



Human rights and sanitation

Introduction

Access to water and sanitation are basic human rights, yet in many parts of the world having clean water and a toilet is a luxury. These lesson plans introduce the idea of human rights in the context of basic sanitation.

Curriculum links

The curriculum links below are not exhaustive but offer a guide as to where this set of lesson plans could fit into a specific subject.

They are of particular relevance when studying global development in **Geography**. They provide a good introduction to present day sanitation issues when studying **History** topics including Victorian Britain and the GCSE Medicine Through Time syllabus. In **Citizenship** studies, the activities link with investigations of global issues and in looking at how change can be achieved. The activities can be linked to **PSHE** when looking at the importance of hygiene and personal care.

Aims

- To consider what the differences are between needs and wants and whether these are different according to where you are.
- To think about whether adults and children share the same needs.
- To understand what is meant by human rights and introduce the Universal declaration of human rights and the Convention on the rights of the child.
- To understand that access to the most basic of needs is often denied in developing countries.
- To consider how best to raise awareness of important issues for different audiences.
- To plan an awareness raising campaign around an issue of interest related to sanitation either at home or abroad.

Keywords

Sanitation
Human rights
Rights

Needs
Wants
Awareness raising

Hygiene
Advocacy

Resources

Luxury item? film <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-T2eH7zrDJg>

Needs and wants cards (Resource 1)

Universal declaration of human rights <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

Convention on the rights of the child (Resource 2)

Source packs (Resource 3)

Let's talk about toilets! blog extract (Resource 4)

Amina's case study http://www.wateraid.org/documents/peoples_stories_amina.pdf

Gautam and Niladari Gupta's case study (Resource 5)

Project planning sheets (Resource 6)

Notes for teachers

This set of lesson plans introduces students to human rights through the issue of toilets and sanitation in both a UK and global context. It also allows students to express their opinions about the issues and draw upon their own personal experiences so that they are able to compare and contrast these with other people's experiences. The lessons act as a stimulus for debate and discussion around many development issues and can be used as they are or adapted and extended to explore the subject in more depth.

The lesson plans below can be used as the basis for a number of lessons, and allow the teacher to choose whether to cover all aspects of the plans or just a few. Some of the activities might be particularly suitable for homework or extension times (some are highlighted as such). All the resources referred to can be found at the end of the lesson plans.

Throughout the plans there are suggested questions to ask students. These can be used for written work or class discussion. They are a guide for using the resources and stimulus material and should be adapted to suit specific learning groups.

Lesson plans

| Key question | Activity | Resources |
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| What is a 'luxury'? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students what is meant by 'luxury'. Get them to brainstorm as many luxuries as they can and write them on the board. Watch Luxury item? http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-T2eH7zrDJg) Ask students whether they are surprised by the film. Would they consider a toilet to be a luxury? Why? Why not? Might the concept of luxury change according to where you live in the world? | Luxury item? film |
| What is the difference between 'needs' and 'wants'? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students what they think the difference is between a 'need' and a 'want'? Write up agreed definitions of each. Ask whether a want could be considered a luxury or is it different? In pairs or small groups, students should sort through the needs and wants cards. Make two piles – one pile should represent needs and one pile should represent wants. Go through the cards as a class and discuss any disagreements. Ask whether needs and wants might change depending on where you live. Why might this be the case? Students should give examples. Ask the students to look back at their needs and wants cards. In their pairs or groups they should agree on their top five needs and the reasons for their choice. As a class the top five choices should be discussed. Has anyone changed their mind? What are the top five needs as a class? Why are these | Needs and wants cards (Resource 1, pages 8 – 9) |

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| | <p>things so important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that many of these needs are considered to be so important that they are seen as 'rights'. Discuss what is meant by a right. Why do people need rights? Are children's rights different to those of adults? Why might this be the case? Which rights might be different for a child? | |
| What are human rights? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain to the class that there is a set of rights laid down by the United Nations which every human in the world is entitled to. This is called the Universal declaration of human rights http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/. The idea behind this is that all the countries which are members of the United Nations would strive to ensure that everyone would be able to enjoy these rights both within their own country and elsewhere. Ask students to look at the Universal declaration of human rights and compare it to their list of top five needs. Are they in the declaration? Is there anything they would add or take away? Why? | The Universal declaration of human rights |
| Are children's rights different to adult's rights? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain that the Universal declaration of human rights only covers adults and that it was felt that children have their own special needs that weren't covered by the declaration. For this reason the Convention on the rights of the child was created. Look at the summary of the convention. Explain to the students that they will be investigating rights in relation to our basic needs. Ask students to go through the summary and shade all the rights that relate to water, hygiene, health and sanitation. They should share the rights they have found with the rest of the class to ensure that none have been missed. Ask the class if they feel that they currently have these rights in the UK? They should explain their answers. | Summary of the Convention on the rights of the child (Resource 2, pages 10 -11) |
| Are toilets a problem in the UK? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to think of an occasion when access to a toilet has been a problem. Why was it a problem, what did they do and how did they feel about it? Ask students whether they think toilets are a problem in the UK. Why? Why not? Where might toilets be a problem? Do they think the effects of problems with toilets in the UK are the same as those in the developing countries shown in the video? Why does the state / availability of toilets matter? Explain that one of the biggest complaints aired in school councils in this country is about the state of school toilets. Some students find the experience of going to the toilet in school so distressing that they don't go until they get home. Ask students to share good and bad experiences of school | |

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| | <p>toilets. What kind of problems do they think could be caused by poor facilities in school? How might these problems be reduced?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In small groups conduct an audit or survey about the state of the toilets in school. Ask students what action they think they can take to improve the toilets in their school. Explain that there is a campaign for the improvement of toilet facilities in schools and that a charter of standards http://www.bog-standard.org/charter.aspx has been drawn up. Students should compare their survey results against the charter. • Each group should use the Bog Standard website http://www.bog-standard.org/ to research problems associated with poor school toilets. They should consider what improvements could be made to their school toilets and how they can encourage other students to support them. Each group should plan a presentation or produce a display that explains their findings and ideas for improvement, supported with facts that they have researched. They should present these to the rest of the class. As a class, the students should consider who in school they could put their findings to in order to achieve some of the changes and improvements they would like to see. <p>Optional extension activity: the class could plan a school toilets improvement project to try and achieve some of the changes that they have discussed. Using their ideas and research, they can plan their project using the project planning sheets (Resource 6).</p> | <p>Bog Standard website</p> <p>Project planning sheets (Resource 6, pages 16-18)</p> |
| <p>What are the facts about water, sanitation and hygiene? How do they fit in with human rights?</p> | <p>Write up the following facts on the board.</p> <p>Fact 1: “2.5 billion people do not have somewhere safe, private or hygienic to go to the toilet.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write up fact 1. Explain that this accounts for two fifths of the world’s population. Ask students what these facts tell us about human rights. Do we all enjoy human rights? Why might this not be the case everywhere? What reasons can students think of? Is it acceptable that this situation should exist? Who is, or should be, responsible for putting it right? • Focusing specifically on the first fact, ask students whether they find this fact surprising and what problems they think this could cause. In pairs they should list how not having somewhere to go to the toilet could affect someone’s life and whether this would be different for males / females / children. • Give each pair a set of sources to find out about the problems caused by not having somewhere safe, private or hygienic to go to the toilet. | <p>Source packs (Resource 3, pages 12-13)</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do their lists compare to what they have found out from the sources? They should add these effects to their lists. Explain that it is hard to imagine what life might be like without toilets if you have never had to go without. Even when we complain about toilets in this country, the experience is not quite the same. As a class read the Let's talk about toilets! blog extract about a British woman's experience of toilets in Ethiopia. How do they think they would cope with these conditions? What did they find most interesting / shocking about the woman's experiences? What if they had to live like this? What if there were no toilets in their school? What would they do? <p>Fact 2 : “2,000 children die every day from diseases linked to poor sanitation.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that students understand what is meant by the term 'sanitation'. Why do they think these deaths are linked to sanitation? Why might this be happening? Ask students to list reasons for children dying from diseases linked to poor sanitation and choose one way in which WaterAid is tackling poor sanitation to discuss with the rest of the class. Use the WaterAid website to research poor sanitation and WaterAid's work. | <p>Let's talk about toilets! blog extract (Resource 4, page 14)</p> |
| <p>How can people be taught about good hygiene?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students what they think should / could be done to help prevent deaths and illnesses due to poor hygiene and sanitation. Read Amina's case study. What methods are used to spread the important messages about sanitation and hygiene? Why are these effective for children? Read about Gautam and Niladari Gupta from Patel Pali village, India and their local youth hygiene group. How do they spread their messages? Ask students to imagine that they have been asked to prepare a presentation about good hygiene for young people of their own age in the UK. What methods would they use and why do they think these would be effective? Would these methods need to be different to those used in India? Do they think it's important that people know about the problems with hygiene and sanitation in developing countries? What could people in the UK do to help? Students are likely to come up with lots of ideas about fundraising. It is important to stress to the students that raising awareness about these | <p>Amina's case study</p> <p>Gautam and Niladari Gupta's case study (Resource 5, page 15)</p> |

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| | <p>issues is just as important as raising money. Ask them why this might be. Who might they raise their concerns about hygiene and sanitation with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask each student to choose one fact about hygiene and sanitation that they have found of particular interest or most surprising. They should design a poster that highlights their chosen fact and a solution. They should make their poster bold and eye catching and may want to use WaterAid's website http://www.wateraid.org for further information, images and ideas. A display could be created of all the posters, or students could give assemblies about the issues to younger students in order to inspire action. <p>Optional extension activity: This can be extended to look at how organisations lobby governments and campaign for change and could lead to students carrying out their own awareness raising campaign in school. Students should look at ways in which WaterAid spreads its messages and at the campaigns section of the website http://www.wateraid.org/get-involved/campaigns which outlines WaterAid's campaigns to raise awareness and involve people in their work.</p> <p>Which of these campaigns and methods do they think are most effective? Which attracted them and why? Do they think different campaigns are targeted at different people? Why might this be the case? Why might there be lots of different campaigns? Use the project planning sheets to plan an awareness raising campaign about sanitation and toilets in developing countries. Students could choose to focus on one country or on the issues in general.</p> | <p>Advocacy sheet</p> <p>WaterAid campaigns</p> |
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Resource 1: Needs and wants cards

Instructions: *print and cut out a set of cards for each group of students.*

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| Food | Water |
| Bed | Winter coat |
| House | Entertainment |
| Sports facilities | Shower |

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Bath | Transport |
| Hospital | Internet |
| Phone | Toilet facilities |
| Books | School |

Resource 2: The Convention on the rights of the child

The Convention on the rights of the child has 54 separate 'articles' (or rights). All the rights are connected and considered to be of equal importance. This is a summary of the convention. Articles 43 to 54 which explain how governments and organisations should work to ensure children's rights are protected are not included below.

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| Article 1 Everyone under the age of 18 has these rights. | Article 7 Children have the right to a name and a nationality. | Article 13 Children have the right to find out things and share their views with others in any way they wish unless it is offensive. |
| Article 2 All children are entitled to these rights regardless of who they are, where they live, what their parents do, their language or religion, whether they are male or female, their culture, whether they are disabled or if they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly under any circumstances. | Article 8 Children have the right to an identity – an official record of who a child is. | Article 14 Children have the right to choose their own religion and beliefs. Parents should help children decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for them. |
| Article 3 All adults must do what is best for a child. When adults make decisions, they must consider how this will affect children. | Article 9 A child has the right to live with their parent(s) unless it is not in the best interests of the child. Children have the right to live with a caring family. | Article 15 Children have the right to choose their own friends and join or set up groups as long as it does not harm anyone else. |
| Article 4 Governments are responsible for ensuring that children's rights are protected. They must help families protect these rights and create environments where children can grow and reach their potential. | Article 10 If a child lives in a different country to their parents, they have the right to live together. | Article 16 Children have the right to privacy. |
| Article 5 Families must help children exercise their rights and ensure they are protected. | Article 11 Children must be protected from kidnapping. | Article 17 Children have the right to get information that is important to their well being. Adults must ensure that the information being obtained is not harmful and should help children find and understand the information. |
| Article 6 Children have the right to life. | Article 12 Children have the right to give their opinion and for adults to listen and take children's opinions seriously. | Article 18 Children have the right to be brought up by their parent(s) if this is possible. |

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| Article 19 Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or mistreated physically or emotionally. | Article 27 Children have the right to food, clothes, a safe place to live, and to have their basic needs met so that they are not disadvantaged in any way from doing anything. | Article 35 A child cannot be kidnapped or sold. |
| Article 20 Children have the right to special care and help if they cannot live with their parent(s). | Article 28 Children have the right to a good quality education. Children should be encouraged to go to school. | Article 36 Children have the right to be protected from any kind of exploitation. |
| Article 21 Children have the right to care and protection if they are adopted or in foster care. | Article 29 A child's education should use and develop their talents and abilities. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. | Article 37 A child cannot be punished in a cruel or harmful way. |
| Article 22 Children have the right to special protection and help if they are refugees in addition to all the rights in this convention. | Article 30 Children have the right to follow their culture and religion and speak their language. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right. | Article 38 Children have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war. |
| Article 23 If a child has a disability, they have the right to special care and education in addition to the rights in this convention in order to be able to live a full life. | Article 31 Children have the right to play and rest. | Article 39 Children have the right to help if they have been hurt, neglected or badly treated. |
| Article 24 Children have the right to the best healthcare possible, safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean, safe environment and information to help them stay well. | Article 32 Children have the right to be protected from work that harms them and is bad for their health and education. If a child works, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly. | Article 40 Children have the right to legal help and fair treatment in a justice system that respects their rights. |
| Article 25 If a child lives in care or away from home, they have the right to have their living arrangements checked regularly to ensure they are in their best interests. | Article 33 Children have the right to be protected from harmful drugs and the drug trade. | Article 41 If the laws of a country provide better protection of a child's rights than the Convention, then those laws should apply. |
| Article 26 Children have the right to help from the government if they are poor or in need. | Article 34 Children have the right to be free from sexual abuse. | Article 42 Children have the right to know their rights. Adults should know about these rights and ensure that children learn about them. |

Resource 3: Source packs

Examine the images, read the stories and view the videos (links are provided below) to investigate the problems caused by not having somewhere safe, private or hygienic to go to the toilet.



Photo A: An unhygienic makeshift latrine, Motijharna slum, Chittagong City, Bangladesh



Photo B: Slum scene, Zakir's slum, Dhaka, Bangladesh



Photo C: A hanging latrine in Dhaka, Bangladesh



Photo D: Unhygienic community latrine, Antananarivo Province, Madagascar



Photo E: A sewage channel running between houses in Woriziehi, Ghana



Photo F: A child next to flowing sewage, Nabuado, Uganda

Resource 3: Source packs (cont.)

Links to films

Water Works animation

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wX4Cfu3Dd2E>

A film about the importance of water and sanitation.

Life without loos: Chef

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhJm8Mdgc5Q>

A film about what life might be like without toilets.

Imagine

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cf09XUNh_H4

A film that shows the effects of living without toilets and clean water.

Personal stories

Personal story 1: Living without a toilet

Baby is 15 years old and lives in a slum in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India.



"We used to face so many problems when we needed the toilet. We didn't have anywhere to go for open defecation as there is nowhere private here. When we tried to go the boys used to follow us and we felt shy and afraid. Because we were so scared to go outside we used to end up having to go inside our houses, on the floor, just like children and then clean it up. It was awful. Now we have constructed pit latrines which make a big difference, but we are hoping to get sewerage too."

Personal story 2: Poor sanitation

Annette Namougabo lives in a slum called Bwaise 2 in Kampala, Uganda and is pregnant with her first child.



"I wouldn't like to have child my here. The environment is filthy. If I have my child here I am afraid it will get cholera when it is young. I get diarrhoea from the flies that breed in this channel outside my house. They come in and land on the food, we cannot exclude them. We have tried to drain this channel but in vain. People come and dump large amounts of waste in this channel late at night. I really don't want to stay here because it is a bad environment. I cannot go to a better place yet. I use a public lavatory which is 100m from my house. It is not safe to go there at night. I have to go to the toilet at home and throw it outside. This place is overcrowded with houses and there is no room for a toilet with every household."

Resource 4: Let's talk about toilets! blog extract

The following blog extract was written by a British woman living in Ethiopia. She describes her experiences with toilets during her time spent there. She lived in both rural and urban parts of the country.

Let's talk about toilets!

Seriously, the toilet perils of travelling don't get talked about enough. I think it's because most of the Africa travelogues I've read are written by men and, I don't care what anyone says about men and women being equal, but men simply don't have the same issues when it comes to toilets. They can generally pee anywhere (and they do... every time I turn a corner there seems to be a man peeing up a fence or a lamp post or on a parked car) but for women it's not so easy.

For a start, sometimes a toilet, however basic, doesn't actually exist. At the school where I work there are no toilet facilities (they are currently being built) and there is very little cover to enable you to pee behind a tree. Consequently, if I'm at the school from early morning until the evening I have to either drive back to the town to pee (which makes me feel utterly ridiculous!) or just hold it. So I try and plan to only stay for a few hours at a time, and ration the amount I drink (not so easy when it's really hot!).

So wherever you're going and whatever you're doing, you try and make sure there are toilets. I don't mean I have to have a western style toilet, I'm quite happy with a hole in the ground – in fact, sometimes these can be a more pleasant experience. Toilet wise, I have done things I never would have done in the UK. I have peed while a goat's watched, peed in a group, behind a tree (okay, I've done that before!) and most memorably, peed in a hat (don't ask!).

I'm not asking for luxury toilet facilities. The one thing I do ask for is some kind of privacy – it amazes me that in most of Ethiopia, doors do not seem to be an essential part of the toilet experience. In one café where we once stopped for breakfast, people eating had a perfect (and I am talking cinema-scope) view of anyone using the toilet as there was no door. This is okay for men, but for women...

Then there's the issue of cleanliness. Once you've overcome the worry of the world seeing your bottom, you then have the problem of where you are putting it. Toilets in Ethiopia go from perfectly nice to really smelly and disgusting. There's a particular toilet that will always stick in my mind. The floor was covered in something that definitely wasn't mud and as I gingerly tiptoed my way through it, I dropped my shawl! Argh! I could have cried!

So cleanliness is not always a given and you don't get much privacy, even in hotels and restaurants. You don't always get toilet paper either. When I first started travelling around Ethiopia, this came as a bit of a surprise and I got caught short a few times. I soon learnt to take any toilet paper from wherever I could find it in case of emergencies!

Of course all these problems become a thousand times worse when you factor in stomach bugs and women's issues. I know, I know! But nobody talks about this stuff, and it's so important. How can I go to work and school when I might need the toilet at a moments notice and popping behind a tree won't cut it? I'd just rather stay away.

There are definitely lessons to be learnt from this. Always be prepared for variations in what is considered a toilet, build up those thigh muscles for squatting and always carry your own toilet paper!

Resource 5: Gautam and Niladari Gupta's case study



Gautam Gupta lives in Patel Pali village in India. He is the founding member of the youth hygiene group which he formed with others from the cricket team. Now there are 29 men in total involved in hygiene education.

“Before we were just the cricket team, then we decided we had to do something to make a difference as well rather than just playing cricket. More members joined us and now there are 29 of us.

“We use the posters to explain about the issues. We ask people where they go to the toilet and then explain how many bacteria and viruses there are in faeces and explain the dangers. We then explain that by going to the toilet outside in the open they are eating their own and other people's faeces. Then we explain how this is happening – by talking about how the waste mixes with water, and if you drink from open sources you also drink the waste. If you go in fields, flies will sit on your faeces and then they will land on people's food and vomit and then you eat the food. Dogs also eat the faeces and then come inside the house. We also explain that if you aren't washing your hands and then are feeding your children you are feeding them with faeces.



“After all this we ask them, if they don't want to eat faeces what should they do? Then the people themselves say that they must use latrines, wash their hands, cover their food, use water from handpumps and keep the water off the floor. We then explain which diseases you can prevent by doing this – diarrhoea, amoebic dysentery and typhoid.

“In the first year 300 people had diarrhoea and this reduced to 150 last year – a 50% reduction. We would like to see everyone constructing latrines and carrying out proper hygiene practices then diseases will go down and this will increase their economic standards. If they don't get sick, they don't have to pay for a doctor.”



Niladari Gupta is a member of the girls' hygiene group.

“We discuss these things with our friends in school and drama, and we formed this group. Even after the project ends, we will continue, as we need to keep clean. We are able to attend school more now as we are less ill. We have a safe water supply, I get it from a water tank. It is safe because the water tank is cleaned every month. The latrines are under construction at my school. At the moment I go in the open and I am looking forward to the privacy.”

Resource 6: Project planning sheets

Use the following sheets to action plan your project.

1. Brainstorm ideas for your project.

2. Discuss and consider the advantages and disadvantages of each idea. Are they realistic and achievable? Which idea has been chosen and why?

3. What will your project be called?

4. What is the aim of your project? What do you hope to have achieved by the end of it?

5. When will you carry out your project? Where will your project take place? Who will benefit from it?

Resource 6: Project planning sheets (cont.)

6. Write a short description of your project.

7. Action plan: Who? What? By when?

Think of all the things that need to be done to make your project a success. Break it down into separate tasks and think about who will do what and by when.

| Task / activity | Who will do it? | Deadline | Completed (tick) |
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8. Who (people from your community / an organisation / school) might be able to help you with your project?

Resource 6: Project planning sheets (cont.)

9. Will you need any funding? Where might this money come from?

10. What resources / materials do you need to carry out your project? Where will these come from?

11. How will you know your project has been successful?

12. How will you evaluate and review your project?

13. How will you publicise your project and get others involved?

Good luck with your project!

Credits and acknowledgements

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Gautam and Niladari Gupta's case study photos: WaterAid/Marco Betti

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Download
lesson plans
and films

Book a
speaker or
a workshop

Get your
class talking
about water