

Citizenship Education



"The right of the child to education."

CRC - Article 28

Street children are often denied access to education for the following reasons:

- They need to work in order to support themselves and/or their families. Rigid timetabling can often mean that it is impossible for them to attend education and work at the same time;
- They can't afford school fees, uniforms or books;
- They are often also explicitly excluded from formal education on the grounds that they are a threat to classroom discipline and to the development of other students;
- They may not be allowed to register because they lack documents such as birth certificates.

"My parents cannot afford to send me to school and to provide for my needs. I have to go petty trading and do other hard jobs to help bring in money for the running of the house."

Street boy, aged 15
- Sierra Leone¹

In a 2000 survey in Tanzania, 22% of children migrated to the street as a result of school exclusion linked to inability to pay school fees.²

Lack of education keeps street children in poverty and reduces the choices they have now and in the future.

Interventions

Street children are used to a lot of freedom and traditional schooling is often not the best option for them. They need access to good quality education that is flexible and adapted to their needs - such as helping them with maths so they can manage their money better, or helping them to learn new technical skills so that they can make a living.

Some organisations working with street children claim that it is better to work with them in an environment that is away from the distractions of the street. Others find it easier to meet the children where they are, in their own environment. Teaching children on the streets enables children to keep working, but also to learn about the things they need to know.

"The benefits I feel from being a part of the study group are that I can read better and I'm no longer scared to get homework from school.... Before I went to school I would sing in the streets for money, and then when I got home from school I never had time to study. Even though [my parents] work all the time, they can't meet our needs so I sing for money to help my parents out. But now I don't worry about studying now, because Yasin (outreach worker) always comes by and asks about my homework. He helps me study and gives me motivation and other information that really helps me out."

Street girl, aged 10
- Indonesia³

Background information



Footnotes: see page 76

Education: what's the point?



Key learning point:

- The benefits and drawbacks of education for students themselves and for street children.
- How to design a questionnaire.



Instructions

1. Design a questionnaire activity

Ask students to design a questionnaire to find out about other students' attitudes towards getting an education. Depending on the ability of the group you can give them different levels of guidance and support in doing this. It can be as simple as 3 questions: Why do you like coming to school? Why don't you? What would you change about school to make it better?

Once designed, students can then conduct their survey in the class or in the wider school environment. Once they have done this they can be asked if they have learned anything from doing the activity.

The results can then be analysed. (Would they change any of their questions for example?) Alternatively, one of the best questionnaires can be copied for the whole class to use so that group analysis of the results is easier.

The class can then be asked if they would like to do anything with the results. Should the results stay in the classroom or be shared with anyone in the school? If changes were suggested by students at the school, suggest that it might be useful to give this feedback to the people that make decisions at the school. Ask them to discuss who these people are and how the information might best be fed back.

2. Brainstorm activity

On the black/whiteboard brainstorm the benefits and drawbacks of getting an education for themselves and for street children. (They should have seen the VFTS DVD/video already). Are the benefits to street children the same as they are to the students? Conclude that the benefits are very similar.

	Benefits	Drawbacks
You	Answers (examples): Gain qualifications Learn new things/skills Meet up with friends	Answers (examples): Takes up your free time
Street child	Answers (examples): (Many will be the same as above)	Answers (examples): They will not be able to make money while at school



National curriculum

2) Developing skills of enquiry and communication: c) contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in debates.

Citizenship

Why can't people go to school?



Key learning point:

- Many street children do not have access to an education even though countries have agreed they have a right to it.
- Organisations in this country and overseas are working to change this.



Resources

Internet



Instructions

1. Brainstorm activity

If the benefits are the same and all children under Article 28 of the CRC have the right to an education why are so many children, including street children, not getting an education? Teacher to elicit ideas from class.

2. VFTS video/DVD activity

Watch the education section on the VFTS video/DVD to find out more about street children and their access to education. Ask students to write down:

- Any things that prevent street children being able to get an education.
- Any things that can be done to help street children get an education.

3. Campaign activity

Ask the students to do some research on the internet either in class or as homework about organisations which are trying to help poor children get an education.

or

Present to them a current campaign being run by a UK charity/charities (such as the 'Send My Friend to School' campaign 2005). Explain to the students how they could get involved and ask what steps they would need to take if they did want to get involved. (Most of the large development organisations such as ActionAid, Save the Children, Oxfam etc. run campaigns on these issues).



See also: Section B9, 'What can we do?'

Junto Con L@s Nifi@s (Jucow)



Working with street children and their families in Mexico.



National Curriculum

2) developing skills of enquiry and communication: c) contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in debates.

B5c Citizenship

The benefits of education



Key learning point: ■ Getting an education has certain benefits.



Resources: Two big handkerchiefs/scarves of different color or design.



Instructions

Brainstorm the benefits of getting an education. Emphasise the fact that it can help you do more things faster and more easily and it can give you more opportunities (get / give examples e.g. shopping without knowing how to count; reading a job application form; understanding how to repair a washing machine or helping someone through first aid; getting a degree in engineering and getting a well-paid job etc.)

Explain that handkerchief A represents a street child getting an education. He/she can do things more efficiently and faster. Handkerchief B represents a street child not getting an education. Things take longer and are more difficult for this child. [You can stick a picture of a different child on each and give them a name].

Form one big circle and sit down [can have more than one group doing this at the same time]. Hand over handkerchief A to one participant and handkerchief B must be given to the person opposite or in front of that person. Say "Go!", to start the game.

The student who holds the 'education' handkerchief (A) must tie it in a knot once (1 knot), untie it then pass it on to the person on his/her right who will do the same, and so on. While the one who holds the 'no education' handkerchief (B) must tie it twice (2 knots), untie it then pass it on the person on his/her right, and so on. Ask students which handkerchief / street child progressed faster in life / travelled faster round the circle (A). Reiterate that this represents the benefits of getting an education.

You can adapt this by turning it into a more elaborate game where the teacher keeps interrupting the passage of handkerchief B by taking it out of the circle and moving it back 2 places whilst giving a reason why a street children might not get an education – e.g. 'Sorry! There's a delay because someone stole the street child's bus money to get to school.' You can also accelerate the passage of handkerchief A by moving it forward 2 places saying "Congratulations! You came top of your class and have won a prize!"

Teacher guidance



National Curriculum

2) Developing skills of enquiry and communication:

a) think about topical political, spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, problems and events by analysing information;

3) Developing skills of participation and responsible action:

a) use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own.