WE VILLAGES:
EDUCATION PILLAR

LESSON PACKAGE FOR GRADES 9 TO 12

AN INITIATIVE OF

WE

Dear Educator,

Welcome to the WE Movement. We are so glad you've joined us in our mission to inspire, education and empower students to find their place in the world. Throughout the last two decades, educators have stood by us. With over 12,000 schools thriving in WE Schools, we are delivering impressive results in academic engagement, life skills and civic engagement. Through the WE Schools method of experiential service-learning, students engage in collaborative learning and independent reflection. As a result, your students will become more engaged in local and global issues.

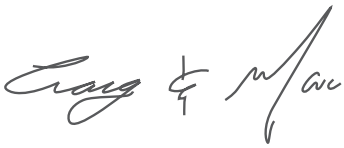
We have been delivering equally impressive results in our international work. Through Free The Children's WE Villages sustainable development model that provides access to the Pillars of Impact—Education, Water, Health, Food and Opportunity—to empower a community with the means to forever lift itself from poverty. All the projects and programs of WE Villages are owned and maintained by the community and are designed to be self-sustaining after the initial project implementation.

The WE Villages Pillars of Impact lesson packages provide students with insight into the issues and barriers that, combined, prevent children from attending school in developing communities. They then learn how the WE Villages sustainable development model is applied to each community's needs. Whether you are beginning a fundraising campaign for WE Villages and want to huelp students understand why funds are needed, where they are going and what they will be used for or if you are interested in increase student knowledge on sustainable development, we hope these lesson packages serve you well.

Together, we have the power to reignite the fundamental purpose of education: increasing student initiated learning and preparing them with the life skills to better the world and forge their own paths to success.

Thank you for having the heart and passion to bring WE into your classroom. We are honored and encouraged to work with such a dedicated and enthusiastic group.

We are stronger together,



Craig and Marc Kielburger
Co-Founders, WE

Essential Question:

What is experiential service-learning and how can I incorporate it into my classroom instruction with WE Schools curriculum resources?

WE Schools

WE Schools is a unique, step-by-step program that challenges young people to identify the local and global issues that spark their passion and empowers them with the tools to take action. Educators and students work together to learn about the world and take action to create meaningful change. Delivered in 12,300 schools and groups across North America and the UK, the program provides educators and students with curriculum, educational resources and a full calendar of campaign ideas.

What is Experiential Learning?

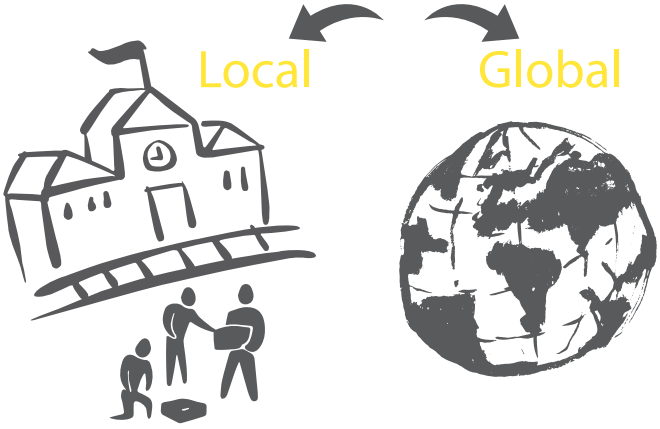
Experiential service-learning is based on a structured academic foundation that goes beyond volunteering and community service. It's a practice that engages teachers and students with their communities in a structured way and allows students to meet their learning objectives while addressing their community's needs.

The Four Steps of WE Schools

1. INVESTIGATE AND LEARN
   Students explore topics related to a real-world challenge or opportunity.

2. ACTION PLAN
   Students develop a plan to implement their service-learning project, including one local and one global action.

3. TAKE ACTION
   Students implement their action plan.



4. REPORT AND CELEBRATE
   Students present the results of their service-learning initiatives.

Setting Students Up For Success: In school, the workplace and in life.

WE Schools Introduction: WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/

Living WE is about improving our lives and our world by reaching out to others. It involves focusing less on "me" and more on "we"—our communities, our country and our world.

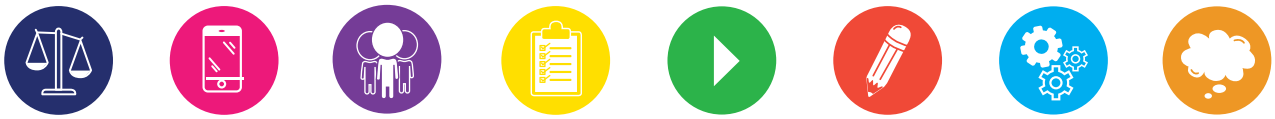
Social Emotional Learning: The WE Learning Framework is grounded in social emotional learning principles, helping students develop the skills to manage their emotions, resolve conflict and make responsible decisions.

Global Mindset is the ability to operate comfortably across borders, cultures and languages is invaluable. WE Schools programing promotes global mindedness and cultural competency amongst student populations during their formative years.

Active Citizenship: Students act on their growing knowledge by connecting with others in their communities, thereby generating interest, further research and engagement in local and national causes.

Reflection is a key component of our experiential service-learning model. Our reflection activities direct students' attention to new interpretations of events and provide a lens through which service can be studied.

OUR LEARNING SKILLS LEGEND



WE Villages: Education Pillar Overview

Education is more than reading, writing and arithmetic. It is a powerful tool that can empower and improve livelihood. When children are educated, they are armed with the courage and self-confidence to better themselves, their families, their communities and ultimately the next generation. Education may provide the highest return of any social investment by reducing poverty, reducing gender inequality and creating opportunities for economic growth.

In this lesson package, students will be introduced to the Education pillar, explore how education can serve as a tool for change, investigate the local and global barriers that prevent access to education and discover the journey children around the world take to receive an education. The lessons are grounded in the WE Learning Framework, ensuring students develop core skills that can help them achieve the learning goals and outcomes that contribute to becoming global citizens.

This lesson plan package is meant to be informative, generative and empowering for teachers and students. Once completed, continue exploring social issues through one or more experiential service-learning supports:

▶Frontline Support: Professional needs-based support for your classroom and extracurricular needs.

▶Global Voices: A weekly lifestyle column linked to global issues, that includes educator resources.

▶Customized Leadership Training: Additional support for students who wish to grow their leadership capabilities.

▶Service-Learning Trips: Opportunities to explore the impacts of WE Villages service work.

RATIONALE

Free The Children's WE Villages is an sustainable development model that provides access to the Pillars of Impact—Education, Water, Health, Food and Opportunity—to empower a community with the means to forever lift itself from poverty. Why these pillars? Because together they can achieve a greater impact. All the projects and programs implemented under the WE Villages model are owned and maintained by the community, and designed to be self-sustaining after the initial project implementation.

Since the creation of the Education pillar, more than 650 schools and school rooms have been built in WE Villages partner communities, giving 55,000 children the opportunity to gain an education and realize their true potential.

ASSESSING THE LEARNING

You know your students best—their learning styles and preferences, skill levels and knowledge. You are in the best position to anticipate the habits of mind that will make this lesson package successful.

In this lesson package the teaching strategies include independent writing, case studies, group work, class discussion and brainstorming. Strategies to assess learning include written reflection, student-generated discussion and presentations.

▶Explore our resources and current campaign offerings at WE.org

WE VILLAGES:
EDUCATION PILLAR

SUBJECT(S): English Language Arts, Health and Physical Education, Social Studies, Arts

GRADE LEVEL: Grades 9 to 12

ESTIMATED TIME: 330 minutes

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- How is education a tool for change in society?
- Why is education not accessible for all girls and boys around the world?

LEARNING GOALS:

Students will:

- Participate in active group work, hands-on projects and class discussions about education
- Explore how education can serve as a tool for change
- Build an understanding of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Examine global and local barriers that prevent access to quality education
- Discover the journey that children around the world take to get to school
- Engage in a fundraising initiative to support WE Villages Education Pillar

WORD BANK

Indigenous—originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native

Reconciliation—the restoration of friendly relations; the action of making one view or belief compatible with another

Rights—a moral or legal entitlement to have or do something

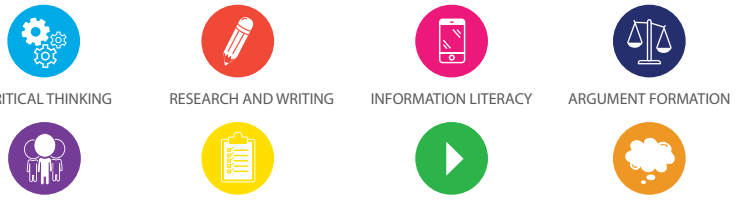
Universal Declaration of Human Rights—a document of human rights drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris, France on December 10, 1948. It is a common standard of achievements for all peoples of all nations, which sets out fundamental human rights to be universally protected. (Source: www.un.org)

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- Front Board
- Paper and writing utensils
- Computer with Internet access
- Appendix 1: Assessment Rubric
- Blackline Master 1 – Global Voices by Marc and Craig Kielburger
- Blackline Master 2 – Real World Times Newspaper

Core Skill Sets

Look for these icons at the top of each lesson. The icons identify the most relevant core skills being developed. Learn more about the WE Learning Framework at www.WE.org/we-schools/program/learning-framework/.



INTRODUCTORY LESSON:

A TOOL FOR CHANGE

Objective: Students will analyze how access to education can affect the development of individuals by comparing personal stories from around the globe. Students will analyze barriers to education around the world and contribute these insights in class discussion.

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 (History/Social Studies)
Determine the central ideas or information of primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events of ideas develop over the course of a text.
CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RH.9-10.8 (History/Social Studies)
Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims

Instructional method(s): Group work, class discussion, brainstorming

Differentiated instruction:
- Read the Global Voices articles as a class and then divide students into groups to record their responses.

Course connections: English Language Arts, Social Studies

Estimated time: 60 minutes

Investigate and Learn

Steps:

1. Write on the board a Nelson Mandela quote about education: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

2. ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING: Ask students what they think this quote means. Have them explain their reasoning.

3. Next, organize the class into groups of three to four students. Distribute chart paper to each group. Instruct students to jot down ways they think education can be used as a powerful tool to change the world. Encourage students to write anything that comes to mind, as there is no wrong or right answer.

4. Tell students that in their groups they will analyze an article and determine how the topic of education is presented. Distribute one Global Voices article from Blackline Master 1: Global Voices to each group. Advise students to use the same chart paper from the previous activity to write down their responses. Provide the following guidelines:
   - Name of article
   - Locate the different regions mentioned in the article
   - Main issue/social problem

And the following questions to answer:
- How is the topic of education presented in this article?
- How would the life of the person(s) be different without education?
- What opportunities did education offer?
- Would you consider education as a tool for change in this story? Why or why not?

EDUCATOR'S NOTE: Global Voices is a weekly column written by Craig and Marc Kielburger that explores local and global social issues, and offers additional elementary and secondary school resources. Visit www.WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/educator-resources/ to find articles and resources online.

CORE LESSON:

BREAKING BARRIERS

Objective: Students will apply their understanding of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and local and global barriers to education recording insights within a newspaper article.

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS:
CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 (History/Social Studies)
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source district from prior knowledge or opinions.
CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 (History/Social Studies)
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA.W.4 (Writing)
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 (Speaking and Listening)
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Instructional method(s): Independent writing, case studies, group work, class discussion and brainstorming

Differentiated instruction:

- Allow students to create a public service announcement about access to quality education at both the local and global level.
- Students compose a timeline of events from the perspective of a 14 year old child denied access to education in her local community with a corresponding timeline for the same age student at their school.

Course connections: English Language Arts, Arts, Social Studies

Special materials: Newspapers (online or print)

Estimated time: 120 minutes

Steps:

1. ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING: To begin, ask students: Are all people in the world equal and have the same rights? Why do you think that?

2. Introduce students to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Tell students that the UDHR is an internationally agreed-upon document that states basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which all human beings are entitled. Show students "The Story of Human Rights" (10:00): www.humanrights.com/#/what-are-human-rights to give them a better understanding of the declaration.

3. Hold a brief class discussion using the questions below:
   - From the information you've gathered watching the video, what are some basic human rights? Is education a basic human right?
   - If education is a basic human right, does that mean that everyone has access to education? Explain.
   - Is the UDHR legally binding? What implications may arise if a country denies some of these rights to their citizens? How can that affect their lives?

4. Read to students Article 26 of the UDHR found below and then show students "The Right to Education" video.

   (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

   The Right to Education: www.humanrights.com/what-are-human-rights/videos/right-to-education.html (2:00).

5. Organize the class into groups of three to four students. Distribute chart paper to each group. Write the following questions on the board. Instruct each group to write down their collective response on the chart paper:
   a) What do you understand as being stated in Article 26 of the declaration?
   b) How would you summarize the video "The Right to Education"? What is the intended message of the video?
   c) How many adults worldwide would you estimate cannot read or write?
   d) How many children worldwide would you estimate do not go to school?
   e) What sort of barriers do you think prevent children from having the right to education?
   f) Why do these barriers to education exist?
   g) Do you think there are barriers that exist in our community that prevent children from going to school? If so, what are they?

6. Display the following statistics on the board. Ask one member from each group to read a statistic out loud.
   - Worldwide, 774 million adults (15 years or older) cannot read or write.
   - 64% of them are women and 36% are men.
   - Worldwide, 58 million primary-aged children are currently not enrolled in school, 31 million of those children are girls.
   - The highest portion of girls out of school is found in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
   - An estimated 215 million children are engaged in child labour.
   - Worldwide, only one in five working children is paid.
   - Poverty, child marriage and violence are some of the barriers to education that children face around the world.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics www.uis.unesco.org

7. On the board create a t-chart with the following two categories: "Global Barriers" and "Local Barriers."

Global Barriers	Local Barriers

8. Ask students to brainstorm in their groups:
   i. Global barriers that prevent children in other parts of the world from accessing quality education.
   ii. Local barriers that prevent children in your community from accessing quality education.

EDUCATOR'S NOTE: Below are examples of global and local barriers to education.

- Lack of funding for education
- Lack of funds to attend school
- Being the "wrong" gender
- Hunger or poor nutrition
- Living in a country where there is conflict
- Homelessness
- No classroom
- Having no teacher or an untrained teacher
- Distance from home to school
- Physical inaccessibility such as lack of ramps or elevators in multi levelled school buildings

9. On the board create a master list of the barriers gathered from each group. Instruct students to record the complete list of barriers in their notebooks in preparation for their next task.

10. Tell students that they will create a lead story for their classroom newspaper called "Real World Times." Explain to students that a lead story is the most important news story of the day. Each group will submit an article that focuses on a local or global barrier that is preventing equal access to quality education. The purpose of their article is to raise awareness of the issue while engaging their potential readers to take action.

11. Circulate the front page of a local newspaper to the class. Ask students to study the front page and discuss with a neighbor the elements of the front page (e.g., title, headlines, pictures or graphics, captions, date, table of contents, etc.).

12. Provide the class with the project guidelines found on Blackline Master 2: Real World Times newspaper. Allow groups in-class time to research and put together their work. Have students present their front page article on a posterboard.

EDUCATOR'S NOTE: The website www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages/ allows students to explore daily front-pages from over 800 newspapers worldwide. With Newseum, students will have a better sense of the components involved in creating a front page newspaper.

Provide tips for creating an effective front page, such as:

- Generate enough curiosity with the headlines or images to entice others to read the paper.
- Images and statistics should complement and enhance the content.

CONCLUDING LESSON:

ROAD TO EDUCATION

Objective: Students will develop an innovative idea to make travel easier for students around the world to reach school by producing a new product that takes into consideration the environment of We Village communities from around the world.

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS:
CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA.W.7 (Writing)
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects bed on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 (Speaking and Listening)
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Instructional method(s): Independent writing, group work, class discussion, brainstorming

Differentiated instruction:

- Allow visual learners the option to sketch out their inventions, encouraging them to draw diagrams to scale.

Course connections: English Language Arts, Social Studies, Arts, Career Development and Occupational Studies

Estimated time: 120 minutes

Action Plan

Steps:

1. The following link shares images from a photo exhibition that was launched by SIPA Press, UNESCO and Veolia Transdev. Tell students that the images tell an inspiring story of the journey children around the world take to go to school. They illustrate the obstacles faced by millions of children on their way to school, including poverty, lack of transportation, political and religious conflict, dangerous urban environments, natural disasters and gender inequality, and the children's willingness to face these obstacles in order to get to school and receive an education. Journeys to School: youtu.be/MxBfqd639BE.

2. Ask students to discuss the following questions with a partner:

   - Were you surprised by the images? Which image stood out to you the most? Why?
   - Do the majority of these images convey a safe or unsafe environment for these children? Explain.
   - How do these images compare to your journey to school?
   - These are images of courage and dedication. Children around the world take these daily journeys in the hope that their education will lead to a better life. What specific examples can you think of that can ease the journey to school for these children?

3. Inform students that the WE Villages holistic development model is designed to eliminate the obstacles preventing children from accessing education and break the cycle of poverty. WE Villages has Pillars of Impact that provide the crucial support an entire community needs for long term sustainability and development. The Pillars of Impact are:
   i. Education
   ii. Water
   iii. Health
   iv. Food
   v. Opportunity

4. Post a map of the world for all students to see. Point out and place a sticky note on top of each of the following countries. Tell students that these are the eight countries WE Villages currently operates in:
   • Kenya • Sierra Leone • Ecuador • Haiti
   • India • Nicaragua • Rural China • Tanzania

5. Show the following video to help students better understand the WE Villages model: player.vimeo.com/video/71444171.

6. Divide students into eight groups and assign one WE Villages country to each. The students will create a two-part presentation. The first part will give a brief summary of their country and the second part will be a business plan.

7. Students will create a business plan for a product or service they believe can ease the journey to school for the children living in their country. Hold a brief brainstorm session to allow each team to collectively gather ideas and then provide the class with the following guide for their presentations.

   Part A: Information on the WE Villages country
   - Name of country and capital city
   - Geography
   - Population
   - Literacy rate

   Part B: Product/service to ease the journey to school
   - What is the idea? Is it a service or product?
   - What is the name of your product/service? What does the name say about your product/service?
   - What makes your idea unique? Is there anyone selling the same or similar service/product?
   - Does your idea take into account the geography, climate or any other factor unique to your WE Villages country?
   - How will this product/service help children get to school safely? Does it reduce their travel time?
   - What supplies do you need to make your product or set up your service? How much will each unit/service cost, approximately?
   - How will you fund the development of the product/service?
   - Is your product/service affordable? Approximately how much will the product/service cost for customers?
   - How will you communicate about your product or service to potential customers (e.g., posters, letters, emails, word-of-mouth, etc.)?

EDUCATOR'S NOTE: Allow students in-class time to research the different journeys children take to get to school in their WE Villages country.

Visit www.we.org/we-villages/our-development-model/ for more information on Free The Children's WE Villages model.

Take Action

8. Students can present their WE Villages work through a PowerPoint or Sway presentation. Ensure students provide a visual of their product or service to share with the class.

Connect with your WE Schools Coordinator or contact weschools@we.org for fundraising posters and more information on the Education pillar.

Let us know what you think. We are always working to make our educational resources better for teachers and students. Answer the short survey and help shape the educational content we offer.

Education pillar: www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2484817/E

Additional Resources

In addition to the lesson plans, share these resources with your students:

- Free The Children's WE Villages story: www.WE.org/we-villages/story/
- WE Villages Education Pillar: www.WE.org/we-villages/education/
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics: www.uis.unesco.org/
- UNESCO: Out of School: www.uis.unesco.org/_LAYOUTS/UNESCO/oosci-data-tool/index-en.html#en/intro
- United Nations Girls' Education Initiative: www.ungei.org/
- World Health Organization: www.who.int/en/
- World Inequality Database on Education: www.education-inequalities.org/

Appendix 1

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

This assessment rubric is based on Bloom's taxonomy, a multi-tiered model to classify cognitive levels of complexity to evaluate students' comprehension of issues and participation with the lessons.

	Level 1: 50-59%	Level 2: 60-69%	Level 3: 70-79%	Level 4: 80-100%
KNOWLEDGE AND COMPREHENSION	Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the relationships among facts, ideas and concepts	Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the relationships among facts, ideas and concepts	Demonstrates considerable knowledge and understanding of the relationships among facts, ideas and concepts	Demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the relationships among facts, ideas and concepts
APPLICATION AND ANALYSIS	Uses critical and creative thinking processes and develops examples with limited effectiveness	Uses critical and creative thinking processes and develops examples with some effectiveness	Uses critical and creative thinking processes and develops examples with considerable effectiveness	Uses critical and creative thinking processes and develops examples with a high degree of effectiveness
SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION	Demonstrates knowledge and makes connections with limited effectiveness	Demonstrates knowledge and makes connections with some effectiveness	Demonstrates knowledge and makes connections with considerable effectiveness	Demonstrates knowledge and makes connections with a high degree of effectiveness
ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNICATION	Expresses and organizes information while using appropriate language for different audiences and purposes with limited effectiveness	Expresses and organizes information while using appropriate language for different audiences and purposes with some effectiveness	Expresses and organizes information while using appropriate language for different audiences and purposes with considerable effectiveness	Expresses and organizes information while using appropriate language for different audiences and purposes with a high degree of effectiveness

Blackline Master 1:
Global Voices by Marc and Craig Kielburger

"LITERACY HOLDS THE KEY FOR TROUBLED INDIGENOUS YOUTH"

Published June 18, 2012, updated December 14, 2016

After passing out from a cocktail of pills, Sally awoke to find a friend dead beside her. She knew she had to change. She was only 15. It would not be an easy path. She'd spent her early years in and out of shelters, cared for by a mom who was a drug addict. Sally`s education had been sporadic. She could neither read nor write.

When she was 14, the Children's Aid Society took her away from her mom. She fled the Oshawa group home where she'd been placed; on the streets she turned to drugs. But seeing her friend dead was like a slap in the face. "I felt like an adult, it was so hard I blamed myself for his death. I knew I had to change my life."

Change began with learning to read. Illiteracy is a common thread in the stories of troubled Indigenous youth like Sally. Manitoba Justice Murray Sinclair, the appointed Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and a former judge for almost 25 years, estimates three quarters of the offenders who appear in Canada`s courts are functionally illiterate.

Indigenous youth are disproportionately represented in the justice system. Indigenous youth comprise 34 percent of the youth in our prisons but only six percent of Canada's youth population. Studies show most don't make it past Grade 8. "I can`t tell you the number of Aboriginal people I grew up with who did not complete high school, who didn't even go to high school. That helps explain why there are so many Aboriginal people caught up in the justice system," Sinclair observed.

Experts like Sinclair and Sherry Campbell former President of Frontier College, want to change the way Canada thinks about youth delinquency. The solution, they say, starts with reading and writing. "We have been told that literacy is not a crime prevention strategy. That's ridiculous. Literacy is one of the biggest ways to prevent crime," Campbell argues. Frontier College works in more than 60 First Nations communities across Canada delivering literacy programs for kids.

Justice Sinclair cites a study conducted in Norway which found that every dollar spent on education saves seven dollars on policing. Frontier College is hosting conferences across the country to get educators, police, judges, policy makers and others talking about the key role of literacy in youth crime prevention. Crime prevention through literacy begins at the earliest stages, when kids first learn to read. "By the time they're in the system, we've already really failed them," says Campbell.

This can prove difficult in Indigenous families where books are not a regular part of the life and culture. Most reserve communities lack libraries. "If you`re not making your rent, books aren`t high on what you`re bringing into the household," notes Campbell. The Martin Family Initiative (MFI) Model Schools project works with two Ontario First Nations reserves to improve reading and writing in their band-operated schools. Founded by former Prime Minister Paul Martin, MFI is dedicated to improving education and opportunities for Canada`s Indigenous peoples.

"Literacy is the most critical skill our children learn in school. We need to ensure that Indigenous children are not left behind - that begins with knowing how to read, and write," Martin told us. Frontier College is getting young Indigenous children interested in reading by making it fun at summer literacy camps. "Kids who had never read a book before are eager to get up and go to these camps," says Campbell. The camps even get the kids' parents engaged in reading. Campbell says she sees the adults showing up early for drop-offs and pick-ups so they can watch and participate with their child's reading activities.

For older Indigenous youth with literacy problems, summer camps and schools don`t hold the answer. Campbell notes many Indigenous young offenders do not want to go back to school and face the social stigma of having been in prison. For these youth, Campbell says the best way to get them literate is through programs that provide individual attention and target reading and writing to the youth`s interests and what they want to achieve, even if it's a trade like carpentry or auto repair.

At 19, Sally wants to start a career in the fashion industry. With that goal in mind, a Frontier College program is teaching her the literacy skills she needs to get into a college program for fashion management. For Indigenous youth like Sally, literacy holds the key to escaping a life of despair in the justice system to a life of hope and opportunity.

"SUPERATE: LESSONS ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION"

Published September 19, 2011, updated December 14, 2016

Jaime Palacios was four years old when his mother, widowed and destitute, abandoned him in his small Salvadoran village. By chance, Jaime's paternal grandmother found him in the street and took him in. The old woman was bitter and mean, and wielded what Jaime calls her "special tool to hit me": an electrical cable wound several times.

As a teen, Jaime was sucked into a world of gangs, drugs and violence that threatened to lure him away from school, which in El Salvador is only offered half days. He was a smart kid, but also lonely and full of hate, so his future was precarious. Jaime tells us he'd have wound up selling drugs, or possibly even dead, if an after-school program called Superate hadn't saved him. Now Jaime is attending university with aspirations to become a graphic designer.

Superate (when roughly translated from Spanish means "improve yourself") targets at-risk teens aged 14 to 17, in those crucial last years of high school before university. Besides teaching English as a second language, computer skills and ethics, Superate offers a chance to earn university scholarships. A donation-matching agreement with the U.S. Agency in 2011 of International Development supplemented funds from local sponsors. Two new Superate centres were set to open in 2012, for a total of nine across El Salvador.

Volunteering to build homes for underprivileged families, field trips to archaeological dig sites and museums are all part of the curriculum—all things that poor kids from gang-controlled slums couldn't even imagine, let alone dream about. When we walked through Superate's white stucco hallways and sat in on classes, we met bright and hopeful students like Jaime.

Programs like Superate inspire a re-evaluation of the definition of education. Why not focus on the quality of learning instead of just the number of students attending school? Maybe a new benchmark for success is called for, since the world is failing its young people by current measures.

The second Millennium Development Goal, universal access to primary education by 2015 did improve- net enrollment in primary school reached 91 percent, up from 83 percent in 2000 and—the number of out-of-school primary aged children fell to about 57 million from 100 million in 2000. But the goal of universal education was reaffirmed in the sustainable Development Goal 4: Inclusive and quality education for all. Andrea Méndez is the career and scholarship coordinator at Superate's Kriete centre in San Salvador. With 275 students, it's the largest of seven centres across the country. She told us she's seen the consequences of poor schooling. Méndez likens the public school system in El Salvador to "Russian roulette." A student like Jaime is more likely to be recruited by a gang than head-hunted by a university. Méndez beat the odds. After graduating from high school in El Salvador, she went on to earn degrees from Vanderbilt and Harvard universities. She could have done anything. She chose to return home to try to improve education, and to instil values in the students.

When the school day was cut in half by a cash-strapped government, a class called Civics and Morals was dropped to favor core subjects like math. Community values fell even further "through the cracks." El Salvador's government doesn't advertize this, but Méndez suspects that cutting half of the school day wasn't just a cost savings measure but a way to entice students to attend, since it leaves some daylight hours free in a country where agriculture is the backbone of the economy. The academic year caters to the cocoa harvest, breaking from October to December when most students work on plantations. Most Superate graduates head to university.

Of the 130 students who graduated from Superate Kriete since it opened in 2007 until 2011, 100 now attend university. That's more than the 70 per cent of American high school graduates who enrolled in college in 2009. Superate provides safe after school spaces, teaching morality as a life skill, and enticing at-risk youth with highly employable tools such as computer literacy. This could be a lesson for both developed and developing countries.

In Canada, just 4 percent of First Nations people living on-reserve have a university degree. The national rate for non-Indigenous Canadians is 23 percent. When governments in Sub-Saharan Africa abolished primary school fees, enrolment shot up in one of the poorest corners on Earth. And still, 30 percent of students in the region don't finish primary school.

Building a school and getting kids in the door is crucial, but it's just a start. Not that infrastructure isn't important; it's just that so much more is needed to hook kids on learning. Education must be relevant to the unique challenges of students in order to break their cycle of poverty, and for some kids, their feelings of despair.

Before Superate, Jaime was angry at a world that seemed to have abandoned him. He tells us how his loneliness turned to thoughts of suicide in the weeks prior to starting the program. Superate actually saved his life.

"UNLEASHING AFRICA'S BEAUTIFUL MINDS"

Published September 19, 2011, updated December 15, 2016

Newton, Einstein, Hawking—they showed us the power of one beautiful mind to radically alter our understanding of the universe. Clarisse Uwizeye could be the next genius to turn science on its head, yet the world nearly lost her beautiful mind. At age seven, Uwizeye barely escaped the genocide in her homeland of Rwanda, fleeing with her family to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Two years later, war came to the DRC and the family had to run again, back to Rwanda. Her parents vanished, never to be seen again.

With some support from her two older sisters, Uwizeye told us she persevered. Consistently at the top of her class, she won admittance to one of Rwanda's best high schools. There, her academic career nearly ended when she couldn't afford the fee to write a critical exam. A teacher donated one month's salary to keep her in school. Uwizeye went on to earn a full scholarship to the National University of Rwanda where she showed passion and aptitude for mathematics. Teachers and schoolmates urged Uwizeye to aim for a PhD, but she had little money and no PhD programs at her university. These seemed like the final, impassable barriers—until she heard about the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS).

What makes a developed country developed? We have reliable access to food, clean water and sanitation; health care systems that protect us from preventable illness and death; universal primary and secondary education. Just as important, we have an extensive post-secondary system churning out the doctors, teachers, engineers and scientists who make all those previous accomplishments possible.

Development programs tend to focus on the basics—food, water, sanitation and basic education. But to transform a developing nation into a developed one ultimately requires unleashing its native genius—people like Uwizeye—through higher education. "There's no way the economy in Africa is going to be competitive without these people," argues Neil Turok, director of Canada's world-renowned Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, based in Waterloo, Ont. Turok told us he believes the next Albert Einstein will come from Africa. That's why he established AIMS—a pan-African project partnering with universities in Africa, North America and Europe to find Africa's nascent geniuses by offering advanced degrees in mathematical sciences like physics.

"If you can take a young African from a village in Rwanda and turn them into an advanced mathematician making real contributions to knowledge, that is profoundly important to show the youth of Africa they are every bit as capable," Turok says. Turok conceived of AIMS while on sabbatical in his birthplace of Cape Town, South Africa. He convinced the three major universities in the Cape Town region, as well as the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford in the UK, and the Université de Paris Sud XI in France, to become founders. The first AIMS campus opened in Cape Town in 2003. Since then, many educational partners have flocked to support AIMS, including the Perimeter Institute and the University of British Columbia. There are now AIMS campuses active in Senegal and Ghana, and soon a fourth in Cameroon. The AIMS "Next Einstein" initiative hopes to have 15 academic centres up and running in the next decade.

Upon finishing her bachelor's degree in mathematics in Rwanda, Uwizeye was awarded a scholarship to do her master's at the AIMS Senegal Campus. Uwizeye says she was surprised to find a school unlike any other, with classes like Biomedical Signal Processing, and Algebra and Cryptography.

Turok told us his program "leapfrogs over what is already known and goes straight to the cutting edge," bypassing classic textbooks and teaching methods. In the morning, students sit down for a standard lecture, then in the afternoon they are presented with a problem they must solve based on the morning lecture topic. Turok argues this teaches the AIMS students the skill of problem-solving—something he said is not taught in the average Western theoretical physics classroom, and that students must therefore learn on their own.

AIMS has now graduated more than 400 students. With her AIMS master's degree under her belt, Uwizeye earneda scholarship to study advanced applied physics at a top university in France.

"I will return home after my PhD studies, then I help my country in mathematics and physics," she told us. "I have a dream to build a school of sciences and art in my country."

Albert Einstein changed our understanding of the universe. Uwizeye could well change our understanding of the universe and international development.

DADAAB REFUGEE'S DREAMS LEAD HER TO CANADA

Published September 26, 2011, updated December 15, 2016

In 20 years, Fatumo Mohamed left the chain-linked confines of Dadaab only three times. Twice she travelled to Kenya's capital to take exams to qualify for a scholarship. Her third trip was to Nairobi's airport, bound for a small technical school in Canada.

Fatumo's childhood was contained in the world's largest refugee camp; a place we worry carries a stigma for harbouring victims who await handouts. Fatumo, now 28, fought against a bleak fate that seems sealed in not just by circumstance by also by outside media: images of sunken-eyed children and desperate people who refuse to help themselves. Instead she chased a dream to study abroad.

"From a young age I wanted to give back to society," she tells us. "First I want to help myself, then my family, my community and my country, Somalia." Helping herself proved difficult, and that was just the first step. Leaving the camp is illegal without the permission slip rarely granted by Kenya's government—never mind international travel.

Fatumo doesn't remember fleeing a Somali village near Kismaayo when she was four. Her parents narrated an age-appropriate version of the country's civil war: there were tribal clashes. Angry men came and burned down their village. They killed the livestock. Having lost everything, the family walked some 150 kilometres to Dadaab. Fatumo's father carried her on his back. They had to rebuild their lives from scratch, starting with food rations and plastic tarps.

Paid work for refugees is rare. Often Fatumo and her three siblings went without shoes and school notebooks. There's more peer pressure among refugee girls, says Fatumo, so they're more likely to drop out when taunts from children with shoes and notebooks become unbearable. Fatumo went barefoot and recited the teacher's handouts out loud. Giving up never even occurred to her.

After high school, Fatumo passed a seemingly endless series of exams, after which she was told she had won a scholarship and was bound for university in Canada. Instead, in 2008, she was put on a waiting list. This happened again the next year. And the next.

Looking back, Fatumo isn't angry—not about Somalia's war or the bullies at school. She feels lucky, even "rich" compared to the 1,500 refugees still staggering into camp daily on skeletal frames, fleeing drought and intractable conflict. She tells us her story in a voice that's all at once quiet, hurried and forceful. She speaks in the same way she approaches life: with fierce resolve.

Refusing to waste a single minute of her academic limbo lost in self-pity, Fatumo volunteered with the United Nations to register new arrivals, and then at the Centre for Victims of Torture as a counsellor for patients with severe psychological trauma. There, she heard "hundreds" of harrowing stories from torture victims and grieving mothers. She found her calling.

"Humanitarian work doesn't always extend to a person's feelings;" she realized. While Somalia was being torn apart at the seams: politically, economically and socially, its people suffered, and some became "mentally disorganized." These are the people Fatumo feels most compelled to help. Last month, after a 30-hour journey she arrived in Halifax. With financial support from Windle Trust International, a UK-based educational charity, Fatumo is now a student at Nova Scotia Agricultural College. She plans to change her major to social work this winter and take those skills "wherever the people are most in need."

Dadaab is now visible from outer space. Camps there have been growing for 20 years, gathering people from conflicts across Africa and claiming a sizeable chunk of Earth to become the fourth largest "city" in Kenya. Some might assume that poverty, confinement and food handouts make it easy to lapse into self-pity or complacency. Instead, refugees fight against all odds to sustain themselves and to help each other. Mosques collect donations for new arrivals; families already settled take in those who are too weak to set up shelters. The fledgling city has a quasi-functional economy, with kiosks hawking cell phone minutes and soft drinks, and even The Refugee, anewspaper.

If Fatumo, born into civil war and raised a stateless refugee, can still devote her life to helping others, surely Canadians can follow her example and give generously to East Africa. If Fatumo could hold onto her dream for years, arrive at school and still make plans to return where need is greatest—surely Canadians can support the dreams of those in need.

NUNAVUT EDUCATION—OLD WISDOM IN NEW SCHOOL

Published December 8, 2012, updated December 15, 2016

Eva Aariak had a problem. The young Inuk woman from Arctic Bay—in what is now Nunavut—had received a good education away from home, attending a hands-on vocational school in Churchill, Manitoba, and courses at Algonquin and Kemptville colleges in Ontario. She had learned bookkeeping and typing, and had even helped launch a weather rocket during an internship with the National Research Council. But she was back home and with her newborn and she realized she needed an amautik—the distinctive Inuit parka that with a built-in baby pouch. Yet in all her schooling, no one had ever taught her to make one.

"All the time I was away from home left me not learning my own culture and my own language," Aariak says. She tried to learn from elders but they used technical terms in Inuktitut to describe the different stitches essential in making the parka. Aariak couldn't understand—she hadn't studied Inuktitut past elementary school. She had to ask her mother to make her amautik.

Today Aariak is the Premier and former Education Minister for Nunavut, and she is building an education system that combines the skills young people need to work in the 21st Century with a solid grounding in their language, culture and the traditional skills that even today are necessary for life in Canada's far north. We recently met Aariak to learn how education is changing in Nunavut.

Aariak was born in 1955 "out on the land" in the eastern part of the Northwest Territories that would become Nunavut in 1999. When she was four, her Inuit family moved to the isolated hamlet of Arctic Bay where an unused government building served as one-room schoolhouse. Aariak couldn't understand why other kids were allowed to go and not her. She marched down to the school, only to be gently turned back by the teacher and told "next year."

Next year came and Aariak, then five, was allowed to attend school—for a while. There was no high school in the Northwest Territories then. If Aariak wanted to continue her education, she had to leave her family behind to attend a residential school 2000 kilometres away in Churchill. Only in the past decade has K-12 education been available in all of Nunavut's 25 communities. The last community to get its Grade 10 to 12 program just saw their first class graduate in 2005. But even with new school buildings, the curriculum taught lacked relevance to the history and needs of Nunavut. Much of it had been imported from Alberta.

In 2008, the Government of Nunavut passed a new Education Act, laying the foundation for a Made-in-Nunavut education system that brings traditional knowledge into the classroom. Under the Act, Inuit elders with expertise in traditional skills like igloo or sled building can be certified to teach these skills in schools. And traditional knowledge is tied directly to 21st Century learning. Students discover the science of Inuit innovations that have stood the tests of time. "There is that much of a tie-in. Look at kayaks, at the shape of an igloo—no scientist around the world can improve upon their architecture," boasts Aariak.

What grabs us most about the new northern curriculum is the powerful element of community engagement and global problem-solving. In Grade 10, students must find a younger student and work with them on a project that benefits both the young student and the community. Grade 12 students get a semester-long assignment—much like a university thesis—where they must identify a local or global problem, research and present a report on the issue and engage in a real-world, hands-on project to address some aspect of the issue. One female student studied how the local town council made decisions and wrote a report presenting arguments for youth representation on the council. She then appeared before her local council to push for the creation of an elected youth representative position. A male student studying water quality learned how to test water, and then went to every building in the community testing the water from taps.

The Nunavut education system still faces major challenges. Aariak says they desperately need 300 more Inuktitut language teachers, and many people still have a strong distrust of formal education—a legacy of residential schools. Low attendance and drop-out rates are still a problem. "We have still a long way to go yet, but we have accomplished so much," says Aariak.

During the summer of 2012 we visited the newly-renovated Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit. Inside, the front doors are flanked by two large traditional Inuit soapstone sculptures while overhead hangs a sealskin kayak. In the classrooms, instead of blackboards we found huge state-of-the-art computerized "smart boards". It's a fitting symbol for how Nunavut is finding a = place for old knowledge in new schools.

Blackline Master 2:
Real World Times Newspaper

Group members: _____

Lead Story Guidelines

Step 1: Choose one local or global barrier and research the topic.

Step 2: The article should address the following questions:

- What: What is the local or global barrier?
- Who: Who does it affect?
- Why: Why is it a barrier? Why should this barrier be addressed?
- How: How is it preventing access to quality education? How can we help break down the barrier to education?

Step 3: The article should include, but is not limited to:

- At least one photograph that captures the importance of the issue
- Statistics through the use of diagrams, graphic tables or other infographics
- Links for more information
- Additional information that can fill up the front page (e.g, weather forecast, headlines of other important news, etc.)

Note: Provide your potential readers with one or more solutions to help break the barrier.

Group roles: Each member can choose one of the roles below.

- Researcher—The researcher will search for useful information that relates to the topic, including facts and statistics. They will use the information they collected to develop a diagram, graph or other infographic to accompany the lead story.
- Picture editor—The picture editor will select the best image or images for the lead story and write the captions that will describe them. The picture editor will ensure the images and captions not only relate to the lead story but also enhance it.
- Reporter(s)—The reporter will write the lead story using all of the information gathered from the above roles.
- Editor(s)—The editor is responsible for the overall content of the paper and makes sure everything runs to plan. The editor will write the headlines and fillers that will be featured on the front page. Fillers are usually brief one or two-paragraph stories used to fill a page.