Students Rebuild

Literacy Challenge

Interactive Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

The Students Rebuild Literacy Challenge interactive curriculum includes student activities and resources for further engagement. It's designed to be implemented in the classroom in a minimum of two days. The information is directed to grades 6-12 but can be adapted for use with younger students.

We recommend these learning activities as a flexible jumping off point for educators to explore a few of the issues and solutions that impact literacy access around the world. Please feel free to modify, add to and otherwise use this information to match your group's abilities and interest. In addition, we welcome you to share over social media the creative and interesting ways that you use and adapt Students Rebuild Challenges and lessons in you classroom!

LEARN

Background: The Worldwide Learning Crisis

Imagine going to school every day, but never learning your ABCs. Or picture yourself flipping through a book only to see pages full of symbols, unaware of their meaning or the stories they tell.

For more than a third of all primary-school age children around the world, that's a reality they face every day. Even though more children are enrolled in school today than ever before, the fact remains that 250 million 5 to 12 year-olds cannot read or write, whether they are in school or not. Going to school isn't enough to ensure learning. And some children—those living in extreme poverty, girls and those with few books or no one to read to them at home—need an extra boost to gain basic reading skills. The gap in reading ability between strong and struggling readers widens with age. That's why it's critically important that children learn to read in the early grades, so that they can then read to learn.

Literacy and the cycle of poverty are almost inextricably linked, and the consequences of poverty are much more significant for children than adults. Beyond basic physical needs such as food, water and shelter—literacy and access to education is considered essential to lifting oneself out of poverty and breaking its cycle. According to UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report:

- Literacy is a fundamental right and a springboard not only for achieving an education but also for eradicating poverty and broadening participation in society. As a component of basic education and a foundation for lifelong learning, literacy is the key to enhancing human capabilities and achieving many other rights. It carries wide-ranging benefits not only for individuals but also for families, communities and societies.

- 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills—that's equivalent to a 12% drop in the number of people living on less than $1.25 a day.

- In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 1.8 million children's lives could have been saved in 2008 if their mothers had at least secondary education—a 41% reduction.

Leveraging Change for Children

There are many national and international organizations like Save the Children, the World Bank and the United Nations working to end poverty globally through the education of young people. Through Literacy Boost and other effective education programs, Save the Children is working together with partners around the world toward ensuring that every child receives a quality education and gains the skills and knowledge he or she needs to thrive and develop.

Activity One:
Social and Demographic Inequalities in Education

There are many factors that influence a community or individual access to education, but the most important to consider are gender, income, age and geography. With this in mind, have your students read this New York Times article and answer the following questions using both the editorial and their own background knowledge.

a. Gender inequality in the developing world is a major hindrance to the education of women and girls. What are some of the reasons behind this disparity and what
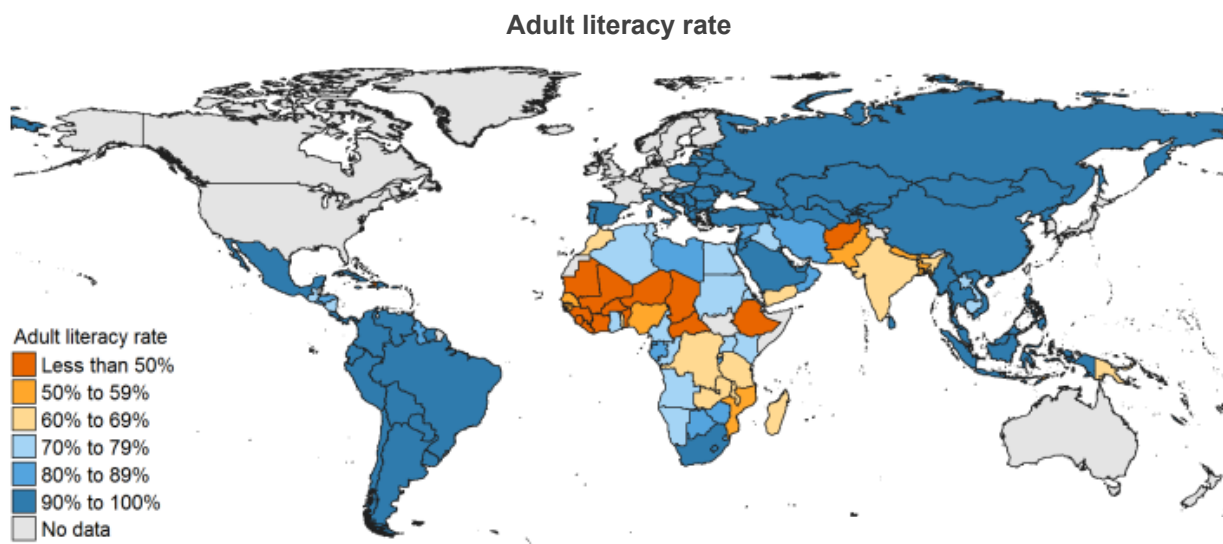
incentives for families does the author describe for keeping girls in school?

Note: For more information on the power of educating young girls living in poverty throughout the developing world, visit www.girleffect.org
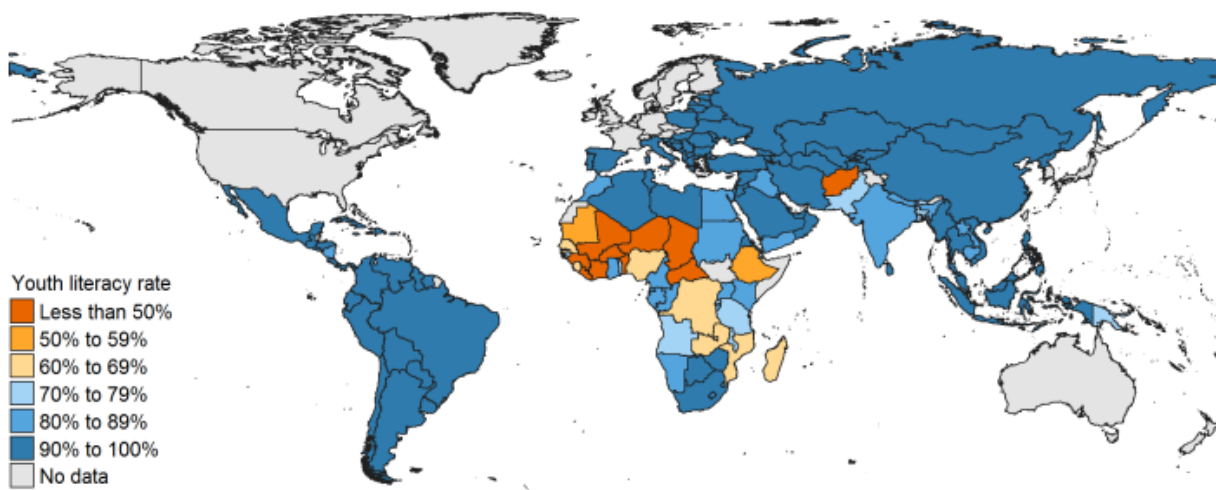
b. How does poverty, on a national and individual level, affect a family's ability to send their children to school? According to the article, what are some nations doing to encourage and help families living in extreme poverty to prioritize education?

c. In what type of community (e.g.: urban, suburban, rural) is the access to education most challenging and what is one example the author gives to illustrate this? Using your background knowledge, give two additional examples of issues that might make access to education in rural community particularly difficult.

d. What is a Book Bank? In what ways does access to books and texts outside of the classroom help children make progress in reading? How do literate or illiterate adults at home impact a student's education?

e. What are three greatest instructional (i.e.: materials, staff, curriculum, school environment) challenges facing schools in poor communities?

f. According to the article, how do the three components of Save the Children's Literacy Boost program work and how do the students benefit?

Activity Two: The Statistics of Global Literacy

FIGURE 1. WHERE ARE LITERACY RATES LOWEST AND HIGHEST IN THE WORLD?
GLOBAL MAPS OF LITERACY RATES FOR ADULTS AND YOUTH, 2012

Adult literacy rate

Adult literacy rate
- Less than 50%
- 50% to 59%
- 60% to 69%
- 70% to 79%
- 80% to 89%
- 90% to 100%
- No data

3

Youth literacy rate

Youth literacy rate
- Less than 50%
- 50% to 59%
- 60% to 69%
- 70% to 79%
- 80% to 89%
- 90% to 100%
- No data

The maps on the previous page and above from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics illustrate the global adult literacy rate and global youth literacy rate for 2012. Have your students study the information provided and complete the following activity.

a. Using the graph below and a political map for reference, organize the following countries with 60-69%, 50-59% and less than 50% literacy rates for both adult and youth categories: India, Pakistan, Chad, Mali, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Papua New Guinea, Afghanistan, Morocco and Nepal.

Youth Literacy Rate by Country	Adult Literacy Rate by Country
<50%	<50%
50-59%	50-59%
60-69%	60-69%

b. Compare and contrast your data from above. For countries that meet the criteria for both youth and adult categories, are the literacy rates for each country the same of vastly different? Have another look at the map and notice how the immediate

bordering countries compare; is there a great disparity between locations or a general low literacy rate in the region?

c. You'll notice that several of the countries listed have a higher youth literacy rate than adult. Select one of these locations and do some follow up research on it. What economic, political and cultural factors might account for the greater disparity between youth and adult rates in these particular locations?

d. Which region of the world has the lowest youth literacy rate? Using the internet as a resource, research what the economy, politics and daily life is like in this region and discuss the three main factors that impact youth literacy here.

e. Want more specific data to analyze? Visit UNESCO's interactive literacy map for a detailed look at the exact youth and adult literacy rates around the world.

Further Reflection:

Several countries, such as the United States, Canada, Australia and England are reported on the maps above as having "No Data"—but youth and adult illiteracy is still an issue for these nations. Select one country reported as having "No Data" (maybe even your own!) and use the internet to research what its most recent youth and adult literacy rates are.

a. Take some time to reflect on your findings. Were the results what you expected or surprising? Why might some of the world's most politically stable and economically advanced nations still have problems ensuring that 100% of its citizens are literate? What segments of the population do you think are most likely to be left illiterate?

b. How does the selected country's rates compare to other places and regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, Central America or South East Asia? What political, economic and cultural factors might account for differences or similarities?

Activity Three: Empathy Exercise

When you've been raised in a community that has the resources and interest to provide you with a quality education from a very young age, it's almost possible to take the ability to read for granted.

Through discussion and images of signs, labels, menus or any text written in a language other than what the majority of your class speaks easily, ask your students to briefly place

5

themselves in the position of someone who is illiterate. To help, print or project these images written in languages other than English for your students to view. In large or small groups, discuss the following prompts.
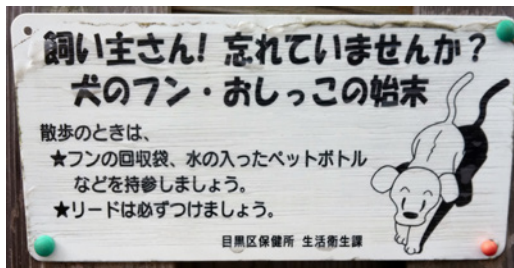

Images courtesy of scriptpro.com, roadtraffictechnology.com, thetokyofiles.com, clarionsafety.com, cyberesi.com and democraticunderground.com.

a. As you might have guessed, most illiterate people are perfectly capable of speaking their native languages fluently—however they're unable to read or write it. Imagine that the signs, labels and text(s) you're looking at are written in your native language. How does it immediately feel to be unable to understand the messages you are seeing?

b. What types of critically important—and sometimes lifesaving, information—are transmitted exclusively through written language? In addition, what are the safety concerns with illiteracy and how could you protect yourself from these if you were illiterate?

6

    c. What kinds of fun, recreational activities might you miss out on if you were unable to read?

    d. Aside from school work, what kind of day to day tasks and activities (even the smallest ones!) of yours require reading? How about for your parents and caregivers?

    e. How might your health, prosperity and access to opportunities be compromised by illiteracy?

    f. Self-esteem is an important part of our well-being as humans. How might being illiterate—in a world, country and community essentially set up for readers—have a negative impact on your self-esteem?

Activity Four: Webcasts (Optional)

Students Rebuild webcasts are free, special events live-streamed through the internet from locations around the world. During the Students Rebuild Literacy Challenge webcasts, students will learn about the Challenge, Save the Children's Literacy Boost program and what global youth literacy actually looks like.

To participate, you simply need access to the internet—we'll provide a link / URL to watch the webcast either on the Students Rebuild website or on Google+. Through a live-stream video and live chat function, youth participants will gain a better understanding of the worldwide learning crisis and learn about the country's culture with guest experts from Save the Children, on-the-ground Literacy Boost staff and students. For those unable to watch the live webcast, Students Rebuild will make video of the program available on YouTube shortly after the broadcast.

Two webcasts will take place during the Literacy Challenge—the first from Malawi on May 20, 2015 and the second and final one from Peru on September 8, 2015. Stay tuned to the Students Rebuild website, social media and newsletter for exact times and other webcast updates!

The following activities build upon other information and lessons covered in this curriculum and will prepare students for participation in the May 20, 2015 webcast broadcast live from Malawi.

Malawi Case Study

Malawi, a landlocked country known for spectacular highlands and expansive lakes, is located in southeast Africa. Home to over 17 million people, Malawi, is approximately the size of the state of Pennsylvania.

Illiteracy is a problem throughout Africa, and Malawi is no exception where an acute shortage of teachers, physical infrastructure and teaching materials makes access to quality education difficult. Although there have been improvements with increases in students enrolled in elementary school, and literacy rates up to 76% among young people, many children either do not graduate elementary school or repeat many classes. By mobilizing schools and communities, Save the Children's Literacy Boost program is working towards ensuring that every child receives a quality education and gains the skills and knowledge they need to thrive and develop.

Activity 4a: Know/How/Wish (KHW) Chart

The KHW chart helps students identify what they already **know** about Malawi, **how** they know it, and what they **wish** to learn through the webcast. Using only what they already know, have students complete the "KHW" chart individually or in small groups. Let students know that this is not about getting the "right answers" but about learning what they know and setting goals for the program. Refer back to and update the chart throughout the program.

	What do I KNOW or HEAR about Malawi?	HOW do I know this? Where did this information come from?	What do I WISH to learn more about?
Geography[1] Where is it? What countries border it? What is the natural environment like?			

---

[1] Icons were designed by various designers at thenounproject.com. For full citations: tinyurl.com/GNGNounProjectCitations.

	What do I KNOW or HEAR about Malawi?	HOW do I know this? Where did this information come from?	What do I WISH to learn more about?
People & Culture Who lives there? What language do they speak? What is daily life like?			
History When and how was the country established? What significant events have taken place there?			
Education Who goes to school? Who do literacy issues affect? How do they deal with literacy issues?			
Other			

Use the 4c. Asking Complete Questions exercise to turn your top **three "wish list" items** into respectful questions.

Activity 4b: Education as a Spark for Change

Illiteracy impacts much more than just the ability to succeed in school. It can lead to poverty, low self-esteem and isolation, poor health, unemployment / weak economies, inequality and more. Through the Students Rebuild Literacy Challenge, we are working together to give students and teachers the tools to increase literacy in themselves and their community.

9

Literacy is a fundamental right that can be a catalyst (or spark) for change in a person and a community. In this activity, we will use the analogy of a fire to explore how literacy can impact a particular aspect of a community or life.

A. Ask students: What is a catalyst? Brainstorm as a group then share the definition. Discuss as a class:

- How can literacy be a catalyst in Malawi? How can it impact an individual and community (gender equity, improved health, etc.)?

- How do "education" and "quality education" differ?

- Is education a universal human right? Why or why not?

B. "Spark" is an analytical tool that helps develop a deeper understanding of social issues, like literacy in Malawi by looking at education as a catalyst or spark that effects other aspects of life. As a class, review the Spark structure:

- **Logs:** These represent the area that education can / does impact within the community.
  Ex: *Health, economics, tolerance, global awareness, gender equality, environment*

- **Flames:** These are the impacts of education on this area.
  Ex: *If logs are family economics, flames could be less spending power because of school fees, increased wages, of children later in life, etc.*

C. Divide students into groups and assign each a different "log." Instruct each group to use the worksheet to fill in their "flames," brainstorming three or four ways that education can impact their topic.

As a class, have each group briefly present their three or four "flames." Discuss as a group:

- Were the flames positive or negative? How do we ensure that education has a positive impact?

- How did this activity enhance your understanding of quality education and its impact?

10

Logs: What area(s) of life does education impact within Malawi and around the world?

_____

Flames: What are the impacts of education on this area?
(List at least three or four!)

_____

Activity 4c: Asking Complete Questions

The webcast will provide your students an opportunity to ask questions in a live chatroom. When learning about new people, places and big issues, sensitive topics may come up. Use this opportunity to help students practice asking "complete questions," which include context and share information about the person who asks the question. This exercise will prepare your students to ask respectful questions that create open, honest and engaging dialogue during the webcast.

A. Create / draw the table below in front of the class. Have students rewrite the three questions in the first column, adding background context and thoughtful wording to make the question stronger.

Instead of asking…	Create a complete question with context:
What is school like for you?	*Sample rewrite:* I start school at 7:30 am and have 5 classes each day: English, science, art, gym and world history. What is your school schedule like?
Why do you wear clothes like that?	*Sample rewrite*: At school, we have a dress code to make sure that students dress appropriately. Our uniform looks like [this]. Do you have a school uniform and what does it look like?
What's it like to not have a school library?	*Sample rewrite:* In our school and in our community we have a library that has many books on many topics. My favorite books to read are about kids like me. What sort of books do you like to read at your community Book Bank?

Ask students: What are the differences between the sample questions and your rewrites?

B. Individual work: Then ask students to work on their own or in small groups to create and rewrite their own "complete questions." Students can fill in a chart like the one below.

Instead of asking…	Create a complete question:

C. **Webcast questions for Save the Children staff and students in Malawi**
As a group, referring back to the KHW charts, have students create a master list of the top **three "complete webcast questions"** to ask when prompted, during the webcast.

1.
2.
3.

ACT

The worldwide learning crisis is vast, but we can collectively take action. Why is reading and writing so important? Illiteracy can lead to poverty, low self-esteem and isolation, poor health, unemployment / weak economies, inequality and more. Worldwide, 250 million children of primary school age cannot read or write—whether they attend school or not. More than 30 million girls are out of school today and children from the poorest 20% of the population are four times more likely to be out of school than their wealthier peers.

Here's how you can help: Take the Students Rebuild Literacy Challenge. Make and mail in a bookmark. For each bookmark you send in, the Bezos Family Foundation will donate $1—up to $300,000—to Save the Children's Literacy Boost program in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The more bookmarks you send, the more children you'll help! See our Literacy Challenge Toolkit for instructions, tips and creative suggestions on bookmark creation.

Save the Children will distribute a selection of your bookmarks to Literacy Boost students around the world. Funding generated by the Challenge will stock Save the Children's international book banks, improve school attendance, reading comprehension and self-confidence. Questions? Visit our Literacy Challenge FAQ page.

Education affects everything: Education affects self-esteem, health, economic prosperity and opens up opportunities for young people. It also affects you—because living in a world where everyone, even those very far away, are educated, healthy, positive and self-sufficient is critical for global prosperity.

So take action and see change right now! Register for the Literacy Challenge then Get Started with making bookmarks.

REFLECT

Read the following quotes and select one upon which to reflect:

"Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much."

– Helen Keller

"When we make something with our hands, it changes the way we feel, which changes the way we think, which changes the way we act."

– Carl Wilkens

Reflection Prompt: How do these quotes relate to your experience participating in the Students Rebuild Literacy Challenge? You may write, discuss, draw, perform or suggest another medium to express this relationship. Please be detailed, diligent and thoughtful in your responses.

Continue your conversation and share what you've done! Students Rebuild offers unique opportunities to directly connect with humanitarian staff, other Literacy Challenge participants and young people around the world through blogs, interactive programming, live webcasts, photo sharing, video and more.

Share Your Voice

Take a picture of the bookmarks(s) you created and share a message about why you feel it's important to engage with this issue and take a stand for global literacy. Students Rebuild has several ways you can share your photos, video and reflections on our social media channels: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Tumblr and Google+. Use the hashtag #SRLiteracy. You can also email photos, videos and your stories to us and be featured in our Students Rebuild blog!