

NO POVERTY

RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS AND FACILITATORS



As language evolves, so do the meanings and impacts of the words we use. This resource encourages critical reflection on terminology and promotes the use of inclusive language that tries not to perpetuate harmful stereotypes, nor disguise or reinforce unequal power relations shaped by historical systems of oppression. Where possible, the language in this document has been updated to align with these principles.

CONCERN
worldwide

Concern Global Citizenship, 2026

POVERTY

Despite the fact that the global poverty rate has more than halved since 1990, intensified efforts must continue to boost the incomes, alleviate the suffering and build the resilience of individuals still living in extreme poverty. In this resource you will find ways to introduce students to the epidemic of poverty and the work Concern Worldwide is doing to tackle extreme poverty in some of the world's most economically vulnerable countries in an effort to leave no one behind.

What is Poverty?

The causes of poverty are varied and complex, however, broadly speaking poverty is caused by the unequal distribution of and access to power and resources in society. Through surveys and other measures we can find out how much poverty exists in our society, identify which groups are most affected and monitor changes in its level and distribution.



Extreme (Absolute) Poverty

Extreme poverty is defined by the World Bank as living on less than \$3.00 per person per day. 830 million people or roughly 10% of the population live below the poverty line mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa or in fragile and conflict affected countries.



Relative Poverty

A person is considered to be living in poverty if either income or spending falls below some minimum level that represents basic needs in their society. This is called the relative poverty line. The relative poverty line is not the same everywhere; it is relative to what is the norm in a particular country. People living in relative poverty do not enjoy the same standard of life as others and causes them to experience various types of exclusion.



GLOBAL STATISTICS



- Since 1990, more than 1 billion people have been lifted out of poverty. The decline in global extreme poverty was largely driven by robust economic growth in East Asia and Pacific and South Asia. ([World Bank, 2025](#))
- Globally, 830 million people - or one in ten - live on less than \$3 per day, the extreme poverty line for low-income countries. ([World Bank, 2025](#))
- In 2024, Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 16 percent of the world's population, but 67 percent of the people living in extreme poverty. ([World Bank, 2024](#))
- The vast majority of people experiencing acute poverty live in rural areas. They have not had access to education, are mostly employed in the agricultural sector, and over 50% are children. ([UN, 2025](#))
- Over 13,000 children under five years old die every day, usually due to preventable causes, with infectious diseases being a leading factor. ([UNICEF, 2026](#))
- People living in acute 'multidimensional' poverty often experience a lack of housing, sanitation, nutrition, clean cooking fuel and electricity. ([UNDP, 2025](#))
- More than 1 in 5 children live in income poverty in 44 of the world's richest countries, meaning their basic needs may not be met. ([UNICEF, 2026](#))
- In Ireland, almost 1 in 5 children live in households with incomes below the relative poverty line. ([Trinity College Dublin, 2025](#))

ACTIVITY ONE: Maslow's Pyramid of Needs

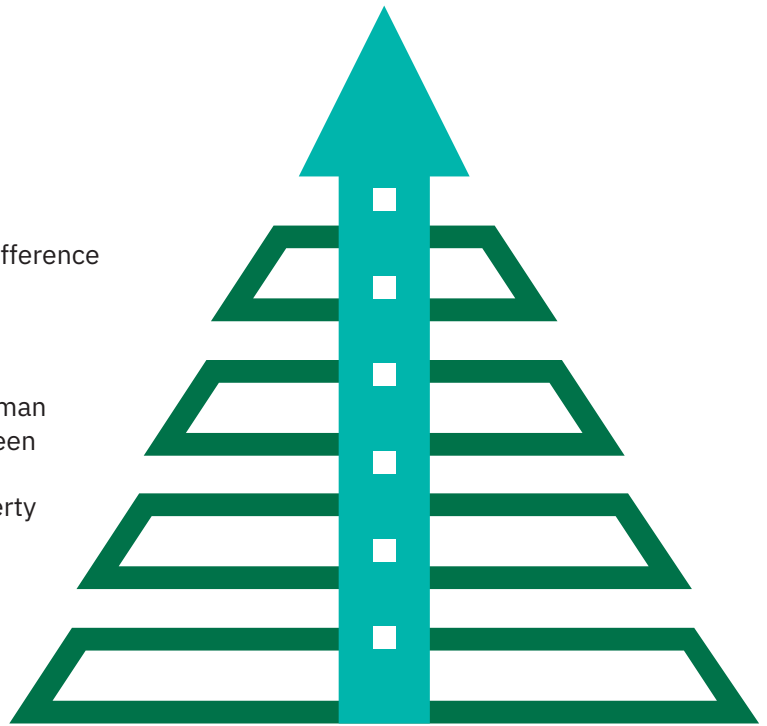
 40 minutes

Preparation:

Familiarise yourself with Maslow's theory and the difference between 'needs' and 'wants'.

Instructions:

1. Introduce students to the concept of basic human needs and briefly discuss the difference between physiological/emotional needs and wants. Introduce the concepts absolute/relative poverty
2. Read the introduction paragraph on page four
3. Distribute/display a copy of the pyramid on page four
4. Ask do they agree with Maslow's theory? Give students some time to read and think/pair/share with a partner
5. Students complete their own pyramid of needs
6. Students share their pyramids - create a class pyramid of needs using the most common needs. Ask would their pyramids be different if they lived in countries with higher rates of poverty?



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



PHOTOCOPY

He set out his beliefs in the shape of a pyramid; each person starts at the bottom of the pyramid. When one type of need is met the person is motivated to reach the next highest level. For example if a person has no food to eat they are not concerned with whether they are loved or not. Not everyone agrees with Maslow, do you?

Write the needs listed to the left of the pyramid into the level of the pyramid to which you think they belong.



ACTIVITY TWO:

The causes of inequality (Ranking game)

 40 minutes



Curriculum Links	Business Studies; 1.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.11	Junior Cycle
	Geography; 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8	Junior Cycle
	History; 3.2	Junior Cycle
	Religious Education; 3.6	Junior Cycle
	Geography	Senior Cycle
	History; Topic 5	Senior Cycle
	Climate Action and Sustainable Development	Senior Cycle
	Politics and Society	Senior Cycle
SDG Links	5, 9, 10, 13	



Learning intention: To provide an opportunity for students to think critically about the causes of poverty and inequality.

Materials

6-8 sets of “Causes of Inequality” ranking cards, pre-cut and randomised (allow one entire set of cards for every 3-4 students).

Methodology

1. Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students, and give one set of cards to every group.
2. Ask students to read and discuss the cards together. Explain that each card gives one possible reason why global poverty continues.
3. Ask students to rank the reasons in order of importance, placing the strongest cause of poverty at the top and the least significant cause at the bottom. The other cards should be positioned in between.
4. Tell students to take a note of the reasons for their chosen ranking, in order to share with the rest of the class.
5. When each student has agreed their list, ask each group to report on what they put at the top and bottom of their list, and any disagreements or discussions which they had while agreeing on the order. Take note of any similarities / differences between each group and draw attention to these.
6. Now, ask students to consider, if they were asked to rank the causes of inequality (as opposed to poverty), would anything change on their list? Give each group 5 minutes to discuss this.
7. Ask for feedback from the full class about any changes that they made to their list. Facilitate a discussion about these changes:
 - Are inequality and poverty the same thing?
 - Do you think the causes of poverty are different to the causes of inequality?
 - Why do you think this is?
 - Does this change the way you think about poverty and inequality?
 - If so, how?

'CAUSES OF INEQUALITY' RANKING CARDS



CLIMATE CHANGE The world's climate has been changing. Low-income countries are suffering most as a result of this with more disasters and flooding than ever before. Rank	WAR Conflict is a major cause of poverty. Military spending reached an unprecedented \$2.7 trillion in 2024 (UN, 2025) Rank
HISTORY The historical legacy of slavery, colonialism and unequal development still continues to keep many countries poor. Rank	CORRUPTION WITHIN COUNTRIES A small number of people in some countries have taken the majority of the wealth. Rank
RISING POPULATIONS It is estimated the world's population will reach 10 billion by 2050. Rank	POLITICAL 'WILL' World leaders are not interested in creating a fairer society. Rank
DEBT Between 2022 and 2024, Low and middle income countries paid \$741 billion more in debt repayments than the money they received in new loans (World Bank, 2025) Rank	GENDER INEQUALITY Women and girls often face gender-based discrimination that puts them at increased risk of poverty, violence, poor education and health concerns. Rank
TAX AVOIDANCE Countries lose \$492 billion in tax a year to corporations and wealthy individuals avoiding tax (Tax justice network, 2024). Rank	POOR PUBLIC SERVICES In many countries, public services like health, education and housing are underfunded, or inaccessible to those who cannot afford to pay for them. Rank
POWER IMBALANCES Some people have less power in society than others, because of income, class, race, gender or other factors. This can mean they have less influence over government decisions about society. Rank	<i>What other reason can you think of? Write your own reason here.</i> Rank

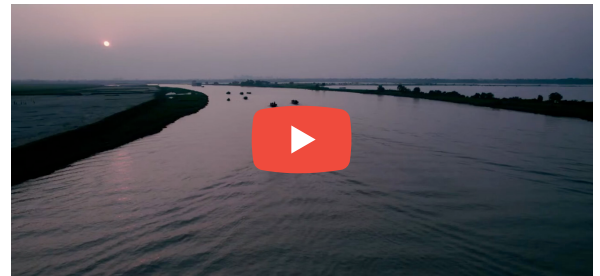
BANGLADESH AND POVERTY

Despite a reduction in poverty levels over the last few decades, roughly 62 million people—about one-third of the population—remain vulnerable to falling back into poverty if faced with an illness, natural disaster, or other unexpected shock ([World Bank, 2025](#)). Bangladesh's geographical location, land characteristics, rivers and climate also make it very vulnerable to natural disasters. Bangladesh furthermore remains vulnerable to food shortages.



Approximately 16 million people (17 percent of the analysed population) are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity ([IPC, 2025](#))

There are also major challenges in terms of gender equality. These include completion of education, access to jobs, access to sexual and reproductive health services, eliminating child marriage, intimate partner violence and other forms of gender-based violence.



The government of Bangladesh is hosting over 1 million Rohingya people who fled violence in Myanmar in what has become the world's largest refugee camp. The area continues to struggle to host the ever-increasing Rohingya community.

What is Concern doing in Bangladesh?

Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian organisation dedicated to ending extreme poverty and suffering in the world's poorest countries. We work in partnership with the very poorest people in these countries, directly enabling them to improve their lives, as well as using our knowledge and experience to influence decisions made at a local, national and international level that can significantly reduce extreme poverty.

In 2024, Concern Worldwide positively impacted over 137,000 individuals through integrated nutrition programmes, offering lifesaving assistance to Rohingya families with 18 nutrition centres in the refugee camps. We have also responded to seven disasters in 11 districts providing lifesaving supports.

Concern has strengthened community clinics and expanded midwifery-led care to improve access to affordable maternal and primary healthcare.

We also support communities through climate-smart agriculture and adaptation measures to reduce climate risks and protect vulnerable people.



360 insight into life as a pavement dweller in Bangladesh

PAPER BAG EXERCISE

Globally, 138 million children are still engaged in child labour (UN, 2025). Some work full-time and some combine work with school.

Many workers have no employer or regular wage. Instead they work as street vendors: shining shoes, selling newspapers or recycling waste materials. In the city of Dhaka, Bangladesh some people earn a living making paper bags out of recycled waste paper – such as old newspapers – and selling them to shopkeepers.

Paper bags are made mostly by women and children from poor families who then sell them to shopkeepers. They are sold in batches of 20 and on average a child makes 200 bags in a day. For this, the child will earn about 15 ₳ - which is equivalent to 16c.

The object of the Paper Bag Game is to show how people work so hard, yet earn so little. Using real cost-of-living prices and wages, players can get an idea of how they would manage if they had to survive making and selling paper bags.

ACTIVITY THREE:

Paper Bag Game

 80 minutes

Need:

- Lots of newspapers, cut into half-tabloid sheet size
- A pot of wallpaper paste for each group (If mess is a problem, use a glue stick, though this is less authentic in style)
- Sample paper bags
- 50 buttons – each representing 1 Bangladeshi Taka (₳),
- 1 photocopy for each group of:
 - How to make a paper bag
 - Family Expenses list
 - Will you survive?
- 1 set of chance cards
- Damp cloths for wiping up at the end



Instructions:

1. Arrange students into groups of 6 or less. Appoint a game leader and shopkeeper
2. Provide background information. Each group represents a family living in a crowded slum in Dhaka. There is a huge demand for paper bags, which are mainly made by women and children from families with the lowest income. The glue is made by boiling water and flour, and adding an anti-fungal chemical
3. Bags will be sold in batches of 10 to shopkeepers. Shopkeepers will pay 1 ₳ per batch of 10. Each time a batch of bags is ready, a group member should take them to the shopkeeper to sell, while the others continue making bags for the next batch. (On average, one child makes 100 bags a day, earning up to 15 ₳.)
4. Introduce the students to the family shopping list and the 'Will you survive' sheet they will complete as a group
5. Show the groups how to make a bag using a sample bag so everyone can see, then ask them to start making bags

Shopkeeper duties:

- A shop keeper is appointed by the teacher. They must check that each bag is properly made, and pays the group 1 ₳ for each batch
- Hand out the chance cards randomly to change the conditions each group is working under
- Take note of how many bags each group produces
- Decide when workers can wash their hands - bag makers may not have the luxury of soap and water



Will you survive?

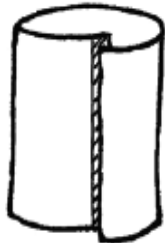
Remind students they have to pay for rent, food, and other supplies. To send two children to school they must save 16 ₳ by the end of the game.



Extra! Extra!

Throughout the game, hold "health clinics" that workers could attend. The group must decide if someone can go - they will lose manpower! Not going may mean someone may later get sick or die!

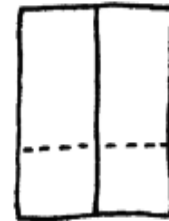
HOW TO MAKE A PAPER BAG



1. Fold the sides of the paper to the middle, overlapping by about 2cm



2. Paste one edge. Stick down the overlapping edge



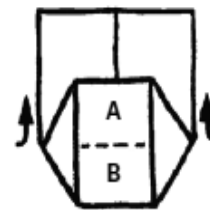
3. Turn up the bottom edge about one third of the way up the bag. Crease it then unfold it.



4. Fold up the bottom corners to the crease. Unfold them.



5. Tuck the corners up inside the tube.



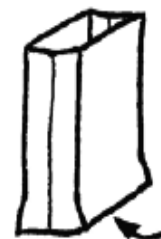
6. You now have a tube with two flaps, A and B.



7. Fold the upper flap A down on itself to the middle line



8. Paste the shaded edge of flap B very carefully.



9. Fold it over flap A and stick it down.

NOTE: IF YOU WANT TO STRENGTHEN THE BAG, STICK A STRIP OF PAPER ACROSS THE BOTTOM

Shopkeeper Change Cards



CHANCE CARD The shopkeeper has too many bags in stock and is therefore reducing the price he pays. You will be paid 1 ₮ for every 15 bags.	CHANCE CARD There is a shortage of bags so the price per batch of ten has risen from 1 ₮ to 2 ₮
CHANCE CARD The shopkeeper has changed the shape of the bags he orders - they now have to be half the size of the ones you've been making. Work out how to make them.	CHANCE CARD The shopkeeper has changed the shape of the bags he orders - they now have to be tall and narrow. Work out how to make them.



Family Expenses List

Essentials	Emergencies	Desirable
Food • Cooking fuel • Rice • Vegetables • Fish Cost: 15 ₮	Medicine • Antibiotics • Painkillers • Ointment for a relative Cost: 60 ₮	Clothes • Shoes • School uniform • Trousers Cost: 0.7 ₮
Paper • To make bags Cost: 12 ₮	Disaster • Dhaka is one of the most vulnerable cities in the world to earthquakes. You live in an informal settlement along the water's edge. Flooding causes damage to your family home. Cost: 40 ₮	Savings • Schools fees • Health seminar Cost: 8 ₮
Rent • Living with family Cost: 1 ₮	Travel • A relative living in rural has become ill Cost: 15 ₮	Entertainment • Celebrations • Festivals Cost: 3 ₮

NOTE: PRICES FOR ESSENTIALS ARE PER PERSON PER DAY

WILL YOU SURVIVE?



DISCUSS

To survive people often rely on negative coping mechanisms such as withdrawing children from school, child labour, child marriage, eating fewer meals and selling possessions, What effect would each of these actions have on the lives of those living in poverty?

Section One:



1. We earned _____ ₮ in 20 minutes
2. We would earn _____ ₮ in 1 hour
3. We would earn _____ ₮ in a 10-hour day
4. We would earn _____ ₮ in 1 week

Section Two:



5. The minimum cost (of essentials) for one person each day is:

Food and fuel: _____ ₮

Paper: _____ ₮

Rent: _____ ₮

Total: _____ ₮

6. The minimum cost (of essentials) for our family for one day _____ ₮
7. The minimum cost (of essentials) for our family for 1 week _____ ₮
8. If your family had worked a 10-hour day, would you have earned enough money to buy all the essentials for 1 day? If not how many were you short?

If you had more than enough for the essentials, how much money was left over for emergencies?



Poverty is a Complex Issue

It is more than a lack of income and resources and exists in many forms including:

- hunger and malnutrition
- limited access to education
- limited access to healthcare
- social discrimination and exclusion
- a lack of participation in decision-making



By taking action on poverty you are ensuring that we are moving towards a future where the sustainable development goals can be achieved. Any economic growth must be inclusive and provide sustainable jobs and promote equality in all sectors of society.

SPEAK ACT DO

Speak, Act, Do is a programme to support students and teachers in taking action on important global issues which impact our world!

Choose a topic, do your research, organise two actions (a Concern action and a local action) to address a global justice issue and then share this with other schools at our Agents of Change event!

Visit our website to find our simple guide to Speak Act Do or email schools@concern.net to find out more.

Below are a few ideas about how you can get involved!



Concern actions

- Start a campaign on social media to coincide with International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17th to raise awareness
- Create a piece of art or media about poverty - publish it in a newspaper or post it online
- Organise a Project US world café in your school so people can learn more about poverty
- Start a petition about a particular aspect of extreme poverty. You could link it to campaigns like climate change, education or healthcare

Local Actions

- Buy Fairtrade and ethically sourced products which mean that people are paid decent prices for their produce and can support their families, improving living conditions for the producers and their communities
- Could you live below the poverty line? Set a challenge in your school and get people to sign up and try experience what it would be like
- Research poverty in Ireland and make links with local organisations who work with people in poverty in your area
- Write to your local TD about poverty in Ireland - are there any bills going through the Dáil you can encourage them to support?

