**Institute of Education**



## Development Education Research Centre

Research Paper No.19
for the Global Learning Programme

# Primary pupils' attitudes towards and understandings of poverty

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Global Learning
*programme*

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# Executive summary

The purpose of the research was to collect primary school pupils' perceptions of, and their views on learning about, poverty and development, in order to better understand the factors that influence and impact on their knowledge, understanding and perspectives. The main research questions were:

1. How do young people conceptualise and make sense of global poverty?

2. How do young people think they can respond to global poverty?

3. In what contexts do young people think they learn about global poverty?

Four schools were selected from the South West region using a purposeful sampling strategy. Data was collected through focus groups with Key Stage 2 pupils in groups of six to eight, of mixed ability and gender. Images were used as a prompt for discussion.

The research found that:

- The meaning of poverty for pupils is very similar across schools, and across year groups. Pupils characterise poverty as lack of basic needs: money, shelter, education and access to resources. Natural disasters were also frequently cited as a cause of poverty.

- The complexity of the definition offered does not seem to be age related but linked to the local context of the school.

- The causes of poverty are seen as being internal to countries. Causes of poverty include war, famine and natural disasters. Pupils consider people to be poor due to lack of money and access to basic needs, such as food, water and shelter. These ideas were explicitly underpinned by a charity mentality by a number of pupils, reinforced by the belief that people are poor due to natural disasters.

- There is also evidence in this focus group of pupils feeling outrage at the inequality between rich and poor.

- Pupil comments highlight the way in which pupils develop a back story to the image in order to support their views of why this image represents poverty, such as not having any parents, having to work hard to achieve things that 'we' take for granted, and not having enough food.

- For the majority of pupils, taking action is strongly associated with charitable giving.

# Contents

# 1 ▶ Introduction

Global learning has a long history in England and has gone through many guises. The most commonly used terms to describe teaching and learning about global issues include: development education, environmental education, the global dimension, global learning, global citizenship, education for sustainable development, and education for sustainability. Each of these adjectival educations has different conceptual underpinnings and foci but, as Bourn et al (2016: 10) explain:

Global learning is the most recent term to emerge from the development education discourse… This term emerged over the past decade, partly as an effort to focus greater attention on processes of learning and advocates suggest that it should be a guiding principle for teaching and learning rather than a discrete curricular area.

In addition to conceptual developments, global learning has experienced significant peaks and troughs in popularity. Up until 2010 there was strong government support for global themes within formal education. However, currently, global citizenship and sustainability have all but disappeared from the formal curriculum. There are no longer specific curriculum references to global citizenship and sustainable development in England, although aspects of learning about global development and environmental themes are still present within specific curriculum subject areas, notably Geography and Science. In 2015, school inspections became tasked with ensuring that schools promote Fundamental British Values (FBV), which can resonate with some of the underlying principles behind global learning, such as social justice and respect.

This research report is part of the UK government-funded programme on global learning that began in 2013 and ends in 2018, the Global Learning Programme (GLP) in England[2]. An element of this programme is to develop a repository of research on global learning in schools. This study contributes to this body of research and, in line with the GLP England's key objectives, aims to better understand the factors that influence and impact on primary pupils' knowledge, understanding and perspectives on poverty and development. The four schools involved in this research are taking part in the GLP in England, and therefore the evidence outlined later needs to be seen in the context of schools who are actively engaged in promoting learning about global issues.

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2  See Appendix 1 for further information or visit the website: www.glp-e.org.uk

The report describes a small, qualitative piece of research into children's understandings of global poverty, the actions they feel they can take to bring about change, and where they think they learn about global poverty. This research focuses on children's learning at Key Stage 2, which refers to pupils aged seven to eleven and complements similar research at Key Stage 3 (Brown, 2015). A focus on young people and their learning and perceptions of global poverty was chosen because to date there has been limited academic focus on this topic in England (Marshall, 2007; Bourn, 2008).

The main research questions are:

1. How do young people conceptualise and make sense of global poverty?

2. How do young people think they can respond to global poverty?

3. In what contexts do young people think they learn about global poverty?

   As with the secondary research study (Brown, 2015), the specific focus of the questions was chosen to relate to the global learning pupil outcomes of the GLP (GLP, 2014), with global poverty and actions for change seen as both accessible topics and a principal focus of the programme.

   The following Literature Review explores research that has been conducted into children's knowledge of, and attitudes towards, issues related to global poverty, and research that looks at appropriate pedagogical approaches. After that I describe the research methodology and findings from the study. I finish with concluding remarks.

## 2 Literature Review

There is increasing interest in how children learn about complex issues associated with global learning, and associated pedagogies. Research highlights how some long-held theories of childhood development and learning have been challenged and redeveloped, in order to enable pupils to engage critically with key global issues.

The following section examines the ways in which discourses on childhood might impact on global learning pedagogy and how this might account for pupils' perceptions of poverty and development.

### 2.1 Cognitive Development Theory (CDT)

Piaget's theory of cognitive development (1952) is based on biological maturation and stages of development, and the notion of 'readiness' is important here. Readiness concerns the idea that certain information or concepts can only be taught when children have reached the appropriate stage of cognitive development. Research has found that concepts associated with global citizenship have been excluded from classroom teaching because educators have considered that children are not 'ready' to engage with these issues (Kelly & Brooks, 2009; Robinson & Jones Díaz, 2009). Furthermore, as Ruane et al (2010: 12) point out:

> Traditional discourses of childhood take little account of the significant impact of globalisation on children's experiences of childhood. The proliferation and pervasiveness of sophisticated technologies; increased worldwide interconnectedness through the forces of globalisation and the aggressive targeting of young children with items of popular culture.

They argue that new and transformative perspectives on childhood and children's learning enable children not only to engage with issues related to global justice, but also challenge educators to identify appropriate pedagogies.

Martin (2008) suggests that a global learning approach can also be used to ask and explore uncomfortable questions, challenge assumptions and recognise differences, although it has been widely noted in research studies that teachers feel less comfortable or able to teach complex and controversial topics with primary-age pupils (Hunt, 2012; Mundy and Manion, 2008; Oberman et al., 2012; Sebba and Robinson, 2010). Without critical global learning there is a risk that exploring issues related to poverty in a classroom setting will cause children to regard people in the Global South as powerless victims or children learn to 'other' those who are different, emphasising difference rather than sameness. Indeed, while there is evidence to suggest that young people in the UK are interested in

learning about global issues (Hicks & Holden, 2007; Warwick, 2008), a survey conducted by the British Council (2014) of young people in Commonwealth countries found that British children lagged behind young people in other countries in their global awareness. At the same time UK business leaders:

> *think we are in danger of being left behind by emerging countries unless young people learn to think more globally, and are worried that many young people's horizons are not broad enough to operate in a globalised and multicultural economy (Think Global and British Council, 2011: 3).*

## 2.2 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory (SIT) argues that there are systematic social group differences in children's geographical knowledge of other countries and intergroup attitudes. However, unlike CDT, SIT is not premised on the notion that knowledge and attitudes develop consistently in relation to age. Research by Barrett (1996), Barrett et al (1996) and Bourchier et al (2002) has shown that English children's knowledge of other European countries varies dependent on their social class, their own geographical location, and gender. Wiegand (1991) found that there were not only differences dependent on social class and age, but also ethnicity. For example, Indian and Pakistani children aged seven to eleven living in England have greater geographical knowledge of India and less knowledge about Western Europe compared with white English children.

Tajfel and Jahoda's (1966) research with children aged six to twelve years asked children both factual questions and about their likes and dislikes of different peoples. The results showed that their knowledge was patchy, but that younger children showed a definite preference for people from their own national group (also see: Bennett, 1999).

The research process was mindful of SIT as a possible explanation for pupil differences in where they considered people were poor and why.

## 2.3 Children and stereotype formation: self-categorisation theory and othering

One of global learning's central aims is challenging stereotypes and negative attitudes to difference. However, educators influenced by modernist views of children consider that they do not have the maturity necessary to engage with issues such as diversity, difference, human rights, social justice, discrimination and prejudice (Ruane et al, 2010: 14). But research indicates that children are aware of difference from a young age. Ramsey (2008), for example, states that educators have observed that children are also capable of recognising stereotyped assertions in books and electronic media, and recognising school and community policies and practices that are unjust. In addition, Rutland's (1998) research developed

Tajfel and Jahoda's ideas in terms of self-categorisation theory (Turner et al, 1987), which indicates that stereotypes appear to get stronger as own-group identification increases. Research by Ruble and Martin (1998) and Killen et al (2001) also shows that young children can be influenced by racial stereotypes.

Of particular relevance for this research is Barrett & Farroni's (1996) research, which found that knowledge about Europe is different depending on the attitudes to Europe that are circulating in the media in each country. Research by Bourchier et al (2002) found that children's geographical knowledge of other countries develops from television, film, books, school work, teachers, visits to other countries, and personal contact with foreigners, and varies depending on social class, nationality, ethnicity and geographical location. Even though there are increasing opportunities for children to actively engage with the wider world, there are indications that children are passive receivers of information received through a screen (Buckingham, 2007).

Also significant for global learning is research by Bourchier et al. (2002), which failed to find any relationships at all between knowledge of, and affect towards, foreign countries. Their study proposed that there is no direct relationship between how much children know about a country, and how they feel towards that country. Indeed the research seems to indicate that children's stated preferences for other countries are likely to be random before the age of eight. It is worth noting that this finding is at odds with research that explores children's knowledge of, and attitudes towards, countries outside Europe. In addition, there is an exception to the knowledge/affect relationship where traditional national enemies are concerned, which are disliked from an early age. Moreover, research has found that as far as overall developmental trends in levels of affect and prejudice are concerned, once a relative order of liking for different national outgroups has been established, this order tends to remain stable and consistent across the remaining childhood years (Barrett, 2005). This finding has considerable implications for pedagogical approaches to global learning. It suggests that there is a need for pupils to have the opportunity to explore, challenge and self-critique the values and perspectives that they hold before meaningful global learning can occur.

In addition to the above arguments for the inclusion of global issues within formal education, there is also a strong moral argument for its inclusion. Over a billion people live on less than $1.25 a day; nearly two billion people live in unsuitable housing; a child still dies of hunger-related causes every six seconds (Hosking & Tero, 2013). It is argued that, in order to develop as active citizens committed to reducing global poverty, young people should have the opportunity to learn about global issues and to engage with contested issues.

However, a critical element of global learning is challenging 'sanctioned ignorance' (Andreotti, 2006: 44), which ignores the role of colonialism in the creation of wealth in the so-called 'First World', as well as the role of the international

division of labour and exploitation of the 'Third World' in maintaining this wealth. This framework also constructs poverty as a lack of resources, services, markets and education, as opposed to lack of control over resource production or 'enforced disempowerment' (Ibid: 45). Andreotti posits that we need to move away from soft global citizenship education (GCE) which may perpetuate a sanctioned ignorance, towards critical GCE that develops learners' critical literacy conceptualised as:

> a level of reading the word and the world that involves the development of skills of critical engagement and reflexivity: the analysis and critique of the relationships among perspectives, language, power, social groups and social practices by the learners (Ibid: 49).

Learners thus become active participants in the learning process, rather than passive receivers of knowledge. Key to this conception of pedagogy is the premise that children and young people are citizens in the present, not citizens of the future. This means that global learning needs to engage children and young people with concepts, ideas, issues, dilemmas and perspectives as opportunities and challenges of the here and now, not of the future when they 'become' citizens. However, as Hosking and Tero (2013: 12) state:

> Poverty is a hard subject, but also a potentially rewarding one. It does involve sad stories, complicated issues and competing ideas about causes and solutions. Poverty means different things to different people, and handling this topic in primary classrooms requires sensitivity and thought, especially as it raises questions about local and personal circumstances as well as global ones.

Children and young people's knowledge and understanding of, and attitudes towards, poverty are likely to be influenced by what they already think and believe about a place.

Inherent in educating children and young people as citizens (rather than citizens-to-be) are conflicting viewpoints about children's perceived readiness to cope with global citizenship issues:

> These attitudes, in turn, are strongly interconnected with different early childhood discourses and theories of socialisation and developmentalism. Discourses of childhood innocence and the perception that children are too young and too cognitively and emotionally immature to deal with global justice issues still impede on the provision of global justice education for children (Ruane at el, 2010: 8).

Robinson and Díaz (2009: 171) assert that paternalistic and needs discourses have a critical bearing on educators' views of 'children's experiences and understandings of diversity, difference and social inequalities'. They suggest that educators feel

that social, economic and political events were 'developmentally inappropriate' for, and irrelevant to, children (Ibid: 7). Howe and Covell (2010) and Lundy (2007) also argue that traditional views on children and childhood are responsible for a reluctance amongst teachers to engage children in global learning. They assert that many teachers believe children to lack the maturity and competencies needed in order to voice their opinions competently (Howe & Covell, 2010; Lundy, 2007).

At the same time globalisation forces have resulted in children's lives becoming increasingly interconnected, which undermines discourses of children's innocence and naivety (Ruane et al, 2010: 12). As Bourn et al (2016: 8) state:

> *Children are not immune from, nor unaware of, the world around them… As a result of the mass media, the use of the Internet and social media, children today are more aware of, and have greater access to information about, the wider world than previous generations.*

Developing pupils' critical literacy is therefore crucial to enabling and empowering young people to engage in thought with global issues.

## 2.4 Children and distant geographies

Research that explores children's knowledge and understanding of the world beyond Europe details limited awareness and stereotypical notions of developing countries held by children (Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011; Fiedler et al, 2011). This is significant given that many global learning issues have international reach. Research has also shown that children's global awareness is determined by personal experiences as much as educational experiences (Bourchier et al, 2002; Holloway & Valentine, 2000). This research suggests that charity approaches that characterise 'developed' countries as benevolently aiding impoverished 'developing' countries, prevail over educational approaches that explore interdependence and solidarity (Bracken & Bryan, 2010). This type of pedagogical approach is likely to reinforce and feed into pupil prejudice rather than challenge values and views.

Tallon (2012: 9) also asserts that:

> *Messages about geographically distant places and people are picked up continuously through general media, formal and informal literature and attitudes and knowledge from family, friends and life experiences.*

As children acquire knowledge about other countries, they often develop correspondingly strong opinions about those countries. Weldon (2010) suggests that the study of distant places with young children can help to counterbalance the negative stereotypes that may be acquired through advertising, family and

peers. She asserts that prejudice can develop before any factual knowledge is acquired about the countries and people who live there. Furthermore, research by Oberman et al (2012) highlights that very young children start to form stereotypical ideas about Africa and associate Africa with poverty. They found that these ideas had a tendency to dominate children's perceptions of African countries and African people, even when exposed to positive images of Africa as part of the research process. A research study, looking at the impact of school partnerships between Britain and countries of the South on children's impressions of other cultures (Martin & Griffiths, 2012), found that children develop negative stereotypes as a result of such partnerships and that the formation of these stereotypes is heavily influenced by the teacher's own view of the world.

MacNaughton and Davis (2001) argue that many post-colonial scholars consider that 'othering' is key to the prolongation of racist ideologies. Their research explored the understandings of 37 four to five year-old Anglo-Australian children of indigenous Australians. They found that the children drew on 'othering' discourses to locate Indigenous Australians as different and exotic, generating the cultural binary of 'us' and 'them'.

## 2.5 Children's perceptions of poverty

Negative stereotyping of other places, particularly in the Global South, is likely to include misconceptions about poverty. Even children as young as preschool age are conscious of social and economic inequality in society, although the ideas they display are nascent. As children grow older, their concepts become increasingly complex, matching adult views (Chafel & Neitzel, 2005). Chafel & Neitzel (2015) found that the majority of answers to the question, 'Tell me about poor people. What are they like?' focused on the neediness of the poor and basic necessities, while some pupils were sensitive to unobservable attributes or states of the poor, such as being cold or sad. Pupils' answers reflected an emerging ability to identify commonalities among people they classified into groups, as well as being able to think about more than one attribute. Chafel and Neitzel (2005) suggest that this finding supports Barenboim's (1981) argument that children of this age draw on comparison processes as they construct knowledge about others. This is a highly relevant finding for global learning. Where children hold negative opinions about people, it is possible that children will emphasise differences rather than similarities, and there is risk that perceived difference will strengthen prejudiced views. This may then lead to a process of 'othering' and a focus on the 'us/them' binary social relationship. The question 'Why are some people poor?' was a far more difficult question for children to answer. A significant number of children talked about reasons for poverty as being external to the individual, such as government, business, crime and family. Fewer children suggested that poverty was due to the fault of the individual, such as poor spending habits and negative behaviours. When children were asked, 'What would have to happen so there

would be no poor people?' they put forward a number of possibilities, including philanthropic endeavours, and some talked about societal change.

Leahy (1981) explored children's notions of wealth and poverty. Participants were aged five to eighteen from a range of socio-economic groups. Younger respondents focused on external descriptors, such as appearance and possessions, while older children referred to psychological concepts. Understandings about the causes of poverty became more refined as children matured. A significant finding from Leahy's later research (1983: 122) was 'the low frequency of explanations of wealth and poverty referring to the social and political systems'.

The following section outlines the methodological approach taken to exploring the three research questions. Research findings are explored in Section 4.

# Methodology

This is a small-scale, qualitative piece of research that explores primary school pupils' perceptions of global poverty and development. The main research questions explored through the research are:

1. How do young people conceptualise and make sense of global poverty?

2. How do young people think they can respond to global poverty?

3. In what contexts do young people think they learn about global poverty?

## 3.1 Sampling schools

Four schools were selected purposively to participate in the research. Although this is a small number, it was considered that this would enable the collection of rich data with a good balance of participants.

The selected schools were taking part in the GLP in England and had indicated a willingness to participate in programme-related research through a Whole School Audit,[3] which is completed by schools participating in the GLP. Schools were selected from the South West region of England because of the location of the researcher. Schools were selected based on the following criteria:

• urban/rural

• proportion of students whose first language was not English

• amount of global learning work already undertaken

• most recent OFSTED rating.

Characteristics of the four schools are displayed in Table 1 together with their approach to, and experience with, global learning in Table 2.

3 The Whole School Audit is an online data collection tool used by the GLP in England to collect data on the level and impact of global learning in schools. For more information see: Hunt, F. and King, R.P. (2015) Supporting whole school approaches to global learning: focusing learning and mapping impact. DERC Research Paper no. 15. London: UCL Institute of Education.

## Table 1: Characteristics of participating schools

|  | School A | School B | School C | School D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year 9 pupils** | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| **Pupils with English not a first language** | 2% | 3% | 6% | Higher than average |
| **Most recent Ofsted judgement** | Good | Outstanding | Outstanding | Good |
| **School type** | Community school | Academy | Academy | Academy |
| **Number of pupils** | 276 | 496 | 379 | 175 |

## Table 2: Characteristics of global learning in participating schools

|  | School A | School B | School C | School D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Status with GLP** | Partner school | Partner school | Partner school | Expert Centre |
| **Length of time incorporating global learning** | Under three years | Five to ten years | Not sure | Three to five years |
| **Global learning teacher CPD** | Some staff training on GL | Some staff training on GL | Some staff training on GL | Some staff training on GL |
| **Award schemes or activities related to global learning** | UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) | International Schools Award (ISA); International Primary Curriculum; P4C[4]. | Fairtrade Schools Award; P4C | ISA; Eco Schools Award; |
| **Fundraising for international issues** | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| **International school link or partner school** | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |

The number of schools is too small to be able to draw any generalisations but the research does enable a rich picture to be generated of pupils' knowledge and understanding of, and attitudes towards global poverty and development.

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4 P4C is Philosophy for Children – an educational approach based on philosophical enquiry where a trained teacher encourages children to think and reason as a group. There is evidence of the impact of P4C on children (e.g. Trickey & Topping, 2014. Philosophy for Children: a systematic review, Research Papers in Education), and global learning initiatives are often incorporated with P4C approaches.

## 3.2 Focus groups

The research employed focus groups as the method of data collection. A total of ten focus groups were held in four schools in England: three focus groups were held with year 3 pupils (aged seven to eight), three with year 4 pupils (aged eight to nine), two with year 5 pupils, and two focus groups with year 6 pupils. A total of 68 pupils participated. Table 3 details how many pupils participated in the focus groups and which school/year group they were in.

**Table 3: Focus groups**

| School | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| A | 6 girls<br>4 boys | 3 girls<br>2 boys | | |
| B | 3 girls<br>3 boys | 3 girls<br>4 boys | 3 girls<br>4 boys | |
| C | 3 girls<br>3 boys | | | 4 girls<br>3 boys |
| D | | 3 girls<br>4 boys | 3 girls<br>3 boys | 4 girls<br>3 boys |
| TOTALS | 22 | 19 | 13 | 14 |

Focus groups were chosen as the method for data collection as they are valuable for establishing not only what people think about something but also 'how they thought and why they thought as they did' (Kitzinger, 1994: 104). There are a number of advantages of focus group research: they are an economical, fast and efficient method of obtaining data from multiple participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000), which means that it is possible to increase the overall number of participants in a qualitative study. In addition, it is argued that focus groups provide researchers with more surprises than other kinds of research. There are no restrictions to the answers participants give and they are free to say whatever they like. Focus groups can thus provide the setting for spontaneous responses (Butler, 1996). However, focus groups are limited to verbal behaviour, consist only of interaction in discussion groups and are created and managed by the researcher.

The focus groups for this research were held with pupils who were known to each other. Pupils were selected by the school's GLP Co-ordinator and each group included pupils of mixed ability and gender. Pupils were also selected based on the GLP co-ordinators' considered judgement of their ability to contribute.

Before each focus group began, I outlined the format of the focus group and

ensured that each group received the same information. I took care to explain the purpose of the focus group: that there are no right or wrong answers; that they were not being tested; and that their contributions to the group were valued. It is important to put children at their ease and to maximise engagement from all participants. Scott (2000) observes that interviews in school may evoke a test-taking mentality and concerns about winning peer approval. In addition, it is likely that pupils will not be used to participating in focus groups, which means that they may use the norms for participating in class, such as hand raising before speaking, or they may talk over each other as the discussion is not taking place in the usual classroom setting, leading to excitability or a heightened keenness to contribute. In order to try to differentiate myself from authority figures, such as teachers, and to try to encourage a more informal relationship, I asked pupils to call me by my first name and used the same terminology as participants. The focus groups were held in rooms at the school. The rooms were not pupils' usual classrooms and included the library, tutors' rooms, activity rooms and, in one case, a new meeting room that pupils had not been allowed into before, which was a source of great interest.

### 3.3 Focus group interview schedule

The focus groups were designed to stimulate discussion among pupils, to enable pupils to put forward their ideas and perspectives on the themes of poverty and development, and to create a safe space where pupils could challenge each other's views. To help generate dialogue and encourage pupils to engage critically with global poverty and development issues, the interview schedule included two picture activities using images from the resource Pictures of Success[5]. For the first activity pupils were asked to choose an image which to them represented poverty. Pupils had 16 images to choose from. Once they had made their selection they were given five minutes to discuss their reasons for choosing it with a partner. Pupils were then asked to discuss with the group why they had chosen that particular image. The second picture activity introduced another set of images and pupils were asked to use the images to talk about what they consider people might need in order not to be poor, and why they thought some people are poor.

The interview questions were as follows:

6 Pictures of Success is an innovative sustainability engagement process with a track record of inspiring and educating people in businesses, the local community and schools. The resource uses real picture-based stories, changes the language from 'sustainability' to 'success', and includes 80 laminated A5 cards. http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/ See Appendix 2 for further information about the pictures used.

1.  What does the word 'poverty' mean to you?

    *What does it mean to be poor? Why do you think people are poor? Do you think we should care about other people in the world being poor?*

    *[First set of pictures] Do you think any of these pictures show poverty? Why?*

    *[Show second set of pictures] What do you think people need to not be poor? Do you think there are things that we do in this country that might help to make some people poor? [The relationship between factors such as inequality, conflict and poverty; climate change; natural disasters; gender; resource use; fair policies on natural resource use; food and different understandings of poverty, for example in relation to income, services or rights].*

2.  Do you think it's important that we should all work together to try to end global poverty? [Pupils given six cards on which were written actions[6] individuals can take to make an impact on global poverty].

    *What sorts of things could you do?*

    *Why might it be difficult to reduce global poverty?*

    *Do you think people in the world are getting more or less poor? Why?*

3.  Do you think it's important to learn about global poverty?[7] Why/why not? [Pupils shown a list of places and spaces where they might learn about global poverty]

    *Where do you think you learn about it? Where does your information come from?*

    *Is there anything you've learnt about other countries that you've enjoyed?*

    *Where would you like to learn about it? Would you like to learn about it more in lessons? Through projects, maths, reading and writing?*

6  The actions pupils could choose were: give money to charity; write letters or email politicians to ask them to make different decisions; tell other people about global poverty; think about what you buy; volunteer in a developing country; and turn out the lights when you're not using them.
7 Places and spaces pupils were asked to consider: specific subjects including geography and history, assemblies, charity action, clubs, television, books, family, overseas visits, and the internet.

## 3.4 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was employed as the method of data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006: 76) describe qualitative analysis as a method for:

*identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic.*

They describe a theme as capturing:

*something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82).*

Thematic analysis focuses on identifying, analysing and reporting either implicit and explicit patterns, or themes in the data (Boyatzis, 1998). I drew on Braun and Clarke's approach (2006) and Crinson's (2001) model of thematic analysis and conducted the analysis in four phases.

- Phase 1 of the process involved the management and organisation of the raw data, which included transcriptions of the focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

- Phase 2 involved generating initial codes.

- Phase 3 was about searching for themes.

- Phase 4 involved the further categorisation of the data through 'theoretically deduced categories drawn from the literature (moving from the abstract to the concrete), which might offer a structural context for the particular discourses' (Crinson, 2001: 11).

I reviewed and refined the potential themes that had been identified in phase 3. In some cases themes were collapsed into each other due to similarities between them.

## 4 ▶ Findings from the research

In the analysis section I respond to four questions outlined in the interview schedule linked to the overall research questions:

- What does the word poverty mean to you?

- Why are people poor?

- What actions can we take?

- Where and how do you learn about poverty?

These responses reflect on relevant literature where possible.

**4.1 What does the word poverty mean to you? What pictures come into your mind?**

In relation to the question 'What does the word poverty mean to you?', the following responses emerged.

### 4.1.1 Poverty as privation

The meaning of poverty for pupils is very similar across schools and across year groups. Pupils characterise poverty as lack of basic needs: money, shelter, education and access to resources. In answer to the questions, 'What does the word poverty mean to you'? and 'What pictures come into your head'? Pupils' comments included:

*People who are on the streets begging for food.*

*People without a home (School A, year 3).*

*They don't get really any like not enough money to have all the stuff like we have (School A, year 5).*

At this stage, pupils' understanding of poverty is beginning to develop, and all pupils were able to offer a view on how they understood the concept. For the majority of pupils, poverty is framed in mainly social and economic terms with little reference to political or cultural conditions, and pupils tend to understand poverty in terms of a lack of access to resources. Homelessness is a theme that runs strongly through the focus groups. This may be because pupils are able to more easily understand and empathise with what it is like to go without food and water, or what it might be like to be without a home. Correspondingly, for the picture activity, which asked pupils to select an image that represented their

notion of poverty, pupils most often selected those images that represented a lack of key basic needs. The image of a rough sleeper in St Martin in the Fields, London (Image 6, Appendix 2), was most often chosen by pupils, and seemed to be the image that pupils could most easily relate to. Comments included:

> *Well I'm thinking of this one because it looks like he's just in the street, he's got a little cover over him but he's begging for money here, and food, so he can get a tent or house and eventually get back up to normal, but he looks really poor and uncomfortable.*

> *Maybe he lost his mum and dad then he had no house (School A, year 5).*

> *It shows poverty by a man being on the street and a lady came and helped him (School B, year 3).*

There are two possible reasons why pupils would be drawn to this image. Firstly, housing and homelessness is a major issue in England, and it is possible that pupils will have come across people begging in the streets as well as sleeping rough. They may also be aware of current issues and worries that significant numbers of people are unable to buy their own home.

Secondly, the current backdrop of debate about rising housing costs and increasing homelessness perhaps makes it easier for pupils to imagine what it would be like to live without shelter. As one pupil commented: 'you wouldn't ever want it to be like that' (School B, year 4). Indeed, there is a chance that some pupils interviewed will have personal experience of the tensions created when the loss of your home is a real risk.

The above findings also indicate that pupils of this age (seven to eleven years) are ready to engage with complex and potentially challenging issues, though the depth to which these issues are explored may depend on pupils' individual circumstances and stage of cognitive development. It would seem that pupils do have concerns about the impact of globalisation processes (though they may not phrase it in this way) on individuals' lives, which they frame in terms of lack of access to basic needs. Key here is the challenge for educators to identify appropriate pedagogies in order for pupils to engage effectively with difficult issues. Approaches would include global learning methods, as suggested by Martin (2008) and others.

### 4.1.2 Poverty and natural disasters

A significant number of pupils equated poverty with natural disasters and weather-related phenomena when asked to describe what poverty means to them:

Is it like when there's like an earthquake and they lose all their stuff and they have no house? (School A, year 6).

Images representing poverty brought about by a weather-related incident or natural disaster were thus the second most popular to be chosen by pupils. For example, a number of pupils selected the image Children writing on rusted steel wall, Habana, Cuba (Image 7, Appendix 2). Pupil comments included:

*For this one I think there was a tornado storm and it could have hurt lots of their family (School C, year 3).*

For another pupil the image represents poverty brought about by an earthquake:

*I think like maybe an earthquake happened, I don't know, everything was destroyed and buildings have like came down, so they don't have like places to learn, no schools, and it makes everything quite tricky so they have to survive, and it's like really messy because of the earthquake (School A, year 6).*

For pupils from School D the photograph depicting a donkey pulling bricks (Image 5, Appendix 2) represented poverty as it relates to war and the weather:

*Well in this picture it looks like some houses have had a small tornado and they are bringing in new resources to make their houses stronger (School A, year 6).*

*… if you have a look at all of these bricks that was probably a house before or a flat and then it just got bombed by the war (School D, year 3).*

The reasons for pupils selecting pictures that represent poverty as a natural disaster may include the fact that pupils from Schools A, B and C have been learning about places affected by earthquakes, such as Nepal, and many pupils had been involved in fundraising activities. In addition to this, the Geography national curriculum at Key Stage 2 includes learning about earthquakes and volcanoes. Critical global learning is crucial in order to engender a shift in approach from a charity mentality to a social justice mentality. A charity mentality underpins constructions of the 'other' as powerless victims in need of financial aid and support, and may focus on negative difference rather than positive difference or sameness (see Simpson, 2016 for further discussion on this). It would seem that in these schools, pupil learning and opportunities for action focus on raising money in response to a natural disaster.

However, also significant is the representation of the developing world in the media and in fundraising campaigns. In order to try to encourage people to give money, images of poverty, particularly of sub-Saharan Africa, have portrayed people as 'helpless and destitute' – an approach that has contributed to a perception of poor people in the developing world as 'uneducated, incapable of freeing themselves from poverty, lacking in competence, and miserable' (Kennedy & Hill, 2010: 56). Using this type of negative imagery may also strengthen social group identities rather than challenging people to identify positively with those outside their social group. A piece of research conducted in 2002 by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO, 2002) on how British people view the developing world found that 80% of the British public strongly associate the developing world with doom-laden images of famine, disaster and Western Aid. They attribute these adverse images to the 'Live Aid Legacy'. Live Aid used images of people living in dire poverty, in particular starving children with flies around their eyes, as a way of raising money and awareness of the famine in Ethiopia in 1984–85. The VSO report states that 'these images are still top of mind and maintain a powerful grip on the British psyche' (VSO, 2002: 3). Over 30 years later, although aid organisations try to portray people featuring in the advertising campaigns as self-reliant and active, the focus is usually on need and asking people in the developed world for help. The resulting pictures often incorporate a variety of negative images (Dogra, 2007: 169). She goes on to argue:

> … the role of NGOs in challenging and modifying representations and their meanings is of paramount importance. It may lead to confusion in the minds of viewers, as feared by some INGOs, but that bafflement might be preferable to a uni-dimensional 'truth' about the Third World.

As indicated above, representations of poverty in the media is an area that has received a lot of criticism. Although there are attempts to employ more positive images of the people in the developing world, the more negative perceptions still seem to be at the forefront of pupils' thinking and influence their responses throughout the focus groups. One pupil comments:

> The kind of pictures that people can't get any sleep and they have to walk about maybe more than ten miles to go to a river and take dirty water back and forth, and they are not having a good life, they have to go in bare feet, and there's some things that can get into their feet (School B, year 3).

This pupil could be describing any number of fundraising campaigns run by INGOs (see, for example, WaterAid[8]). Although not inherently wrong, the danger is that individuals' thinking and understanding stops at this point with no critical engagement with the causes of poverty and possible responses other than to give money.

8  http://www.wateraid.org/uk/what-we-do/the-crisis

These perceptions strongly influenced pupils' observations on which parts of the world they considered to be poor. Indeed, as this report will show, even though Pictures of Success show positive images of people being successful in the developing world, pupils still interpreted them in ways that fitted their not-so-positive perceptions. The following section explores this aspect of pupil thinking.

### 4.1.3 Locus of poverty

Rutland's (1998) research concluded that stereotyping seems to increase as own-group identification develops. The stereotyping of certain countries as poor was very much in evidence during the focus groups, and the picture activity brought to the surface some of the stereotypes that pupils hold. The first stage of the focus group did not specifically ask pupils which countries they associated with poverty. Unprompted, however, a number of pupils from across the schools suggested Africa, 'Third World countries', Syria and Afghanistan as locations of poverty:

*Most poor people come from Third World countries and they don't have any homes or food.*

*Syria, because they have loads of wars.*

*Places where there's like earthquakes and hurricanes and stuff like that.*

*The country that has the most homeless is normally like Africa and places that get a lot of diseases (School A, year 6).*

Pupils from school B commented:

*You see a lot of poor people live in mud houses, mud huts or something.*

*They don't have enough money that they can't have suitable living, they don't live as well as us, so then they have to live with what they have (School B, year 4).*

The image Children writing on rusted steel wall, Habana, Cuba (Image 7) prompted some comments from pupils:

*They don't have anything on their feet, so they probably don't have shoes and stuff.*

*Yeah, then most African people don't have shoes.*

*It looks more like Africa because they are brown, black people, and then it's quite poor (School B, year 4).*

Although there are numerous opportunities for young people to broaden their horizons and engage with global issues, the responses above again highlight the impact of globalisation and the media and perhaps corroborates Buckingham's (2007) argument that children are passive receivers of information obtained through a screen. The influence of the still-pervasive charity discourse to frame individuals and communities in the Global South is also evident. This framing is underpinned by a discourse of being lucky that 'we're' not like 'them', another attitude that can perhaps be traced back to Live Aid and the incitement to, 'thank God it's them instead of you'. This is explored further in the section below.

### 4.1.4 Working hard for basic needs versus taking things for granted

Stereotyping was further evident in the notion of people in the South having to work harder than people in the North in order to meet their basic needs, such as food and water. This is discussed by pupils from School C.

> *Well, in the fishing picture (Image 1), because there's not that much fish in it, it shows that people have to work really hard to get just one fish, whereas people in our country we never think about when we go to a shop getting fish, we never think about where it came from or how much work was put into getting it there (School C, year 4).*

> *Well it looks like he's just been out having a tiring day trying to find food for his family and he can't provide food and he doesn't have enough money so he needs to go out every day to find some food for his family (School C, year 3).*

Pupils frame images in terms of having to make money even where there is no immediate indication from the picture that the individuals are lacking money:

> *I think the ladies (Image 3) maybe don't have a lot of money so maybe they've made this and they are selling it to get some more money (School C, year 3).*

> *They need to work for food and money to catch fish and sell to them, to try and make something to make some water, and maybe get a little shelter (School B, year 5).*

Even though some pupils considered that Image 2 (Appendix 2) showed happiness rather than poverty, the pupil exchange in response to this image again brought out in pupils the idea that 'we' take things for granted, this time because 'we' do exciting things which means that the making of paper hats would never illicit such a significant degree of happiness:

> *We thought that it's not really poverty, it's more of happiness.*

*It could still be poverty, but they've got education, people are helping them … by giving them education to make them better and like so they hopefully get a job when they are older to help their families.*

*They're thankful for what they've got.*

*Yeah, you can see it from this kid's face, he seems happy.*

*It's like if we made them we wouldn't be like...*

*Like if we had these, if we made them like we are now we wouldn't be as happy as they were because we do all exciting things, that's why we are really lucky to be like this, especially in this school, so it's just really happy to them, and it's stuff we take for granted and they never have it (School B, year 4).*

The comments below highlight the charity and aid perspective, that the happiness of people in the South is dependent on 'someone going in':

*The environment that they are in behind doesn't look like a very safe place to be in, and also their clothes, they are ripped, and that one doesn't look very happy, but it looks like someone's gone in and like done something to make them happy because they've got like headbands on (School B, year 6).*

However, pupils also feel that this image (Image 2) shows friendship, which is 'really, really important to happiness'. Other pupils suggest:

*That is definitely not poverty because…*

*Because they are having fun (School D, year 4).*

In contrast to other comments, the above pupil does not link the apparent happiness of individuals in the images to the actions of some external provider.

These discussions highlight that all pupils consider themselves lucky and feel that we should be 'grateful for what we've got'. Research from Oberman et al (2012: 44) found that 'there was ample evidence of the expression of feelings and emotions, concern and empathy for others'. Pupils in this research were not specifically asked whether they felt empathy towards those they considered to be living with poverty. Unprompted, however, the research found that pupils were more likely to think of themselves as 'lucky' that they do not have to deal with poverty-related challenges, rather than empathising. This is not to say that pupils would not have shown empathy had they been asked. However, pupil comments suggest a perception of people living in the South as being dependent on people in the North for help, characterising those living in poverty as helpless.

However, this sense of 'us' and 'them' seems to be particularly strong among the year 4 pupils at school B. It is also a pupil from this school for whom the word 'poverty' conjures up an image of mud huts. Pupils from this school seem to have more negative perceptions of poverty than pupils from other schools. They talk about people having to 'survive' rather than live, poor people being 'smelly' and 'getting diseases'. In addition there is a sense of difference from pupils when discussing Image 2.

Stereotypes of deprivation and poverty, together with images of Western aid, can lead to an impression that people in the developing world are helpless victims, creating an implicit sense of superiority and inferiority – the powerful, benevolent givers versus the grateful receivers. In addition, VSO (2002) argues that unconsciously accumulated images of the developing world have led to a certainty on the part of consumers that they have all the facts. Interestingly, my research found that a number of pupils used their knowledge to create a backstory for the individuals featured in the images to strengthen their reasons for selecting a particular image, which is examined below.

### 4.1.5 Using knowledge and experience to create a backstory

Pupil comments highlight the way in which they develop a backstory to the images in order to support their views of why an image represents poverty, such as not having any parents, having to work hard to achieve things that 'we' take for granted, and not having enough food.

Comments from pupils who selected Image 1 (Appendix 2) include:

*These people probably don't have parents, if they hurt themselves in there or cut themselves or they got caught into the net, they don't have anyone there to get them out, or comfort them if they are upset.*

*... I think there might have been a really bad storm in the sea, so they might have not had lots of food for quite a while, so they went fishing after quite a long time after the storm, and they found lots of food so they are really happy because they might have enough food to sell and get more money to buy things (School A, year 3).*

For many pupils Image 4 (Appendix 2) ties poverty to war:

*Yeah, it was a war. And some children have died from the bricks because they get too rough and they throw it (School D, year 3).*

These comments likely reflect not only images pupils have seen, but also personal worries about their own lives. This is an area that might warrant further

investigation and research as it seems to illustrate underlying anxieties that pupils have. The propensity for pupils to create a backstory to the pictures also highlights the need for space to challenge unawareness rather than sanction ignorance (Andreotti, 2006). As the Literature Review also indicated, research has also found that once a relative order of liking for different national outgroups has been established, this order tends to remain stable and consistent across the remaining childhood years (Barrett, 2005). As suggested above, this finding has significant implications for pedagogical approaches to global education. There is therefore a need for pupils to have the opportunity to explore, challenge and self-critique the values and perspectives that they hold before meaningful global learning can occur.

The following section explores the reasons why pupils consider people are poor.

## 4.2 Why are people poor?

### 4.2.1 Poverty as internal to poor countries

In keeping with Chafel and Neitzel's (2005) research, pupils found it more difficult to answer the question, 'Why are people poor?' Also congruent with their research was the finding that pupils cited reasons for poverty as being external to the individual rather than due to, for example, negative behaviours. However, for the majority of pupils the causes of poverty are seen as being internal to countries, rather than owing to external conditions, and causes cited include war, famine and natural disasters – perspectives that underpin 'sanctioned ignorance'. What is striking is that pupil comments about poverty are very similar to adult perceptions of poverty quoted in research conducted by the Institute for Public Policy Research (Glennie et al, 2012). Comments from those interviewed included:

*We take things for granted, we can walk out and buy what we want to, they've not got money, they've not got jobs and, don't get me wrong, there's poverty here too but not like that (Glennie et al, 2012: 10).*

*I think they've got absolutely nothing and I think that's why in some of those photographs it looks that there's some smiling faces there but it looks as though they've been given something which they wouldn't ordinarily have (Glennie et al, 2012: 9).*

Pupil comments included:

*I reckon like a British person has come with loads of solar panels to help them (School A, year 4).*

This pupil quote seems to demonstrate that there is a tendency for pupils to consider that people in the South cannot be happy without Northern input. This highlights how deeply embedded narrow understandings of poverty are, and perhaps how these understandings are perpetuated. VSO (2002) argued that this relationship of 'Powerful Giver' and 'Grateful Receiver' is also rooted in the Live Aid Legacy. An uncomplicated perspective of war as a cause of poverty potentially characterises those in poverty as 'culpable' through lack of democracy or racial or religious tensions (VSO, 2002).

Comments included:

> Charities try to help the poor countries and stuff.

> Yeah, but they are not doing a very good job of it.

> Natural disasters like earthquakes, there was one that happened recently in Nepal.

> I think people are poor because… the government isn't giving enough things, good things to help (School A, year 6).

This point about the government was echoed by year 5 pupils in School B:

> The government should make a new charity for global poverty and raise money for them.

Perceiving poverty as a result of war, famine and natural disasters likely means that young people feel that they have no control over or impact on reasons for poverty. As indicated above, pupils understand poverty in terms of need and lack of resources, often in relation to this country. This perception of poverty sets up a 'them and us' framework that can prevent the development of shared responsibility. In addition, there is a risk of a sense of superiority among those who identify as 'us'.

At this stage, in the majority of cases there is not a significant amount of evidence to show progression of knowledge and understanding, from one where poverty is understood solely in terms of a phenomenon that is internal to countries, to understandings of poverty that include external causes, such as a country's history and Britain's role in a particular country's history.

Pupil comments highlight the need for education work combatting stereotypical views and prejudice to begin at an early age. It also highlights the need for pupils to have the opportunity to engage with and unpack what they are learning and what they are seeing. Pupils need to have the opportunity to be critical and to challenge both themselves and each other, and avoid relying on single sources

that are uncontested. In addition, it could be argued that understanding poverty as being internal to countries distances young people's engagement with issues related to poverty as being a phenomenon that is 'out there', too difficult to tackle and caused by events beyond control. A further argument is that this view of poverty means that engagement is much more likely to take the form of one-off charitable giving, rather than sustained and engaged action over a period of time, which addresses root causes of poverty and injustice.

### 4.2.2 Poverty as injustice

As indicated above, very few pupils highlighted places other than Africa, Syria or Afghanistan as being poor. However, School C year 6 pupils show a more mature understanding of poverty and why people might be poor. Their ideas demonstrate that their thinking goes beyond a consideration of lack of resources and the impact of natural disasters. Children in School C are trained in Philosophy for Children, which could explain their ability to appear to think more critically. The school also has a higher than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages. It might mean pupils are able to bring in multiple ideas and perspectives for discussion and appear more likely to cite social injustice as a cause of poverty rather than internal culpability. In addition, there are some indications of progression in understanding from perceptions of poverty given by year 3 pupils and year 6 pupils. Comments from year 6 pupils at School C included:

> *Well when I think about global poverty I think about how people are working their whole life just to get this one job and to get enough money to make a living, and also feel rather angry because, I know all the global leaders are trying to do something about it, but like it hasn't made so much progress in some particular countries.*

> *In remote villages I think it's the hardest to get some good money, because well there probably aren't many shops and how do you put it, places to work there, so to get the money I think you need to be educated in a good school, not good but teaches you good values and good things, and then from there build on.*

> *I agree with H. And places like that have their own currencies often aren't as rich as other countries and sometimes they, the people in those countries, don't get paid as much money, but sometimes the food is still as expensive as it would be in a richer country. And I don't think that's fair.*

These pupils subsequently select an image that to them shows poverty as injustice:

> *And this picture just makes me think of people that work in really bad conditions all the time and hardly get paid anything, and then you think of*

*people, a lot of people have cars, which are tens of thousands, thousands or even tens of thousands of pounds, just drive around in their everyday. And some people get paid hundreds and thousands of pounds, and these people only get a tiny bit of money.*

For other pupils in the focus group, Image 10 highlights causes of poverty:

*With this picture (Image 10), well when world population increases there's kind of more demand for things, they have to build more companies to make more things, which is kind of taking up the space that we could be using for housing or like public health services, but instead there are demands for things like iPads and computers.*

There is evidence in this focus group of pupils feeling outrage at the injustice between rich and poor:

*I think it's perfectly fine for people to be mega rich and have all the money they want… but they've probably worked for it for such a long time to get so much money, so I think it's perfectly fine. But what makes me really angry is the part where people have done nothing wrong, they've done their schooling and everything, but they are still in poverty.*

There is also recognition of the injustice of poor pay and unfair trade conditions. The framing is action for social justice, rather than the idea that 'we' should help 'them':

*I think that if you, like in this picture (Image 9) there are a lot of people there working over a big area, loads and loads of land, and they must work for most hours of the day and not get paid much, and they don't exactly work in the best conditions because sometimes it's really hot and sometimes there might be a storm and they might not even get a break for that, and I think you should get more money if you work in harder conditions, and it's unfair if they are doing that for them to get paid hardly anything.*

*I think as M said that shouldn't be possible… them not getting paid much. The person that owns the land should pay them fairly and because they won't be getting paid enough to feed their family, because often people like them have five kids, and yeah, it won't be enough to feed six people (School C, year 6).*

Pupils from School A (year 5) also seem to demonstrate a basic understanding of social justice and fairness:

*Because it's not fair, because we have lots of money over here, they don't have that much money, so the world's not fair.*

*It's a bit like, it's not the same but it's a bit like being bankrupt.*

Some pupils also show that they have an understanding of the challenges involved in reducing poverty:

*I think one of the problems with trying to reduce poverty is with the homes – they often don't have enough resources to build homes and there's often not enough space to build homes, so that's why people end up living in slums like this and tips (School C, year 6).*

These comments, although perhaps not framed as social injustice, show that some pupils have an understanding of the complexity involved in poverty reduction strategies. A year 6 pupil from School D uses knowledge gained through their school link with Uganda to illustrate the reasons why they consider people to be poor:

*Like in Uganda, those poor places when like it goes really hot and the crops like all dry out and they don't have any food and stuff.*

Later in the focus group another pupil argues that:

*… in Uganda and some of the poor places it's the Government that's like taking the money. Trying to get the Government bigger and bigger.*

School A, year 3 pupils were able to reflect on basic needs such as food, water and shelter, but also considered wider needs such as 'a lovely family'.

*You need a chance to go to school so you know how to read and write and get careers and get money for your family (School A, year 5).*

These year 5 pupils in School A also demonstrated an understanding of environmental interdependence:

*We are kind of polluting other countries with cars and like and ferries and boats and getting on aeroplanes.*

*Kindness, so you are not just walking around and people saying like being mean to them, because they need a bit of kindness to stop that happening.*

Year 5 pupils in School B consider that it is important to have other people around: 'you'd just be quite lonely and quite sad'. This theme of loneliness runs through the interview and possibly acts as a distraction. For example, pupils consider that the truck in Image 10 (Appendix 2) is:

*… making a city so that all people can live there, and because if it was just one house in an empty field then you'd just be quite alone and you wouldn't have any company and no-one to talk to.*

Education was seen as key to people not being poor, possibly reflecting the success of campaigns such as Send My Friend to School. Year 6 pupils from School C state that:

*I think they should lower the cost for education, particularly in universities, because some people come from abroad, or go abroad to university, and they might be from a poor background but they want to be like a scientist, and they won't be able to if they don't have a certain degree in that subject, so if you're still, if you have to pay so much money to get an education that will help you across your, all along your life, it just shouldn't happen.*

As stated above, pupil comments show some evidence of thinking about social injustice and the challenges to poverty reduction. However, the majority of pupils interviewed from Schools A, B and D framed poverty as internal culpability.

The following section explores the actions pupils feel they can take to meet the challenges faced in reducing poverty.

## 4.3 What actions can we take? What are the challenges to reducing global poverty?

### 4.3.1 Poverty as opportunity for charitable action

The dominant paradigm for how individuals frame action has been labelled the Live Aid Legacy, characterised by the relationship of 'Powerful Giver' and 'Grateful Receiver'.

*Public perceptions have been stuck in this frame for 25 years. The sector's engagement models have achieved big numbers and ever-increasing incomes, but with what impact on the quality of public engagement? Make Poverty History exemplifies these themes. On the one hand, it was a spectacular success: a mass mobilisation with near universal awareness. On the other hand, it changed nothing for the UK public. The transformative potential offered by the rallying cry of 'justice not charity' went unheard, in part because it was unfamiliar and hard to comprehend, and also because it was drowned out by the noise of celebrities, white wristbands and pop concerts.*

*We need to shift the balance of NGO public engagement activities away from 'transactions' and towards 'transformations'. This means placing less emphasis on '£5 buys...' appeals and simple campaigning actions, and more emphasis on providing supporters with opportunities to engage increasingly deeply over*

*time through a 'supporter journey' (Darnton & Kirk, 2011: 10).*

Indeed, a number of pupils from the schools had taken part in fundraising initiatives at school in response to the Nepal earthquake. The majority of pupils mention giving money as an action that can be taken, and this framed by a notion of unfairness. There is a sense that action should be taken because 'we are quite lucky' (School A), and pupil comments very much emphasise the 'transactions' frame, which is justified by a sense of injustice:

*On TV it says even like two pounds could save a child's life (School A, year 3).*

*I would say give money to charity, but also, because those adverts say like give ten pounds a week, or three pounds a week, and you have to remember, and you soon will run out of money yourself. But also it will actually help, because then it will help people to stand up for their rights too (School A, year 5).*

All School A year 3 pupils agreed that turning out the lights was a positive action that they could take, and that writing to politicians was difficult because 'we are children, and they wouldn't listen to us'. However, another pupil added perhaps a teacher could help them.

A year 4 pupil from School B states:

*We do lots already but I think we could always do more and I think a good way to learn about it would be like doing projects or campaigning maybe, and things like that.*

For the majority of pupils taking action is strongly associated with charitable giving because they feel that:

*Children will always have a limit to what we can do to help, some things we can't, some things we could but it's highly unlikely (School B, year 3).*

As children they feel that 'politicians wouldn't listen to us' and 'I think they'd start laughing at me' (School C, year 3).

## 4.3.2 Transformative action

Pupils from School C, however, seem to show that their thinking is moving away from a transactions way of thinking to a transformative one:

*I think we just need to launch more companies like Fairtrade. That will reduce poverty because the farmers or whatever they are will get paid a good amount for what they give to the outside world.*

*We've got tell other people about global poverty, so you could tell other people, and then they would tell other people, and it would eventually like spread everywhere.*

*When it says tell other people about global poverty you could tell someone, like for example if your cousins live in another part of the country you could tell them and then they'd tell other people and it would eventually spread to around the whole country (School C, year 3).*

The idea of getting people to work together for change was also voiced by year 6 pupils from School C:

*If we get numbers on our side we could, the politicians will be having to do something about it, otherwise, well, the next election time they won't get elected, which is a major thing for them. So they will have to listen to our ideas.*

## 4.4 Where and how do you learn about poverty issues?

All pupils consider that it is important to learn about poverty. Comments on reasons why it is important to learn about poverty issues included:

*I think we should learn about them because we should maybe try and help in any possible ways because we live in a country that is much more wealthy and we have NHS in this country and we have everything, well nearly everything, supplied for us, but in other countries they are poorer than us and have more poverty than us. Some of them don't have what we have and we should try and help in any ways because they need our help, or they need somebody's help.*

*It will help us understand about what things happen now, so we are not really shocked then (School B, year 4).*

Pupils from School A year 3 are unsure about where they might have come across poverty issues in schools but all agree that they have learnt something about poverty through 'TV and Red Nose Day':

*… on Red Nose Day me and my friend did this sale with all the things we don't need, and then we sold it and then we got loads of money and gave it to a charity.*

Many children also learn about poverty issues through their involvement in voluntary youth organisations, such as Beavers and Brownies. Pupils had a number of suggestions about where they felt they could learn about poverty, including

geography, religious studies, TV, books, and assemblies. Year 5 pupils from School A suggest that they have not learnt about poverty. Year 6 pupils consider that they learn most from the internet and the TV 'because sometimes they do adverts about it'.

Year 5 pupils from School B feel that they learn through their history and geography topic work, and it also comes into citizenship and religious studies. One pupil states that she has learnt about poverty issues through family and through experience:

> *I think that I know quite a lot about poverty because of my family, and when my dad was little he actually lived, well he didn't live as badly as some of these people in these photos, but he did live quite poor when he was little. He did go to school and have an OK education but he didn't have what we always want and what he, like, he... he...*

> *HL    That's interesting you get your information from your family.*

> *... and most of my family is actually still living a bit like that.*

> *HL    Whereabouts?*

> *Indonesia, in Lombok, and we go there every summer holidays so we are actually going quite soon.*

Year 6 pupils in School C agree that it is very important to learn about other parts of the world:

> *If you do work on a country or a place like a continent then you should learn about all the different conditions that people are living in within that place, like in year 4 we did work on India and we were taught about the people living in slums around the cities.*

> *I think we should just do whatever we can to raise awareness about global poverty, like Send My Friend To School and other things (School C, year 6).*

Pupils in School D say that they learn through their link with Uganda. They are currently learning 'about poor people' in religious studies and about orphans in Uganda.

# 5 ▶ Conclusions

A theme within the practice of global learning in England, promoted through initiatives such as the GLP, has been the encouragement of an approach that moves from a charitable mentality to one of social justice and seeking social change. The findings from this research seem to demonstrate that some children still hold stereotypical understandings of countries in the South. Africa is characterised as poor, not having any clothes or food. Their perspectives appear to be firmly held and few pupils framed poverty in terms of social injustice or inequality. As indicated in the research, pupils often made a link between poverty and Africa by themselves.

In many cases there was a thread of continuity in pupils' thinking that can be traced through the activities, thus: if pupils' concepts of poverty centred around natural disasters and their impact it was highly likely that they would choose a picture which, to them, showed the effects of an earthquake or a tornado. It could be argued that this shows how ideas about poverty, if left unchallenged, start to become fixed. The picture activity offered a safe space for pupils to constructively question and challenge each other.

Although there are recurring themes across the focus groups, a significant difference between the schools was in the quality of talk and of discussion. Those pupils in School C that are experienced in the teaching pedagogy Philosophy for Children (P4C), not only gave their peers the space to air their views, but also showed evidence of critical engagement and critical thinking. They actively listened to what their peers had to say, and constructively built on what had gone before, in addition to making their own contributions. The highest quality discussion occurred with pupils who were not only P4C trained, but were also able to offer diverse opinions, thoughts and feelings, drawing on personal background and experience. This finding is consistent with Ruane et al's (2010) research, which suggested that transformative perspectives on learning enable children to engage critically with global justice issues through appropriate pedagogy. These findings also challenge the idea that children do not have the capacity to engage with tricky global citizenship topics because they are not ready. While this is a small piece of research, and other causal factors might be in play, the impact of P4C on pupils' awareness and critical understandings of global issues is worth exploring in future research studies.

## 6 ▶ Appendix One: About the Global Learning Programme

The Global Learning Programme (GLP) in England is a government-funded programme of support that is helping teachers in Primary, Secondary and Special schools to deliver effective teaching and learning about development and global issues at Key Stages 2 and 3. It is being delivered by a team of organisations with complementary experience in supporting development education, the wider development sector and peer-led CPD for schools. For further information on the Global Learning Programme in England go to: www.glp-e.org.uk Information about the GLP in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland can be found at: https://globaldimension.org.uk/chooseglp

## 7 ▶ Appendix Two: Images used in the research

Image 1: 9c: Recognise the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations. (http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/9/9c-recognise-ignored-protect-vulnerable-serve)

Image 2: 12b: Affirm the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods (http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/12/12b-affirm-right-indigenous-peoples-spirituality)

Image 3: 10b: Enhance the intellectual, financial, technical, and social resources of developing nations, and relieve them of onerous international debt. (http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/10/10b-enhance-intellectual-financial-technical-social)

Image 4: 9b: Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves. (http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/9/9b-empower-every-human-education-resources)

Image 5: 15a: Prevent cruelty to animals kept in human societies and protect them from suffering. (http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/15/15a-prevent-cruelty-animals-kept-human)

Image 6: 12d: Protect and restore outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance. (http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/12/12d-protect-restore-outstanding-places-cultural)

Image 7: 14: Integrate into formal education and lifelong learning the knowledge, values and skills needed for a sustainable way of life. (Available on Flickr by Fredo_ photo: https://www.flickr.com/photos/8398214@N05/)

Image 8: 8a: Support international scientific and technical co-operation on sustainability, with special attention to the needs of developing nations. (http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/8/8a-support-international-scientific-technical-cooperation)

Image 9: 7d: Internalise the full environmental and social costs of goods and services in the selling price, and enable consumers to identify products that meet the highest social and environmental standards. (http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/7/7d-internalize-full-environmental-social-costs)

Image 10: 13d: Institute effective and efficient access to administrative and independent judicial procedures, including remedies and redress for environmental harm and the threat of such harm. (http://www.picturesofsuccess.org/13/13d-institute-effective-efficient-access-administrative)

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