

# CROSS-CURRICULAR IDEAS

Football and the World Cup offer many different opportunities for using a global citizenship approach to promote real-life learning across the curriculum, enabling young people to learn and think critically about issues such as fairness and inequality. Here are just a few practical teaching ideas for the classroom.

*Note: All of the web links provided below were correct at the time of publication.*

## Maths

- Explore the flags of the different nations participating in the 2018 World Cup. *What patterns can you see? What 2-D shapes and types of angles are there? Which flags have lines of symmetry?*
- Compare the distances between the capital cities (or time zone differences) of the different World Cup countries and Moscow (the capital of the host country, Russia). *Which country is furthest away? Which country has the biggest time difference?*
- Investigate data comparing the pay and working conditions of teams in different national leagues around the world. A few male professional footballers at the top of the game enjoy very good working conditions and high salaries. These footballers mostly play for the big five leagues in Europe (such as the Premier League in England). However, the majority of professional footballers, often playing in parts of Eastern Europe, Africa and some countries in South and Central America, face poor working conditions, low pay and abuse. For example, just under 2% of footballers earn more than US\$720,000 a year, whereas over 45% earn less than US\$12,000.

See FIFPro's *Global Employment Report* for some useful facts and figures:

[www.fifpro.org/news/first-global-employment-report-unveiled/en/](http://www.fifpro.org/news/first-global-employment-report-unveiled/en/)

- Alternatively, explore inequality in the Premier League in England (or another national league in Europe). Collect, analyse and present data to answer questions such as:
  - *Which clubs spend the most money on wages?*
  - *Which clubs make the most money?*
  - *Who is the highest-paid footballer?*

See Deloitte's *Annual Review of Football Finance* for some useful facts and figures:

[www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/sports-business-group/articles/annual-review-of-football-finance.html](http://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/sports-business-group/articles/annual-review-of-football-finance.html)

## English

- Write the story of a football used at the 2018 World Cup. Think about where in the world the ball was made, how it was made and the people involved in the supply chain. Describe the working conditions and profits of the different people involved, from the factory where it was produced to the consumer at the end of the chain. Women and children are often more negatively affected by being at the bottom of the supply chain than men, for example by impacting on the amount of time available for childcare or going to school.
  - Watch a short video clip (*Playing fair: The story of Fairtrade footballs*) from the Fairtrade Foundation to find out how footballs are made in Pakistan and the impact that Fairtrade has made to the lives of some people involved in their production:  
[schools.fairtrade.org.uk/resource/football/](http://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/resource/football/) (8 min, 5 sec)

- See Playfair 2012's *Fair's fair – Life and rights in the global sports industry* to find out more about some of the people who make these goods in poorer countries, often working with few rights, and for very low wages:

[www.playfair2012.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/TUC\\_Fairs-fair\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.playfair2012.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/TUC_Fairs-fair_booklet.pdf)

- There has been much controversy surrounding the staging of the 2018 World Cup in Russia, with some people calling on countries and teams to boycott the event. Organise a debate around this issue: *Should England be taking part in the 2018 World Cup?*

See Oxfam's recently updated *Teaching Controversial Issues* guide for guidance, classroom strategies and practical teaching activities for managing controversial issues in the classroom:

[www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues)

## Science

- Design a healthy, balanced meal for a football player. Then investigate traditional diets in different countries and examine the energy and nutrition content of typical meals.
  - See Oxfam's *Our Food, Our World* for photographs of and information about some foods in different countries: [www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/our-food-our-world](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/our-food-our-world)
- Investigate the use and environmental impact of plastic at a major sporting event, such as the World Cup. Compare different plastics according to their properties, uses and environmental footprint. Design and make a product using waste plastic. See Practical Action's *Plastics challenge* for more ideas: [practicalaction.org/plastics-challenge](http://practicalaction.org/plastics-challenge)

## History

- It is over 80 years since the arrival in the UK of some of the first refugees to play professional football in this country. Investigate the contribution that refugees have made to football since then, both in the UK and elsewhere, as well as the factors involved in forcing these people to leave their native countries. Recent examples include:
  - Fabrice Muamba – a professional footballer from the Democratic Republic of Congo, who played for Arsenal, Birmingham City and Bolton Wanderers.
  - Victor Moses – originally from Nigeria, his parents were killed when he was 11. Victor fled the country and now plays for Chelsea.
  - Shefki Kuqi – a striker from Kosovo, who played for various English teams, including Sheffield Wednesday and Newcastle.
  - Nadia Nadim – a Manchester City player and trainee doctor, who fled from her native country, Afghanistan, with her family, aged 12, after her father was executed.
- Research the history of women in football and compare this to the history of the men's sport. For example, towards the end of the First World War, women's football was very popular, with their games often attracting larger crowds than those of the men (see the English session for further details). Alternatively, explore how other aspects of gender equality (or inequality) have changed over time, such as women getting the right to vote in different countries around the world.

## Geography / social studies

- Research other geographical similarities, differences and links between the countries taking part in the 2018 World Cup. Learners could focus on specific aspects of physical and/or human geography. Alternatively, pairs of learners could each choose a different country to investigate, before coming together as a whole class to compare these countries.

- More able learners could use the Gapminder website ([www.gapminder.org](http://www.gapminder.org)) to investigate how other “development” indicators have changed over time and how these indicators vary in different countries and regions of the world. *What other examples of between-country inequality are there?*
- Find out where in the world footballs are made. This might be the footballs used in your school. Locate the countries on a world map. Discuss who is involved in the production and selling of a football, and draw a diagram, in the form of a chain, of the people involved, from the factory worker to the consumer in the UK. Investigate the working conditions and profits of the people involved in the production process and compare them to those of others along the chain.
  - Watch a short video clip (*Playing fair: The story of Fairtrade footballs*) from the Fairtrade Foundation to find out how footballs are made in Pakistan and the impact that Fairtrade has made to the lives of some people involved in their production: [schools.fairtrade.org.uk/resource/football/](http://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/resource/football/) (8 min, 5 sec).
  - See Playfair 2012’s *Fair’s fair – Life and rights in the global sports industry* to find out more about some of the people who make these goods in poorer countries, often working with few rights, and for very low wages: [www.playfair2012.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/TUC\\_Fairs-fair\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.playfair2012.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/TUC_Fairs-fair_booklet.pdf)

## Physical education

- Investigate how FIFA tries to make the World Cup more inclusive. Learners could research how FIFA ranks teams as well as the current World Cup qualification process (see note below). Learners could reflect on and discuss how “fair” they think these processes are, before coming up with their own ideas. There are challenges in making the World Cup more inclusive. For example, although it would mean that both stronger and weaker teams from different parts of the world have a chance of competing, the positive discrimination that might be necessary to support this could result in championship games between teams of very different abilities. It could also result in some of the stronger teams not qualifying because there may be fewer places available for teams from stronger continents to take part.

These issues are not easy to resolve and there is a lot of controversy. See Oxfam’s recently updated *Teaching Controversial Issues* guide for guidance, classroom strategies and practical teaching activities for managing controversial issues in the classroom:

[www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/teaching-controversial-issues)

*Note:*

*FIFA calculates the rankings by looking at a team’s total number of points over the last four years; teams can win points from the matches that they play with other countries. The more successful a team is, the more points it gains and the higher its ranking. For more information on the ranking procedure, see: [www.fifa.com/fifa-world-ranking/procedure/men.html](http://www.fifa.com/fifa-world-ranking/procedure/men.html)*

*Qualifying tournaments for the World Cup are held in each continent (Africa, Asia, North America, South America, Europe and Australasia). For each of these tournaments, FIFA decides beforehand how many qualifying places there will be for each continent, based on the numbers and relative strength of the teams taking part. There are more European teams in the World Cup because FIFA allocates them more places. The country hosting the World Cup (which for 2018 is Russia) automatically qualifies. For further details, see:*

[www.fifa.com/worldcup/preliminaries/index.html](http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/preliminaries/index.html)

- Research other ways in which football is being made more inclusive. Find out about the FA Disability Cup, which consists of a number of different impairment-specific partner



competitions (such as the Powerchair Cup, Cerebral Palsy Cup, Amputee Cup, Blind Cup and Deaf Cup).

- See: [www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/disability/disability-cup-overview](http://www.thefa.com/get-involved/player/disability/disability-cup-overview)
- Learn about the International Fair Play Committee, which exists to promote fair play around the world. Each year, the committee awards Fair Play prizes to people who have proved to be excellent ambassadors for fair play. There is also a FIFA Fair Play Award, which is presented annually to individuals, teams, fans, spectators or football associations who have acted in the spirit of fair play and compassion. Ask learners to nominate peers who they think have shown fair play, whether in sport or other activities, and organise an annual or termly Fair Play award ceremony.
  - [www.fairplayinternational.org/](http://www.fairplayinternational.org/)
  - [www.fifa.com/sustainability/fair-play.html](http://www.fifa.com/sustainability/fair-play.html)

## Art and design

- Research the logos of some of the sportswear companies that sponsor the top football players. Think about the meaning behind the different designs and colours used. Design your own logo for a Fairtrade sportswear company where all the materials are sourced responsibly and the people who make the items are paid fairly.
- Investigate the history of the flags of countries participating in the 2018 World Cup. Design a flag for an imaginary nation where there is fairness and justice for all and everyone has what they need to live a happy and healthy life.

## Music

- Explore the music and lyrics of different national anthems. Compose your own anthem (tune and/or words) for an imaginary nation where there is fairness and justice for all and everyone has what they need to live a happy and healthy life.
- Investigate the role of music in social change, for example gender equality.
  - See Oxfam's *Raising Her Voice*: [www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/raising-her-voice](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/raising-her-voice)

## Design and Technology

- Consider the waste generated by the millions of spectators during a sporting event such as the World Cup. Explore ideas for trying to reduce the amount of waste produced during a World Cup. Think about how waste is managed in your school and identify steps which could be taken to reduce this waste footprint.
- Sometimes you need to be inventive when it comes to finding something to play football with. Many children around the world lack access to the sporting equipment and facilities enjoyed by others. Use this resource from *Send a Cow* to make your own football out of recycled plastic bags: [www.sendacow.org.uk/lessonsfromafrica/resources/plastic-bag-football](http://www.sendacow.org.uk/lessonsfromafrica/resources/plastic-bag-football)

## PSHE and Citizenship

- Football is one of the most played sports all over the world. Support learners to find out about the many other similar interests we share with people in other countries, at the same time celebrating our differences. Use this short video clip from Oxfam to prompt reflection and discussion: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=INUCw4SJcEM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INUCw4SJcEM)

- See Oxfam's *Your Life, My Life* resource for other video clips and teaching ideas to encourage learners to identify similarities and respect diversity:  
[www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/your-life-my-life](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/your-life-my-life)
- Reflect on the meaning of equality. Hold an unfair egg-and-spoon race, with the whole or part of the class equipped with eggs and spoons, but give one or more learners ladles to carry their egg in. Discuss how learners felt after the race. Alternatively, share out some cake, counters or stickers unevenly among a group of learners and discuss how those with more or less cake, counters or stickers feel. Relate this to real-life examples of inequality.

## Computing

- Select, use and combine a variety of software to analyse and present data from past World Cups. *Which countries have the most/least World Cup appearances and wins. What do you think are the factors affecting a country's chances of taking part in or winning the World Cup?*  
[www.fifa.com/fifa-tournaments/statistics-and-records/worldcup/teams/index.html](http://www.fifa.com/fifa-tournaments/statistics-and-records/worldcup/teams/index.html)
- Raise awareness of inequality by designing infographics to represent some of the data provided in this resource. Alternatively, create a web page, blog post or slide show.
- Investigate why there are fewer women in technology careers than men. A UK study revealed that only 27% of females would consider a career in technology, compared to 62% of males.<sup>1</sup> Collect, analyse and present data to see whether there is a difference between boys and girls in your school in this respect. Discuss possible reasons for this gender inequality and what could be done to encourage girls to take up technology, whether in your school or more widely.

## Foreign languages / Modern foreign languages

- Find out how to say "Welcome" in some of the different languages from countries participating in the 2018 World Cup. Create a "Welcome" poster to display these words at the entrance to your classroom or school.
- Explore media coverage of the 2018 World Cup from some of the different participating countries, in languages such as French, Spanish, German and Portuguese. *Is the coverage generally positive or negative? What sorts of issues are being covered? Compare the media coverage in different countries. What are the similarities and differences in the coverage? What might be the reasons for any differences?*

## Terms of use

Copyright © Oxfam GB

You may use photographs and associated information from this resource for educational purposes at your educational institution. With each use, you must credit the photographer named for that image, as well as Oxfam. You may not use the images and associated information for commercial purposes or outside of your educational institution. All information associated with these images relates to the date and time that project work took place. Although this resource refers to the World Cup throughout, this is editorial usage only and there is no association in any way between FIFA and this resource.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.pwc.co.uk/who-we-are/women-in-technology/tech-she-can-charter.html](http://www.pwc.co.uk/who-we-are/women-in-technology/tech-she-can-charter.html)