

Education for All Workshop

This learning workshop is designed to help young people develop their knowledge and opinions in relation to education for all through role play.

TAGS

Education for all workshop

Age Range: 11- 16 years

Time: Approximately 1 hour

Outline

In 2000 world leaders promised that all children, girls and boys, would complete a full course of primary schooling by the end of 2015. However in 2015, 58 million children were still missing out on school and the goal was not met¹. In the early 2000s there was significant progress towards achieving universal primary education, as countries increased enrolment and cut or abolished school fees. However, progress towards the goal slowed towards the end of the decade. Poverty, gender inequalities, disability, poor school quality and the impacts of conflict and natural disasters proved to be big barriers to achieving education for all.

In 2015 world leaders launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promised to ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.

This workshop explores education in Afghanistan. In 2014 three countries – Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan – accounted for 21 million of the 58 million children out of school. Meeting the challenges faced by fragile states such as these is vital if education for all children is to become a reality.

By 2013 Afghanistan had made progress towards enrolling children in school but still faced daunting challenges. These included ongoing conflict and insecurity, a lack of qualified teachers, inadequate school facilities and social barriers to girls' education. This workshop asks young people to role play a lesson in Afghanistan and use their experience to identify the priorities for continuing to improve education in Afghanistan.

Learning Objectives

- To feel what it is like to have a broken education system.
- To compare and contrast school in Afghanistan with school in the UK.
- To suggest priorities for education in Afghanistan.

Outcomes

- To understand and analyse the challenges faced by school children in Afghanistan.
- To identify and solve problems by working effectively as a group.

Resources

- Video: Nazifa's story (3' 51''): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrEQ2zV5bRQ>.
- Video: Education for Girls, Our Future Depends on It (2' 33''): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3uOLGvw0qE>.

¹ Statistics from www.sendmyfriend.org.

A Lesson in Afghanistan

1. Teach an Afghan lesson (30 mins)

Copy and share these photos to illustrate children's lives in Afghanistan.



A school in Jalalabad, Afghanistan (Credit: Shah Bibi/ACBAR)



Girls collect water in the Parwan-e-duo slum, Kabul. (Credit: Jason P Howe/Oxfam GB)



Children on the way to school, Shar-i-Buzurg. (Credit: Elissa Bogos/Oxfam GB)



A recently built school, Parwan. (Credit: Louise Hancock/Oxfam GB)

This activity asks teachers to simulate the learning environment faced every day by many students in Afghanistan.

As this lesson will be an unusual one for young people, teachers are advised to contextualise it by first showing students the photos (see above) and/or showing the videos (links above).

Here are some of the challenges faced by Afghan students. Conditions in Kabul and other big cities are better than those listed below while conditions in rural areas may be significantly worse. For example, only 8% of schools in Balkh actually have a building.

- Children often have a long walk to school – journeys of up to three hours each way are common, particularly in rural areas.
- Children are often bullied or harassed by adults on the way to or from school. This is much worse for girls than for boys.
- Violence and conflict affect many parts of the country. This closes schools and disrupts education.
- Although more new schools are being built, many schools still do not have a building.
- Many teachers are unqualified. Lessons are often of a poor quality.
- Many schools do not have toilets, washing facilities, adequate textbooks, desks, chairs, writing paper, pens, etc.

Teach part of a regular lesson under as many of these conditions as are possible. This will vary depending on the circumstances, and young people should be prepared to reflect on their experience. Where it's not possible to directly simulate conditions in Afghanistan, young people could be asked to imagine them.

- Aim to teach the lesson, or part of it, outdoors. Under a tree may be a suitable location. If it's either very hot or extremely cold, students in Afghanistan manage as best as they can.
- Teach without desks and chairs. Young people should sit on the floor or the ground. It would most probably be dusty in Afghanistan.
- Teach without textbooks, exercise books, pens, pencils and other school equipment. You may use a chalkboard and slates, if they are available.
- The class is likely to be large, so consider amalgamating two or three classes and teaching them together.
- Your teaching style will predominantly be 'chalk and talk'. Ask young people to repeat and recite answers. Select one or two young people to work out calculations or write spellings on the chalk board.
- Many girls do not have the opportunity to attend school. Some girls could be excluded from the lesson and be given chores to do instead.
- Young people will be tired from their long walks to school, hungry, thirsty and needing to use the toilet. Several of the girls in the lesson will be having periods and there will be no bathroom.

After you have taught some curriculum content bring the young people out of role and back to their usual classroom setting.

2. Reflection (25 mins)

Ask the young people to work in groups and reflect on their Afghan learning experience. Sub-groups could thought-cloud the following questions on flip chart or A3 paper and feed back to the group.

a. The Lesson

What were the main differences between the Afghan lesson and the young people's usual lesson?

Was it difficult to learn effectively in the Afghan lesson? Why?

Do you think it is particularly difficult for girls to learn in the Afghan lesson? Why?

b. Improving education in Afghanistan

Ask young people to take notes under three headings;

- What education is currently like in Afghanistan.
- What young people would like it to be like in ten years time (with a reminder to be realistic).
- What five things the government and international donors should prioritise to make the improvements young people would like to see. This question is about setting priorities and, if possible, identifying how they are interconnected.

3. Plenary (5 mins)

Conclude the workshop with a brief plenary. Stress the challenges faced by governments aiming to provide education for all their children. When a country experiences conflict or other crises, these challenges are even more daunting.