

Teaching Resources for Tackling Societal Issues

Bringing Activism into your School, Centre or Classroom

***Education is the most powerful weapon which
you can use to change the world.***

~ Nelson Mandela

As teachers, we know that education is more than just learning the curriculum. We know that the educational experience should also open the doors to the wider world, and that knowledge is a powerful seed for change. But sometimes it's hard to find the time to bring social action topics into the classroom, to find resources and make lesson plans – hence this resource. We hope you will find it helpful.

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Animal Welfare

Elementary



The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Australia) offers free teaching units on a wide variety of topics. Resources include unlimited access to full unit plans, resources and supporting materials for elementary and middle school students. All you need to do is register.

<https://teachers.rspca.org.au/>



Cochrane and Area Humane Society – offers numerous lesson plans with downloads. The focus is on domestic animals and helping children understand the responsibilities of becoming a pet owner and why so many cats and dogs end up in shelters. Helps children see the bigger picture. The resources target elementary-age students, but are adaptable for older kids.

<http://www.cochranehumane.ca/education/volunteerism/index.html>



International Fund for Animal Welfare – lots of lesson plans and bilingual teaching resources, including videos, worksheets and crafts, on domestic and wild animals. Elementary and middle school levels. Recommended by Curriculum Services Canada.

<http://www.ifaw.org/canada/our-work/education/welcome-teachers>

All Levels



Animal Welfare Institute
- Limited but useful – and free – materials for all levels, as well as opportunities to join specific campaigns.

<https://awionline.org/content/teaching-resources>



BC Teachers' Federation – From the website: *Animals are vulnerable beings in that they are subjected to situations beyond their control. Using animals as a bridge to discuss social justice issues can be a way to ease students into more sensitive and personal social justice issues, such as racism and stereotyping. Included in this package are some outlined activities and discussion questions that should get the conversation started. These are designed to encourage students to think critically about where their beliefs and ideas come from and help them in their future discussions about issues involving people in society, as well as give them a chance to reflect on their own views on animals.* For grades 4 to 12

<https://www.bctf.ca/classroom-resources/details/animal-welfare-a-key-component-in-social-justice>



Humane Society of the United States – another site with lots of downloadable lesson plans. Some plans require that you buy a particular book, particularly at the lower elementary level. Tackles the topics of puppy mills and dogfighting at the upper secondary level.

<https://www.humanesociety.org/search?keys=teacher+resources>



World Animal Protection – Lots of ways for you and your students to learn about and take action on a particular situation.

https://www.worldanimalprotection.ca/?from=international_en&_ga=2.153871163.224710747.1641684485-1875365482.1641684485



World Animal lists numerous sites with resources for teachers, and also includes tips on how to run a successful fundraising campaign.

<https://worldanimal.net/our-programs/humane-education/resources-he>



The World Wildlife Fund has tons of free resources for teaching about the challenges facing the world and its inhabitants, and that includes people.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/teaching-resources>

Pet education reSources

Pet Education Resources has a mega-list of resources for teaching about anything to do with pets, whether that pet is a dog, a goat or a fish. Topics include food, training, pet therapy and so much more!

<http://www.peteducationresources.co.uk/learning-resources/for-teachers/sixteen>

Child Soldiers



The Dallaire Institute doesn't have any lesson plans, but it's an important tool for learning about the many dimensions of the issue of child soldiers. Retired Senator, Order of Canada appointee and recent inductee into Canada's Walk of Fame, General Roméo Dallaire, is an important force in the fight to end child soldiers worldwide. You can download the reports that interest you.

<https://dallaireinstitute.org/>



Teaching Ideas has exactly that – lots of ideas about how to introduce students to the topic of child soldiers, most suitable for students from 9 to 17. The site also has resources on math, science, English, art and music

<https://www.teachingideas.co.uk/pshe/child-soldiers-lesson-plan>



Amnesty International offers lesson plans for using Ishmael Beah's book, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, to teach about child soldiers. The resource includes handouts and activities, and is designed for ages 11-14, but could be adapted for older students.

https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/activities_resource_0.pdf

You can listen to the audiobook here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onhz4Qw9gzU&list=PLylqBs6i-i2tpHJU7wlyPewJ9H7j-1qS>

Part of the lesson plans include Youtube videos, which you can find here:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%22Ishmael+Beah%22%3A+Ishmael%E2%80%99s+story%2C+Child+soldiers+in+war

Getting Involved



War Child – having explored the issue of children in war, you may wish to get your class or school involved in fundraising to help children who were child soldiers or otherwise victims of war. The site provides information and statistics on all aspects of the issue, and offers ways in which schools and classes can help to protect the rights of children affected by war. There's also a Canadian branch.

<https://www.warchild.org.uk/> www.warchild.ca

Climate Change



Administration.

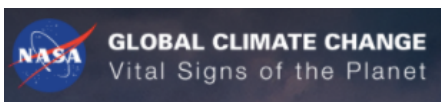
The **EPA** site lists 21 websites with resources for all levels of students, everything from National Geographic to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric

<https://www.epa.gov/climate-change/climate-change-resources-educators-and-students>



Goodside has a free 99-page e-book that covers all the basics of climate change, including the science behind climate change, reducing carbon emissions, and offsetting carbon footprints.

https://www.joingoodside.com/guides/more-climate-action?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIpNn_4Zat9QIVgq71Ch070QrOEAAAYASAAEgJnovD_BwE



NASA – There are piles of resources for educators here on all things climate, including posters and interactives and links to other sites.

<https://climate.nasa.gov/resources/education/>



The **World Wildlife Federation** has produced a range of curriculum based resources, including lesson plans, handouts, guides and activities.

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/get-involved/schools/resources/climate-change-resources>

Human Rights

Elementary



The Human Rights Warrior – a blog written by a human rights lawyer has lots of activities to do with your kids around Human Rights Day (December 10). Mostly for younger kids, but a few things for older kids, too. There are also some very thoughtful posts around human rights themes.

<https://humanrightswarrior.com/>



Equitas' Play it Fair Toolkit – a 178-page PDF primer on everything to do with human rights, for students from 6 to 12. The toolkit is divided into two parts. The first part is a reference section and the second has 63 activities that are divided by age, value, and issue. If you've heard of the Exclusion by Numbers game, these are the people that created it.

https://equitas.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Equitas-PIF-Toolkit-2008_En.pdf

All Levels



The Advocates for Human Rights – This is a must-see, powerful site focusing on human rights. There are lots of resources, A major resource is called *A Road to Peace - A Teaching Guide on Local and Global Transitional Justice*, a 229-page document with lesson plans and handouts,

including an appendix with a list of resources on peace and justice. The link below connects to *A Road to Peace*, but there are also many teaching guides on many different topics around human rights and justice at the Educator Resource tab.

<https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/res/byid/8607>



Canadian Museum for Human Rights – The museum has created an ever-growing list of education resources in French and English on topics from slavery in Canada to disability rights. Most of the resources are created by teachers for teachers. If you should ever find yourself in Winnipeg, be sure to go to the museum; it is a beautiful collection – or you could take the virtual tour!

<https://humanrights.ca/>



The University of Minnesota's Human Rights Resource Center This is a fabulous treasury of activities and lesson plans on the many aspects of human rights, as well as links to other sites. Although the document was last copyrighted in 2000, the themes around human rights are timeless.

<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/activities.shtm>



Youth for Human Rights International – This site is for the educator who has a serious interest in bringing human rights into the classroom. You can order an educator’s toolkit for free (in return you must provide feedback). There are also 30 public service announcement videos on human rights, a PDF download with activities, and ways you can get involved to promote human rights.

www.youthforhumanrights.org



Human Rights Watch’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights - a PDF with 10 links to sites with human rights activities for the classroom, along with descriptions of each site. Take a look at the main Human Rights Watch website, too. There are tons of information on many different human rights issues such as arms, free speech, child soldiers, child labour and international justice.

http://hrwstf.org/education/Ten_UDHR_Lesson_Plans.pdf

Humane Education



Animal Welfare Institute – From the website: *Humane education can be defined as the teaching of compassion and empathy for all living beings and respect for their habitats. AWI encourages educators to teach about biological and ecological processes in a manner that instills a greater respect for animals and avoids methods that treat animals as disposable commodities.*

<https://awionline.org/content/humane-education>



The Animals and Society Institute offers resources to learn more about humane education. It lists five similar websites, as well, and several of them have resources that teachers can use in the classroom.

<https://www.animalsandsociety.org/for-humane-educators/humane-education-resources/>



BC Teachers' Federation – From the website: *Animals are vulnerable beings in that they are subjected to situations beyond their control. Using animals as a bridge to discuss social justice issues can be a way to ease students into more sensitive and personal social justice issues, such as racism and stereotyping. Included in this package are some outlined activities and discussion questions that should get the conversation started. These are designed to encourage students to think critically about where their beliefs and ideas come from and help them in their future discussions about issues involving people in society, as well as give them a chance to reflect on their own views on animals.* For grades 4 to 12

<https://www.bctf.ca/classroom-resources/details/animal-welfare-a-key-component-in-social-justice>



Barn Sanctuary offers six free resources to help students of all levels learn about the connections between how we treat animals and our environment, our sense of social justice and our own health. The resources are intended for homeschoolers, but teachers can certainly adapt them for use in the classroom.

<https://www.barnsanctuary.org/blog/6-free-humane-education-resources/>



The Ottawa Humane Society has created a teaching toolkit for kindergarten students, complete with stories, colouring sheets and other activities. Other resources include lesson plans for K-12 students.

<https://ottawahumane.ca/youth-programs/teacher-resources/online-kindergarten-resource-kit/>



Teach Heart – Resources for all levels on humane education. From the website: *Lessons and Activities for Pre-K to 12 Students*

Our free humane education resource guides provide lesson plans, worksheets and everything you need to teach students ages 3-18 to be caring and compassionate toward animals, people, and our planet, while meeting academic standards. Well worth taking a look!

<https://teachheart.org/library/>

Indigenous Education



First Nations Educational Steering Committee – Teaching resources residential schools and reconciliation for Grade 5, 10 and 11/12

<http://www.fnesc.ca/irsr/>



Four Directions Teachings - This is a very interesting website that offers audio recordings on the heritage of five major tribes: Cree, Ojibwe, Mohawk, Blackfoot and Mikmak. There is also a downloadable teacher resource kit.

This is a wonderful opportunity to hear the cadence and timbre of Aboriginal voices speaking to their culture.

<http://www.fourdirectionsteachings.com/>



The **Martin Family Initiative** is a collection of links to organizations concerned with Aboriginal culture, history and issues. Lesson plans galore for all levels. You will find everything from exploring an Iroquoian longhouse to dealing with tough contemporary topics such as Truth and Reconciliation. Prepare to spend some time exploring.

<https://www.themfi.ca/ppw-educational-resources/ppw-resources>



Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation – this unit plan helps students understand the complexity of the issues facing Canada's Aboriginal peoples. The unit focuses on access to health care, access to education, substance abuse, teen pregnancy and suicide, poverty and low living standards and limited economic opportunity. Includes lesson plans, assessment tasks and a PowerPoint presentation. Suitable for Sec. III and up.

<https://www.osstf.on.ca/AboriginalIssues>



To quote from its website, **Project of Heart** is “an inquiry based, hands-on, collaborative, inter-generational, artistic journey of seeking truth about the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada.” The

site brings together different resources that can be used in teaching about Indigenous heritage and issues.

<http://projectofheart.ca/>



The **University of British Columbia** has a wealth of teaching resources and lesson plans on a wide variety of topics and different grade levels. Subjects and topics include Indigenous Education, art, music, drama, English, French, math, social studies, science and more.

<http://guides.library.ubc.ca/c.php?g=676257&p=4765077>

LGBTQ2S+



Advocates for Youth has developed this K-12 curriculum in order to “respect young people’s rights to honest sexuality education.” Includes lesson plans, hand-outs and classroom materials.

<https://advocatesforyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/3rscurric/documents/7-Lesson-6-3Rs-IAmWhoIAm.pdf>



This **ATA** page contains resources for teachers to support sexual and gender minority students, allied students, and colleagues. It includes a listing of many

websites around gender identity and sexual orientation.

<https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/c.php?g=710232&p=5060785>



Educators 4 Social Change – This site has piles of resources and approaches for teaching about gender identity.

<https://educators4sc.org/topic-guides/teaching-about-gender-identity/>



Safe@School – has an exhaustive listing of sites with lesson plans, resources and toolkits for educators. Includes EGALE Canada, Advocates for Youth, and It Gets Better. This is truly a “one-stop shopping” site. Bonus – it also covers the topics of racism and sexism.

<https://www.safeatschool.ca/resources/resources-on-equity-and-inclusion/homophobia/resources-for-youth>



difficult subject.

Teaching Sexual Health – Answers to all the questions you’ve ever had concerning sexual and gender identity. Includes resources and lesson plans for learning and teaching about this

<https://teachingsexualhealth.ca/teachers/>

Poverty



The Committee on Temporary Shelter offers an interdisciplinary resource and activity guide on homelessness for K-12 classrooms. The guide also provides a lot of background information and statistics on homelessness which, although based on Vermont, still provides a valuable window on poverty.

<http://cotsonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Unsheltered-Lives-2010.pdf>



HRE USA

Human Rights Educators USA

Human Rights Educators USA has put together a listing of middle to high school lesson plans on poverty and other human rights topics.

<https://hreusa.org/hre-library/topics/poverty/lesson-plans/>



Let's Cultivate Greatness is a blog written by Erin, a high school social studies teacher. The site provides lots of ideas about teaching and learning about poverty, along with teaching resources. Most of the materials are free, but you can also buy unit guides.

<https://letscultivategreatness.com/5-activity-ideas-for-teaching-about-world-poverty/>



National Council for the Social Studies has prepared a listing of sites that build an awareness of poverty. Sites include those that prepare teachers on the subject and those that provide lesson plans and teaching resources.

https://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/articles/yl_210232.pdf

Racism

All Levels



The Alberta Teachers' Association

This ATA page lists 14 sites that offer free teaching resources on racism and anti-racism.

<https://teachers-ab.libguides.com/c.php?g=717443&p=5120546>



The British Columbia Teachers' Federation has put together a comprehensive and searchable set of lesson plans, including activities on racism and prejudice. If you follow the link, in the left-hand menu, you'll find there are resources on many subjects and topics.

<https://www.bctf.ca/classroom-resources/professional-development-teaching-resources-search?keyword=racism>



LEARNING FOR JUSTICE

Learning for Justice has all kinds of resources – lesson plans, texts, strategies, film kits and a whole lot more.

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/our-new-name-learning-for-justice>

Queen's University

Queen's University has a wealth of anti-racism and diversity resources, all curated, and for all levels.

<https://educ.queensu.ca/anti-racism-and-diversity-resources>

SAFE@SCHOOL

Safe @ School has a listing of 14 websites o of resources and toolkits on anti-racism, inclusion, anti-semitism,

<https://www.safeatschool.ca/resources/resources-on-equity-and-inclusion/racism/toolkits-and-activities>



The University of South Carolina has listed essential materials for teachers as well as resources for teaching about racism and equity.

<https://rossieronline.usc.edu/youth-and-racism/resources>