

EDUCATION

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Barriers to Education

Core Activity

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to educate students on the barriers that stand in the way of education around the world.
- **Instructional method(s):** Class discussion, partner work, class presentation
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Read the scenarios as a class and decipher the barriers together.
 - Students read the scenarios independently and share their thoughts with the class.
- **Estimated time:** 45 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Now that students have an understanding of education and its benefits, explain that there are many barriers that restrict children from accessing a proper education. Explain that they must understand these barriers in order to build a well-rounded and educated opinion on this issue. It is only with this knowledge that they will be able to create positive change.
 2. Begin by asking students to define the term “barrier,” listing off what some of these barriers might be (e.g. poverty, lack of school facilities, need to help parents around the home, etc.). Make a list on the board.
 3. Divide the class into four groups.
 4. Cut out the scenarios found on BLM 1 and distribute one to each group.
 5. Explain to students that each group is going to be given a scenario. In their scenario they will read about the life of a child around their age from Kenya, Ecuador, Haiti or India. They must read their assigned scenario and determine the different factors (barriers) in their life that are restricting that child from accessing a proper education.
 6. After students have had a significant amount of time to examine their scenario, bring the class back together.
 7. Ask each group to read their scenario to the class and explain the different barriers that exist in this person’s life that restrict them from accessing a proper education. At the conclusion of each presentation, open up the discussion to the rest of the class, asking them to add any additional thoughts about the scenario and education.
 8. Before the conclusion of this activity, ensure that students are aware that there are a variety of reasons why children around the world do not receive a proper education. Explain that now they are going to move on to discover ways that these barriers can be broken down to provide children around the world with access to education.

B.L.M.1

The Struggle to Stay in School

Sohan Meena's parents believe that you learn more by working than at school, no matter what age you are. But that is not the whole reason why Sohan and his younger brother were working in the alcohol business before either had turned 10.

Sohan's father grows maize for his family and works in construction. His mother, in addition to taking care of her eight daughters and two sons, works at the construction site alongside her husband. In the unforgiving land around the village of Lai Gow near Udaipur, India, the Meena family is doing everything it can to put food on the table.

As the eldest son, it is Sohan's responsibility to put aside his own future to help feed his younger siblings. But despite what his parents said, he was determined to go to school. After a few years of working in the city, a Free The Children school was built right in his own community. Sohan returned home, thrilled to have the chance to get a good education.

His family still needed money, so Sohan also got a job cooking for a crew of a nearby stone quarry. He would wake early and quickly clean the kitchen and cook breakfast for the crew. From 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sohan would be in school, where he made many friends and received good marks in all his subjects. After school however, he would immediately return to the quarry to make tea then dinner for the workers.

Between school and work, Sohan would only see his family once every two weeks. He hoped to finish school so he could get a better job and maybe even play a part in making his dream come true, to bring electricity to his village.

In 2009, when Sohan was just 13 years old, the owner of the quarry took him to the city of Udaipur to work in his house as a cook. Sohan left his school and his community to help support his family, hoping that his younger siblings will be luckier than he.