teacher's Note:

Absolute poverty, here, means going without basic needs such as safe water, food, health and sanitation. People in absolute poverty have less than \$1 per day to cover all their needs.

Of the 6.5 billion people on Earth, 1.2 billion live on \$1 or less a day (20%). A 2008 report on the progress towards reaching the MDGs indicates that the world is on target to halve the number of people in the world living on less than \$1 a day (Goal 1). However, this progress is largely due to the economic expansion of Asian countries. In contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa has recorded little progress since 2000.

1. As the session is about to commence, place different coloured stickers on every 3rd (BLUE) and 5th child (GREEN).
2. As the teacher calls out a colour invite those with the sticker to stand up.

3. Ask the class to imagine that they represent the world's population. Those who get the BLUE sticker represent the proportion of children in the world that experience regular hunger in their lives.
4. those who get the GREEN sticker represent the number of people living in absolute poverty or number of children not attending school.
5. Invite the class to comment. If the children have heard of Human Rights, link the exercise to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children have the right to food, shelter, education and participation in society among other things (see <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>).

(This activity is adapted from Our World Our Future Activity 1 p. 100 & p. 23
(see Section V for details of resource))

SESSION 1 – ACTIVITY 2

Population Distribution

This activity is based on a class of 30 who represent the world's population. In the first part of this activity the children explore actively the division of the world's population by continent. In the second part of this activity the children build on their learning about population by exploring how wealth is distributed among the people in the world. This leads to a consideration of the inequalities that exist between different parts of the world.

1. Before commencing give children time to study the atlas and become familiar with the continents and with landmasses, etc.
2. Place the 6 cards (with named continents) around the room – the class decide amongst themselves how many of them should stand under each of the continents in order to represent the population of that continent (an alternative could be to sketch a large outline of the continents on flip chart and place it on the floor, then ask children to stand on a continent. To avoid confusion, the teacher might first place 2 children in each continent and ask each class member in turn to distribute themselves to whatever continent they think needs more population).
3. When children have grouped themselves under the continents allow time look at the division and comment.
4. Now call out the correct population as follows and allow

children to make the correct adjustments.

Asia	18
Africa	4
Europe	3
Latin America	3
North America	2
Oceania	< ½ (person kneeling)

Allow time for reflection and comments. Typical comments might be: 'I thought that there were millions more people in Africa than in Europe.' Point out that Europe is highly populated given its size. Does high population therefore necessarily mean poverty?

Distribution of wealth

1. Explain that all the cards (i.e. 100%) represent the wealth of the world and that you are going to show how it is shared out.
2. Bring the group of 30 back together. Separate the group into 2 sub-groups of 24 and 6 (this represents 80% and 20% of the world's population).
3. Give the large group two cards (each with 10%).
4. Give the small group 8 cards (each with 10%).
5. Allow them to draw their own conclusions about fair/unfair distribution of wealth; poor/rich countries etc.

(Activities adapted from 1&2 p 22–23 *Our World Our Future* (see Section V for details))

Further information on the inequalities in the world can be found on the website www.developmenteducation.ie – show clips from *Imagine the World Were a Village of 100 People* animation. Alternatively, show examples from the book *If the World Were a Village* (see Section V for details).

SESSION 2: FAMILIARISATION WITH THE MDGs

Objectives

- To allow children become familiar with each individual MDG.
- To support children to reach some understanding of the role of governments, the EU and the UN in tackling poverty and inequality.

Materials required

- A set of photographs and Millennium Goals poster from *Our World Our Future*; or use other posters displaying the goals such as in Irish Aid Children's Media Awards pack or from Trócaire or Oxfam.
- Teacher's background information – Millennium Development Goals information page provided with this resource.
- Millennium Development Goals PowerPoint presentation from www.developmenteducation.ie/issues.

SESSION 2 – ACTIVITY 1

Photo-activity:

Before proceeding to the photo-activity display on walls some of the available posters and distribute the simplified Millennium Goals Summary.

1. Cover the written explanation on the back of each photo (from *Our World Our Future*).
2. Distribute them to pairs of participants.
3. Ask children to decide with reference to posters and information provided, which of the 8 goals it seems most applicable to.
4. Discuss which other goals might also apply.
5. Now reveal the information on the back of each photo and ask children to re-assess their decision.
6. Ask them to prepare to present their photo and reasons for choice to whole class.

Follow-up Discussion:

1. MDGs are all interconnected (in same way that poverty issues are, etc), e. g. because of lack of access to water, girls might have to spend 4–5 hours a day fetching water and

cannot go to school, so education and literacy, access to water and health are all linked (Millennium Goal 2, 3 and 7).

2. Can one goal be achieved without the other? Likely reasons why goals cannot be met by different countries include:

- Some governments spending so much money paying back debts that there is little money for health and education spending
- In countries where there is war and conflict, a large part of the government budget goes to military spending.

To consolidate children's learning, show all or parts of the PowerPoint presentation on MDGs on:

www.developmenteducation.ie/issues

SESSION 3 – EXPLORING ONE MDG: GOAL 7 – ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Objectives

- To help children reflect on the ‘environment’.
- To make connections between our lifestyle in the North and the lives of vulnerable people in South.
- To support children to understand that ensuring environmental sustainability is something that needs to concern us all.

Materials required

- Picture of Goal 7 (child-friendly versions can be found in Irish Aid Media Awards pack or from Trócaire – see Section V).
- Peel-off sticky dots.
- Copy of Activity 10 from National Youth Council of Ireland’s One World Week pack 2005 *Making a Difference* (see below).
- Mystery clues sheet (see below).

SESSION 3 – ACTIVITY 1

Sustaining Our Environment

Note for teachers:

Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Targets set for Goal 7 refers to specifically to improving access to clean water and the lives of slum dwellers, as well as the more general promotion of sustainable development principles. In these materials the focus is on general introduction to environmental sustainability but other entry points to Goal 7 could equally be through the theme of ‘water’ or ‘exploring lives of people living in slums/poor conditions in urban situations’

1. Display Goal 7.
2. Brainstorm/construct an **issues map** or **mind map** on ‘environment’ in small groups or as whole class.
3. Write word ‘environment’ in centre of board or flipchart or ask the children to do so.

4. Pose the question, 'when you hear the word *environment* what do you think of?' or 'What are all the different aspects of the environment that come to mind?'
5. Give the following prompts if necessary: try going through typical day and think of all things you take/get from environment (air, water, food, fuel etc), also don't forget the **built** environment (e.g. what building materials do we get from environment?) as well as **natural**, even suggest the **social** environment (e.g. places to play etc) and our **inner** environment (e.g. feelings nature gives us). The purpose is to get children to see that the environment has many different and important aspects to it some of which we might take for granted.
6. Carry out **dot voting** using peel-off sticky dots distributed to groups or individuals (minimum two dots per group or pupil needed but can use more; simple alternative is to get children to use markers to make dots/symbols or use coloured chalk if using blackboard).
7. To help children see that everyone is connected to/ dependent on the environment no matter where they live and that some people in poorer countries are even more directly dependent on the environment use (a) and (b):
 - (a) Ask pupils to 'vote' by placing a dot on any aspect of the environment with which they have a connection e.g. they drink water, they breathe air, etc.
 - (b) Ask them to imagine that they live in a rural part of one named African country and to place a dot on any aspect of the environment on which they depend (they may need to add more points to the 'maps' e.g. firewood, soil to grow crops, plants to feed animals etc but will also see that people everywhere depend on the environment for water, air, etc).
8. Introduce concept of 'sustainable development' or environmental sustainability either by displaying the definition below or by discussing the meaning of the verb 'to sustain' and the term 'development'. You may use the Bruntland¹ definition of Sustainable Development: 'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without limiting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

¹ This definition comes from the World Commission on Environment and Development report, called "Our Common Future" (1987). The Chair of the Commission was former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. The report is often referred to as the "Brundtland Report" and the definition as the "Brundtland Definition".

Note for teachers:

It is necessary to think and act locally about the environment and sustainability. It is worthwhile for children to develop a sense of personal responsibility towards the environment (for example learning about the 3 Rs – reduce, reuse and recycle). However, from a development education perspective it is desirable to go that bit further and to make explicit the global connection. Helping children/people make the connections between how we live our lives and how this affects other more vulnerable/poor people in Southern/developing countries presents a challenge. The suggested activities in Step 3 aim to help educators meet this challenge in an engaging way.

SESSION 3: ACTIVITY 2

The following activities are meant to be carried out in smaller groups. They involve solving puzzles and mysteries in order to make local-global connections, particularly in relation to global warming and climate change:

Chain Reactions

Objective: To help children make local–global connections, particularly in relation to global warming and climate change.

Materials required: Copy of Activity 10 from National Youth Council of Ireland’s One World Week pack 2005 *Making a Difference*.

Advance preparation: Enlarge and cut up ‘links’ in chain (they can be stuck onto Post-its or use Blue-Tack to hold ‘links’ in their final place).

Method:

1. Distribute one chain activity to each group of 4–5 people.
2. Ask them to place links of chain in order.
3. Ask them then to write one sentence about what they think the chain is all about.
4. Discuss in whole class the different ‘chains’ and draw some conclusions.

Solve the mystery: Why has Mrs Camara's stall closed down?

Objective

To help children make local–global connections, particularly in relation to global warming and climate change through solving a puzzle with many clues.

Materials required

Mystery Clues Sheet.

Advance preparation

Enlarge and cut up components or clues of 'mystery'.

Method:

1. Distribute set of 'clues' to each group.
2. Ask them to first sort the clues into those which seem connected in some way.
3. They should then try to solve the mystery.
4. Discuss outcomes with whole class comparing variations on the solution and what they learnt from the activity about climate change and the interconnections between the lives of people in different parts of the planet.

Note for teachers:

*Alternatively with younger children use only **Chain Reactions** and use **Solve the Mystery** for differentiation, i.e. give out the mystery to those groups who solve the chain puzzles easily and quickly.*

IV. BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS ON THE MDGS

a) MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS INFORMATION

The UN's Millennium Development Goals

In 1992, the largest-ever gathering of world leaders took place at a summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: 117 heads of state attended and a total of 178 countries were represented. The summit aimed to address the twin issues of promoting worldwide economic development and protecting the environment – including tropical rain forests, biodiversity and reducing global warming.

While many good intentions were expressed, there was a lack of firm commitments, and the event was criticised by poorer countries (Less Economically Developed Countries, or LEDCs) for placing the responsibility for environmental protection on them, without the necessary support from the More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs).

Five years later, in 1997, world leaders again met in Kyoto, Japan. This meeting aimed to build on the Rio agreements, placing more specific targets for countries to achieve. Its most important, yet contentious, aim was the worldwide reduction of greenhouse gases (to 5.2 per cent below their 1990 levels) in order to slow down the rate of global warming.

Some LEDCs thought that restricting the fossil fuels they burnt would also restrict their development and they were unhappy that they had to suffer for the overuse of fossil fuels by the MEDCs. But some MEDCs were also unhappy about reducing their fossil fuel use because they believed it would have a bad effect on their economies.

It took a long time and a lot of renegotiation, but 178 countries eventually agreed to a final, watered-down version of the treaty in 2001, though importantly not the USA, the world's biggest polluter.

While the final version of the Kyoto Treaty was being negotiated, another important agreement was being developed. This time, the development needs of the LEDCs were to be at the heart of the discussions. At this summit, held in New York, September 2000, known as the Millennium Summit, every country in the UN agreed to continue working towards global development and the elimination of poverty.

The following year, guidelines were drawn up to help governments to continue their development work: these are known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

These eight goals help to focus the world's community on improving the lives of millions of people by, for example, aiming to halve the number of people living in absolute poverty by 2015 and reduce by two-thirds the proportion of children dying before the age of five. Ultimately, the MDGs will help to concentrate the international community's efforts on issues that matter most to the world's poorest children – like whether they eat nutritious food or whether they go to bed at night hungry; whether they stay healthy or whether they even live to *see* their next birthday.

When the next World Summit took place in 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, the agenda continued to focus on LEDCs achieving sustainable development, though its targets are less ambitious than the MDGs. The MDGs remain the most comprehensive list of aims ever agreed.

The first seven MDGs reinforce each other and aim to reduce all forms of poverty, while Goal 8 – a global partnership for development – describes how the world's richer countries can contribute to achieve these goals.

The MDGs are important as they:

- **Endorse a multi-dimensional view of development.**

Progress is measured not only by economic growth, but also by factors that make a direct difference to people's lives – the realisation of their human rights, eg, their rights to nutritious food, a decent standard of health, education, and to have a say in decisions that affect them.

- **Have been adopted by many countries and international development agencies as a basis for their work.**

This means that development programmes supported by international agencies will endeavour to tackle some of the most important problems facing poor people.

- **Recognise that different development problems 'cross-cut'.**

For example, in some countries children usually girls – spend up to four hours a day carrying water. As a result, lack of access to clean water may mean that girls do not go to school.

The MDGs matter to children because:

- They cover most of the **fundamental rights** enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), for example, the right to life, education, health.
- They include many of the development indicators relevant to children. There are 32 indicators linked to the first seven

goals, and ten of these are direct measurements of child welfare (such as under-five mortality and school enrolment).

- Most of the other indicators cover areas that have a direct or indirect impact on children, such as maternal mortality.

Progress towards achieving the MDG targets will be measured at regular intervals, and over a period of 15 years the results will show countries whether or not they are likely to achieve them. To date some countries are on track, but many are not, and only a few will meet some of the targets, such as the three-quarters reduction in maternal mortality. Action is needed at both national and international levels for all countries to achieve their targets for each MDG.

The less developed countries are working towards their goals, by allocating a larger percentage of their economic budget to meet their population's basic rights, such as better nutrition, healthcare provision, education, clean water, sanitation; a more modern infrastructure, including housing and roads; and better employment opportunities.

But politics often stand in the way of achieving these needs. For example, in Africa government spending per university pupil is several hundred times that spent on each primary school pupil. Similarly, large-scale infrastructure programmes, such as dams, often give governments more visibility than longer-term investments, such as healthcare provision. The more developed, donor countries are also working towards goals related to the MDGs (see section on Aid on page 7).

As in many countries (developed and developing alike), military expenditure or an overblown, inefficient civil service, may consume essential resources. Moreover, despite recent efforts at debt reduction, many poor countries continue to pay large amounts of debt service each year to developed countries. More developed countries will need to provide support to ensure that all countries reach the MDG targets.

(Young Lives, Global Goals. Children, poverty and the UN Millennium Development Goals, A resource pack for environment studies and citizenship for 11- to 14-year-olds, London: Save the Children 2004, p. 3 and p. 5)

b) MILLENNIUM GOALS SUMMARY

MILLENNIUM GOALS SUMMARY

Millennium Goal 1: *Poverty and Hunger*

Cut in half the number of people who live on less than one US dollar a day and who suffer from hunger.

Millennium Goal 2: *Education*

Make sure that all children start and finish primary school.

Millennium Goal 3: *Girls*

Be sure that as many girls as boys go to school.

Millennium Goal 4: *Infants*

Cut back by two-thirds the number of children who die before they reach the age of five.

Millennium Goal 5: *Mothers*

Cut back by three-quarters the number of women who die when they are having babies.

Millennium Goal 6: *Disease*

Stop terrible diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB from spreading, and make them less common.

Millennium Goal 7: *Environment*

Cut in half the number of people who lack clean water, improve the lives of people who live in slums, and promote policies that respect the goods of creation.

Millennium Goal 8: *Global Partnership*

Promote greater cooperation among all nations, with special concern for fairer deals for poor countries in trade, aid, debt, new technologies, etc.

c) MYSTERY CLUES SHEET

SOLVE THE MYSTERY CLUES

'Why has Mrs Camara's stall closed down?'

Eamonn is driven to school every day in his parents' car.

Banjul, capital city of The Gambia, is an island $\frac{1}{2}$ metre above sea level.

Cars produce carbon dioxide from the burning of petrol.

Last year's peanut harvest was spoiled by heavy rain.

Banjul is linked to the Gambian mainland by a single highway.

Eamonn's parents say the traffic in Dublin makes it too dangerous to walk or cycle to school.

Global warming is believed to cause extreme weather.

Tourists come to the Gambia for winter sun and sandy beaches.

The Gambia is in West Africa. It is one of the countries most at risk from sea levels rising.

The High Court is situated on a busy roundabout by the Banjul Highway.

Bad storms and waves have been damaging the main Banjul Highway.

Eamonn lives 2km from his school in Ranelagh, Dublin.

Last week Mrs Camara's stall was flooded for the second time.

Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas which adds to global warming.

The morning bus to Eamonn's school is often held up in heavy traffic.

Dublin's traffic is mostly made up of cars.

Recent stormy weather has made it harder for cars and trucks to come into Banjul.

Sea levels have risen as a result of global warming.

Mrs Camara sells nuts and oranges to office workers and tourists, outside the High Court in Banjul.

Mrs Camara's stall has had to close down.

(Adapted from Catty Holden's 'Global Citizenship' workshop,
Global Teacher conference, Manchester, 2004)

V. RESOURCES

Useful resources referred to in resource and to allow further work on the MDGs

Our World Our Future, A teaching resource on development for Senior Primary Geography, for 5th and 6th classes, Irish Aid, 2006

Young Lives, Global Lives – Children, poverty and the UN Millennium Development Goals, Save the Children, 2004

Making A Difference – Young People Participating to Change the World, National Youth Council Development Education Programme, 2005

In the Global Classroom, Pippin Publishing, 2003 (Book 1 Chp 3 Environment and Sustainability)

If the World were a Village, David A Smith, A & C Black, London, 2002

Pachamama – Our Earth – Our Future, UNEP/Evans 2001

Our World Children's Media Awards 2006 pack – available from ourworld@real-event.ie, tel 021-4550434, website: <http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/ourworld/>

Sustainable Human Development, A Young Person's Introduction, Peace Child International 2002

Websites:

www.developmenteducation.ie

www.worldwatch.org

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/>

www.globaleye.org.uk

www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

www.millenniumcampaign.org

http://www.familycare.org/news/if_the_world.htm

http://odtmaps.com/behind_the_maps/population_map/if-world-were-village.asp

www.unicef.org/mdg/

www.un.org/cyberschoolbus