

GLOBAL ISSUE

Gender equality and women's empowerment



Competences: social responsibility • global awareness
• problem solving • comparing past and present issues

The fifth of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals concerns Gender Equality. It states that: 'Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.' The goal seeks to protect women and girls from violence and harmful practices but also to provide women and girls with equal access to education, health care, employment and to political and economic empowerment.

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



STEP 1 The United Nations and gender equality. Consider the two articles from the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 below and surf the UN website for further information (www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality). Then discuss the questions which follow.

Art. 1 All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Art. 2 Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

- 1 Do you think that women today really enjoy the equality, the rights and the freedoms mentioned in these articles? Where?
- 2 Do you think women's position is better today than it was in past centuries? Where and why?

STEP 2 Elizabeth I – a 'modern' woman of the 16th century.

Now consider Queen Elizabeth I's speech and answer the following questions.

- 1 What is strikingly 'modern' about the figure of Elizabeth I?
- 2 Highlight the elements in her speech which indicate that the Queen herself was aware of her particular position.
- 3 How did she contribute to making people aware of the issue of gender equality?



Colour engraving of Queen Elizabeth I knighting Sir Francis Drake on deck of the Golden Hind in Deptford, April 1581.



↑ A painting by Cheryl Braganza (1945-2016), who closely collaborated with organizations that focus on women's rights.

← *Manifestation* (2014), oil on canvas by Angela Alés.

STEP 3



GLOBAL ISSUE VIDEO 2

Women's empowerment. Watch this video by UN

Women and complete the following sentences.

- 1 There can be no sustainable development without _____.
- 2 Globally, women and girls are overrepresented among _____.
- 3 15 million girls in the world will never get a chance _____.
- 4 Women and girls are fourteen times more likely to die than men _____.
- 5 We need public action to tackle _____.
- 6 We need to invest in policies and programmes that work _____.



BE THE CHANGE

Here are the Goal 5 main targets:

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

Identify an initiative in your community (city, region or nation) that is contributing to the realisation of one or more of these targets. Work in small groups to collect information and to prepare a presentation to inform people.