

# INEQUALITY: TEACHERS' OVERVIEW

## Introduction

How fair is the world? How fair is the society you live in?

One way of thinking about how fair our societies are is by looking at “equality”. Equality is a way of measuring how equally a society shares things like money. So, for example, in a completely equal society everyone would have the same amount of money. In an unequal society, some people would have much more money than others.

Of course, no society is completely equal. But is inequality growing? And if it is growing, does that matter?

Twenty-first-century societies are highly unequal, and inequality is increasing. For example, in 2017, the richest eight people on the planet owned as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity.<sup>1</sup> You may ask why this matters. It would take only 1.5% of the combined wealth of all the world’s billionaires to fund the shortfall in the health and education services of the world’s poorest countries. There is a close connection between extreme inequality and the challenge of finally eliminating poverty. Yet inequality remains a controversial issue which has divided economists.

## Oxfam’s view

Oxfam believes that extreme inequality is undermining efforts to eradicate poverty. For this reason, we are helping people to understand its effects and campaigning to end it. This video, [Even It Up: The Rich and the Rest](#) (2min, 58sec), sets out our position and gives some relevant facts and figures.

## Inequality and the Global Citizenship Challenge

These activities are a good starting point for young people to think critically about inequality and begin to draw their own conclusions.

## Further teaching ideas

- Ask your young people to research the impact of inequality in Wales. They could take a look at [Oxfam Cymru’s Blueprint for Change](#) (available in English and Welsh) to learn more about Oxfam’s view of inequality in Wales.

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<sup>1</sup> [Oxfam’s Even it Up campaign](#)

- Your young people could investigate the different reasons why some children miss out on an education. This can be related, for example, to gender, conflict, disabilities, natural disasters or governments not having the funding to run schools. Young people can find out about the [Global Campaign for Education](#) or get involved with the annual [Send My Friend to School](#) campaign. Use the Welsh Baccalaureate Education Resources to look at inequalities in access to education.
- Ask your young people to find out more about the [gender pay gap](#) and why there are inequalities in pay between men and women.
- Oxfam's More or Less Equal? resources explore inequality and young people's lives around the world. They include [Maths](#), [Geography](#) and [English](#) resources. The Geography resources are [available in Welsh](#).
- Your young people could learn about the impact of inequalities in access to health care around the world. The Health and Inequality: Welsh Baccalaureate resource looks at inequalities in maternal health care. Young people could find out more about what communities in Wales are doing to improve health care in African countries via [Wales Africa Health Links](#).

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