

## SESSION 3: PROTEST SONGS AND INEQUALITY IN LATIN AMERICA

Age range: 9–11 years

<p><b>Outline</b></p> <p>Learners will begin by thinking about why people protest, reflecting on the issues of race which they learnt about in Sessions 1 and 2. This session will then move on to explore issues of inequality in Latin America, specifically Chile and Bolivia. Listening to Victor Jara’s song “Take Down the Fences”, learners will explore how songs have been used to highlight issues about land rights for indigenous people. Using a newspaper activity sheet, learners will then explore some case studies from Bolivia, including a successful protest movement and their continuing challenges. Learners will then begin to plan their own protest song. <b>Note that due to the more complex nature of the material, we recommend this session for 9-11 year olds only.</b></p>		
<p><b>Learning objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop an understanding of certain forms of racial inequality.</li> <li>• To explore a particular style of protest song.</li> <li>• To synthesise information from a newspaper article and communicate it to others in a creative way.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners will develop a role play based on information from a newspaper reading activity.</li> <li>• Learners will use their knowledge of inequality to plan a protest song.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Key questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do people protest?</li> <li>• Who was Victor Jara’s song about?</li> <li>• What does “indigenous” mean?</li> <li>• Why are land rights important?</li> <li>• How can I use a song to tell other people about inequality?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slideshow: <i>Raising Our Voices</i> (slides 15–21)</li> <li>• Activity sheet: <i>The Bolivia News</i></li> <li>• Background notes for teachers</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Curriculum links</b></p>		
<p><b>England</b> <b>Geography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locational knowledge: learners should locate countries of South America.</li> </ul> <p><b>Foreign language:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners should appreciate a song in a foreign language.</li> </ul> <p><b>English: reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners should retrieve, record and present information from non-fiction; and explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read.</li> </ul> <p><b>English: writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners should identify the purpose of writing, plan their writing and write about real events.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Wales</b> <b>Literacy: reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show understanding of main ideas and significant details in texts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Literacy: writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt writing style to suit the reader and purpose.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scotland</b> <b>Social Studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can gather and use information about forms of discrimination against people in societies and consider the impact this has on people’s lives. <b>SOC 2-16b</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can persuade, argue, explore issues or express an opinion using relevant supporting detail and/or evidence. <b>LIT 2-29a</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Music</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspired by a range of stimuli, and working on my own and/or with others, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through musical activities. <b>EXA 1-18a / EXA 2-18a</b></li> </ul>

## Session outline

### Starter (10 minutes)

*Why do people protest?*

- Ask the class to think about something in school which they feel is unfair and they would like to tell teachers about? Is it something that is affecting a lot of learners? Why do they want teachers to hear about this?
- Explain that speaking up about a problem in order to try and bring about change is a form of protest. Protest is a way of asking people in charge (for example, governments or head teachers) to solve problems or to make things fairer. Protest can help people to have a say in some of the things which are important for their lives, or the lives of others. For example, African-Americans protested against having to send their children to schools that were not as good as the ones white people's children went to. Can the class remember (from Session 1) any of the other things which African-Americans protested against during the Civil Rights Movement?
- What other protests do learners know about? Perhaps give some examples (protests against the government reducing the money which they give to people who can't work because they're disabled; protests against animals being treated cruelly).

### Activity 3.1 (10 minutes)

*Inequality with land rights and protest in Latin America*

- Show slide 16 to locate Chile on the map. Ask the class if they have heard of Chile before and if they know anything about the country. Explore the countries that neighbour Chile (particularly Bolivia and Paraguay).
- Explain that you are going to listen to a song by a Chilean musician called Victor Jara. [vimeo.com/27705333](https://vimeo.com/27705333) (1min 31sec). Ask the class if they can work out which language he is singing in.
- When they have watched the video, confirm that Jara was singing in Spanish, the language spoken by most people living in Chile. Ask what they think he was singing about. (They may have ideas from the video.) Tell them that the title of the song, "A desalambrar", means "Take down the fences". Explain that this song is an example of a new form of protest song which began in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s called *Nueva Canción* (New Song). This song was asking listeners to think about people's rights to own or control the land that they live on.
- In Latin America, indigenous people (people naturally existing in a place or country, rather than arriving from another place) are often denied their rights to land because of racial inequality. This means that they often live in poverty, making them vulnerable to shocks, such as floods.
- Farmland is particularly vital to poor people in developing countries because they need it



to be able to make a living. However, many are denied their legal rights to the land they live and work on, especially women, meaning that they can be driven off it and left with no way of growing food or selling their crops to make money.

- Victor Jara used music to speak up for the rights of indigenous people as he believed that they should not suffer because of racial discrimination and governments should be fairer.
- In Paraguay, another Latin American country, big landowners control 80% of agricultural land. Every year, 9,000 rural families are evicted from their land and many are forced to move to city slums.

### **Activity 3.2 (30 minutes)**

#### *News from Bolivia*

Learners will now explore in more detail some recent examples of land and racial inequality issues from Bolivia. Split the class into smaller groups and hand out *The Bolivia News*. Ask the groups to read through the newspaper report together. You could also give them the following questions to help guide their reading:

- Why is it so significant that Evo Morales has become president of Bolivia?
- What problems have indigenous people in Bolivia had?
- How much land has been given to indigenous communities?
- Who did Martha lose her land to?
- What was destroyed while the gas pipeline was being installed?
- What are poorer communities in Bolivia still vulnerable to?
- What changes have been made to Fernando's home to help protect his family from floods?

Once the groups have finished reading, ask them to each devise a role play for the class to communicate what they have read. This could be in the form of a TV news show or an interview with one of the people in the stories. They don't need to cover all the information on the sheet but can instead pick out one part which they find most interesting.

If you have time, you might like to point out to learners that these indigenous people in Bolivia had some of their human rights affected by poverty, inequality and climate change. For example:

- Right to have enough to eat
- Right to a safe environment
- Right to a livelihood
- Right to equality of opportunity

#### **Differentiation**

*Make it easier: Instead of the role play, read through the news sheet as a class and then hold focus groups to answer the questions above.*

**Plenary (5–10 minutes)***Planning for a protest song*

- Reflecting on what they have learnt about inequality over the last few sessions, ask the class to think about something they would like to write a protest song about.
- Once they have a theme in mind, jot down the points they would like to mention about that theme – this will form the basis of each verse.

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# THE BOLIVIA NEWS

YOUR FAVOURITE DAILY NEWSPAPER

## THE PEOPLE'S VOICE IS FINALLY HEARD!



After years of struggle by Bolivia's protest movements, the country's first-ever indigenous president, Evo Morales, is in office. Until recently, poverty, inequality and unfair treatment of the country's majority indigenous population were common in Bolivia. In 1950, only 4.2% of the Bolivian population owned 70% of the land in the east of the country. Now, as a result of the demands for land made by

indigenous people, over 28 million hectares (that's nearly the same as 40 million football pitches!) have been given to them. There has also been a rise in the minimum wage (the least amount of money that workers must be paid) and more government money has been spent on health care and education. This has all meant falling levels of poverty and inequality in Bolivia.

### On the front line with the struggle for basic rights

Evo Morales's victory is not the end of the story for land rights. Deals with big businesses can still mean that indigenous people's rights to land are not respected. Martha Cuellar used to have 25 fruit trees, but they were destroyed when PlusPetrol installed a gas pipeline in her yard. Leaders of her community, Puerto Viejo, negotiated a bad deal with the company which Martha had no idea about.

The government has recently changed its deals with oil and gas companies to ensure that they come with more projects to benefit communities. However, stories like Martha's still occur and highlight how inequality with land ownership is still a problem.

**"I was really angry, I was crying. I asked them, 'who gave you the authority to do this?' I saw the fruit trees all cut down on the ground...and I saw my cow was injured in the pipeline hole...the engineer promised me compensation and help, but he never came back."**  
**Martha Cuellar**

### Climate change still a threat for many

Despite the steps forward in Bolivia, inequality is still a big problem for the country. Many communities living in poverty farm cheaper land which is more likely to suffer drought and flooding. These problems are becoming more common because of climate change.

The Beni region in Bolivia is the same size as the UK and is flat.

It experiences both drought and flooding throughout the year and thousands of people are affected. Oxfam is working with partners to support rural communities who were losing their homes and crops to floods every year. Homes have been raised onto stilts, providing better protection for families from floodwaters. Farmers have also revived an ancient irrigation system called *camellones* to help them grow their crops all year round.



*Fernando Franco Zelady with his baby cousin Yoani Guasinave Franco in the doorway of their raised home. The boys have benefited from Oxfam's project*

## Background notes for teachers

### The *Nueva Canción* Movement in Latin America

The “New Song” Movement was a socially committed, pan-Latin American folk movement, with activity strongest in Chile and Argentina. Its roots were in the underdevelopment of Latin American countries. However, it soon became associated with human rights movements because of the songs’ political lyrics, which included resistance to US imperialism. Musicians became part of a non-violent struggle, using music to openly talk about poverty, empowerment, imperialism, democracy, human rights, religion and the Latin American identity.

“The authentic revolutionary should be behind the guitar, so that the guitar becomes an instrument of struggle, so that it can shoot like a gun” – Victor Jara

The New Song Movement was closely linked to Salvador Allende’s *Unidad Popular* alliance, which won a general election in 1970. However, in 1973 Allende’s government was overthrown by a military coup led by General Pinochet. Under the Pinochet regime *Nueva Canción* was banned and Chile entered a period of “cultural blackout”. The use of traditional instruments was prohibited and singers were seen as extremists. Victor Jara was tortured and killed under this military regime.

### Indigenous people, peasant farmers and land rights in Latin America

Indigenous people make up approximately 10% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, they have been disadvantaged for centuries. When the continent was originally colonized by Europeans, their rights to land and resources were reduced. Upon independence from Europe, they were again treated as less worthy of respect than other races, with governments aiming to assimilate them into society rather than support their traditions. There are many different indigenous peoples in Latin America but, broadly speaking, they share an attitude to the land that is radically different from the western one, seeing it as something to be revered, looked after and preserved for future generations, rather than as a commodity to be exploited, bought and sold.

It was not only indigenous people who faced poverty and discrimination in Latin America. Victor Jara was active as a theatre director and musician in Chile in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time land was still in the hands of a few rich owners and was farmed by large numbers of peasants who lived in extreme poverty. Jara himself grew up in a poor peasant family. He was put to work on the land when he was six years old, as his family needed the income. His father could not earn enough to support the family and abandoned his wife and children after developing an alcohol addiction. Jara was brought up by his mother, who acquainted him with folk traditions and taught him to play the guitar. It was these challenging beginnings that made Jara aware of the hard life of the continent’s peasant farmers and the poverty and injustice they suffered. He asked himself why those working on the land were denied a fair share of the fruits of their labour.



**Climate change**

The Bolivia News contains references to climate change and explores how it is making matters worse for indigenous people since they often live on cheaper land which is vulnerable to floods and droughts. For further information and activities about climate change, see Oxfam Education's resources, *Climate Challenge* and *Making the Change* which uses a case study from Bolivia.