



# Education

Access to education is the birthright of every child. Yet around the world, there are still 58 million primary school-age children not in school. That number climbs to 124 million when you include all children and adolescents.

While some kids are too poor to afford school fees, others are too sick to attend class or too hungry to concentrate when they do. In some instances, children are excluded because of their gender, a disability or cultural factors. While other times, situations of war or child labour stand in the way.

Education is the most basic insurance against poverty and the first step to overcoming it. At any age, education empowers people with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to shape a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

## FAST FACTS

*Children of uneducated mothers*

**ARE 2.8x AS LIKELY**

*to die before*

**THE AGE OF 5**

*compared to children whose mothers  
have a secondary education.*

*Child marriages would*

**FALL BY 14%**

*if all girls had a  
primary education.*

**1 EXTRA YEAR**

*of schooling increases an  
individual's earnings by*

**UP TO 10%.**

*We need*

**\$26 BILLION**

*more each year to achieve basic  
education for all. That's*

**LESS THAN 5%**

*of what the U.S. military  
spent in 2015!*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT WOULD YOU DO EVERY DAY, AND WHAT WOULD YOUR FUTURE LOOK LIKE, IF YOU COULDN'T GO TO SCHOOL?
2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF ALL CHILDREN ACCESSING AN EDUCATION?
3. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS TO EDUCATION?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of access to education worldwide at [WE.org/exploringissues](http://WE.org/exploringissues).

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help children in developing communities gain access to education? Take action with the **WE Are Silent** campaign on page 46 of your Student Guide.



# Food



Food is fuel. Without a steady supply of it, our brains and bodies can't get the nutrients they need to function properly. Yet many people in developing countries continue to suffer from a lack of basic nutrition. A lack of vitamin A can lead to eyesight issues, including permanent blindness. When a pregnant woman doesn't get enough iodine, her child has a higher chance of being born with brain damage.

Hunger not only delays physical, emotional and cognitive development, but also hinders a child's ability to focus in school or attend altogether. Those who do make it to class tend to perform poorly academically and are frequently held back.

For the 795 million people who aren't getting the food they need, hunger is an everyday problem that affects every aspect of life.

## FAST FACTS

*Farmers produce more than enough to feed the world, yet*

**1/3<sup>RD</sup> OF ALL FOOD**

*produced for human consumption is lost or wasted.*

**RECOVERING JUST 1/2**

*could eradicate hunger.*

**98%**

*of the world's undernourished people live in developing countries.*

**\$3.2 BILLION**

*is needed per year to feed the*  
**66 MILLION CHILDREN**  
*who go to school hungry.*

*If female farmers had the same resources as male farmers, up to*

**150 MILLION MORE**

*people would be fed.*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. IF FARMERS ARE PRODUCING ENOUGH FOOD TO FEED THE WORLD, WHY DO YOU THINK THERE ARE STILL 795 MILLION HUNGRY PEOPLE?

2. WHAT CAN WE DO TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE?

3. HOW ARE POVERTY, HUNGER AND HEALTH RELATED?

GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of food security worldwide at [WE.org/exploringissues](http://WE.org/exploringissues).

TAKE ACTION

Want to help children in developing communities gain access to healthy food? Take action with the **WE Bake for Change** campaign on page 42 of the Student Guide.



# Health



Health provides the stability every family needs to grow and be productive. Parents who have access to health care can run their farms and businesses with peace of mind, ensuring their families are fed and their children can go to school.

When health care is unavailable, parents live in fear that their child falling ill could mean the difference between life and death. Or when the cost of health care is unaffordable, they may find themselves in a cycle of never-ending medical debt.

Simple, preventative health measures, like standard checkups, vaccinations for newborns and vitamins for expecting mothers, could save up to 6.6 million lives every year. Without affordable treatment, many kids end up chronically sick and miss too much class to progress in school.

## FAST FACTS

*A child who is*  
**EXCLUSIVELY BREASTFED**

*in the first 6 months of life is*

**14x LESS LIKELY**

*to die during this time than  
a non-breastfed child.*

**1/3<sup>RD</sup>**  
*of the world's  
population lacks access to*  
**ESSENTIAL MEDICINES.**

*Immunization saves up to*  
**3 MILLION CHILDREN**  
*every year.*

**16,000 CHILDREN**  
*under the age of 5 died  
every day in 2015, mostly from  
causes that could have been*  
**PREVENTED OR TREATED**  
*with simple, affordable  
interventions.*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. HOW CAN POOR HEALTH AFFECT OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE?
2. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR FAMILIES TO BE ABLE TO ACCESS HEALTH CARE? WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT HAVING ACCESS?
3. SHOULD HEALTH CARE BE AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE? HOW CAN GOVERNMENTS ENSURE THIS?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of access to health care worldwide at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.wearecreate.org/exploringissues).

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help children in developing communities access health care? Take action with the **WE Create Change** campaign on page 36 of the Student Guide.

# Poverty



Poverty means more than not having enough money. On a deeper level, poverty is the state of not having access to opportunities to improve your situation and take control of your future. For the 71 percent of the world who live on less than \$10 per day, poverty forces difficult decisions. Do I buy food and go thirsty, or buy water and go hungry? Do I pay for school fees or hospital bills?

Without equal access to social resources like education, jobs, loans and financial literacy skills, poverty creates a cycle where children born into poor families have fewer opportunities to succeed as adults. Women have less access to social and economic resources, even though studies show that when women gain access to paid work, economies grow.

## FAST FACTS

*The poorest*  
**1/2 OF THE WORLD'S**  
*population has the same amount of combined wealth as the*  
**62 RICHEST PEOPLE**  
*on the planet.*

**171 MILLION PEOPLE**  
*would be lifted out of poverty if every child in low-income countries finished school with basic literacy. That's a*  
**12% DROP**  
*in poverty worldwide.*

*Extreme poverty*  
**HAS BEEN CUT IN 1/2**  
*since 1990, but progress has been far from equal. Most of the gains from the*  
**LAST 30 YEARS**  
*have been made in a single country.*

*It would cost*  
**\$66 BILLION**  
*to end extreme poverty*  
**FOR 1 YEAR.**  
*That's less than Americans spent on the lottery in 2014.*



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. HOW WOULD YOU SPEND YOUR MONEY IF YOU ONLY EARNED \$10 PER DAY?
2. IF YOU COULDN'T AFFORD TO ATTEND SCHOOL, HOW WOULD IT AFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO EARN MONEY IN THE FUTURE?
3. IF YOU COULDN'T AFFORD MEDICINE OR EMERGENCY SAVINGS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU GOT SICK?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of global poverty at **WE.org/exploringissues**.

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help women in developing communities earn a living? Take action with the **WE Are Rafikis** campaign on page 32 of the Student Guide.

# Water

Around the world today, more than 663 million people live without access to safe drinking water, while at least 2.4 billion still lack access to adequate sanitation facilities. That's one in three people! For those deprived of these basic human rights, every drink makes them vulnerable to infectious diseases like cholera, typhoid and dysentery.

In developing communities, hauling water from distant sources is primarily the responsibility of women and girls. For mothers, this means more time away from young children and income-generating activities. For girls, this means missing out on school and future job opportunities.

In times of drought and crop failure, villages without a reliable water source go hungry and it can mean the difference between life and death. These health and financial costs have a ripple effect on a community's entire economy—making it increasingly difficult for families to break the cycle of poverty.

## FAST FACTS

*1 study found that reducing the distance to a clean water source by*  
**JUST 15 MINUTES**  
*can increase girls' school attendance by*  
**UP TO 12%.**

**POOR WATER**  
*and sanitation in developing countries result in economic losses estimated at*  
**\$260 BILLION ANNUALLY.**

*More than*  
**1,000 CHILDREN DIE**  
*every day due to preventable water- and sanitation-related diarrhoeal diseases.*

*More people die from*  
**UNSAFE WATER**  
*annually than from all forms of violence,*  
**INCLUDING WAR.**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER?
2. WHAT ARE ALL THE THINGS YOU DO IN A DAY THAT REQUIRE WATER? HOW MUCH WATER DO YOU NEED TO DO ALL THOSE THINGS?
3. DOES ANYONE OWN WATER? SHOULD ACCESS TO WATER BE FREE FOR EVERYONE?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of access to clean water worldwide at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.weforum.org/exploringissues).

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help children in developing communities access clean water? Take action with the **WE Walk for Water** campaign on page 54 of your Student Guide.



# Accessibility



Accessibility is the state of a place, object or resource being available to all people, regardless of physical, mental, emotional or social disability. Disability occurs when there is a mismatch in the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which they live.

In Canada, 3.8 million people over the age of 15 report having a disability—that's more than the entire population of Atlantic Canada—and yet their needs are often not considered in the creation of public spaces and services.

Disabilities can come in a wide variety of forms: pain, mobility, agility, hearing, seeing, learning, psychological, memory, speech and developmental. Each involves different strengths, assets and challenges to accessibility and many of these challenges aren't visible. They can be situational or temporary, or long-term.

## FAST FACTS

### *Inclusive design* **BENEFITS EVERYONE!**

*Modern texting technology and voice commands evolved from  
**DESIGN SOLUTIONS**  
for people with disabilities.*

**MORE THAN 1/2**  
*of Canadian children with disabilities*  
**DON'T HAVE ACCESS**  
*to the aids and devices they need.*

**79% OF**  
*Canadian business owners*  
*believe diversity is an asset*  
**BUT 69%**  
*say they've never hired*  
*someone with a visible or*  
*non-visible disability.*

**STIGMAS ABOUT**  
*disability can create social barriers.*  
**1/2 OF CANADIANS**  
*believe someone is more likely*  
*to get hired or promoted if they*  
*hide their disability.*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A SPACE TO BE ACCESSIBLE? HOW DO RAMPS, LEARNING ASSISTANTS, MAGNIFYING SOFTWARE AND TEXT-TO-SPEECH MAKE SPACES AND PROGRAMS MORE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT ABILITIES?

2. WHY IS INCLUSIVE DESIGN IMPORTANT? WHO DOES INCLUSIVE DESIGN BENEFIT?

3. WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO ENSURE THAT PROGRAMS, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTS ARE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY MORE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE?

GO DEEPER

Learn more about accessibility at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://we.org/exploringissues).

TAKE ACTION

Want to help make your community more accessible? Take action with the **WE Are One** campaign at [WE.org/weareone](https://we.org/weareone).



# The Environment



Our everyday choices have a direct impact on the future of the planet. As the population grows, so does the demand we put on the environment. Between January 1 and August 13, 2015, the global population used up all the resources the planet would produce for the whole year. We're depleting forests faster than we can regrow them, and at current rates, world fishing populations are set to completely collapse by 2048.

With this level of consumption comes waste, pollution and the widespread destruction of habitats. Greenhouse gas emissions are predicted to increase by more than 50 percent by 2050. By then, air pollution will be the top environmental cause of premature death. Unless we improve our habits of consumption and waste, many of these changes will come in our lifetime.

## FAST FACTS

*Because of environmental damage,*

**40% OF THE WORLD'S**

*population will live in  
water-stressed regions*

**BY 2050.**

*Species are dying off at a rate*

**1,000x TO 10,000x**

*faster than the natural  
extinction rate.*

**1/4 OF THE PLANET'S**

*coral reefs are already damaged*

**BEYOND REPAIR.**

*Globally we produced*

**2.1 BILLION TONNES**

*of waste in 2007—*

**27% CAME FROM**

*high-income countries.*



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT EVERYDAY ACTIONS DO YOU TAKE THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT?
2. WHAT ARE SIMPLE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE YOUR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT?
3. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT? HOW CAN WE ENSURE THAT PEOPLE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPACTS THEIR ACTIONS HAVE ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of environmental sustainability at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.ve.org/exploringissues).

## TAKE ACTION

Want to change the headlines on environmental sustainability? Reduce your negative impacts and boost your positive ones with the **WE Take Charge** campaign on page 24 of the Student Guide.

# Homelessness



Homelessness isn't just what we see on the street—it takes many forms and affects many different people. People find themselves homeless for any number of reasons: they've lost their job, their health is deteriorating or they are fleeing domestic violence. Women and children are often part of the “hidden homeless”: people living in friends' homes or temporary accommodations.

More than 235,000 Canadians experienced homelessness at some point in the past year. Homelessness costs the Canadian economy \$7 billion annually. Per month, it costs \$1,932 for a shelter bed or \$10,900 for a hospital bed. And yet, none of these provide permanent solutions.

That's why many cities are turning to a model of help that provides housing stability as a first resort and then builds on that base with education, job training and aid for mental health challenges. So far, this method has been extremely effective at significantly reducing homelessness.

## FAST FACTS

*1 study showed*  
**2 IN 5 HOMELESS**  
*individuals had been*  
**ASSAULTED**  
*in the previous year.*

*With an increased risk of*  
**ILLNESS OR ASSAULT,**  
*homeless people are*  
*admitted to a hospital*  
**5x MORE OFTEN**  
*than the general population.*

**180,000**  
*homeless people stayed in*  
**EMERGENCY SHELTERS**  
*across Canada during 2014.*

*Vancouver reduced*  
*homelessness by*  
**66% IN 5 YEARS**  
*by providing stable housing*  
*as a base for other*  
**SOCIAL SERVICES.**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT DAILY ACTIVITIES WOULD BE AFFECTED IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE A HOME? WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL? STAY CLEAN? STAY FED? DO HOMEWORK? MEET FRIENDS?

2. WHAT RESOURCES EXIST IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO HELP THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS? ARE THEY ENOUGH?

3. WHAT ARE SOME ISSUES THAT ARE MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY HOMELESSNESS? HOW WOULD OVERCOMING HUNGER, POVERTY OR ILLITERACY BE EASIER IF EVERYONE HAD A STABLE HOME?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of homelessness at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.ve.org/exploringissues).

## TAKE ACTION

Want to make a difference for those experiencing homelessness in your community? Take action with the **WE Volunteer Now** campaign on page 50 of the Student Guide.





# Hunger

Imagine trying to get through everyday life without knowing when your next meal will come. Short-term hunger can cause headaches, dizziness, irritability, nausea and inability to concentrate, and the long-term effects can go even deeper.

Studies show that homes that don't have access to enough affordable, nutritious food also report multiple chronic medical conditions, major depression, and long-term mental and physical disabilities. These health issues can be made worse by hunger and also make it harder to earn money and provide food.

Across the country, 54 percent of food banks reported an increase in demand between 2014 and 2015. Close to 40 percent are run entirely by volunteers; the rest still rely heavily on volunteer assistance. Food banks in Canada consistently rate affordable housing, social assistance benefits and increases to minimum wage as the three biggest investments we can make to fight hunger.

## FAST FACTS

*Single-parent families  
with children are*  
**MORE VULNERABLE**  
*to hunger than any other  
kind of household.*

**IT'S A MYTH**  
*that food banks make their users  
dependent. In a study of one  
provincial food bank, most clients*  
**MADE LESS THAN 1/2**  
*of the maximum number of annual visits.*

*The rate of*  
**FOOD INSECURITY**  
*in Nunavut is more than*  
**4x HIGHER**  
*than the Canadian  
average.*

*Adults living without  
enough food are*  
**1.7x MORE LIKELY**  
*to have been diagnosed with a*  
**MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE.**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. FOOD SECURITY IS THE STATE OF HAVING ACCESS TO ENOUGH FOOD THAT IS BOTH AFFORDABLE AND NUTRITIOUS. WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF SITUATIONS WHERE FOOD MIGHT NOT BE AFFORDABLE OR NUTRITIOUS?

2. HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU WERE EXPERIENCING HUNGER ON A DAILY BASIS? WHAT CHALLENGES WOULD YOU FACE? WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM RISKS?

3. WHAT ARE SOME ISSUES YOU SEE AS BEING RELATED TO HUNGER? HOW DO THESE ISSUES MAKE IT HARDER FOR PEOPLE TO FIND AFFORDABLE, NUTRITIOUS FOOD? HOW DOES HUNGER AMPLIFY THESE ISSUES?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of hunger in Canada at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://we.org/exploringissues).

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help your community fight hunger? Take action with the **WE Scare Hunger** campaign on page 28 of the Student Guide.

# Reconciliation



For over 100 years, Indigenous children in Canada were taken from their families and placed in Indian Residential Schools—government-funded, church-run institutions that removed the influence of parents in the spiritual, cultural and intellectual development of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children.

During this dark period in Canadian history, more than 150,000 Indigenous children attended schools located hundreds of kilometres from their homes. This system—which only ended about 20 years ago—has left a legacy of unresolved trauma that has deeply affected Indigenous Canadians and the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was established as a response to the charges of abuse that Indigenous children experienced in residential schools. As a step toward reconciliation, the commission spent six years travelling across the country to hear the stories of survivors and their families, and work toward building more positive relationships between all Canadians.

## FAST FACTS

*There were*  
**139 FEDERALLY SUPPORTED**  
*residential schools identified  
 across Canada.\**

**THE LAST**  
*residential school  
 did not close until*  
**1996.**

*The Truth and Reconciliation  
 Commission of Canada's final report  
 on residential schools contains*  
**94 CALLS TO ACTION.**

**IN 2015,**  
*the National Centre for Truth  
 and Reconciliation opened as a*  
**PERMANENT**  
*research centre at the  
 University of Manitoba.*

\* This does not include provincially supported residential schools or residential schools that were solely run by churches.



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. HOW DO YOU THINK THE FINAL REPORT BY THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA WILL CHANGE, OR HAS ALREADY CHANGED, THE CONVERSATION SURROUNDING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND ISSUES IN CANADA?

2. WHETHER YOU IDENTIFY AS AN INDIGENOUS OR NON-INDIGENOUS CANADIAN, WHAT CAN YOU DO TO EDUCATE YOURSELF AND SPARK A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE HISTORY, CULTURES AND EXPERIENCES OF FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT CANADIANS?

3. WHAT MORE DO YOU THINK CAN BE DONE TO STRENGTHEN TIES BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS CANADIANS?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on Indigenous experiences and issues in Canada at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.weareindigenous.ca/explore).

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help start conversations on issues important to the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians? Take action with the **WE Stand Together** campaign on page 58 of the Student Guide.