

PREFACE

Global Issues in the ELT Classroom is a suite of lesson plans and resources for teachers of English as a second or foreign language. The subject matter is the MDGs as defined in 2000 by the United Nations when almost 200 nations signed up to a set of proposals aimed at improving the lives of a large proportion of the world's population who suffer from poor sanitary facilities, a shortage of clean and accessible drinking water, human rights violations, gender discrimination, unfair trade practices, poor access to health care, AIDS and the stigma attached to it, the victims of political conflict, illiteracy, and well, the list could go on. And on.

The lessons are designed to engage learners of English in language development on one hand and in issues of global importance on the other. The lessons draw on students' creativity in expressing their responses verbally, visually, theatrically and digitally. The activities engage the four skills in holistic ways and very much employ the so-called *right side of the brain*.

In preparing the students to perform the activities, attention is paid to vocabulary and pronunciation and key communicative phrases as the activities require. In preparing the students to deal with the issues, relevant *knowledge of the world* is imparted via maps, info boxes, websites, and problem solving activities such as true/false prediction statements. The students are challenged to reflect on their own attitudes, feelings and sensibilities.

The one language element that has been deliberately omitted from the lessons is grammar. It was deemed inappropriate to practise prepositions, change tenses in sentences, insert the appropriate article, etc., when dealing with issues which are by and large global, national and personal tragedies.

The book came about through an initiative of **The Society for Fair Trade** in Brno, Czech Republic in partnership with **Südwind Agentur** from Austria. Both of these NGOs are among the major players in global development education in their respective countries.

Once grants were obtained from the Regional Partnership Programme and the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a team of writers and editors was assembled. The twelve writers are Czech teachers with varying degrees of classroom experience and a strong commitment to the MDGs and the role that language education can play in promoting awareness and sensitivity.

In four teams the teachers developed material for two MDGs each. Once they created their lessons and piloted them in their own teaching situations, they were submitted to the editors who fed back, proofread and eventually prepared them for publication. It has been a busy but rewarding nine month gestation period.

The lessons piloted in teacher seminars have been very positively received. The teachers praised the lesson formats, the variety of activities, the language development potential, the cognitive depth, and appreciated them as a vehicle leading students of all ages to become sensitive and aware global citizens.

Many of the lessons present the ways in which some of the issues are already being tackled. They show who is taking the initiative and the campaigns, projects and solutions currently in train. And importantly this extends to the actions that we as citizens can take. The lessons often arrive at an optimistic ending by making the participants aware of what they can do, how can they get involved, and how even a small individual contribution can make a difference.

The Resources

- more than 30 complete lesson plans with teachers notes and student worksheets are published on CD and in book form.
- a website with additional materials and useful links is at <http://www.globalissues.eu>
- teachers might also like to direct their students to <http://www.globalissues.eu/moodle> which contains interactive exercises that students can do as homework or lab work to support their study in the various MDGs. No log in is required – users may simply click the button, *Log in as guest*.

The lessons have been created at pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate levels. They can be used as one-off lessons or combined into short courses. There is enough variety of activity types for this.

The flow of individual lessons is quite prescriptive as the end goals are methodically led up to. Teachers are advised to familiarise themselves with the steps and the resources required for each one. The standard lesson structure adopted is lead-in, main activity, one or more follow-up activities, and sometimes homework suggestions.

Almost all of the lessons require the teacher to prepare such things as copies of the student worksheets that are part of every lesson; download maps, photos or videos from www.globalissues.eu or other websites provided; set up a data projector to show Youtube videos, pictures in class etc; have coloured cards for students or chart paper.

The recommended timing for the lessons is only ever a guideline and teachers will need to determine the amount of time they can allocate to each section. Some lessons may easily run into two lessons, and this is especially the case where the homework and follow ups are assigned.

Feedback

In the event of a revised edition or even a second one, any feedback you have would be most appreciated. This may take the form of likes and dislikes, suggestions for improving any aspects of particular lessons and formatting. You might also like to request lessons or even contribute your own related material. Email us at info@globalissues.eu.

A personal note

It has been a privilege to work on this project. In the process I have learnt a lot about the MDGs and the state of the world, at times suffering a bit of "third world blues", a worthwhile emotional process to endure in my opinion. Hopefully your students will be stimulated and motivated and enjoy the process too, whether in a single isolated lesson or in a series of them. Hopefully their language development in the MDG areas will equip them to interact with people all over the world who also empathise with the various plights of the billions who are not in classrooms because education is expensive, because they don't have time to go to school, because they aren't allowed to go to school, because they have to fight adult wars, get married at puberty, all the while living in resource-rich countries the benefits of which are mostly seen in the first world. Before I go in any deeper, let me invite you to turn the page and start exploring. Together we can work towards a better a world.