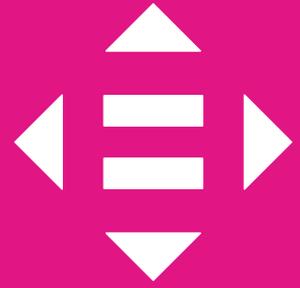


# 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



## REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

**Age, sex, ability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion and socio-economic status are all important aspects of our identity.** However, in many ways, our identity can impact our income, along with our political, social and economic participation in daily life. Goal 10 is all about reducing these inequalities to encourage prosperity and income growth within and between countries. We can achieve this by making sure our attitudes, policies and behaviours ensure equal opportunities, respect for human rights and inclusivity.

## TARGETS

- Provide support for people living in poverty to access resources for sustainable economic development.
- Ensure laws and practices represent and reflect people's needs while not discriminating against any group.
- Facilitate and support regular, responsible and safe migration and mobility of people.
- Ensure social programs and laws protect and include disadvantaged and vulnerable populations.
- Ensure people leaving one country to live in another benefit from laws and protection.

“An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics.”

**Plutarch**  
1st Century Greek  
biographer



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- 1** Learners will understand inequality, how to measure it, and its interrelation with other social problems.
- 2** Learners will understand the local, national and international processes that promote and hinder equality, such as fiscal, wage and social protection policies or corporate activities.
- 3** Learners will be able to raise awareness about inequalities in their community and abroad, while showing solidarity with people who are discriminated against.
- 4** Learners will be able to evaluate inequalities in terms of quality and quantity, while identifying causes and strategies to reduce them.

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

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### Media

How does the media report on inequalities?

### Environment

How does environmental degradation unequally impact people or countries?

### Poverty, wealth and power

What are some contributors to the poverty cycle in your local community? How can we balance inequalities of power between nations?

### Indigenous Peoples

How do Indigenous individuals and communities experience inequality and what is being done to address it?

### Oppression and genocide

What are some examples of genocide that resulted from or have led to inequalities?

### Health and biotechnology

How is biotechnology addressing inequalities in health? What are the barriers to implementing these programs?

### Gender politics

How has feminism addressed inequalities of gender? What can be done in the future to address current gender inequalities?

### Social justice and human rights

What are some historical events of inequality that have led to advances in social justice and human rights? How can we take action on social justice issues today?

### Peace and conflict

How do inequalities result in conflict? How have people overcome these conflicts to address peace and equality?



# THE BIG QUESTIONS

## 1 Where did it begin?

- Inequalities arise when our actions, attitudes and policies discriminate against individuals and communities. Often these inequalities are based on characteristics such as income, sex, indigeneity, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity and religion.
- When our society discriminates or excludes people from benefiting and participating fully in or from social, economic and political spaces, we call this treatment **marginalization**. Racism, sexism, ageism, disability, **xenophobia**, homophobia, transphobia or prejudice are examples of marginalization. These kinds of marginalization can happen between people and also at an institutional level.
- The reality for many of the world's poorest people is that no matter how hard they work they cannot escape the **poverty cycle**. For those who are already rich, they might continue to see their wealth grow at an ever-increasing rate, which can heighten other economic inequalities. In South Africa, a platinum miner would need to work for 93 years just to earn their average CEO's annual bonus.<sup>1</sup>
- Inequalities negatively impact long term social and economic development, poverty reduction strategies, as well as individual self-worth and prosperity. Beyond a certain threshold, inequality can harm individual and community health and the quality of relations between public and political spheres.
- One way to measure inequality is through the **Gini coefficient**. A score of zero represents perfect equality and one equals perfect inequality. The Gini coefficient measures the extent to which income is distributed unevenly amongst a population. Between 1990 and 2010, the average income inequality—taking into account population size—increased by 11 per cent.<sup>2</sup> Increasing income inequality rates should prompt a call to action for governments and society at large to support equal growth, social supports and poverty reduction strategies.



## 2 Why does this issue matter?

- **People living in poverty need access to economic growth**

More than 75 per cent of the population in developing countries are living in societies where income is more unequally distributed now than it was in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup> Poverty reduction strategies need to recognize unique barriers to economic growth for different vulnerable populations to make an impact on income equality. Policies and social support programs work to empower marginalized groups and improve quality of life for all.

- **Laws and practices need to be inclusive and supportive for all people**

When we support vulnerable populations, we support ourselves. Social protection has been significantly expanded around the globe, yet persons with disabilities and mental health issues are up to five times more likely than average to incur catastrophic health expenditures.<sup>4</sup> Inequalities such as access to healthcare and other key services can be addressed through policies and funding for social support programs.

- **Disadvantaged and vulnerable people must be protected**

Human rights cannot be taken away from us, but vulnerable populations still face discrimination. Governments must recognize and protect the rights of vulnerable populations to be able to support them. As an example, transgender people are being increasingly recognized and protected at the national level, but are still ostracized and experience income inequalities. In an effort to protect vulnerable populations, the Indian government officially recognized **transgender** people as a third gender in 2015.<sup>5</sup> This advance in policy ensured quotas for jobs and education to help transgender populations increase their income and end a cycle of poverty. Protections must be put in place for vulnerable populations, including the disabled, the extreme poor and other marginalized populations.

- **People who leave one country to live in another must benefit from laws to protect them**

Whether documented or undocumented, migrants are increasingly vulnerable to human rights violations. They also face additional challenges from living in precarious situations, often without full citizenship status in their new country. State governments determine the admissions process for migrant workers and hold a lot of power over their well-being. When states protect and support migrants, and enable them to earn decent pay and decent working conditions, their productivity contributes to the host country in a mutually beneficial relationship.<sup>6</sup>

## 3 Who and what are affected?

- **Vulnerable populations**

Discrimination is an act of oppression against an individual or community on the grounds of their race, age, gender, sexual orientation, health status, geographic location, religion, migration status, ability, age, **indigeneity** and income. Vulnerable populations represent the people who are more likely to be discriminated against. Policies rooted in discrimination can influence how people perceive marginalized groups within society, making it a cycle of discrimination. Social, political and economic support that respects the unique barriers and opportunities of marginalized groups is essential to address inequalities and invite participation from these populations.



## 4 What needs to be done?

- We can't fix income inequalities without changing rules at the local, national and international levels. We can help the economies of developing nations by making it easier for trade by reducing import tariffs, increasing economic access to resources and supporting social welfare programs and economic development through aid.
- On a local and national level, raising minimum wage, increasing taxes on extreme wealth, capping CEO pay and strengthening laws on non-discriminatory hiring, while providing incentives for job creation are ways for policy and practice to address the issue of income inequality. Supporting those who suffer financially from marginalization and inequality through **solidarity** efforts and social welfare programs are also great places to start.
- For most citizens, there's a lot that can be done to end poverty inequality. Communicating political, social and economic support through activism, votes, time and talent can all help make a difference.

“Today, women make up half of the U.S. workforce, but the average working woman earns only 77 per cent of what the average working man makes.

Unless women and men both say this is unacceptable, things will not change.”

**Beyoncé Knowles**  
American singer



## CONNECTION TO THE OTHER GOALS



Discrimination, particularly through income inequality, greatly increase a person's likelihood of entering the poverty cycle. When we explore the reasons why inequalities exist, we must also examine their connection to other areas of a person and community's well-being, such as physical and mental health, **food security**, education, poverty and access to housing.



Investments in infrastructure and industrial development need to incorporate opportunities to improve access to, and benefit from, economic development for all. Inclusive industrialization can improve opportunities for decent work and community prosperity as well.



Income inequality is a gendered issue. Women are often paid less than men for equal work, which is coupled with the **double burden** of unpaid work at home and in the community. Ensuring equal pay, access to education, recognition and opportunities for leadership invites new perspectives to our work and empowers us all.

“ The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little. ”

**Franklin D. Roosevelt**  
Former US President



## Consequences of Inaction

- Healthy migration practices require social, political and economic support. If we fail to provide these supports, we are directly impacting people's ability to break cycles of poverty. This reality is not just for the migrants who land in another state, but for future generations to come.
- Income inequality is directly related to physical and mental health. If we aren't able to support ourselves and our families, we are not able to provide healthy conditions for our bodies to thrive.
- If we are going to strengthen decent work and economic growth, we need to understand how inequalities and marginalization prevent vulnerable populations from accessing these opportunities. Our policies, attitudes and behaviours need to work against these barriers to make employment more inclusive. If we do not act, vulnerable populations will continue to be affected by these issues, ensuring enduring inequalities.

## REFLECTION AND ACTION QUESTIONS

- 1 How do you feel about the issue now that you know more about it?
- 2 How might this issue have been prevented? What could have been done differently?
- 3 How has this problem changed over time? Where do you see it going in the future?
- 4 What questions do you still have?

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

**Article 1**  
Universal  
Declaration of  
Human Rights



## RESOURCES

### How to take action

- **Show your solidarity.** Discrimination comes in a variety of forms and we all experience it differently. Show your support for individuals and communities facing inequalities by learning about their history, their struggle and their activism. Listen to their stories and offer your time and talent to help bring equality to their reality. In this case, many hands make strong work.
- **Support capacity building.** If you are interested in donating to charity or supporting humanitarian work in your community or abroad, look for opportunities that build individual and community capacity. Projects that help build self-sufficiency and the ability for people to provide for themselves are more sustainable and empowering. Providing a “band-aid,” or short-term solution, doesn’t help communities develop income equality in the long term.
- **Pitch it to the media.** If you see inequalities in your community, and want to get more attention on the issue, pitch it to the media. Tell them your angle and the who, what, when, where, why and how their attention could help improve this issue.
- **Get vocal.** If you see inequalities and want to address them, raise your voice and draw attention to the issues. Write a letter to the editor, your member of parliament, call in to a radio show or give a speech at your school or community events. Tell the world what the issues are, what you’re asking, and how their support can help.
- **Learn about inequality in your community.** How are people in your community experiencing the effects of inequality? How might differing levels of abilities or levels of access to services affect you or others in your community? How might it affect others around the world? How can our community reduce discrimination? Take action based on what you discover!
- **Start a social justice or equality group.** Discover issues where your effort and energy can be put to good use. Find out who is working on these issues in your community and learn more through volunteering, interviews or fundraising.
- **Research your local politician’s actions and statements.** What is their position on disability issues and inequality? Find out what’s happening now in your community and Canada. Join the discussion by calling or writing your government representatives and encouraging them to take action.
- **Write to the Prime Minister and the Minister of International Development.** Ask them to take action to ensure development assistance goes to the least developed countries first.



## Educational resources

- The World's Largest Lesson page for Goal 10 has downloadable comics, posters and lesson plans [here](#). You can also download [The World is Not Equal. Is that Fair?](#) (ages 11 to 14). This lesson helps students learn about inequality and explore its impacts on the wider society and economy.
- Safe@Schools is a project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education. They have a wealth of activities and resources for understanding marginalization and how to teach inclusivity. Find their toolkits and activities [here](#).
- The United Way invests in programs to ensuring vulnerable populations have the opportunity to fulfill their life's potential. They have a web-based game called [Make the Month](#) that simulates the reality of living below the poverty line and explores difficult decisions about things most of us take for granted.
- The American Psychological Association has a number of [activities and exercises](#) for students and teachers to understand privilege and inequality.
- Explore forced migration and the refugee experience through [Children On The Move](#). Students will build an understanding of what life is like for people forced to flee their homes and understand that migration has and continues to affect everyone.
- Share the [Goats of Anarchy](#) comic book with your students to teach concepts around differing abilities and inequality. The comic includes discussion questions at the end.
- Consider taking your older students (Grade 7 and up) through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank [Forced to Flee](#) activity, where students work together in 'family units,' making difficult decisions within this forced migration scenario, to maintain their supply of food, money and health while securing their future post-conflict.



## CASE STUDIES

### 1 ADRA Canada

For many refugees to a new country, inequalities accessing resources are a difficult reality. ADRA Canada is working with Burundian refugees in Rwanda to reduce inequalities accessing education by providing transitional classrooms for Burundian refugee children in the Mahama refugee camp. Children participate in a six-month intensive orientation program, and were enrolled in Rwandan national schools in 2016.

### 2 Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace

The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace is working in Zambia to reduce inequalities by strengthening community participation in decision-making for issues related to the mining and extraction industries. In the Zambian provinces of Copperbelt, Luapula and North Western, the organization is working to support local people in exercising their own voice to demand economic justice by engaging communities, mining companies and the government to remain transparent and participatory with local stakeholders.

### 3 War Child Canada

War Child Canada is addressing gendered inequalities in education by focusing on radio-based learning for girls in the South Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This project targets out-of-school girls aged 12 to 16 in South Kivu of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a population that, due to their age and gender, is among the most vulnerable in the country. It is to developing and broadcasting a total of 150 lessons and providing practical recommendations for the scale-up of an alternative education model for secondary education.

### 4 Provincial Government of Ontario

To address poverty reduction, in 2017, the Provincial Government of Ontario introduced a pilot project providing 4,000 lower income citizens a basic annual salary to understand its impact on education, physical and mental health, employment, food security and housing stability.

### 5 iDE Canada

To reduce barriers for those with disabilities, iDE has a project to build easy latrine shelters for people with disabilities. This project utilizes iDE's affiliated sales force and supply chain partners to design, test and pilot a disability-friendly latrine shelter for rural Cambodians with disabilities.



## 6 Lion Air

In 2011, airplane manufacturer Boeing announced their largest order to date, 230 jets. Most were shocked to learn that the deal wasn't with a North American or European Airline. Rather, the \$22 billion deal went to Indonesia's Lion Air. Once among the poorest countries in the world, investments in economic development and wealth equality resulted in a rising middle class in need of air travel.<sup>6</sup> Aid investments not only improved life for millions of people in the region, but as the world's fourth most populated country, Indonesia's poverty-reduction has enabled millions to become new consumers of goods and products.

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### End notes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/even-it-up-inequality-oxfam.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/about\\_camh/newsroom/for\\_reporters/Pages/addictionmentalhealthstatistics.aspx](http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/about_camh/newsroom/for_reporters/Pages/addictionmentalhealthstatistics.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-27031180>

<sup>6</sup> <https://borgenproject.org/global-poverty-u-s-jobs/>