EXPLORING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH WE VILLAGES

LESSON PACKAGE FOR GRADES 9 TO 12

THEME: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT | SUBJECTS: ENGLISH, GEOGRAPHY
THEME: Sustainable Development

SUBJECTS: English, Geography

GRADE LEVEL: Grades 9 to 12

LESSON PACKAGE OVERVIEW:
In this package, students will learn the concept of sustainability locally then globally. They will read a story of a young person who has been helped by sustainable development through Free The Children’s WE Villages model. Students will research the WE Villages model and then write an epilogue to the story.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:
► How can WE Villages be implemented to improve access to education for young people in developing countries? What role will you play (individually or as part of a group) in helping to reach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals?

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:
Students will:
• Define and understand sustainability
• Find their role in helping to work toward sustainable development

Recommended Assessment for Learning:
You know your students best—their learning styles and preferences, skill levels, and knowledge. You are also best positioned to anticipate the habits of mind that will make this lesson package successful.

In this lesson package, teaching strategies include collaboration, visualization and reading and research. Suggestions for demonstration of learning include small group and large group discussion, reflection and cataloguing. Please make any accommodations or modifications that serve your students.

WORD BANK

Barrier—a circumstance or obstacle that keeps people or things apart or prevents communication or progress

Developing countries—a poor agricultural country that is seeking to become more advanced economically and socially

Sustainable—able to be maintained at a certain rate or level, conserving a balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources

Sustainable development—economic development that is conducted without depletion of natural resources

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

• Chart paper and markers
• Computer with Internet connection
• Projector
• Blackline Master 1: Stories of Sustainable Development
• Blackline Master 2: WE Villages and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
LESSON 1:
UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY

SUGGESTED TIME:
75 minutes

Investigate and Learn

1. Guide students to an understanding of sustainable development. Begin by having students assemble onto the “train of thought.” Have students gather in the centre of the room on the train of thought. Tell students that they will be given two stop options. Based on their choice, they will need to move to the right or left side of the train. As choices are made, select students to explain their choice to the rest of the riders. Based on this information, students may change their side. Use the following options for the exercise:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Side Stops</th>
<th>Right Side Stops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$50 of takeout</td>
<td>$50 of groceries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable bottled water</td>
<td>Refillable bottled water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut flowers</td>
<td>Potted plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi rides</td>
<td>Public transit pass or buying a bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking on odd jobs to earn money</td>
<td>Having a part-time job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Debrief the exercise with students and ask them what the left side stops have in common. (Answer: disposable, short life-span, costly over the long term.). What do the right side stops have in common? (Answer: reusable, longer lasting, investments, sustainable.)

3. Write the word “sustainable” on the board. Ask students what they think it may mean. Create a class definition of sustainability.

4. Now that students are thinking of sustainability, guide them to think about components of their community that make it sustainable. Divide the class into groups of three to four students.

5. Distribute chart paper and markers to each group. On the chart paper have students list what basic components make communities sustainable. What value does each component add to the community? For example, an elementary school provides basic education that helps young community members learn to read, write and think critically. It also provides a safe place for parents to send their children for a significant part of each day, which frees them up to do other tasks like working to earn money for the family, grocery shopping, cooking and doing laundry, which help the health of a family. Encourage students to think of examples in their community as well as other communities they have visited or learned about in books, magazines, TV and movies. Students may draw their communities—or parts of them—instead of writing lists.

6. Next, have students add community services to their lists. What is the value services add to a community? How do they increase sustainability? For example, garbage collection benefits a community by centralizing waste management so individual households are not responsible. It also provides jobs.

7. Finally, have students think longer term. What would make communities sustainable as populations grow, demands for energy increase and land becomes scarce? For example, rooftop gardens create insulation systems for buildings that increase cooling in the summer and contain warmth in the winter. They can also provide freshly grown food, help convert carbon dioxide to oxygen and give pollinators landing spots in areas that are commonly concrete jungles.

8. Have groups share their communities with the class. Discuss similarities and differences between communities.
**LESSON 2:**
**INTRODUCING WE VILLAGES**

**SUGGESTED TIME:**
75 minutes

1. Now that students understand what makes their communities sustainable, introduce the concept of sustainable development with the following explanation:

   Sustainable development means creating ways for people to take care of themselves and meet basic needs, such as providing access to food, clean water and shelter—in ways that also protect the environment. This is why development projects that help people living in poverty can’t just be good for today. They have to be good for the future as well. Our world still has a long way to go toward meeting this goal. Our consumption of natural resources also has to be more equitable. Right now, about 20 percent of the world’s richest people use almost 80 percent of the world’s resources, such as crude oil, energy and clean water.

   Ask students to draw comparisons between their initial idea of sustainability and the definition presented here. Have them discuss with a partner.

**ENRICHMENT:** Ask students to think about who should implement sustainable development. Create a barometer line. At one end write or post a sign with “strongly agree” and on the other end write or post a sign with “strongly disagree.” Mark the centre as “neutral.” Explain to students that they should position themselves on the line as they agree or disagree with the following examples. Students may move around based on the explanations put forth by their peers. Tell students they may be asked to explain why they have placed themselves where they did. Depending on the level of students and the discussions that ensue, you may not need to use all of the statements.

   Sustainable practices should be initiated by:
   
   • People from countries who already have or use the technology/knowledge/method
   • The political leaders of the countries that need sustainable development
   • Business leaders within the country or community that needs sustainable development
   • Community members who need sustainable development
   • A combination of international members, national leaders, business leaders and community members

2. Tell students that they will be learning about WE Villages, a sustainable development model that works in partnership with international donors, national and local governments, local community members and others to help create sustainable communities—communities where families have the knowledge and skills to be self-reliant. WE Villages began as a school-building project to help young people attend school. It quickly evolved into a sustainable development model that helps young people and their families overcome barriers related to education, water, health, food and opportunity, allowing them to break the cycle of poverty and help young people attend school.

3. Show students a video about WE Villages to reiterate what they have learned about sustainable development so far and help them see how WE Villages works player.vimeo.com/video/174570410?title=0&byline=0&portrait=0&autoplay=1 (2:15).

4. Divide the class into four reading groups for a jigsaw exercise. Distribute one story to each group from **Blackline Master 1: Stories of Sustainable Development**. Instruct students to highlight, circle or underline examples of sustainable development practices could help.

5. Next, tell students that they will be researching WE Villages in order to write a success story of a fictional character who has benefited from sustainable development. The story will examine how sustainable development helped break the cycle of poverty in a young person’s life. Students may use the stories from the previous lesson as examples.

6. The story must include the following:
   
   a. Details of the fictional character, such as:
      i. Name
      ii. Gender identification (male or female; ensure at least half of the students profile a female youth)
      iii. Age
      iv. Family situation
   
   b. Country (choose from one of the eight countries where WE Villages works)
   
   c. Barriers they overcame and how they overcame them. (Remind students that sustainable development is a process so not all measures may be in place yet and not all communities have the same needs.) Students should consider the following Pillars of Impact and show examples of at least three:
      i. Education
      ii. Water
      iii. Health
      iv. Food
      v. Opportunity

7. Direct students to **WE.org/we-villages** to conduct their research.

**EDUCATOR’S NOTE:** Review classroom rules on respect before students begin their research. Remind students to be respectful of the cultural differences they may notice.

8. Upon completion, have groups share their success stories.

**REFLECTION:** Have students reflect in conversation with a partner. Ask students to share some of the barriers that keep young people from attending school around the world.
ENRICHMENT LESSON:
UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

SUGGESTED TIME:
75 minutes

1. Introduce students to the global strategy of sustainable development with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG). Have students read and identify the who, what, when, where, why and how on the third page of the UNSDG from the PDF at undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/brochure/SDGs_Booklet_Web_Eng.pdf. Project, download or have students check it out online. Print off two copies of the package for the next step unless using tablets.

2. Review the answers.

3. Divide the class into five groups. Assign each group, one of the following WE Villages Pillars of Impact:
   a. Education—WE.org/education
   b. Water—WE.org/water
   c. Health—WE.org/health
   d. Food—WE.org/food
   e. Opportunity—WE.org/opportunity

   Distribute Blackline Master 2: WE Villages and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In their small groups, instruct students to answer the questions on the first half of the handout. Direct students to the relevant WE.org websites indicated in the list above.

4. While students research, set up a gallery walk. Split the classroom into two halves. Disperse one set of the UNSDGs around one half of the classroom, allowing space for students to visit. Repeat this process with the other half of the classroom. Note: For classes of 20 or fewer students, use one set.

5. Once students have answered the questions, divide each group into two groups and assign each subgroup a side of the classroom to mirror the gallery walks that have been set up. Instruct students to move around the room with their small group, visiting and reading each of the 17 UNSDGs. At each goal station, instruct students to reflect on their WE Villages research to determine if the goal is related to the work achieved through the assigned Pillar of Impact. Encourage groups to discuss at the stations. Some goals may be obviously connected while others will need further consideration. If they believe the goal and Pillar of Impact are connected, instruct students to circle or highlight that goal on the second half of the handout.

6. After students have completed the gallery walk, have them sit in their small groups. Create a master list on the board. Review each UNSDGs. Ask groups to share if they circled it, and if so, why? If one small group believes their pillar applies while the other does not, have the class discuss the decisions.

7. Upon completion, ask: How is WE Villages contributing to the UNSDGs? How many UNSDGs are not connected to at least one of the Pillars of Impact?

8. Give students exit cards and ask them to answer what role they can play—as an individual or as part of a group—in helping fulfill the UNSDGs.
LESSON 3:
GET INVOLVED IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SUGGESTED TIME:
75 minutes

Action Plan and Take Action

1. In pairs, have students brainstorm how they can get involved in sustainable development efforts, either individually or as part of a group. Put forth to the class a few of the best ideas to take action on. Have students vote on one to use. For more information and activities on creating action plans, taking action and service-learning, visit WE.ca/educator-resources.

Alternatively, take action with a WE Schools campaign designed to raise awareness or fundraise for WE Villages. Check out one of the following campaigns to get involved with. Each campaign comes with resources, like lesson plans, to help students through action planning, raising awareness, taking action and reflecting.

WE Are Rafikis—Sell handmade Rafiki Bracelets to help Kenyan artisans earn a living and raise funds for community-led development projects through WE Villages.

WE Bake for Change—Come together for a bake sale to raise money for WE Villages.

WE Create Change—Collect coins to create change for developing communities through WE Villages.

WE Are Silent—Plan a day of silence to raise money and/or awareness for children whose voices go unheard.

WE Walk for Water—Raise money and/or awareness for communities who must travel to access safe, clean drinking water by arranging a walk of solidarity to fetch or carry water in your own community.

Report and Celebrate

2. Have students reflect on their learning and experiences. In a written, verbal or conversational reflection response, students will use specific examples to answer the following questions: How can WE Villages be implemented to improve access to education for young people in developing countries? What role will you play (individually or as part of a group) in helping to reach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals?

3. Encourage students to go deeper by using the following questions:
   a. As a Canadian and a global thinker, what have you learned about sustainable development?
   b. How can you continue to apply and share what you have learned about sustainable development?
   c. As a young member of society, what is your role locally, nationally and internationally to promote sustainable development programs like WE Villages?

4. Post stories and promote them through social media to share the impact students are having. Use #WEVillages to connect with the larger WE Movement. Find more information and resources on it at WE.org/we-villages. Collect completed student media release forms when necessary.
**Water**

My name is Hillary, and I am 11 years old. I live in Enelerai, a small village in Kenya’s Maasai Mara. I have one sister named Yola and one brother named Nicholas. My favourite part of the day is when I read at home. I also like to study all subjects at school. My big goal is to go to high school.

**Community profile:**
- Community name: Enelerai, Kenya
- Population: 2,000 with 240 families
- Ethnicity: Kipsigis
- Languages: Kipsigis, Swahili, English
- Literacy: 10% to 20% (estimated)
- Main sources of income: herding goats, cows and sheep; small-scale farming of beans, millet, sweet potatoes and maize
- Average income: $11 per household per month

**Hillary’s health risks:**
- Dirty water from the Mara River
- Lack of hand-washing facilities
- No local medical clinic
- No money to pay for a doctor in far-away Mulat

**Hillary learns about getting sick**
My mom and dad say I am lucky because of my good health. I have never visited a doctor for a check-up or illness. I just hope I don’t get sick. The nearest clinic is a day’s walk away in Mulat and my family doesn’t have enough money to pay the fees.

This year in school I learned how people in my village get sick. One way is dirty water. Many cows and goats are herded to the Mara River to drink and cool off in the water. The animals don’t get out of the river when they go to the bathroom. This makes the muddy, brown water dirty and dangerous for people to drink. This scares me, because like most people in the village, my family fetches water from the river to drink and wash.

Another way people get sick is not washing their hands. At school we have pit latrines, or outhouses, where we go to the bathroom. I didn’t usually have a way to wash my hands after I went so I just wiped them on the grass if they got dirty.

**Hillary learns how to stay healthy**
One day in September I was in my Grade 6 class when our teacher started to talk about “basic sanitation and hygiene.” We learned what makes us sick—like the tiny bacteria that live in dirty water—and how we can stay healthy with simple actions. Interested, I sat straight up and listened really well.

A great thing I learned is that by boiling water we make it safe to drink. Really hot water kills the tiny bacteria in the water that make us sick. Another thing I learned is that hand-washing kills the diseases that get on my hands when I go to the latrine or play with our goats. Now after we use the latrine at school we go to the “leaky tin” to wash our hands. The leaky tin is a jug of water with a hole in it and a stick plugging the hole. After I use the latrine, I pull out the stick and the water rushes out. I wash my hands and scrub hard. Then I put the stick back in the hole. It’s fun!

After class I ran home to tell Mom and Dad everything I learned. They were interested, too. We started boiling all our drinking water and we even put a “leaky tin” behind our house.

Now that I know how to stay healthy, I’m more confident that I can achieve my goal of going to high school. After I finish high school, I want to be a police officer in Nairobi or a doctor or maybe even the leader of Kenya!
Poverty

My name is Jorje, and I am 10 years old. I am in Grade 5 at Jatari Campesino Primary School in Ecuador. When I’m not in class, I like to spend time with my friends and play games. My favourite game is soccer. My favourite classes at school are writing and English language. I want to learn English well so I can visit countries in North America.

Community profile:

• Community name: Jatari Campesino, Ecuador
• Population: 320
• Ethnicity: Puruhá
• Languages: Kichwa, Spanish
• Literacy: 5.5%
• Main sources of income: agriculture, construction (men) and domestic work in nearby cities (women)
• Average income: $100 per family per month if they find work; subsistence farming is their only constant source of income

Jorje’s challenges:

• Poverty in the community
• No high school near his home
• No money to attend high school in the city
• Farming sometimes makes him miss school
• Lack of good jobs in his community
• Migration, which means moving to the city to look for work

No high school in sight

When I grow up, I want to get a good job in Jatari Campesino so I can help my village. But to get a good job I need to go to high school, and there is no high school near my home. To go to high school I have to move away from my family to the city, Riobamba, 72 kilometres away. That costs a lot of money, I don’t have money and I would miss my family. A lot of families don’t have money and many of the elders have never gone to school. This means our village has always been poor and we don’t always know how to help our village get the things we need to make it better so we can stay and work here.

Finding a good job

Another problem is there aren’t very many good jobs here in Jatari Campesino. Our village is very small with only 320 people. In our community we need more jobs and money. Everybody has to go to the city to work and they don’t stay here.

I miss my father a lot. He has to work in the city all the time to earn money and comes home on weekends only. I’m worried that to get a good job I will have to move to the city, too. If this happens, I will miss my family and friends a lot.

The future according to Jorje

I believe each person must work to make the world a better place. The first step to making it better is letting children from poor families go to school and get a good education. But it’s hard for many kids like me to spend time at school because they have to farm in the afternoons. Sometimes kids are absent for many days.

We have many challenges, but I want to tell all kids one thing: you must work in your community to help other children and be committed to completing your schools. This is the only way to make your life better, give back to your community and help the world.
**Education**

My name is Hellen Kamara. I am 17 years old and I live in Moyamba, Sierra Leone. In 1995, my family fled our village to hide from rebels in the forest. In the days that followed, the rebels tortured and killed many people in our village, specifically teachers. They also destroyed buildings of all kinds, including houses, schools and medical clinics.

**Community profile:**
- Community name: Moyamba, Sierra Leone
- Population: 13,000
- Ethnicity: Though ethnically diverse, Mende are the majority
- Languages: Krio, English
- Literacy: 33%
- Main source of income: Agriculture
- Average income: $50 to $70 per household per month (where the average household is made up of six members)

**Hellen’s hardships:**
- Town destroyed during the civil war, including the only high school
- Family’s house burned down
- Still haunted by memories of the civil war

**A war on children**
This all happened during my country’s 11-year civil war. The war left tens of thousands of my fellow citizens dead. In Moyamba, hundreds of children were abducted, recruited as child soldiers and sexually abused. The war destroyed the innocence of hundreds of thousands of children. By the end of the war, more than 10,000 children, some as young as five, had been forced to choose between getting a limb cut off or fighting with one of the two sides of the civil war.

I still have bad dreams about those days. My family was lucky to escape alive.

**They found only ashes**
During this time, my parents and I remained unharmed hiding from the rebels. Other families were not so lucky. When it was finally safe to return home, there was little of our village left standing. We looked for our house and found it had been burned to the ground—only ashes were left. Nearby, the all-girls St. Joseph’s Secondary School was destroyed. It had been the only high school in the area. My parents and I now worried about my education. The nearest working high school was too far away, especially with no public buses running because of the war. Where would I go to school?

**Hellen’s school is rebuilt**
But soon, the community worked with an international organization to rebuild St. Joseph’s Secondary School. It was truly a blessing. The new school is a place for me and other young women to learn and heal our painful memories.

Today I start each morning excited for class. My parents work very hard to see that I go to school. My father is a farmer and my mother takes care of our home, but I have decided I want to do something different. My thinking is to become a lawyer, to help Sierra Leone continue to be a peaceful country.

With all the experiences I have faced in life, from war to peace, and after much struggle, I hope to see a brighter future.
**Sustainable development**

My name is Yuzhuo Nan and I am 10 years old. I live in Nanjia, a small town in Gansu province, China. This is a story about how “sustainable development” changed my life.

**Community profile:**
- Community name: Nanjia, China
- Population: 5,300, including 910 families
- Ethnicity: Han
- Languages: Mandarin
- Literacy: 25%
- Main source of income: agriculture
- Average income: $12 per household per month

**Yuzhuo’s unsustainable situation:**
- Both parents work in the fields, leaving Yuzhuo at home to take care of her brother and do chores
- Fetching clean water is a one-hour walk each way
- School is far away from home

**My broken dream**

My heroes are my teachers because they give us knowledge about China and the world. My biggest dream is to be a teacher so I can give knowledge too. But two years ago my dream started falling apart. My parents told me that I had to stay at home instead of going to school.

I was angry and sad. I didn’t understand. My father explained, “Yuzhuo, we are sorry. To eat we must work, but we cannot work and care for your brother also. School is far and there are many chores. Daughter, you must stay at home.” Back then my family was only earning $12 each month by farming. They needed me to watch over my little brother Jian, while they worked in the fields. I wasn’t happy but I did as I was told.

Every morning I woke up at six o’clock. I walked one hour to the well to fetch water and one hour back. Then I helped my mother cook breakfast before she went back to the fields with father. They put lunch in a bowl to bring with them. After I fed Jian, I washed clothing, cleaned pots and started making dinner. Some afternoons I helped my parents farm with Jian sitting on my back. Every day was hard work, and I felt worried. I knew I couldn’t be a teacher if I didn’t go to school.

**Social and economic support to the rescue**

A new school was built in my village not long ago. I suddenly felt hope. Now that my school was close I thought maybe I could go to class again. I asked my parents, but they said they still needed me to work at home.

But soon after the school was ready, a clean water well was also built in our village. Now I only walk five minutes to fetch water, not one hour. Also, each family got piglets to make money. My family got three! I learned that these are a couple of ways to do “sustainable development.”

After the piglets started to grow, my father told me they could get by without me at home and that I should go back to school. My dream came alive again. It was one of the happiest days of my life. A couple days later I was sitting in class very happy. Looking around, I noticed many kids I didn’t recognize. I was confused at first, but then I realized: before now they must have been stuck working at home, too!

**My future**

Life is much better now. I still help my family but I spend more time playing Chinese badminton, talking with my best friend Jia and doing homework. My grandmother calls these things “being a kid.” But I like to study more than play games. Now that I am back in school learning, I know I will be a teacher.
Blackline Master 2:
WE Villages and the United Nations
Sustainable Development Goals

WE Villages
1. What is the Pillar of Impact being examined?
2. What is the issue/what are the barriers?
3. What is one fact you think is noteworthy? (Select from the facts section on the website.)
4. How does WE Villages work in communities?

Sustainable Development Goals
1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Live on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals