

DISCUSSION EXPANSION TOPICS

As you work through OutRight activities with your group, there are some ideas to explore that they may not have come across before or might have questions about. Do join our workshops, or watch the recordings, to help you guide discussions with your group. We've expanded a few themes here that may come up.

Inequality

Inequality can get in the way of children accessing their rights – and that can be inequality between people, or groups of people, or it can be between one country and another.

When international aid was first introduced in the 19th century, European colonialism was rife, as countries such as Britain, France and Spain took full or partial political control over countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas, and occupied it with settlers. The occupied countries were called colonies. People from the controlling country made the laws and decided how to rule the colony. They could run projects or businesses that 'extracted wealth' from the colonies – in other words, they made money from the crops, minerals and workers in that country.

This way, colonialism has caused some of the inequality between countries that we still see today. Many occupied countries became independent – or took back control of their land and resources – in the past 80 years and have been working to develop services for their people. But many of these countries have also faced obstacles, including natural disasters.

There is also the problem that countries with less money for services often have to borrow money. But then that just adds a further cost for those countries – the cost of paying back borrowed money. This traps lower income countries in a sort of cycle of inequality, and means it will take longer for all countries to become equal when it comes to tackling today's problems. One of the biggest challenges is climate change, caused by industrialisation linked to colonialism, and every country in the world should work together to protect our planet and our people.

How aid works

We've looked at the difference between bilateral aid – which is given directly from one country's government to another, and multilateral aid, which involves other agencies and organisations including UNICEF.

But why would you give multilateral aid instead of just giving directly?

One reason might be that governments have political priorities that might influence how they spend money. Organisations and agencies separate from governments can be freer to give support based on people's needs rather than based on political priorities. But it's important to acknowledge that all organisations – just like governments – are run by humans! We're all influenced by the culture and society we grow up in and we all have biases, so it's important for us all to look at how these affect what we do and how we do it. When international aid is given with unreasonable or unnecessary expectations attached, it can cause (or worsen) power imbalances between countries. As aid evolves, it's important that lots of work is done to make sure it's based on good listening and is respectful of differences.

Another important reason to give multilateral aid is that running a country is very complicated – and needs lots of people with different skills. So sometimes, organisations outside governments have more capacity to make sure aid reaches people and works well.

In other words:

- they have a range of experienced, expert people
- tried and tested systems
- and infrastructure that they've already built to provide help and support.

Governments can ask for help from these organisations and make use of all these existing skills and systems, instead of starting from scratch in building them. Often, government workers work in partnership with the aid organisations.

But what do we mean by systems and infrastructure, or the logistics of aid? We talked about aid not just being about giving money or things. To get supplies to people, we need warehouses to store the goods safely. We need to transport them. For example, food and vaccines have to be handled carefully, or they can 'go off' and be wasted. The people who distribute the supplies need training to make sure it gets safely and fairly to the people who need it most. People giving medicines and doing health checks also need training. These are just a few examples.

Is aid the same as charity?

Essentially, aid comes from governments and charity comes from individual people and groups. UNICEF is both a charity, because we get donations from individual people and from our own fundraising efforts, and an aid agency, because we organise how international aid money is used too.

There are lots of different ideas about what charity means, and they can vary from culture

to culture. It can also depend on people's religion. For some people, charity is making a choice to help or donate that feels good because it's the right thing to do. Other people see it more as a responsibility – it could be a cause they believe in. Or it may be connected to their religion:

- Judaism has an idea of right and fair giving called Tzedakah, for example.
- Islam has Zakat, where everyone is expected to put aside a certain portion of the money they earn to help others.
- In Christianity, there's 'Tithing' – giving a tenth of your income.
- Hinduism links charitable giving to Dharma (righteous duty), Karma (action and consequences), and Seva (selfless service).
- Buddhism and Sikhism have Dana and Daan, which are similar concepts of selfless giving.

Some ideas of charity suggest you should give without expecting anything in return. However, registered charities of all sizes should have proper measures and reporting in place to show the difference they're making to people's lives. They'll report this back to their donors – so when you give to charity, you can expect to get information about how your gift is used.

As you'll see, in our OutRight activities we're looking at the responsibilities we have to each other as citizens of one world, and the responsibility that countries have to one another to tackle inequality and to solve issues. We see aid as necessary to look after everyone's rights, not as help that's nice to give when we choose to.

When we tackle inequalities, and work to make sure everyone gets the chance to learn and be as healthy as possible, we all have more energy and skills to share. There's lots of evidence that when people's rights are protected, it's good for our wider communities, our countries and the world – it makes the planet a better, safer place for us all.