

# Education

Access to education is the birthright of every child. Yet around the world, there are still 58 million primary school-age children not in school. That number climbs to 124 million when you include all children and adolescents.

While some kids are too poor to afford school fees, others are too sick to attend class or too hungry to concentrate when they do. In some instances, children are excluded because of their gender, a disability or cultural factors. While other times, situations of war or child labor stand in the way.

Education is the most basic insurance against poverty and the first step to overcoming it. At any age, education empowers people with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to shape a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.

## FAST FACTS

*Children of uneducated mothers*

**ARE 2.8x AS LIKELY**

*to die before*

**THE AGE OF 5**

*compared to children whose mothers  
have a secondary education.*

*Child marriages would*

**FALL BY 14%**

*if all girls had a  
primary education.*

**1 EXTRA YEAR**

*of schooling increases an  
individual's earnings by*

**UP TO 10%.**

*We need*

**\$26 BILLION**

*more each year to achieve  
basic education for all. That's*

**LESS THAN 5%**

*of what the U.S. military  
spent in 2015!*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT WOULD YOU DO EVERY DAY, AND WHAT WOULD YOUR FUTURE LOOK LIKE, IF YOU COULDN'T GO TO SCHOOL?
2. WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF ALL CHILDREN ACCESSING AN EDUCATION?
3. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS TO EDUCATION?

## GO DEEPER

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

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help children in developing communities gain access to education? Take action with the **WE Are Silent** campaign on page 46 of your Student Guide.

# Food



Food is fuel. Without a steady supply of it, our brains and bodies can't get the nutrients they need to function properly. Yet many people in developing countries continue to suffer from a lack of basic nutrition. A lack of vitamin A can lead to eyesight issues, including permanent blindness. When a pregnant woman doesn't get enough iodine, her child has a higher chance of being born with brain damage.

Hunger not only delays physical, emotional and cognitive development, but also hinders a child's ability to focus in school or attend altogether. Those who do make it to class tend to perform poorly academically and are frequently held back.

For the 795 million people who aren't getting the food they need, hunger is an everyday problem that affects every aspect of life.

## FAST FACTS

*Farmers produce more than enough to feed the world, yet*

**1/3<sup>RD</sup> OF ALL FOOD**

*produced for human consumption is lost or wasted.*

**RECOVERING JUST 1/2**

*could eradicate hunger.*

**98%**

*of the world's undernourished people live in developing countries.*

**\$3.2 BILLION**

*is needed per year to feed the*  
**66 MILLION CHILDREN**  
*who go to school hungry.*

*If female farmers had the same resources as male farmers, up to*

**150 MILLION MORE**

*people would be fed.*



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. IF FARMERS ARE PRODUCING ENOUGH FOOD TO FEED THE WORLD, WHY DO YOU THINK THERE ARE STILL 795 MILLION HUNGRY PEOPLE?
2. WHAT CAN WE DO TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE?
3. HOW ARE POVERTY, HUNGER AND HEALTH RELATED?

## GO DEEPER

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

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help children in developing communities gain access to healthy food? Take action with the **WE Create Change** campaign on page 24 of the Student Guide.



# Health



Health provides the stability every family needs to grow and be productive. Parents who have access to health care can run their farms and businesses with peace of mind, ensuring their families are fed and their children can go to school.

When health care is unavailable, parents live in fear that their child falling ill could mean the difference between life and death. Or when the cost of health care is unaffordable, they may find themselves in a cycle of never-ending medical debt.

Simple, preventative health measures, like standard checkups, vaccinations for newborns and vitamins for expecting mothers, could save up to 6.6 million lives every year. Without affordable treatment, many kids end up chronically sick and miss too much class to progress in school.

## FAST FACTS

*A child who is*  
**EXCLUSIVELY BREASTFED**

*in the first 6 months of life is*

**14x LESS LIKELY**

*to die during this time than  
 a non-breastfed child.*

**1/3<sup>RD</sup>**  
*of the world's  
 population lacks access to*  
**ESSENTIAL MEDICINES.**

*Immunization saves up to*  
**3 MILLION CHILDREN**  
*every year.*

**16,000 CHILDREN**  
*under the age of 5 died  
 every day in 2015, mostly from  
 causes that could have been*  
**PREVENTED OR TREATED**  
*with simple, affordable  
 interventions.*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. HOW CAN POOR HEALTH AFFECT OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE?
2. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR FAMILIES TO BE ABLE TO ACCESS HEALTH CARE? WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT HAVING ACCESS?
3. SHOULD HEALTH CARE BE AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE? HOW CAN GOVERNMENTS ENSURE THIS?

## GO DEEPER

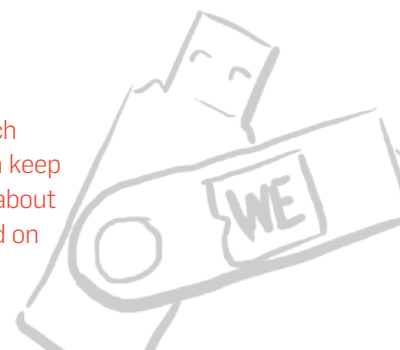
Check out more info and stats on the issue of access to health care worldwide at [WE.org/exploringissues](http://WE.org/exploringissues).

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help children in developing communities access health care? Take action with the **WE Step Up** campaign on page 54 of the Student Guide.

## WATCH & REFLECT

In 2007, Charlize Theron founded Africa Outreach Project, an organization that helps African youth keep themselves safe from HIV/AIDS. See her speak about her work in the WE Day broadcast special stored on your USB.



# Poverty



Poverty means more than not having enough money. On a deeper level, poverty is the state of not having access to opportunities to improve your situation and take control of your future. For the 71 percent of the world who live on less than \$10 per day, poverty forces difficult decisions. Do I buy food and go thirsty, or buy water and go hungry? Do I pay for school fees or hospital bills?

Without equal access to social resources like education, jobs, loans and financial literacy skills, poverty creates a cycle where children born into poor families have fewer opportunities to succeed as adults. Women often have less access to social and economic resources, even though studies show that when women gain access to paid work, economies grow.

## FAST FACTS

*The poorest*  
**1/2 OF THE WORLD'S**  
*population has the same amount of combined wealth as the*  
**62 RICHEST PEOPLE**  
*on the planet.*

**171 MILLION PEOPLE**  
*would be lifted out of poverty if every child in low-income countries finished school with basic literacy. That's a*  
**12% DROP**  
*in poverty worldwide.*

*Extreme poverty*  
**HAS BEEN CUT IN 1/2**  
*since 1990, but progress has been far from equal. Most of the gains from the*  
**LAST 30 YEARS**  
*have been made in a single country.*

*It would cost*  
**\$66 BILLION**  
*to end extreme poverty*  
**FOR 1 YEAR.**  
*That's less than Americans spent on the lottery in 2014.*



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. HOW WOULD YOU SPEND YOUR MONEY IF YOU ONLY EARNED \$10 PER DAY?
2. IF YOU COULDN'T AFFORD TO ATTEND SCHOOL, HOW WOULD IT AFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO EARN MONEY IN THE FUTURE?
3. IF YOU COULDN'T AFFORD MEDICINE OR EMERGENCY SAVINGS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU GOT SICK?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of global poverty at [WE.org/exploringissues](http://WE.org/exploringissues).

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help women in developing communities earn a living? Take action with the **WE Are Rafikis** campaign on page 36 of the Student Guide.

## WATCH & REFLECT

Sixteen-year-old activist and entrepreneur Maya Penn and her mother Deidre went on a trip to Narok South, Kenya, to learn how their everyday shopping choices create economic opportunities for women overseas. Watch their story in the WE Day broadcast special stored on your USB.



# Water

Around the world today, more than 663 million people live without access to safe drinking water, while at least 2.4 billion still lack access to adequate sanitation facilities. That's one in three people! For those deprived of these basic human rights, every drink makes them vulnerable to infectious diseases like cholera, typhoid and dysentery.

In developing communities, hauling water from distant sources is primarily the responsibility of women and girls. For mothers, this means more time away from young children and income-generating activities. For girls, this means missing out on school and future job opportunities.

In times of drought and crop failure, villages without a reliable water source go hungry and it can mean the difference between life and death. These health and financial costs have a ripple effect on a community's entire economy—making it increasingly difficult for families to break the cycle of poverty.

## FAST FACTS

*1 study found that reducing the distance to a clean water source by*  
**JUST 15 MINUTES**  
*can increase girls' school attendance by*  
**UP TO 12%.**

**POOR WATER**  
*and sanitation in developing countries result in economic losses estimated at*  
**\$260 BILLION ANNUALLY.**

*More than*  
**1,000 CHILDREN DIE**  
*every day due to preventable water- and sanitation-related diarrhoeal diseases.*

*More people die from*  
**UNSAFE WATER**  
*annually than from all forms of violence,*  
**INCLUDING WAR.**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER?
2. WHAT ARE ALL THE THINGS YOU DO IN A DAY THAT REQUIRE WATER? HOW MUCH WATER DO YOU NEED TO DO ALL THOSE THINGS?
3. DOES ANYONE OWN WATER? SHOULD ACCESS TO WATER BE FREE FOR EVERYONE?

## GO DEEPER

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

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help children in developing communities access clean water? Take action with the **WE Create Change** campaign on page 24 of your Student Guide.



# Accessibility



Accessibility is the state of a place, object or resource being available to all people, regardless of physical, mental, emotional or social disability. Disability occurs when there is a mismatch in the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which they live.

Approximately 53 million Americans have disabilities—that's more than the population of any state in the country—and yet their needs are often not considered in the creation of public spaces and services.

Disabilities can come in a wide variety of forms: pain, mobility, agility, hearing, seeing, learning, psychological, memory, speech and developmental. Each involves different strengths, assets and challenges to accessibility and many of these challenges aren't visible. They can be situational or temporary, or long-term.

## FAST FACTS

*Inclusive design*

**BENEFITS EVERYONE!**

*Modern texting technology and voice commands evolved from*

**DESIGN SOLUTIONS**

*for people with disabilities.*

*1 state study found*

**2 IN 3 FAMILIES**

*didn't have access to extracurricular activities for their child with*

**A DISABILITY.**

**1 IN 4**

*of today's 20-year-olds*

**WILL HAVE DISABILITIES**

*before reaching age 67.*

*Someone with a disability is*

**2x AS LIKELY**

*to be unemployed as someone without one.*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A SPACE TO BE ACCESSIBLE? HOW DO RAMPS, LEARNING ASSISTANTS, MAGNIFYING SOFTWARE AND TEXT-TO-SPEECH MAKE SPACES AND PROGRAMS MORE ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT ABILITIES?

2. WHY IS INCLUSIVE DESIGN IMPORTANT? WHO DOES INCLUSIVE DESIGN BENEFIT?

3. WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO ENSURE THAT PROGRAMS, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTS ARE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY MORE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE?

GO DEEPER

Learn more about accessibility at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://we.org/exploringissues).

TAKE ACTION

Want to help make your community more accessible? Take action with the **WE Are One** campaign at [WE.org/weareone](https://we.org/weareone).

# The Environment



Our everyday choices have a direct impact on the future of the planet. As the population grows, so does the demand we put on the environment. Between January 1 and August 13, 2015, the global population used up all the resources the planet would produce for the whole year. We're depleting forests faster than we can regrow them, and at current rates, world fishing populations are set to completely collapse by 2048.

With this level of consumption comes waste, pollution and the widespread destruction of habitats. Greenhouse gas emissions are predicted to increase by more than 50 percent by 2050. By then, air pollution will be the top environmental cause of premature death. Unless we improve our habits of consumption and waste, many of these changes will come in our lifetime.

## FAST FACTS

*Because of environmental damage,*  
**40% OF THE WORLD'S**  
*population will live in*  
*water-stressed regions*  
**BY 2050.**

*Species are dying off at a rate*  
**1,000x TO 10,000x**  
*faster than the natural*  
*extinction rate.*

**1/4 OF THE PLANET'S**  
*coral reefs are already damaged*  
**BEYOND REPAIR.**

*Globally we produced*  
**1.9 BILLION TONS**  
*of waste in 2007—*  
**27%**  
*came from high-income*  
*countries.*



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT EVERYDAY ACTIONS DO YOU TAKE THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT?
2. WHAT ARE SIMPLE ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE YOUR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT?
3. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT? HOW CAN WE ENSURE THAT PEOPLE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IMPACTS THEIR ACTIONS HAVE ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

## GO DEEPER

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

## TAKE ACTION

Want to change the headlines on environmental sustainability? Reduce your negative impacts and boost your positive ones with the **WE Take Charge** campaign on page 20 of the Student Guide.

# Homelessness



Homelessness isn't just what we see on the street—it takes many forms and affects many different people. People find themselves homeless for any number of reasons: they've lost their job, their health is deteriorating or they are fleeing domestic violence. Women and children are often part of the "hidden homeless": people living in friends' homes or temporary accommodations.

On any given night, 564,708 Americans go to sleep without a home. Some of them are chronically homeless, meaning they remain homeless for a long period of time. Others are cyclically homeless, moving into and out of homelessness several times over a three-year period. Others are transitionally homeless, going homeless for a very short period of time.

Many cities are turning to a model of helping the homeless that provides housing stability as a first resort and then builds on that base with education, job training and aid for mental health challenges. So far, this method has been extremely effective at significantly reducing homelessness.

## FAST FACTS

*You would have to work*  
**86 HOURS A WEEK**  
*at minimum wage to afford*  
**AN APPARTMENT**  
*at fair market rent.*

*9% of American cities*  
**PROHIBIT SHARING FOOD**  
*with homeless people.*

*California accounts for*  
**1/5<sup>TH</sup> OF THE NATION'S**  
*homeless population.*

**1/8<sup>TH</sup> OF AMERICA'S**  
*low-income housing was*  
*permanently lost between*  
**2001 AND 2013.**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT DAILY ACTIVITIES WOULD BE AFFECTED IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE A HOME? WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL? STAY CLEAN? STAY FED? DO HOMEWORK? MEET FRIENDS?

2. WHAT RESOURCES EXIST IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO HELP THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS? ARE THEY ENOUGH?

3. WHAT ARE SOME ISSUES THAT ARE MADE MORE DIFFICULT BY HOMELESSNESS? HOW WOULD OVERCOMING HUNGER, POVERTY OR ILLITERACY BE EASIER IF EVERYONE HAD A STABLE HOME?

## GO DEEPER

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

## TAKE ACTION

Want to make a difference for those experiencing homelessness in your community? Take action with the **WE Won't Rest** campaign on page 32 of the Student Guide.

## WATCH & REFLECT

Avid skiers Corinne Hindes and Katrine Kirsebom came up with a new way to help the homeless: collecting unclaimed lost and found items from ski resorts and donating them to their local homeless shelter. Find out how Corinne and Katrine teamed up with Unilever to further help the homeless in their community. Watch their story in the WE Day broadcast special stored on your USB.





# Hunger

Imagine trying to get through everyday life without knowing when your next meal will come. Short-term hunger can cause headaches, dizziness, irritability, nausea and inability to concentrate, and the long-term effects can go even deeper.

Studies show that homes that don't have access to enough affordable, nutritious food also report multiple chronic medical conditions, major depression, and long-term mental and physical disabilities. These health issues can be made worse by hunger and also make it harder to earn money and provide food.

Currently, one in seven Americans lives in a hungry household. Many hold down jobs, but struggle financially. America's biggest food bank network reported that 84 percent of client households with children purchased the cheapest food available, even if it wasn't the healthiest option, just to put something on the table.

## FAST FACTS

Food insecurity has been linked to  
**ANEMIA, ASTHMA,**  
 learning difficulties and delayed  
 development in children.

**\$9,175**  
 is the median annual income  
 for a household accessing  
**AMERICA'S LARGEST**  
 food bank.

**MORE THAN 1/2**  
 of the households using  
 America's largest food bank  
 network report having  
**AT LEAST 1 PERSON**  
 working a job in the last year.

**63%**  
 of food bank households  
 with seniors report having  
 to choose between paying for  
**FOOD OR MEDICAL CARE.**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. FOOD SECURITY IS THE STATE OF HAVING ACCESS TO ENOUGH FOOD THAT IS BOTH AFFORDABLE AND NUTRITIOUS. WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF SITUATIONS WHERE FOOD MIGHT NOT BE AFFORDABLE OR NUTRITIOUS?

2. HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF YOU WERE EXPERIENCING HUNGER ON A DAILY BASIS? WHAT CHALLENGES WOULD YOU FACE? WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM RISKS?

3. WHAT ARE SOME ISSUES YOU SEE AS BEING RELATED TO HUNGER? HOW DO THESE ISSUES MAKE IT HARDER FOR PEOPLE TO FIND AFFORDABLE, NUTRITIOUS FOOD? HOW DOES HUNGER AMPLIFY THESE ISSUES?

## GO DEEPER

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

## TAKE ACTION

Want to help your community fight hunger? Take action with the **WE Scare Hunger** campaign on page 28 of the Student Guide.

# Poverty



When meeting basic needs is often a struggle, families face difficult choices with every dollar they spend. Pay for groceries or electricity? Medical bills or housing? Diapers or school supplies? Every decision made means the family has to get by without something else.

Poverty is most commonly the result of unemployment, low-paying jobs, and lack of affordable housing and health care. What's more, poverty can make health problems even worse. Low-income families often live on high-carb, processed foods, which contribute to health problems. And when health problems hit, the bills can get staggeringly expensive.

Compared to children whose parents have an income twice that of the poverty line, poor children complete two fewer years of school and are nearly three times as likely to have poor health.

## FAST FACTS

*The number of poor families*

### **SHARING HOMES**

*with a second family is*

**52% HIGHER**

*now than before  
the recession.*

### **29% OF PEOPLE**

*with a disability live in  
poverty—that's more than*

**4 MILLION AMERICANS.**

*Poverty is not unique to  
cities. In fact, poverty*

### **RATES ARE SLIGHTLY HIGHER**

*in non-metropolitan areas.*

*Poor children earn*

### **LESS THAN 1/2 AS MUCH**

*in their future careers as  
their peers growing up at*

**TWICE THE POVERTY LINE.**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT ARE SOME SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF POVERTY?
2. HOW DO THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY MAKE IT HARDER FOR A FAMILY TO EARN MONEY AND OVERCOME BARRIERS TO SUCCESS?
3. WHAT ARE SOME RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES LIVING IN POVERTY? ARE THEY EFFECTIVE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of poverty in the United States at [WE.org/exploringissues](https://www.ve.org/exploringissues).

TAKE ACTION

Want to help your community end poverty? Take action with the **WE Volunteer Now** campaign on page 50 of the Student Guide.



# Youth Violence

Youth violence involves harmful behavior—especially the intentional use of physical force—committed by or against a young person that can result in injury, death or psychological harm.

Drug or alcohol use, negative influence of peers, family issues, and poverty are some of the factors that can increase the risk of a young person engaging in harmful or criminal behavior. Youth violence doesn't just affect an individual's physical and mental well-being—it affects the overall health of an entire community.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to ending youth violence, communities can help reduce the prevalence of it by developing a city-wide strategy that combines prevention, intervention, treatment, and re-entry and employment strategies.

## FAST FACTS

*In a 2013  
nationwide survey,  
**1 IN 4**  
high school students  
reported being in a  
**PHYSICAL FIGHT**  
in the last year.*

*Homicide is the  
**3<sup>RD</sup> LEADING CAUSE**  
of death for young people  
between the ages of  
**15 AND 24**  
in the United States.*

*Each year,  
**YOUTH HOMICIDES**  
and assault-related injuries  
result in an estimated  
**\$16 BILLION**  
in combined medical and  
work loss costs.*

***1 IN 17 STUDENTS**  
misses at least 1 day of school  
every month because they  
**FEEL UNSAFE**  
at school or on their way  
to or from school.*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH VIOLENCE? WHO IS AFFECTED BY IT?
2. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER WAYS TO HELP REDUCE YOUTH VIOLENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT KINDS OF THINGS CAN EACH PERSON DO TO MAKE THEIR COMMUNITY SAFER OR STRONGER?
3. HOW CAN LEARNING ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMMUNITY HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY?

## GO DEEPER

Check out more info and stats on the issue of local youth violence at [WE.org/exploringissues](http://WE.org/exploringissues).

## WATCH & REFLECT

In 2014, Christian Burgos' life drastically changed when his sister was killed in a shooting while picking him up from a friend's house in Chicago. Christian has since become a speaker against gun violence. See his story in the WE Day broadcast special stored on your USB.

