

WATER

Water is a basic human right, yet more than 840 million people do not have a basic drinking water service.

More than 260 million people, mostly young girls, have the daily task of collecting water from distant sources—time that could be spent in school or earning a livelihood. By cutting the time and distance to fetch water in half, girls' school attendance increases by 12 percent. Poor sanitation and contaminated water can lead to diseases like cholera, hepatitis A and typhoid. But with access to clean water, families are able to send their girls to school, watch their crops flourish and improve their personal health.

By 2050, at least 1 in 4 people will live where a lack of fresh water will be either chronic or recurrent.

A recent survey of 100,000 health care facilities in developing areas found that more than 50% lack running water and soap.

In countries dealing with conflict, children are 4 times less likely to have access to basic water services.

40% of the world's population is affected by water scarcity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** How would your daily routine change if you did not have access to clean water?
- 2** Why do you think millions of people still do not have clean drinking water?
- 3** What do you think needs to be done to make clean water accessible to everyone?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of access to clean water at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.weforum.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Walk to raise awareness and provide people with access to clean water for life.

WEwalk
for water

FOOD

There are approximately 815 million people around the world who do not have enough food to lead a productive life.

With the global population expected to reach 10 billion by 2050, food production will need to increase by 50 percent globally in order to feed another two billion people. Climate-related events, such as drought, can limit the availability of food sources in many regions. Conflict, coupled with climate change, is beginning to reverse the long-term declining trend in global hunger. Many families suffering from food insecurity are forced to pull their children out of school to help with farming, having lifelong effects on the well-being of millions of youth around the world.

Soil erosion from croplands carries away 25–40 billion tonnes of topsoil every year, significantly reducing crop yields.

More than half of people facing hunger—489 million—live in countries affected by conflict.

More than 20 million people in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria are facing starvation and famine.

The United Nations has pledged to end hunger and malnutrition by 2030.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** Why do you think women do not have equal access to farming?
How can farming equity be improved?
- 2** How is food insecurity related to education, health and poverty?
- 3** What can be done to help reverse the effects of conflict and climate change on global hunger?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of access to food worldwide at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.weforum.org/explore/food/).

Take Action

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EDUCATION

Education is the first step to breaking the cycle of poverty.

On any given day, more than 130 million girls are out of school. Many children face barriers that prevent them from attending school, such as needing to collect water for their families, staying home to perform household activities or living in conflict-ridden areas. With access to education, children gain the skills and tools to empower themselves and their communities. Education provides the opportunity for children to learn, grow and become empowered to lead the life they want to live.

Countries that provide all children with secondary education cut their risk of war in half.

Only 50% of refugee children are enrolled in primary school.

69 million new teachers are needed in order to achieve global universal primary and secondary education.

Girls living in areas of conflict are 90% more likely to be out of secondary school.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What can be done to ensure every child receives an education?
- 2 What would you do if you weren't allowed to go to school? How would your life be different?
- 3 How do education standards vary across the world?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of access to education worldwide at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.weareawe.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Your voice is a powerful tool for social change. Use it to speak up or go silent for all of those whose voices go unheard.

WE are  silent

DISCRIMINATION

Canada's population is made up of many races, ethnicities, genders and backgrounds, who still face varying degrees of discrimination on a daily basis.

A quarter of Canadians say they have experienced racism, and nearly half of respondents in a recent study said that Canada is facing a racism problem. In 2017, Canada appeared before the United Nation's Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to defend their stance on fighting racial discrimination. The panel concluded there was concern over the high rates of incarceration of Indigenous people. There was also concern over the detention of asylum seekers and racial profiling by police.

Hate crimes against Muslims in Canada increased 253% over 4 years.

The most violent crimes in 2017 targeted sexual orientation.

1 in 5 Canadians have been discriminated against at work because of their gender.

Despite encompassing less than 5% of the total Canadian population, Indigenous people make up 27% of the federal prison population.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** What types of discrimination exist in your community?
- 2** How can you, your school or community become more accepting of people of all races, ethnicities, genders and religions?
- 3** Why is it important to share kindness and compassion with people from all backgrounds?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of discrimination at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.weareasilent.org/exploringissues).

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WE are  **silent**

POVERTY

More than 700 million people live in extreme poverty.

Despite the progress made in reducing poverty, 767 million people still live on less than \$1.90 a day. But it's not only about not having enough money to live on. Poverty affects many aspects of life, including not being able to afford access to education, food, health care and job security. On a deeper level, poverty is not having access to opportunities to improve your livelihood and take control of your future. Social safety nets, such as social pensions and school feeding programs, are making an impact in the fight against poverty. In fact, they have helped an estimated 36 percent of the very poor escape extreme poverty.

Gender inequality in the economy costs women in developing countries \$9 trillion a year.

Extreme poverty rates have been cut in half since 1990, but 1 in 5 people in developing regions still live on less than \$1.90 a day.

It would cost \$175 billion per year to end extreme poverty worldwide in 20 years.

Globally, women earn 23% less than men.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** What would you do if you had to live on less than \$2 a day?
- 2** How can social safety nets help people escape poverty? What other steps can be taken?
- 3** Why do you think more men are in paid work than women? What would happen if women had access to the same opportunities?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of access to opportunity worldwide at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.weforum.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Empower female artisans in developing communities. Sell handcrafted Rafiki bracelets and give back to the woman who made them.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

A recent study revealed that a third of working women in Canada have experienced harassment in the workplace.

Since 1998, 17,700,000 women worldwide have reported a sexual assault. The #MeToo movement, founded by Tarana Burke in 2006, and which became viral in 2017, encouraged millions of women to speak out about sexual violence and harassment. It brought important conversations into the media, helping destigmatize survivors by highlighting the impact sexual violence has on women. The TIME'S UP movement is a unified call for change for women everywhere. It addresses systematic inequality and injustice in the workplace.

Comparing the annual earnings of full-time workers, Canadian women are earning, on average, 74 cents for every dollar a man earns.

Women hold 23% of seats in parliament globally.

Every year that a girl spends in school can boost her future income by 10–20%.

1 in 3 women worldwide has experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in her lifetime.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 Who is a woman in your life that inspires you?

2 Why do you think it is important for both men and women to be treated equally?

3 How can you help support women's empowerment in your everyday life?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on women's empowerment at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.womenempowerment.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

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WE are 
rafikis

HEALTH

Health is a key factor in the livelihood of a population, but half of the world's population still lacks access to essential health services.

For the 800 million people who spend at least 10 percent of their household budget on health expenses, becoming trapped in a cycle of poverty is an unfortunate reality. However, preventative health measures, such as immunization, could help save millions of lives each year, making vaccinations one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions. A healthy population contributes to the economy by being more productive in their everyday lives.

Almost half of all deaths are now recorded with a cause, meaning improvements are being made globally in collecting vital statistics.

Despite tuberculosis (TB) being a curable disease, there were an estimated 1.4 million TB deaths in 2015.

Since 2000, measles vaccines have prevented more than 15 million deaths.

High health care costs have pushed 100 million people into extreme poverty.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** How can we make health care accessible to everyone?
- 2** Why do you think poor health affects other aspects of life?
- 3** What are the consequences of not having access to health care?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of access to health care worldwide at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.ve.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Contact your WE Schools Program Manager to learn more about how you can take action.



HUNGER

Each month, more than 850,000 Canadians turn to food banks for help—more than one third of these individuals are children and youth.

Food insecurity (not having access to affordable, nutritious food) and hunger at an early age are associated with childhood mental health problems, and also increase the risk of asthma and depression. Hunger is not always easy to spot. But just because you can't always see it, that doesn't mean it's not affecting people around you. In Canada, food insecurity is closely connected to income. As a household's income begins to decline, the risk of food insecurity increases.

13% of Canadians live in a state of food insecurity.

38% of food distributed by Canadian food banks is fresh.

1 in 5 people helped by food banks is on disability-related income.

In Nunavut, almost 50% of all households are food-insecure.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** What health issues can develop as a result of hunger?
- 2** What are some examples of food that may be affordable but not nutritious?
- 3** How would your everyday life be different if you were to experience hunger on a daily basis? What are the long-term risks?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of hunger at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.we.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Want to help your community fight hunger? Take action with WE Scare Hunger.



CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying includes sending, posting or sharing negative, harmful content about someone else.

Almost one in 10 Canadian teens say they have been the victim of bullying through social networking sites. Major tech companies have strict policies against bullying behaviour on their services, but it is hard to enforce and many rely on users to report abuse. Cyberbullying can be worse than traditional forms of bullying as victims may not know who is targeting them. Hurtful actions have the potential to go viral, and since cyberbullying can be done from distant locations, it is easier for people to say things they wouldn't say to someone's face.

Children who bully are almost 40% more likely to commit criminal offences as adults.

Depending on the nature of the activity, many Criminal Code offences apply to cyberbullying.

More than 1/3 of Canadian teens have seen mean or inappropriate comments about someone they know.

Researchers say that bullying usually ends within 10 seconds of an intervention by peers.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

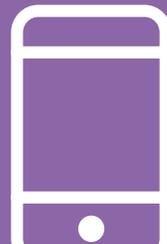
- 1** What are some ways you can help someone you know who is being cyberbullied?
- 2** How would you respond to receiving unwelcome messages on social media?
- 3** What are some ways to make your online interactions more welcoming and respectful?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of cyberbullying at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.weriseabove.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Stand up to cyberbullying by taking action with WE Rise Above.



ACCESSIBILITY

Approximately 3.8 million people in Canada have a disability.

Disabilities come in a wide variety of forms, and many of them (e.g., deafness, learning disability) are not visible. This is why inclusive design is important, to ensure everyone can access the products and services they need. Promoting inclusion allows people with diverse skills, abilities and experiences to offer different viewpoints and ideas. And by focusing on people's capabilities, we can create equal opportunities for everyone and learn from each other along the way.

1 in 10 Canadians has a learning disability.

More than 25% of workers with disabilities do not tell their employer.

55 athletes represented Team Canada in the 2018 PyeongChang Paralympic Winter Games.

In 2018, Google Maps added wheelchair-accessible routes to their transit navigation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How does inclusion benefit everyone?
- 2 Why is inclusive design important?
- 3 What are a few examples of inclusion in your school? What are some changes to promote inclusion that you would recommend?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of accessibility at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.weareone.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Want to help your school and community become more inclusive? Take action with **WE Are One**.



ENVIRONMENT

Shrinking glaciers, loss of sea ice, accelerated sea-level rise and stronger storms are just a few of the current effects of climate change.

As the planet continues to warm, storm intensity is predicted to increase. The year 2017 marked the worst wildfire season in British Columbia to date, with more than 1.2 million hectares burned, thousands of residents displaced and \$564 million in damages. By protecting Canada's lands and oceans, we can help fight the effects of climate change. Land and oceans act as carbon sinks, which absorb emissions that would otherwise contribute to heating our planet. By 2020, the Canadian government aims to protect at least 17 percent of terrestrial land and 10 percent of marine areas.

**Sea levels are rising
3.2 millimeters per year.**

**17 of the 18 warmest
years on record have
occurred since 2001.**

**Permafrost in the northern
Arctic will thaw enough to
become a source of carbon
in the atmosphere in 40 to
60 years.**

**Canadians see climate
change as the top threat
to fresh water in Canada.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** Have you noticed any unusual weather patterns where you live? How have they affected you?
- 2** What are actions we can take each day to help reduce the effects of climate change?
- 3** What steps can the government take to help reduce the effects of climate change?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of climate change at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.wego.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Reduce your negative impacts and boost your positive ones with WE Go Green.



INDIGENOUS

Indigenous peoples represent nearly 5 percent of Canada's population—1.7 million people.

Investing in Indigenous education is an important step to improve the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians and build a stronger, more united country. Closing the achievement gap between Indigenous students and other students can create jobs and grow Canada's economy by \$27.7 billion, or 1.5 percent annually. One example is the Indigenous-run Anishinabek Educational Institute (AEI) in northern Ontario. They partner with post-secondary institutions to offer students degree and diploma programs, as well as apprenticeships. The curriculum reflects cultural heritage, identity and community needs.

First Nations Partnership Programs help train Indigenous educators and elevate the education of Indigenous youth.

Since 2013, there has been a 55% increase in the number of academic programs that include an Indigenous focus or are designed for Indigenous students.

The Métis community of Fort McKay, Alberta, became the first in Canada to buy all the land it's on from a provincial government in March 2018.

Two-thirds of universities are incorporating Indigenous knowledge, methods and protocols into teaching policies, programs and practices.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** How can schools incorporate Indigenous languages into their curriculum?
- 2** Whether you identify as Indigenous or not, what are some ways you can educate yourself and others about Indigenous histories and cultures?
- 3** What are some ways we could strengthen the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats about the issues facing Indigenous peoples of Canada at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.we.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Want to be part of the process of reconciliation between Canadians? Take action with **WE Stand Together**.



LITERACY

The definition of literacy continues to be redefined as our society changes and grows.

Being literate in the 21st century means having the ability to read, write and express critical thought through verbal, print, visual and digital formats. According to Statistics Canada, almost 50 percent of adults age 16 and older don't have the literacy skills needed for today's working world. Without proper literacy skills, things such as job applications, medication labels and basic signage can become inaccessible—decreasing the chances of a healthy and productive life. Well-rounded literacy skills allow people to function to their full capability.

25% of Canadian households do not own a single book.

Approximately 30% of Grade 3 students lack basic literacy skills.

Many schools in disadvantaged communities can only afford 1 new library book per year for every 3 students.

Poor educational outcomes are tied to poverty, unemployment, illness and crime.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** How different might your life be if you had never learned to read and write?
- 2** What does it mean to you to be literate?
- 3** What are some ways that society could benefit from having a higher level of overall literacy?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of literacy at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.we.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Contact your WE Schools Program Manager to learn more about how you can take action.



HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness isn't just what we see on the streets—it takes many forms and affects many different people.

On any given night in Canada, 35,000 people experience a form of homelessness. For many, the climbing expenses of rent, food and other bills force difficult decisions that often lead to homelessness. Between March 1 and April 30, 2018, the second national Point-in-Time (PiT) Count of homelessness was conducted by communities across Canada. This count provides vital information about individuals experiencing homelessness, helping to identify their needs and develop effective strategies to respond appropriately in each community. When homelessness is not addressed, governments end up spending more money on health care emergency services and law enforcement.

1.5 million Canadians are paying more than they can afford for housing.

65% of all homeless people in Canada are men.

21% of those in youth shelters identify as part of the LGBTQ2S community.

\$2.1 billion will be invested in the National Housing Strategy from 2018/2019 to 2027/2028.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 What do you think of when you hear the word “homeless”?
- 2 What steps can you take to help reduce homelessness in your city?
- 3 What circumstances could lead to someone becoming homeless?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of homelessness at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.wecanendhomelessness.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Help fight homelessness in your community by taking action with WE Volunteer Now.



VIOLENCE

Whether it is family, domestic, gender-based, racial or gun-related, Canada is not immune to the types of violence that affect people all over the world.

In 2016, there were 141 gang-related homicides in Canada—almost 47 percent more than in 2015. And every year, an estimated 362,000 Canadian children witness or experience family violence. To help combat violence across the country, the federal government announced in November 2017 that they would be spending \$327.6 million over five years on anti-gun and gang initiatives, with an additional \$100 million annually after that.

1 child or youth per day is killed or injured by a firearm in Ontario.

Violence can have a lifelong impact, including physical injury, disability, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The economic cost of partner violence against Canadian women is valued at \$4.8 billion annually.

Women living in Canadian territories experience violence at a rate 8 times higher than those living in provinces.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** What are the different types of violence?
How do they impact the way we live our lives?
- 2** How does violence affect a community?
- 3** What can and should the government do to help keep Canadians safe from each type of violence?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of violence at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.we.org/exploringissues).

Take Action

Contact your WE Schools Program Manager to learn more about how you can take action.



MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is defined by the World Health Organization as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

One in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness in any given year, but, for many, the stigma surrounding the topic of mental health will prevent them from seeking health care. Having a positive outlook, wellness skills and good habits help us to deal with the ups and downs of life, while also keeping our minds and bodies healthy.

Almost 50% of people who feel they have suffered from depression or anxiety have not seen a doctor about it.

Youth ages 15 to 24 are more likely to experience mental illness than any other age group.

70% of mental health challenges have their onset in childhood or adolescent years.

Mental disorders can be diagnosed, managed and treated as accurately as the most common physical disorders.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How can we reduce the stigma surrounding mental health?
- 2 How do healthy eating and physical exercise affect mental health?
- 3 Why do you think mental well-being is important in leading a healthy life?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on the issue of mental health at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.erikeya.org/exploringissues).

Need help?

To learn more, visit erikalegacy.com/find-help.

OUR FOUNDING PARTNER:



NUTRITION

Healthy eating helps fuel the body and mind.

By making healthy choices with every meal and snack, you will be better equipped to live an overall healthy lifestyle and develop lifelong healthy eating habits. Having a healthy breakfast with protein is associated with better memory, higher school attendance and improved mood. Drinking lots of water helps improve cognitive functions. Fruits and veggies are high in vitamins, minerals and fibre, which help promote good health and development, strengthen your immune system, and even protect against disease. Half of your plate at lunch and dinner should be filled with vegetables to help support a healthy mind and body.

Kids ages 4 to 13 should drink at least 6 to 8 cups of water a day.

Sugar-sweetened drinks account for 10% of total caloric intake among children and youth.

Drinking 2 cups of milk or fortified soy beverage a day helps build strong bones and meet calcium and vitamin D needs.

Eating whole vegetables and fruits is more nutritious than drinking juice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** How can healthy eating help you excel in school?
- 2** What factors do you think contribute to childhood obesity?
- 3** What lifestyle changes can people make to lead a healthier, more nutrient-filled life?

Go Deeper

Check out more info and stats on nutrition at WE.org/exploringissues.

Take Action

Spread awareness about the benefits of healthy eating by taking action with WE Eat Well.

