Causes and effects of poverty

Learning objectives

- To know and understand at least three **causes of poverty**
- To know and understand at least three **effects of poverty**
- To be able to describe how CAFOD is addressing causes and effects of poverty.
- To have come up with your own possible solutions to wider causes and effects.

How to use this resource

1 First, read the "Babies in the River" story, and work out why it is vital to understand the root causes of poverty.

2 Read at least two case studies. If you are unsure what a word means, look at the glossary below. As you read the stories, underline causes of poverty in one colour and effects of poverty in another.

3 For two of the case studies, fill in the table on page 7.

Cause *noun*
The reason why something happens.

Effect *noun*
The result of a particular influence.

Interesting fact!
A cause of poverty can also be an effect. For example, lack of education can be a cause of low income and may also be an effect of family poverty during childhood.

4 If you have time, watch a video of Rosana, Fabiano or Aya, who are mentioned in the case studies: **cafod.org.uk/GCSE-RE-films**.

5 Use the Problem and Solution trees to revisit and embed your learning.

6 Global causes of poverty require complex global problem-solving, for example, climate change in Fabiano's story. Think: What are *your* possible solutions to these wider causes of poverty?

Glossary

Key word/term	Definition
Colonial past	A time in history when a country was taken over and ruled by another
Exploit	To use or abuse a person or situation for your own benefit
Faction	A group, or a minority that does not agree with a larger group
Guerrilla	A rebel fighter, usually politically motivated
Irrigate	To supply an area with water, especially farmland
Paramilitary	An unofficial soldier, not part of a regular army
Poverty line	Level of income below which a person is considered to be living in poverty
Recruit	To enlist or enrol somebody (for example, enrol someone into the army)
Sustainable	Something that can be kept going over the long term
Taliban	An Islamic political movement and armed group in Afghanistan
Tolerance	Acceptance of people with different views; open-mindedness

The story of the babies in the river

One day a group of villagers was working in the fields by a river. Suddenly someone noticed a baby floating downstream. A woman rushed out and rescued the baby, brought it to shore and cared for it.

Over the next few days, more babies were found floating downstream, and the villagers rescued them too. Soon there was a steady stream of babies floating downstream.

The whole village became involved in the rescue work: pulling these poor children out of the stream, making sure they were properly fed, clothed, and housed, and accepting them into village life.

Although not all the babies could be saved, the villagers felt they were doing well to save so many. But they became exhausted with all this rescue work.

It was a long time before one young villager asked: "Why don't we go upstream to find out how and why all these babies are ending up in the river?"

THINK:
- What might happen next?
- Why is it vital to find out the causes of poverty?

Fabiano

UGANDA

Uganda is being hit hard by climate change. Droughts are more frequent as the climate gets hotter, but so are intense floods.

For over 80 per cent of the population, who depend on rain to farm, this means going hungry when crops dry up, or are washed away.

This adds to an already serious hunger problem. A third of schoolchildren in Uganda have no food during the school day.

This is linked to the fact that half the population has no clean water. There is high demand on water sources, they are often not well cared-for, and may dry out as the climate heats up.

Millions of people in Uganda therefore have to travel long distances to collect water to drink, wash and irrigate their fields. This has many negative effects that keep people poor, as we see from Fabiano's story. There are other complex reasons for poverty in Uganda, including some consequences of its colonial past.

Fabiano's water story

An Arsenal fan who wants to be a doctor, 15-year-old Fabiano is determined to shine at school. The trouble was, morning and evening he had to walk 3 miles to collect water for his family. There was no tap in his entire village.

"By the time we got back, we would have great problems going to school," he told CAFOD. "It would be too much for us, we would just be too tired, or too dirty."

Many children in Uganda miss school time to fetch water, and fall behind. This is one way that lack of water affects not just your thirst but your life chances. Another is disease. As we all know only too well since the onset of coronavirus, when you can't wash often, sickness spreads easily. In Uganda, 8 out of 10 people don't have a decent toilet – one that is safe, private and clean.

Tips and taps

Then our local engineers installed a solar-powered water pump in Fabiano's village, so he has a community fresh water tap just a few minutes from home.

"It means life," says Fabiano simply. He learned vital hygiene tips from our experts and is a health prefect at school. He shows others how to keep themselves and their homes clean and even shows adults how to build latrines.

In the photo you can see him watering the family farm, which now produces a better supply of food through the year.

Without the long water trips, Fabiano and his friends have more time and energy to study - and to play football of course!

Meet Fabiano on film:
cafod.org.uk/GCSE-RE-films

Rosana

COLOMBIA has been torn apart by an internal conflict lasting over 50 years. More than 280,000 people, including many children, were killed in fighting between the army, guerrillas and paramilitary groups.

The conflict is complex, but it grew out of inequality and a struggle for land. The poorest were hit the hardest, and nearly 8 million have been driven from their homes, worsening their poverty. In recent years, the violence has been fuelled by drug trafficking and illegal gold mining, amongst other issues.

Criminal gangs rule by fear, stifling opportunities for young people to lead normal lives, find jobs and get out of poverty. They may be forcibly recruited by armed groups, or even join out of desperation to earn a living.

But a recent peace deal with the formerly largest guerrilla group has brought a new moment in Colombia's history. Young people we work with hope that a new future is opening up.

Rosana's peace story

Rosana, 16, is a secondary school student in the north of Colombia. She is brave and determined to change the culture around her.

She has to deal with daily fear, but she believes that young Colombians must start to build peace if they are to escape from the violence that keeps them trapped in poverty.

"As young people we have an important role to play," she says. "We think differently from previous generations."

Alternatives to violence

With the help of our local peacebuilding experts, Rosana is now working to change the attitudes of peers, teachers and her neighbourhood.

Together with other young leaders in 34 secondary schools, her goal is to build a more peaceful community from within. Through activities like workshops, art and drama, they learn about values of tolerance, respect and equality.

In these ways CAFOD helps young people explore their life goals and become aware that there are other possibilities open to them beyond becoming part of the armed conflict. Then they may have a better start, away from violent gang culture.

CAFOD works alongside the Colombian Catholic Church and others to help the peace process move ahead. We strive to protect human rights defenders who stand up for the poorest people.

We support communities who have been pushed into poverty by the years of conflict. "Living in peace would mean so much," as Rosana says. "I would be free."

See Rosana's story on film at cafod.org.uk/GCSE-RE-films

Fazel

AFGHANISTAN

This is one of the world's poorest nations (the United Nations ranked it 168 out of 189 in 2018). Its geography and climate are harsh: it is mostly mountainous and dry, with soils that easily erode away with wind or rain.

There are frequent natural disasters, with 230,000 people affected each year by drought, earthquakes, flooding and avalanches.

Added to this, 40 years of conflict have made the country very difficult to govern well or to develop economically.

A long-running war between the government and armed opposition groups, most notably the Taliban, means a peaceful society is still a long way off.

Four in ten people do not have enough to eat; job opportunities are few and education and healthcare are still weak despite some advances. Life expectancy in Afghanistan is 64. In the UK it is 81.

Please note: This resource was written in 2020

Fazel's farming story

Young farmer Fazel* lives in Herat province in western Afghanistan, where a quarter of the population are jobless. Most people try to scratch a living from the land. Too poor to keep him in school, his parents took him out at 10 to work on the family farm. On average, boys in Herat get only six years of education.

Trying to farm in drought conditions, with no cash for fertiliser or pesticide, Fazel needed expert help. Although he knew basic farming, his lack of school and training held him back.

[Photo cropped for security reasons]

A better way forward

With support from CAFOD, Fazel received tools and workshops on sustainable farming.
"I learned how to prevent pests and the best way to cultivate," he says. He is growing a wider variety of crops so the family has a better diet and food spread out year-round.

Now Fazel knows how to use natural fertilisers, to store his crops so they last well, and how to market any extra he has for sale. His community have also learned to keep poultry and bees. He earns enough to help pay for his younger sisters and brothers to go to school. He wants them to have a better start in life than he did.

CAFOD also works to influence local and international decision-makers to challenge some of the political systems that keep Afghans trapped in poverty. We also support peace building. Achieving peace and stability is essential if a country and its people are to grow and thrive.

*Name changed for security reasons

Aya

LEBANON

Lebanon is a tiny country struggling to host around 1.5 million Syrian refugees and 300,000 Palestinians who have fled war. Most refugees live in poor housing, with limited access to healthcare, education or jobs. They cannot thrive.

It's hard for locals too. The Lebanese economy is in crisis. Prices are high and people can't make ends meet while their government fails to provide stable energy supplies, clean water, healthcare or reliable internet. Corruption exists at all levels.

Half the people of Lebanon have now been pushed below the poverty line. The economic crisis means there are few jobs for young people, whether refugees or Lebanese. They see their dreams being shut down.

Lebanon is home to many religions and political factions. These differences can cause tension and violence, preventing peaceful growth.

L E B A N O N

Aya's refugee story

Living as a Syrian refugee in Lebanon isn't easy. Aged 24, Aya and her parents have been caught here for seven years, while her country has been devastated by civil war that has killed half a million people.

"We have little hope of returning home," she says, "and for a young person like me, there are few opportunities."

Aya took part in our programme to help young Lebanese and Syrians make friends while working on shared projects and learning job skills.

"When everyone sees that young people are friends with each other – whether they are Lebanese or Syrians – they can expect more from the situation," Aya explains.

This helps to create a more peaceful society where life can improve for everyone. For example, the projects include restoring playgrounds and spaces where diverse communities can mingle.

Meeting basic needs
CAFOD helps thousands of refugees and poor Lebanese communities with food, safe shelter for women and children under threat, medical supplies and emergency cash. We support Syrian and Lebanese women to learn English, IT and leadership skills so they have better work options.
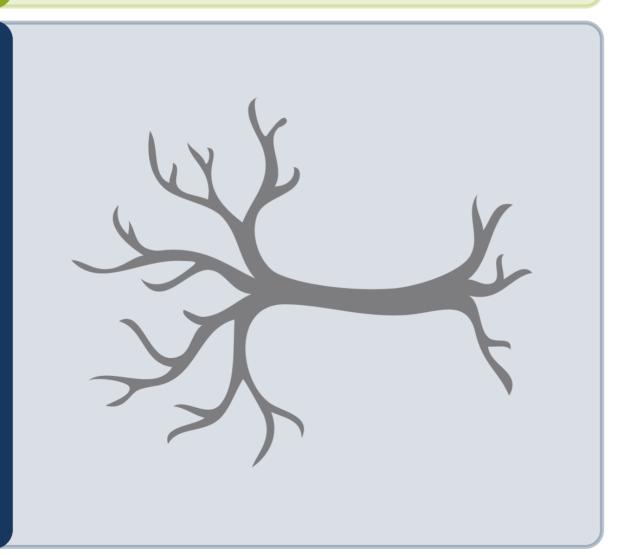
In Syria, meanwhile, we are providing food, water, safer places to live and emergency grants for basic needs like rent. In more peaceful areas, we are helping returning refugees to rebuild their homes and restart work and education.

Meet Aya on film: cafod.org.uk/GCSE-RE-films

Title of story

Some **causes** of poverty in this story are:	**Causes** – what makes people poor?
What is being done to tackle these causes of poverty?	
Some **effects** of poverty in this story are:	**Effects** – what happens because people are poor?
What is being done to tackle these effects of poverty?	
What else do you think should be done to tackle the poverty in this story?	

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What else do you think should be done to tackle the poverty in this story?	

The Solution Tree: Write at the roots what can be done to stop poverty (what would solve the problems). Write the effects (or 'fruits') of these actions on the branches.

The Problem Tree: Write on the roots what causes poverty. Write the effects of poverty on the branches.

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