

The United Nations: fighting poverty

In this lesson you will learn about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These are eight goals agreed by world leaders in 2000 with the aim of eliminating poverty and inequality throughout the world. Each goal has a set of targets to be achieved by 2015. You will consider the importance of the goals and present your ideas to the class. You will then look specifically at the goals that focus on education, something that not every child in the world has access to, and what the UN is doing to change this.

Learning objectives for today

- To assess the importance of the MDGs
- To prioritise and present your views

The main aims of the UN are

1. Secure international peace
2. Eliminate poverty
3. Protect human rights

What are the Millennium Development Goals and why were they created?

In 2000 world leaders met at the UN headquarters in New York for a 'Millennium Summit'. At this meeting, they agreed that all countries, rich and poor, share the responsibility to end poverty and its root causes. They drew up a list of eight goals to be achieved by 2015 to fight poverty and inequality. These goals are called the 'Millennium Development Goals' or 'MDGs'.

All 193 UN member states have pledged to help the UN to achieve the MDGs. While the UN is leading the MDG efforts, the primary responsibility for meeting the targets lies with individual countries (member states). The world has the money, resources and technology to achieve the goals, but only if governments work together to take urgent and effective action.

1. Read through the Millennium Development Goals to see what each one aims to achieve. They are on student worksheet 3.2.

2. Imagine that the United Nations can only tackle one goal. Note down in secret the Millennium Goal that you think the UN should tackle - the goal you think is the most important.

3. Why have you chosen that particular goal over the others? Think on your own for five minutes about the reasons why and make some notes about your ideas. You will need these to help you present your ideas to the class.

4. Now, go and stand by the goal that you think is most important. The posters are displayed around the classroom.

5. You have just one minute to persuade the others that your goal is the most important.

6. Have you changed your mind since hearing the speeches? If so, move to the goal you now think is the most important.

Challenge task!

Are there any other goals you think should be included in the MDGs? What are they?



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