

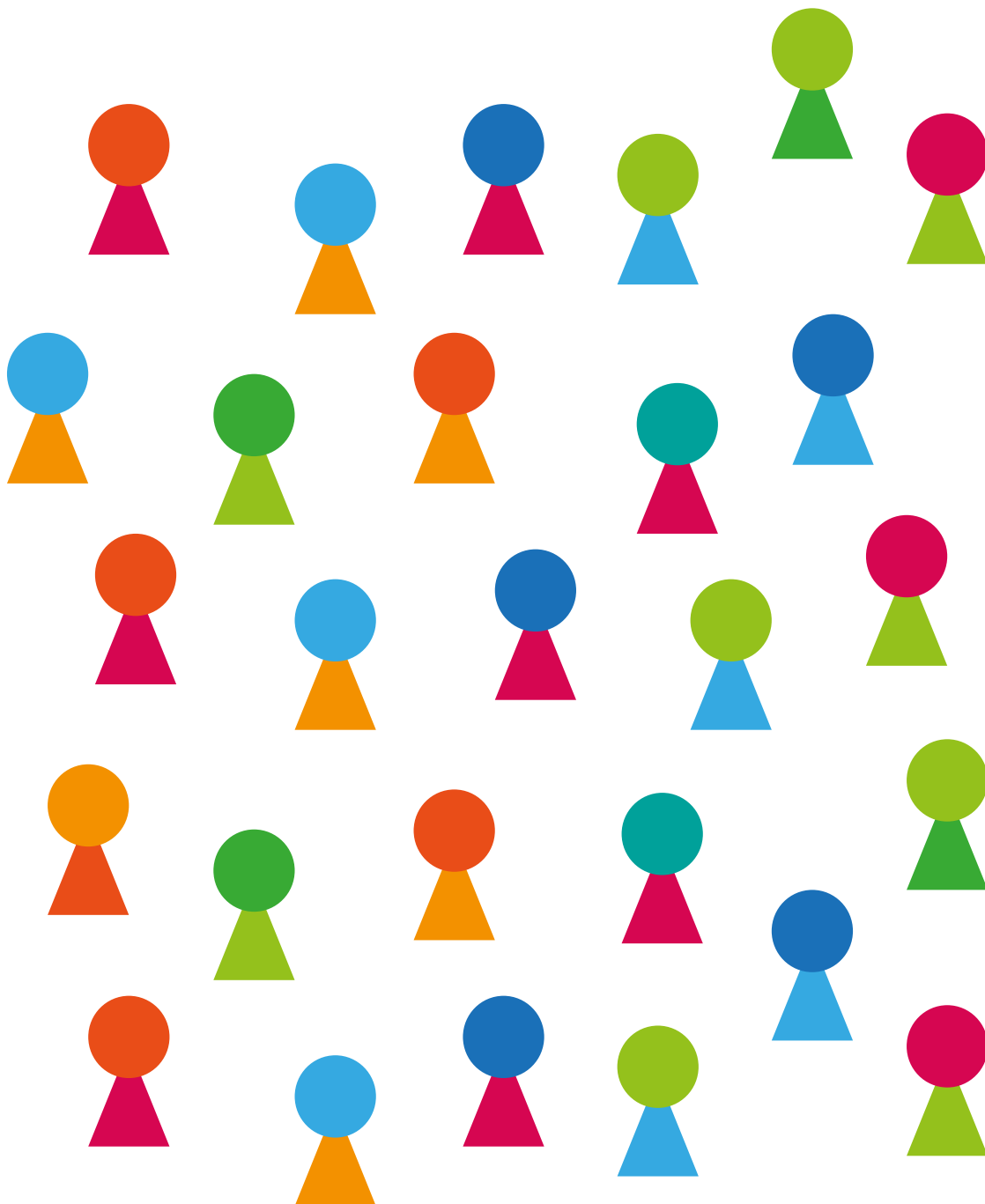
Education unlocks opportunities for girls

Activity pack for ages 11–16



About this resource

Every child has the right to an education, whatever their gender. Educating girls has huge benefits for individuals, communities and countries. However, millions of girls and young women in countries around the world are missing out on school. Although a lot of progress has been made, more needs to be done to help break down the barriers to education, particularly for girls. These cross-curricular activities for ages 11-16 encourage learners to think critically about some of the reasons why so many children and young people (and girls in particular) are still denied the chance to go to school. Learners will consider the impacts of gender stereotyping on people's lives and think about what action they could take to help make life fairer for everyone, whatever their gender.



Activity 1 – Agree or disagree?

Learners will use an agreement line to explore and discuss their thoughts and feelings in connection with education and gender. Do you think everyone has the right to an education? Is every child able to go to school? Are girls more likely to be out of school than boys?

Activity 2 – Why are some children missing out on education?

This activity uses a reading mystery to investigate some of the barriers that children, and girls in particular, may face in accessing education. Reading mysteries are a great way of developing critical thinking and inference skills. Learners will need to read through a set of clues, some of which may be more useful than others, to help them solve the 'mystery' and be ready to explain and justify their responses.

Activity 3 – Thinking about gender

By considering whether certain careers are associated with particular genders, learners will reflect on how and why stereotypes about gender exist, and begin to explore the impacts of these on people's lives. Learners will find out how Theirworld is working in partnership with others to help break down some of these stereotypes and support girls to develop skills for the future.

Activity 4 – Challenging gender stereotypes

In this final activity, learners will think critically about how gender stereotypes might affect the rights that every child is entitled to, including the right to an education. They will learn how two Theirworld Global Youth Ambassadors are speaking up for education, and girls' education especially. Learners will then discuss possible actions they could take at school to help tackle gender stereotyping.

Terms of use

Please feel free to print, copy and distribute these materials in their entirety for non-commercial educational purposes only. However, alteration, modification, extraction or reproduction of any part of these materials and/or commercial use is prohibited.

Notes for educators

- These flexible activities are intended to support your teaching rather than direct it. Additional teaching may be required to develop learners' knowledge and skills, as well as their understanding of some concepts.
- The activities could be used as standalone sessions for a drop-down (off-timetable) day or to enrich the teaching of different subjects and topics. An overview of potential curriculum links is provided below.
- The approximate timings given for each activity are a guide only. We recommend completing all the activities over a series of lessons, if possible, but educators may prefer to use a selection depending on their learners' needs and the time available. Some additional activity ideas are included at the end of the resource.
- Learning outcomes are provided at the start of each activity. No starters and plenaries are included as it is assumed that educators will want to plan these individually.
- All activity and resource sheets are included in this pack. An accompanying slideshow is provided as a separate download.
- Where possible, the activities are differentiated to help you meet the needs of different learners in your class. This guidance might also be useful in adapting some of the activities for younger and older learners. It may also be helpful to refer to the Education unlocks opportunities for girls resources for ages 7-11.
- This resource explores some of the barriers to education, including poverty, conflict, and gender-based violence and harassment. Learners will also investigate how gender stereotyping can affect people's lives and opportunities, and the rights of girls and women in particular. Some of the activities may need to be adapted if there are children and young people in the class with direct experience of these issues. If learners feel comfortable and 'if the discussion complies with a school's safeguarding standards', it may be helpful to sensitively draw on these personal experiences to further develop the awareness and understanding of others in the group. Depending on learners' age and the context, teachers may also wish to acknowledge and discuss inequality issues connected to LGBTQIA+.
- We have also put together a list of useful links and resources to help support any additional teaching about the issues explored in these activities.
- We hope these materials will be of interest and use but ultimately defer to you to check and decide whether these materials are suitable. We do not provide any warranty or guarantee, or accept liability, as to the accuracy, performance and suitability of the materials or information provided for any particular purpose.

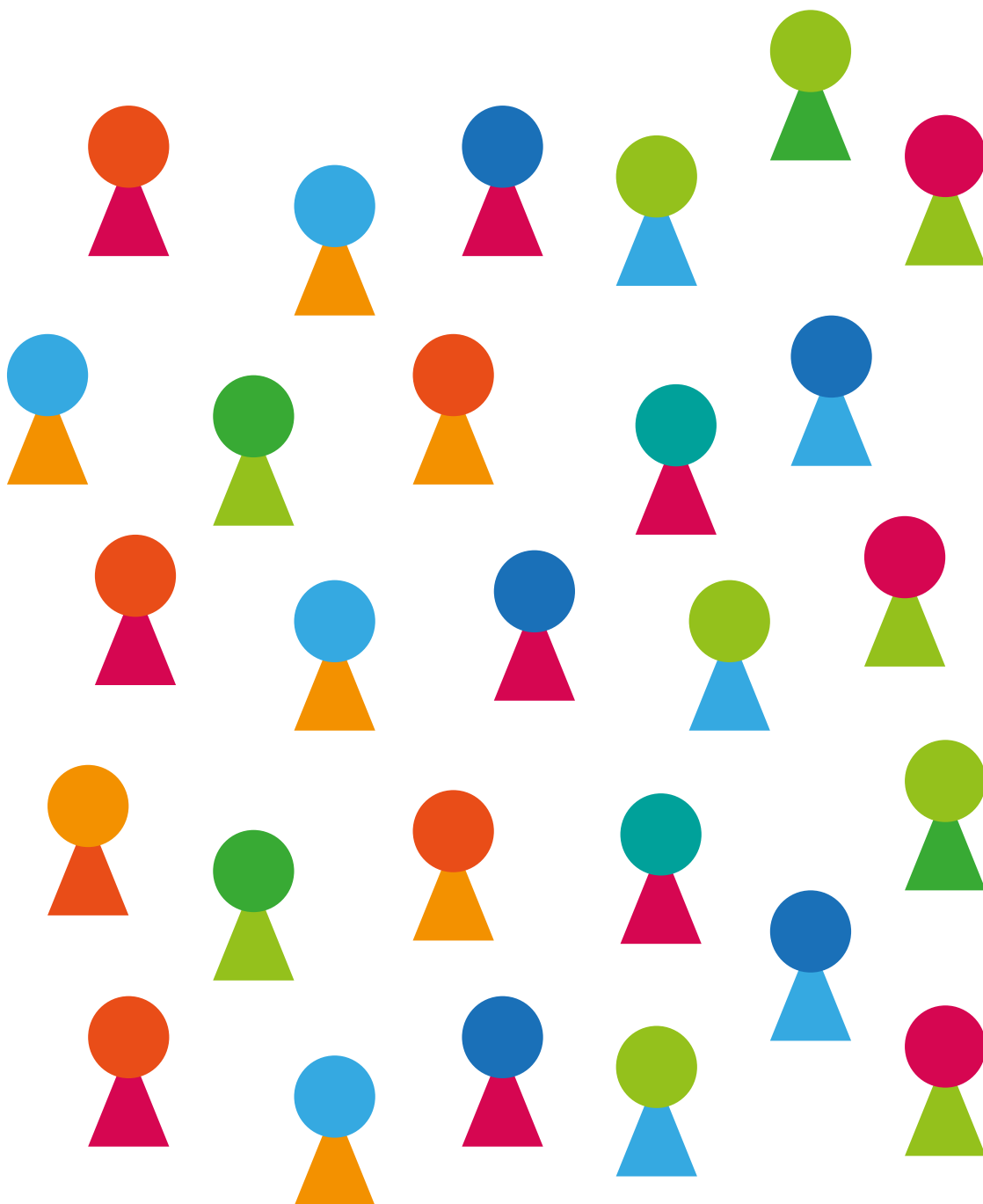
Curriculum links

England: Citizenship; English; Personal, Social and Health Education

Northern Ireland: Language and Literacy; Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Scotland: Health and Well-being; Languages; Social Studies

Wales: Health and Well-being; Humanities; Languages; Literacy and Communication



Background information

Girls have the same right to education as boys. Educated girls can make informed choices – and from a far better range of options. Educating girls saves lives and builds stronger families, communities and economies.

However, girls and young women in many parts of the world miss out on school every day. According to UNICEF estimates, around 129 million girls are out of school. Although there has been an overall improvement in gender equality in education in recent decades, some parts of the world are falling behind in the progress being made. More than two thirds of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education but there are still many countries where girls are more likely to be out of school than boys. Some countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria, have seen attacks on girls' education and threats to close down schools.

The barriers to girls' education are many. Girls may be marginalised and are out of school simply because they are girls and their education is not the cultural norm. There may be legal, religious and traditional practices that discriminate against girls having the chance to receive an education. Their chances of a quality education are even smaller if they come from a family living with poverty or displaced by conflict, live in a rural area or have a disability. Factors such as early marriage or pregnancy, work pressures, domestic duties and care responsibilities can all take girls out of school.

About Theirworld

Theirworld is a global children's charity committed to ending the global education crisis and unleashing the potential of the next generation.

A quality, inclusive and equitable education gives children and young people the skills and opportunities they need to succeed in life. There are 250 million children around the world who were not in school. Of those, 72 million have had their education interrupted by conflicts and emergencies. The pandemic affected the education of more than 90% of the world's children and further worsened the global education crisis.

Through our campaigning and advocacy work we are working to reshape the global mindset around the importance of education and development for young people. A total of 100,000 children and young people have been directly supported by our projects over the past 10 years. From double-shift schools for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, to computer skills for girls in Kenya; from supporting psychosocial support for displaced children in emergencies, to breakthrough scientific insights on the effects of preterm birth, Theirworld is proud to be agile, innovative and bold in our approach.

Activity 1 – Agree or disagree?

25 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- discuss their thoughts and feelings about issues connected with education and gender
- identify reasons why going to school is important
- start to explore some of the barriers that might prevent children and young people from accessing an education and why in some places girls are affected more than boys

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 2-7)
- A large open space such as the playground or a school hall. Alternatively, the classroom could be used by moving chairs and tables to one side.
- 'Agree' and 'disagree' signs (optional)

What to do:

- 1** Ask learners to imagine a line from one side of the space to another. Teachers may wish to label one side of the space 'agree' and the other side 'disagree' (see PPT slide 2).
- 2** Tell learners that you are going to call out a series of statements. For each statement, learners need to position themselves along this line to show the extent to which they agree or disagree. The closer someone is to an end of the line, the more they agree or disagree with that particular statement. An alternative approach is to ask children to each place a marker somewhere on the line to show their position.
- 3** Before starting, agree some ground rules as a class such as respecting and listening to the ideas of others. Explain that there are not necessarily any right or wrong answers. Everyone will have their own opinion that falls somewhere on the line.
- 4** Teachers may wish to call out a couple of practice statements to familiarise learners with using an agreement line, such as 'I love football' or 'I hate chocolate'.
- 5** Read out some or all of the statements below. For each statement, allow some thinking time before asking learners to move into their position on the line.
Agreement line statement
 - School is important.
 - I love school.
 - Everyone has the right to an education.
 - Every child is able to go to school.
 - Girls are more likely to be out of school than boys.
 - More children go to school now than 15 years ago.
 - Young people who complete secondary school are more likely to live a healthy life.
 - Everyone should be treated the same, whatever gender they are.
 - Everyone is treated the same, whatever gender they are.

-
- 6** Invite learners in different places on the line to share a few words about why they have chosen that position. Encourage learners to respond to the viewpoints of others, for example, through asking questions or by building on the thoughts and ideas of others. Teachers may wish to provide opportunity for learners to move their position on the line after listening to the reasoning of others.
-
- 7** The background information on PPT slides 3-7 could be used to support any follow-up discussion.
-
- 8** Finish by explaining that in the following activities, learners will be finding out more about the barriers to education that some children and young people face, and starting to think about potential solutions.
-

Differentiation

Make it easier or more difficult:

Some of the agreement line statements could be omitted depending on the time available, and the context and age of the learners they are working with. Teachers may also wish to replace some of the statements to support or challenge learners.



Activity 2 – Why are some children missing out on education?

45 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- identify some of the barriers that children and young people may face in accessing education
- think critically about why girls might be more likely to miss out on school, using evidence in a text to justify their responses
- participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 9-10)
- Copies of the *Reading mystery cards*
- Pairs of scissors

What to do:

1

Ask learners to think of possible reasons why a child or young person might not be able to go to school? Ask learners to talk with a partner before discussing their ideas as a class. Make the point that some of these barriers might be temporary, for example, a child being ill or schools being forced to close because of snow. However, other barriers might result in a child missing out on all or most of their education.

2

Explain that learners are going to be solving a two-part mystery to try and answer two questions:

- Why are some children and young people missing out on education?
- Why might girls be more likely to be out of school?

3

Organise learners into groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the first set of *reading mystery cards* – *Why are some children and young people missing out on an education?* Explain that these cards provide a set of clues, some of which may be more useful than others. Learners should cut out and read these statements, and then work as a group to consider their response to this question.

4

Encourage learners to identify any links between the different clues. It may be helpful for them to group the clues in ways that help explain their response to others. Learners can choose to leave out some cards if they feel this information is less relevant. Teachers may also wish to provide blank cards for learners to add their own reasons.

5

When learners are ready, allow time for each group to feedback their response to the rest of the class. Encourage learners to justify their answers and comment on the responses of other groups. It may be useful to record a class list of these education barriers on the board for reference. A list of potential barriers is provided on PPT slides 8-9.

- 6 Explain that learners are now going to be thinking about why girls might be particularly affected by some of these barriers. Spend a few minutes discussing learners' own ideas, encouraging them to give reasons for why they think this.
-
- 7 Give each group the second set of *reading mystery cards* – *Why might girls be more likely to be out of school?* As before, learners should cut out and read the statements, and then work as a group to consider their response to this second question. As before, encourage learners to consider any possible connections between the different clues, as well as any links with the first set of mystery cards.
-
- 8 Invite each group to feedback their response, again asking them to justify their answers and comment on the responses of other groups.
-
- 9 Discuss their ideas as a whole class. Possible discussion points include:
- Do you think these are barriers for children and young people all over the world or just in certain countries or places within a country? Why do you think this? Point out that some of these barriers, such as being hungry or facing language barriers will be a reality for some children and young people in all countries, including the UK. Other barriers such as overcrowded classrooms and not having school toilets are likely to be more country-specific (although not all children within a certain country will face these challenges).
 - What do you think are the causes of some of these barriers? Explain that these causes are complex and all of these barriers are interlinked. For example, living in extreme poverty will be connected with not having enough food to eat. Conflict might be caused by the political situation in a country or place; violence and harassment might be linked to gender.
 - Do you think these obstacles have got bigger or smaller over time? What do you think will happen in the future? Remind learners of the progress that has been made in recent decades to overcome some of these challenges. For example, there are more than a billion fewer people living in extreme poverty today than there were in 1990. However, factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic, rising inflation and the climate crisis are threatening this progress.
 - What impacts might these barriers have on other aspects of children's lives, besides education? Explain that many of these barriers will impact the lives of children both in and out of school in lots of different ways. For example, being hungry will also have consequences for a child's health and well-being. Conflict may result in someone having to flee home and be separated from their family and friends.
 - How might education help in overcoming some of these challenges? Point out that education doesn't just benefit individuals, it is also key in creating a kinder, fairer and more sustainable world for everyone.
 - Why else might a child not be able to go to school? Encourage learners to suggest other potential factors.
-

Differentiation

Make it easier:

Give groups a selection of the reading mystery cards rather than the complete set.

Make it more difficult:

Challenge learners by asking them to write a summary of their response to one or both questions.

Activity 3 – Thinking about gender

30 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- identify gender stereotypes and question some of these views and perceptions
- start to consider how gender stereotyping might affect the opportunities someone has in life
- investigate ways in which people are taking action to tackle gender inequality

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 8-16)
- Copies of the Skills for the future and *Improving digital skills* case studies (optional) and the *Thinking about gender* resource sheet
- Large sheets of paper, pairs of scissors

What to do:

- 1** Show PPT slide 8 and ask learners to draw a person doing one of these jobs (teacher, firefighter, construction worker and nurse). Explain that learners should just do a quick sketch, they could use stick people if they want. Alternatively, learners could be asked to come up with any words they would use to describe one of these careers (these could be written or shared verbally).
- 2** Ask learners to share and talk about their ideas with a partner. Why have they drawn/described the person in this way? Did they draw/describe someone of a particular gender and if so why?
- 3** Briefly discuss their ideas as a class. Point out that what we think about how something or someone is might be based on what we have experienced or seen in their own lives. For example, we might know a firefighter who is a certain gender. Our ideas might also be influenced by stereotypes.
- 4** Use PPT slides 9-10 to discuss what stereotypes are. Invite learners to share any examples of stereotypes they are aware of. If learners, feel comfortable, they may like to share any personal experiences they have had of being stereotyped.
- 5** Explain that learners are going to be thinking a bit more about gender stereotypes. These are commonly held views about how a person should be or act based on the gender they are perceived to be. Ask learners to share any examples of gender stereotypes they have heard of, some examples are provided on PPT slide 11.
- 6** Organise learners into groups and give each group a large sheet of paper. Ask learners to divide their sheet of paper into three columns, with the headings: 'Female', 'Male' and 'Any gender' (see PPT slide 14). Note that there are many different gender identities and teachers may wish to acknowledge and/or include other gender identities in this sorting activity.

- 7 Distribute copies of the Thinking about gender resource sheet. Ask learners to cut out the cards and then decide which heading to place each one under based on whether the career is perceived to be 'Female', 'Male' or 'Any gender'. Learners could be asked to sort these careers based on their personal views as a group or according to what they think the perceptions of society in general are.
- 8 Share and discuss learners' groupings as a class. Possible discussion points are provided on PPT slide 13.
- 9 Ask learners to think about what career they would like to have when they are older. Discuss how they would feel if they were told that they couldn't do that job because of their gender. Do learners think these gender stereotypes are fair? Ask learners to talk with a partner before discussing their ideas as a class.
- 10 Show PPT slide 16 and explain that stereotypes can lead to gender inequality – where people are treated differently and unfairly because of their gender or sex.
- 11 Share the statistics on PPT slide 15 and discuss learners' responses to these. Possible discussion questions include: How do these inequalities make you feel? What do you think are the causes of these inequalities?
- 12 Explain that people all over the world are taking action to challenge gender stereotypes and make life fairer for everyone, whatever their gender. Share the examples of the work Theirworld is doing in partnership with others to break down some of these stereotypes and support girls and women to develop digital skills for the future (see PPT slide 16). Alternatively, provide copies of the case studies for learners to read.
- 13 Finish by reminding learners that gender stereotypes aren't just connected with the career that someone might have, they can affect many other aspects of people's lives. Explain that in the next activity, learners will be thinking more about the impacts of gender stereotypes on people's lives, as well as considering possible actions they could take at school to challenge gender stereotyping.

Differentiation

Make it more difficult:

Challenge learners by asking them to think of their own examples of careers to sort.

Activity 4 – Challenging gender stereotypes

45 min+



Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- discuss and describe how gender stereotyping might affect children's rights
- recognise some ways in which gender stereotypes might be promoted
- consider possible actions that they and others could take at school to challenge gender stereotyping

What you need:

- Slideshow (slides 3, 11, 17-20)
- Copies of the *Speaking up for girls' education* case study (optional) and *Challenging gender stereotypes* resource sheet

What to do:

1

Recap learning from the previous activity by asking learners to talk with a partner about any examples of gender stereotypes they are aware of. For example, these might be things learners have heard people say, watched on television, viewed online or read in a book. If learners feel comfortable to do, they could also share with their partner any experiences they (or people they know) have had of being told they can't do something or treated differently because of their gender. Teachers may wish to first revisit the examples of gender stereotypes on PPT slide 11.

2

Briefly discuss learners' ideas as a class. Talk about the possible impacts of these gender stereotypes. How might they affect people's lives and opportunities? How do they make you feel? Do you think they are fair?

3

Remind learners that in 1989 almost all of the countries in the world came together to agree the United Nations Convention on Children's Rights (see PPT slide 3). This is a list of rights that every child is entitled to. Ask learners to suggest what rights that they think all children should have.

4

Share the examples of rights on PPT slide 17. Ask learners to talk with a partner about how these rights might be affected by gender stereotypes. Discuss their ideas as a class.

5

Explain that stereotypes can affect the rights of people of all genders but girls and women are particularly affected. For example, in some communities, gender stereotypes might prevent or make it more difficult for girls to attend school. Gender stereotypes might discourage girls from studying certain subjects, taking part in activities or pursuing particular careers. In some communities, gender stereotypes might affect the opportunity girls have to make choices about their lives or participate in decision-making activities in their communities.

- 6 Discuss where gender stereotypes come from and how they are promoted. Some possible sources are provided on PPT slide 18. Invite learners to share any particular examples they have experienced or seen, for example, adverts targeted at boys or girls, books they have read or content they have seen online.
- 7 Share the story of Shazia and Kainat on PPT slide 19. Alternatively, print off copies of the *Speaking up for girls'* education case study for learners to read.
- 8 Discuss learners' responses. How did gender stereotyping affect the lives of Shazia and Kainat? What action are they taking?
- 9 Use the quote from Shazia to remind learners of the power each one of us has to create change (see PPT slide 20). Point out that every action, however small, can make a difference. It's a bit like the ripples that are created when a stone is dropped into a pool of water.
- 10 Explain that learners are going to be thinking about what action they could take at school to help challenge gender stereotypes. For example, in the language people use or their expectations about what someone of a particular gender can or can't do.
- 11 Organise learners into groups of three to four. Ask learners to work in their group to come up with a list of possible actions that could be taken. This might be actions people could take as individuals, things they could do in partnership with others, or whole-school changes. Some ideas are provided in the *Challenging gender stereotypes* at school resource sheet. See the useful links and resources section for some additional sources of information and inspiration
- 12 Allow time for each group to share their ideas with the rest of the class. If possible, support learners to choose one or more of these actions (either as a group or a class) to develop further.

Differentiation

Make it easier:

Work as a class rather than in groups to think of actions that could be taken to challenge gender stereotyping at school.

Additional activity ideas



Learners could:



Create a board game that helps players learn about some of the barriers stopping children (or girls) from going to school and how these could be overcome, for example, an adapted version of Snakes and Ladders.



Find out more about the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and think critically about how these rights might be affected by gender stereotyping.



Investigate [SDG 4 \(Quality education\)](#) or [SDG 5 \(Gender equality\)](#) and the progress that has been made so far towards achieving these goals.



Explore other types of stereotypes such as those related to race, age, religion or physical appearance. Learners could consider what the impacts of these views and perceptions might be, and try to identify ways in which these stereotypes could be challenged.



Investigate the benefits of girls' education and create persuasive messages to make the case for governments to do more to address this issue. For example, girls' education is key in tackling climate change, preventing child marriage, and achieving good health and well-being. Theirworld's resource [The Key](#) is a good starting point for finding out more.



Role play as different members of a community who have different views on girls' education to prompt discussion about gender stereotypes.



Consider how other aspects of someone's identity, as well as their gender, can intersect to affect a person's opportunities and experiences in life.



Investigate the life and achievements of people in their community or globally, past or present, who have taken action to speak up for the right to education or challenge gender stereotyping.



Plan an activity for [International Women's Day](#) or [International Day of the Girl Child](#).

Share your learning!

Theirworld would love to hear how any schools have used these activities in the classroom. Please also let us know any feedback so that we can try to improve our resources and support for schools in the future. Email schools@theirworld.org or find @theirworld on [X](#) and [Facebook](#).

Useful links and resources

These links and resources [provided below] include and will take you to materials and sites that have been produced by third parties. We do not maintain or control these links, materials or sites and have no responsibility for the content or your use of the same. Please be aware that there may be separate terms and conditions applicable to your use of these materials and sites.

- Check out [Theirworld's schools hub](#) to access other resources to help children and young people learn and think about the importance of education in unlocking big change.
- Use [Theirworld's resource The Key](#) to find out more about the importance of education and why some girls are missing out on school.
- In this [stop motion video from UNICEF](#), children explain who is not in school and why. The focus is on the Middle East and North Africa but these education barriers are relevant in other parts of the world as well.
- This [data from the International Labour Organisation](#) shows the breakdown of employment by sex and occupation across 121 countries and highlights the gender divide that still exists in many occupations.
- [Redraw the Balance](#) is a short video that could be used to support further discussion in Activity 3 about the impacts of gender stereotyping on career choices and opportunities.
- [Gender Action](#) is an award programme which promotes and supports nurseries, schools and colleges to take a whole-school approach to challenging stereotypes. Their website includes a [resource library](#) to help inspire and inform schools to take action.
- The [Gender Equality Charter Mark](#) is a framework that can be adopted by schools to help them consider and implement changes across the school and wider community in relation to gender equality issues. This [collection of resources](#) may be of use in supporting learners to identify possible actions they could take to challenge gender stereotyping at school.
- The [Gender Respect Project](#) aimed to help children and young people to understand, question and challenge gender inequality and violence in both a local

and a global context. Some of the teaching ideas and links on the project website may be of interest.

- [This useful collection of resources from the Institute of Physics](#) includes an animation, tips, classroom activities and career guidance and action guides to support gender-inclusive teaching.
- This [resource from EqualiTeach](#) provides advice, lesson plans and activities to support those working with young people ages 3-18 to promote gender equality across different education settings.



The links and resources [provided above] include and will take you to materials and sites that have been produced by third parties. We do not maintain or control these links, materials or sites and have no responsibility for the content or your use of the same. Please be aware that there may be separate terms and conditions applicable to your use of these materials and sites.

Why might girls be more likely to be out of school?

Girls are more likely to care for members of their family or support with household work such as cleaning, making food and washing clothes.

In some families and communities, girls can spend six hours each day collecting water for themselves and their family to use.

Every year 12 million girls under the age of 18 become wives, that's about 23 girls every minute.

An estimated 150 million girls and 73 million boys around the world are sexually assaulted every year.

Many girls cannot return to school after marrying at a young age because they can't afford to pay school fees.

Each year about 12 million girls around the world aged between 15 and 19 give birth. Girls who marry young are also more likely to have children at a young age.

Targeted attacks on girls' schools can make parents afraid to send their daughters to school.

In Afghanistan, girls over the age of 12 are banned from going to school and women are not allowed to go to university.

Girls often have fewer digital skills and less access to the internet. This makes it difficult for them to access and benefit from remote learning.

In some families and communities, sending girls to school is viewed to be a waste of time or against traditions and culture.

Girls who marry young are much more likely to drop out of school or complete fewer years of education.

In a 2021 survey by Plan International UK, 58% of girls aged 14-21 said they had been publicly sexually harassed in their learning environment. A more recent survey found that around 1 in 5 girls and young women don't feel safe in school.

Dancer	Hairdresser
Builder	Footballer
Scientist	Gymnast
Nurse	Web developer
Chef	Sales assistant
Teacher	Engineer
Firefighter	Surgeon
Police superintendent	Care assistant
Waste collector	Architect
Plumber	Dentist
Headteacher	Flight attendant
Marketing manager	Journalist
Scientist	Receptionist
Fashion designer	Lawyer
Chief executive	Accountant
Stay-at-home parent	Computer programmer
Bus driver	Librarian



Girls take part in a workshop as part of Theirworld's Skills for Their Future programme run in partnership with BRAC Tanzania.

Women represent only 3% of technology graduates globally. With Skills for the Future, Theirworld is working with others to help girls and young women aged 14-20 to develop digital, coding and entrepreneurship skills.

The girls in this photograph are finding out how to create and edit video and photography content at a school in Tanzania. In Tanzania, only 10% of students earning degrees in computer science are female. Only 25% of women have technology jobs.

Jennifer is one of the students who has taken part in Skills for the Future in Tanzania. She said: "Girls can change their lives and their community with these skills... I shared the knowledge with my family because I wanted them to also understand. It helped my father to use his phone for finding materials online and my family in budgeting."



Shazia Ramzan and Kainat Riaz are from Pakistan.

These two young women, along with their close friend Malala Yousafzai, were injured when the Taliban, an Islamic group, attacked the school bus they were travelling on. Gender stereotypes about the roles of girls and women made it difficult for Shazia and Kainat to go to school. In neighbouring Afghanistan, the Taliban leaders have banned girls over the age of 12 from getting an education. Women have also been prevented from going to university.

Shazia and Kainat are now studying in the UK. They would like to be doctors one day. "For me, education is like a light – without light you can't see anything," said Kainat.

Shazia and Kainat are also determined to speak up for education, particularly girls' education. They are Theirworld Global Youth Ambassadors. They are part of a worldwide group of young people who are campaigning for the right to education for every child, everywhere. Campaigning is about making change happen. It is about influencing others, thinking about what action is needed and identifying who is responsible for taking action.

Shazia explained: "You start with one person. If we can change the mindset of that one person, they can change the mindset of another person, maybe even in the same family, then others."

Ideas for taking action

- Challenge any gender stereotypes that you hear. Ask people why they have these views, listen to their ideas and offer reasons to counter this way of thinking.
- Try to use gender neutral language. This means talking about people in ways that don't assume what gender they are. An example would be to say 'firefighter' instead of 'fireman'.
- Look at the range of books and resources used in your school. Do these celebrate diversity and promote positive role models of different genders?
- Investigate whether certain areas of the school grounds are used more by one gender than another. Think about possible reasons for this. Are there any changes that could be made to encourage everyone to make use of all these spaces?
- Carry out a class or school survey to find out things such as what jobs people would like in the future, whether they have to help out with housework, or what sports they like to do. Compare the responses from different genders and think about possible reasons for any differences.
- Think about the people you have learned about in school who are well-known and celebrated for something they did. Try to find out about the achievements of other people in the past or present so that people of different genders are celebrated equally.
- Look at the posters and displays around your school, as well as your school's website and newsletters. Can you spot any gender stereotypes in the words and pictures used? Try to think of alternatives that could be used instead.
- Respect everyone's right to be referred to by the pronouns of their choice (or to not be referred to using any pronouns). Pronouns are the words we use to refer to ourselves such as they/them, she/her and he/him. If you are not sure what pronoun to use for someone, you could ask them or just refer to the person by name.
- Think about the names of any classes or houses in your school. Are these biased towards a particular gender, for example, are they named after male or female historical figures? Perhaps you could come up with new names to avoid any gender imbalance.
- Give an assembly, teach a younger class or design posters to share your learning about gender stereotypes with others in the school.
- Look at your school's uniform policy. Could it be made more gender neutral to allow everyone the choice to wear the same options?



Theirworld

Theirworld is a global children's charity committed to ending the global education crisis and unleashing the potential of the next generation.

Registered Charity 1092312

Please feel free to print, copy and distribute these materials in their entirety for non-commercial educational purposes only. However, alteration, modification, extraction or reproduction of any part of these materials and/or commercial use is prohibited. .

We hope these materials will be of interest and use but ultimately defer to you to check and decide whether these materials are suitable. We do not provide any warranty or guarantee, or accept liability, as to the accuracy, performance and suitability of the materials or information provided for any particular purpose.