

QUALITY EDUCATION

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

Quality education is the foundation for improving people's lives, in all parts of the world. However, many people around the world do not have access to education even at primary and secondary level. Major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels, however more must be done. Conflict, poverty and gender inequality are some of the biggest barriers that continue to keep children and young people out of education.

Use this resource to explore how education impacts on people's lives, the reasons why people are denied an education and what your students can do to take action.

What does quality education mean?

The aim of SDG4 is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning”. This means:



Education that suits the needs of all learners, in all places, from all backgrounds



Free primary and secondary education for all



A safe environment to learn in that is free from violence



Education facilities that have clean drinking water, toilets, electricity and are disability friendly



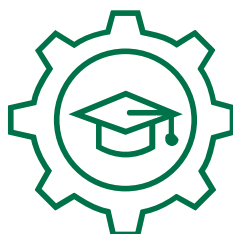
Education that is facilitated by qualified teachers

Educational opportunities are also important beyond school years – access to further education and technical and vocational training is vital for supporting people and communities to break free from poverty.

ACTIVITY ONE: Your education system

 20 minutes

Use this activity to get students thinking about what education should provide for people, communities and the world.



Ask the groups to consider:

- What will people learn and why?
- How will they learn?
- What will the physical environment be like?
- How will you achieve this?



Instructions

- Divide students into groups of four and ensure that each group has a sheet of paper and pens
- Their task is to design the future of education in Ireland. Give each group ten minutes to discuss their ideas and write/draw them on the paper
- Ask each group to present their ideas to the rest of the class



DEBRIEF:

Does the current education system meet the needs that you have outlined above now? What barriers do people face to getting an education here in Ireland and in other places around the world?

The COVID-19 pandemic closed schools around the world. What barriers to education did this bring here in Ireland and around the world?

EDUCATION FACTS AND STATISTICS

Globally, one in six children, adolescents and youth are not in primary or secondary school. Despite huge improvements since the year 2000, the number of out-of-school children has been rising in recent years, reaching 273 million in 2024. ([Global Education Monitoring Report, 2026](#))



- One in three children and young people who live in countries impacted by conflict or natural disasters are out of school. This means that these disasters impact their lives twice – once by taking away their education, and once in the future as they are more likely to face poverty due to a lack of education. ([Education Cannot Wait, 2026](#))
- Children born to women who can read are 50% more likely to survive past the age of five and every extra year a girl stays in school can increase her future income by 10 per cent. ([UNESCO, 2024](#))
- Every child in Ireland is entitled to free, state-run primary and post-primary education as well as two years free pre-school education. Attendance at full-time education is compulsory for all children between six and sixteen years of age
- Going to school doesn't always guarantee learning. Approximately, 6 out of 10 children and young people around the world are unable to reach minimum standards in reading and math by the end of primary school. (UNESCO, 2025) A lack of resources, support, qualified teachers and factors such as hunger and violence contribute to this.



10 BARRIERS STOPPING CHILDREN FROM GETTING AN EDUCATION



CLIMATE CHANGE



HUNGER AND POOR
NUTRITION



WAR AND CONFLICT



LACK OF TOILETS



RISK OF VIOLENCE



COST OF SUPPLIES
AND UNIFORMS



GENDER



UNPAID TEACHERS



CHILD/EARLY/FORCED
MARRIAGE



DISTANCE

BOX OUT THE BARRIERS

Build a display for your classroom or school - big or small - using boxes. The boxes will represent one of the barriers that prevent children from achieving an education. Ask students to decorate each box with words and images about each of the barriers.

Your model can get people thinking about what holds people back from being able to go to school.



ACTIVITY TWO: Education transformation

 25 minutes



Use this activity to explore how education can have a transformative impact on individuals, communities and the world.

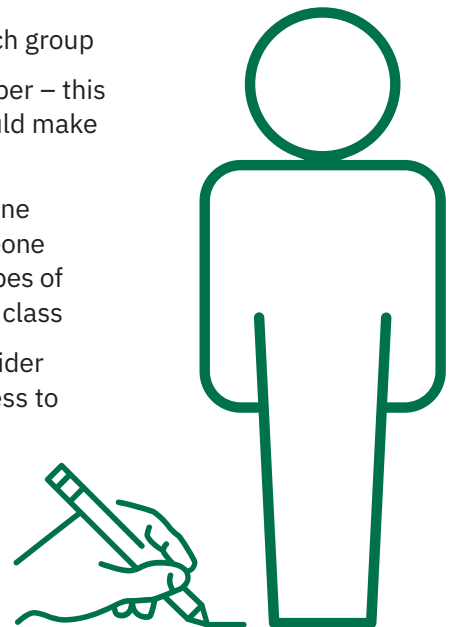
Need:

- Sheet of Paper
- Pens
- A copy of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) displayed for the whole group to see or printed off for each group



Instructions:

1. Divide students into groups of four and distribute pens and paper to each group
2. Ask each group to draw the outline of a person in the middle of their paper – this should be big enough to write inside. If you have enough space, you could make this life sized!
3. Give the groups seven minutes to discuss and write down **inside** the outline what qualities and characteristics they think an education may give someone (encourage students to think outside of the box and consider different types of education in this). Ask each group to feed back a few ideas to the whole class
4. Next, give students another seven minutes. This time, ask them to consider what the qualities and characteristics of a world full of people with access to education might be like. They will write these down **around** the outline of the person. Ask each group to feedback
5. Finally, ask each group to look at the SDGs. Ask them to discuss and choose five of the goals which they think could be tackled through wider access to education in all forms. You may wish to share some of the statistics on page three to help with this task



DEBRIEF:

Education has a transformative effect on individuals and communities everywhere, yet education is often underfunded across the world. Ask them to think about why this is the case.



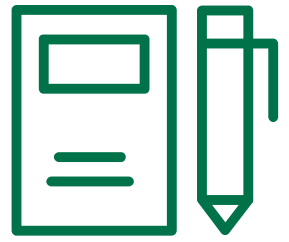
FOLLOW UP:

Take action on education funding!

Why not ask students to raise awareness about the importance of education both locally and globally. This could be a poster campaign in school, or you could invite in/write to local TD's to share their findings.

CONCERN AND EDUCATION

Concern works on education projects in 9 countries across the world. These range from ensuring that schools have resources to provide education to their students, making sure that there are sanitation facilities in school (such as toilets and running water) or providing psychosocial support and safe spaces to play for children who have experienced trauma.



Keeping girls in school in Bangladesh

Around the world, 133 million girls are still out-of-school around the world today ([UNESCO, 2026](#)). There are lots of reasons for this: it may be because of school fees, pregnancy or the fear of violence.

One other reason is because of periods. A lack of sanitary products or toilet facilities in school can mean that girls don't feel comfortable attending school when they have their period each month. A study found that approximately 1 in 10 girls in Sub-Saharan Africa missed school while on their period ([World Bank Blogs, 2025](#)). Regular time out of school impacts on the education girls receive, and many often drop out or become at risk of early marriage and pregnancy.

Concern provides training to teach girls hygiene and sanitation skills and advocates at a policy level to provide more support for menstrual health. This means that the girls are more likely to feel confident to attend school when they are on their periods and ensure that they stay in school in the long term!



A session with girls at Rajapur, High School, Bangladesh where they receive information about menstrual hygiene and the importance of hygiene, including nutrition information. Photo: Mohammad Rakibul Hasan/Concern Worldwide

Breaking Barriers to Education

Concern Worldwide's education programme in Kenya aims to improve access to quality education, improve the quality of teaching, and foster safe learning environments for vulnerable children. Their programmes have specifically focused on promoting STEM education, keeping girls in school, and supporting overall child well-being.

Our focus is to:

- Improve access to free and quality primary education for boys and girls.
- Improve learning outcomes by improving numeracy and literacy.
- Promote child wellbeing by providing children with life skills and engaging with caregivers.



can help lift households, communities and

ACTIVITY THREE:

Language barriers

 15 minutes



For children that are forced to leave their homes behind and become refugees, or even for those whose parents might have actively chosen to move, going to school when you don't speak the language – as well as being extremely daunting – can be a huge barrier to accessing education.

Preparation:

If you have children or young people in your class who speak other languages at home (or if there are any other staff in the school who do) you could see if they are comfortable writing the statements in their own languages to personalise this activity to your own school context. Some sensitivity is advised around this though.

Need:

- Print off the activity cards on page seven and then cut them up into individual tasks (they all say the same as the statements in English) keeping each language in a separate pile on your desk
- Paper and pens for each group
- You may want to have a prize for the 'winners'

Instructions

1. Divide students into groups of four and explain that they will be completing four activities. The aim is to be the group that complete the activities first
2. Each group will receive instructions in a different language – don't tell the students this and act as if it is perfectly normal! Designate a language to each group and make a note of this just for yourself
Note: you may have students in the group that speak the language which the instructions are in...that is okay as it will highlight an important point later on!
3. Give each group the first task and tell them to begin. Explain that when they have finished the first task, they will need to come to you for the second and that groups can't help each other as it's a race!
4. Some students may be able to understand or work out the instructions. Others may not be able to do anything – that is okay as it will be an important part of the discussion. Try to behave as if this is a perfectly reasonable thing to ask the students to do - even if students protest otherwise!
5. Stop the activity after about eight to ten minutes. If a group has completed the tasks, then you might want to give them a small prize



DEBRIEF:

- Ask the students in each group to describe how they felt when they received the tasks. Why did they feel this way?
- If any students were able to complete the task, ask the class how it felt to see others be able to complete them?
- Do they have any ideas how they might be able to support people in their own community who face this issue?
- Inclusivity is a key part to achieving SDG4 and language is only one barrier children and young people face in schools around the world. What other things might exclude people from getting the most from school?

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY:

- Ask students to create signposts in different languages (this could represent languages spoken in school or around Ireland) and display them in the classroom or around the school
- Are there any other ways that the school community could be more accessible and inclusive that they could work on or speak to the principal about?



STATEMENTS FOR ACTIVITY THREE

English

Russian

Romanian


1. Write your names on a sheet of paper and show the teacher
2. Draw a picture of a cat
3. Write down five facts about Ireland
4. Make a paper aeroplane

1. Напишите свои имена на листе бумаги и покажите учителю
2. Нарисуй кота
3. Напишите пять фактов об Ирландии
4. Сделай бумажный самолетик

1. Scrie numele pe o foaie de hirtie si arata profesorului.
2. Deseneaza o pisica
3. Scrie cinci fapte despre Irlanda
4. Construieste un avion de hirtie.

Spanish

Portuguese

Polish


1. Escribe tu nombre en una hoja de papel y muestralo a tu profesora
2. Dibuja un gato
3. Escribe 5 datos sobre Irlanda
4. Haz un avion de papel.

1. Escreva seu nome em uma folha de papel e mostre para sua professor
2. Desenhe um gato
3. Escreva 5 fatos sobre a Irlanda
4. Faça um aviao de papel

1. Napisz swoje imię na kartkę papieru i pokaz nauczycielowi
2. Narysuj kota
3. Napisz pięć faktów o Irlandii
4. Złóż samolot z papieru



A lack of access to education is a **BIG ISSUE** that plays a big part in:

- Increasing infant mortality rate
- Reducing the chances of individuals obtaining decent pay and work
- Keeping families and individuals living in poverty
- Making existing inequalities worse



...and as a consequence takes away peoples dreams, ambitions and rights.

By taking action on education access, you are taking a stand against the issues above and showing solidarity with all those impacted by this crisis.

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

- Organise an event (a play, a movie night) to educate and spread awareness about how important access to education is. One suggestion could be 'He Named Me Malala'
- Create a piece of art/a sculpture to display in school or your community to help people reflect on access to education and communicate how communities that Concern work with are impacted
- Organise a stunt or event for International Day of Education which takes place on January 24th every year to highlight how many children and young people around the world do not have access to education still

Local Actions

- Research about education inequality in Ireland and how it impacts on different communities. Is there an area in particular that you can try and make change in?
- Organise peer workshops in your school on the topic of education to help other students understand why access to quality and inclusive education is important for tackling other global issues
- Plan and create a photography/art exhibition to show other students what school is like around the world

