



Himal, Age: 16, Country: Nepal

Himal's Story

How Poverty Affects Children

A MIDDLE SCHOOL UNIT (GRADES 6-8)

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Unless stated otherwise, the source for all charts, figures, maps, and statistics used in this unit is: United Nations Children’s Fund, (UNICEF), New York. Additional sources are noted when they are required. Website addresses (URLs) are provided throughout this unit for reference and additional research. The authors have made every effort to ensure these sites and information are up-to-date at the time of publication, but availability in the future cannot be guaranteed.

UNIT OVERVIEW

Himal's Story How Poverty Affects Children A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

Unit Overview

Himal's Story, a middle school unit, is a unit of three lessons. The content can be adapted for use with older or younger students. The lessons are designed to:

1. Raise awareness of the multiple causes of poverty.
2. Increase students' understanding of how poverty affects children's lives.
3. Explore solutions and programs that can help break the cycle of poverty.

Lesson 1: Students will explore the life of Himal, a working teen living in poverty in Nepal, by viewing a short video and answering guided questions. They will also consider the impact of poverty on various aspects of children's lives.

Lesson 2: Students will use statistics to examine the impact of poverty on the lives of children in developing countries. They will look at different aspects of deprivation and consider the long-term effect of each.

Lesson 3: Students will read about a program that is attempting to address poverty in Himal's life and its potential impact. They will also examine statistics and calculate the extent to which progress is being made in addressing poverty in Nepal.

Background Information

Poverty is a major reason that children do not receive the basic social services they need to survive, develop and thrive. More than 1 billion children around the world suffer from one or more of the effects of poverty. These include being deprived of:

- Adequate nutrition
- Safe drinking water
- Decent sanitation facilities
- Health-care services
- Shelter
- Education
- Information

This can jeopardize children's physical health and growth, as well as their intellectual development. Poverty also undermines the ability of families and communities to protect children from exploitation, abuse, violence, discrimination and stigmatization.

Poverty in childhood is a root cause of poverty in adulthood, as children living in poverty often grow up to be parents who, in turn, bring up their own children in poverty.

Breaking this cycle of poverty depends on investments by governments, civil society and families in children's rights and wellbeing, and in women's rights. Spending on a child's health, nutrition, education, and social, emotional and cognitive development, and on achieving gender equality, is not only an investment in a more democratic and a more equitable society, it is also an investment in a healthier, more literate and, ultimately, more productive population. Investing in children is sound economic investment, with high rates of return. The world has come to agree on this. Six of the eight Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.unicef.org/mdg/> or www.endpoverty2015.org) relate directly to children. For more information on UNICEF's anti-poverty efforts visit: www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/poverty.php.

Himal's Story focuses on the life of a child living in poverty in Nepal, one of the world's poorest countries. Nepal has been undergoing armed conflict since 1996, as Maoist groups have fought the ruling monarchy. It was estimated that the Maoists controlled approximately 80% of the country, and they required that families give one teenager to serve in the army. The conflict affected children directly in other ways too, closing schools and making it difficult for them to get basic health services like vaccinations.

More than 50,000 children in Nepal die each year, 60% of them from malnutrition. Half of the children in Nepal are underweight; two-thirds of the population do not have access to toilets. More information on Nepal, and UNICEF's work there, can be found at: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nepal_nepal_background.html.

Himal's Story is based on *The State of the World's Children Report from 2006 (SOWC, 2006)*. For more up to date statistics on poverty please visit the following websites:

<http://www.childinfo.org/undernutrition.html>

http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_countrystats.html

http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/sowc/explore_1653.html

<http://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/map2.html>

http://www.unicef.org/why/why_poverty.html

<http://www.unicefglobalstudy.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.undp.org/poverty/>

<http://endpoverty2015.org/>

Evaluation/Assessment

Students will be evaluated based on their participation in class discussions and:

- Ability to name possible effects of poverty on a child's life.
- Analysis of the program described to address child poverty.
- Ability to calculate and interpret statistics.

Service Projects

Regardless of their range and scope, the best service projects are those developed and initiated by students themselves. They can last an afternoon, a weekend, a week, a month—depending on the goals students set. They can be done on an individual basis, in pairs, or in small groups—in some cases, the project may be so big that an entire class or even school can get involved!

Some possible service projects for Himal's Story include:

- 1. Food for All**

Students partner with community organizations such as a nearby soup kitchen. Community work is balanced with classroom work where students learn about nutrition, food production, and distribution.

- 2. Advocate**

Provide an opportunity for students to write their elected officials allowing them to voice their support of the issues UNICEF's addresses. To learn more about the issues and how your students can take action, please visit <http://volunteers.unicefusa.org/activities/advocate/>.

National Standards

The TeachUNICEF lesson plans are designed in line with National Content Standards. Using the National Content Standards as a guide, these lessons can be aligned with State Standards.

	Lesson		
	1	2	3
National Organization			
National Council for the Social Studies (K-12) Source: Expectations of Excellence — Curriculum Standards for Social Studies			
People, Places, and Environments Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.	✓	✓	✓
Global Connections Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.	✓	✓	✓
National Council of Teachers of English & International Reading Association (K-12) Source: Standards for the English Language Arts			
Standard 1: Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace.	✓	✓	✓
Standard 7: Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.		✓	✓
Standard 8: Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.	✓		
Principles and Standards for School Mathematics Source: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics			
Number and Operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems • Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates 		✓	

	Lesson		
	1	2	3
National Organization			
Problem Solving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build new mathematical knowledge through problem solving • Solve problems that arise in mathematics and in other contexts • Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve problems • Monitor and reflect on the process of mathematical problem solving 		✓	✓
Data Analysis and Probability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them • Develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data 		✓	✓

LESSON 1

Himal's Story How Poverty Affects Children A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

THE FACE OF POVERTY

TOTAL TIME: 45 MINUTES

Objectives

Students will:

Become aware of the causes of poverty, and the impact of poverty on the lives of children.

Session Plan

- Opening Activity: 5 Minutes
- Viewing to Learn: 10 Minutes
- Reading to Learn: 20 Minutes
- Vocabulary and Homework Review: 10 Minutes

Vocabulary

The following words may not be daily occurrences in a student's vocabulary. Feel free to use this list as a resource for students to expand their working vocabulary as they encounter these words in this unit.

- Dung
- Porter
- Poverty
- Rebel

Materials Needed

- Chalkboard/Newsprint/Whiteboard
- World map(s), globe, etc.
- Computer with Internet access, connected to a projector if possible
- Student copies of "Himal's Video Viewing Guide" (Handout #1)
- Pencils/pens
- Student copies of "Himal's Story: Part 1" (Handout #2)

Set Up

Before class starts, write the following statement on the board: “1 in 5 people in the world live on less than \$1 per day.”

Opening Activity

Directions:

1. Ask the class what the word “poverty” means to them.
2. Direct the class’ attention to the statement on the board. Let students know that living on less than \$1 a day is one of the two measures of extreme poverty that UNICEF and other United Nations (UN) agencies use.
3. Ask the class to count off by 5’s. Have all the number 1’s stand. Ask the class to imagine that these people are living on less than \$1 per day. Ask for some quick responses to the question “How would your life be different if you had to live on less than \$1 per day?”
4. Have the class locate Nepal on a map. Explain that the class will be learning about the life of a 16-year-old boy from Nepal named Himal, who lives in extreme poverty.

Viewing To Learn

Directions:

1. Hand out copies of “Himal’s Video Viewing Guide” to the class (Handout #1).
2. Show the 2-minute video on Himal that can be found at:
www.teachertube.com/viewVideo.php?video_id=171624&title=Himal_s_Story_Poverty_and_Children&ref=Teachunicef.
3. Have the class take notes on their Viewing Guide. If you have time, you may want to show the video twice.
4. Afterwards share the following questions as a group:
 - Why does Himal say he left school?
 - What are some signs of poverty in Himal’s life?
 - What are problems Himal might face because he has to work and not go to school—both in his day-to-day life, and in the future?
 - What signs did you see of Himal’s strengths in dealing with poverty?

Reading To Learn

Directions:

1. Give the class "Himal's Story: Part 1" (Handout #2).
2. After they read the story, use the following questions to start a discussion:
 - What do you think it was like for Himal to be sent to the city?
 - What do you think it was like for Himal's family to send him away from their home?
 - Are there people living in poverty in your community? How do you think poverty affects them?

Homework

Directions:

Based on the skills, interests and age level of the students, assign one of the following homework activities:

1. American History: Do research to find out how common child labor was in the United States 100 years ago. Why has this changed? How did these changes come about?
2. Research what the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), an international treaty, says about poverty. It is not always easy for countries, especially poor countries, to fulfill these rights. UNICEF bases all of its work with governments on the CRC, helping them create the laws and services that will help children survive, develop, and participate. Both the full text and a shorter version of the CRC can be found online at: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm>.

Interview Guide— Himal's Video

Himal is 16 and lives in Nepal.

The video has four scenes. As you watch the video, write down:

- Any signs of poverty that you see in each scene.
- Any dangers, difficulties, or possible problems Himal might face.
- The skills you see Himal using to deal with poverty and his job.

1. What signs of poverty did you see in each of these scenes?

Market/Street

Barn

House

Himal's Room

2. Were there any dangers, difficulties, or possible problems for Himal in each of these scenes?

Market/Street

Barn

House

Himal's Room

3. What skills did you see Himal using in each of these scenes?

Market/Street

Barn

House

Himal's Room

Himal's Story—Part 1

Himal is one of eight children in a family that struggles to earn enough to live on. To add to the small amount of money earned from the family's corn harvest, Himal's father spends half of the year away from home, working as a porter.

Like many other boys in eastern Nepal, Himal used to help his father by carrying loads while his mother and sisters stayed behind to take care of the farm. For Himal's family, earning money had to come first, even before sending the children to school. By the age of 14, Himal had only been to school for about a week in his entire life.

In the district where Himal lived, rebels wanted to remove the ruler of Nepal from power. As the rebels grew stronger, Himal's father became more and more worried about his son's future. At first, the rebels tried to get young boys like Himal to join the uprising. But they soon became bolder in their demands. They made a "one family one child" rule, saying that every family had to give one teenager to their army.

In order to save Himal from being forced into the rebel's army, his father sent him to Biratnagar, the second largest city in Nepal. There Himal became a domestic worker—someone who works taking care of another person's home. Himal looks after his employer's cows and cleans his house for the equivalent of \$7.00 a month.

Some poor Nepalese families living in the country have always sent their children to work in the city. But because of the conflict, which began in 1996, many more parents are sending their children to the cities. Parents hope that in the cities, their children will be safe from the rebels, earn more money, and have a chance to go to school.

1. Himal's video gave one reason that he does not go to school. What is another reason that can be found in this story?

2. How does the conflict with the rebels affect Himal and his family?

3. What were the reasons that Himal's family chose to send him to the city?

Source: www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/full_child4.php

LESSON 2

Himal's Story
How Poverty Affects Children
A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

TOTAL TIME: 45 MINUTES

Objective

Students will:

Understand how poverty effects many aspects of children's lives in developing countries.

Session Plan

- Opening Activity: 6 Minutes
- Understanding Statistics: 6 Minutes
- The Cycle of Poverty: 20 Minutes
- Vocabulary and Homework: 9 Minutes

Vocabulary

The following words may not be daily occurrences in a student's vocabulary. Feel free to use this list as a resource for students to expand their working vocabulary as they encounter these words in this unit.

- Access
- Deprivation
- Immunized
- Nutrition
- Sanitation

Materials Needed

- Chalkboard/Newsprint/Whiteboard
- Index cards
- Deprivation Chart (Handout #3)
- Paper and pencils

Set Up

Before class starts, write the following percentages and groups on the board:

- Group 1: 33.9%
- Group 2: 30.7%
- Group 3: 21.1%
- Group 4: 16.1%
- Group 5: 16.1%
- Group 6: 14.2%
- Group 7: 13.1%

Opening Activity

Directions:

1. Explain to the class that you are going to do an activity that shows how poverty affects children in developing countries. Divide the class into seven groups. Assign each group their respective percentage, as listed above and on the board.
2. Ask each group to calculate how many students in the class their percentage represents.
NOTE: Students should “round up” their answers to whole numbers—for example, an answer of “10.7” should be rounded up to “11.”

Understanding Statistics

Directions:

1. Ask each group how many students their percentage represents, and give them that number of index cards. (For example, if Group 1 calculated that 33.9% of the class equals 10 students, give them 10 index cards.) Have each group write one of the following words on each of their index cards, as outlined below.
 - Group 1: Shelter (write “Shelter” on each of the 10 cards)
 - Group 2: Sanitation
 - Group 3: Water
 - Group 4: Information
 - Group 5: Nutrition
 - Group 6: Health
 - Group 7: Education
2. Collect all the cards and distribute them randomly.
NOTE: Not all students will receive the same number of cards.
3. Ask all the students holding a card that reads “Shelter” to stand. Explain to students that in developing countries, 33.9% of children do not have decent shelter. This means that they live in a home that has 5 or more people living in one room, or in a home that has a mud floor.

Handout #3 can be distributed to students—either before or after this activity—to reinforce the percentages of children in the developing world living with each of the deprivations covered in class.

4. Continue through the list of statistics, having the different groups stand as they go through each of the deprivations listed in the chart below:

**SEVERE DEPRIVATION AMONG CHILDREN IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD,
BY DIFFERENT DEPRIVATIONS**

Type Of Deprivation	% Of Children Severely Deprived	Definition
Shelter	33.9%	More than 5 people per room, or mud floor.
Sanitation	30.7%	No toilet of any kind.
Water	21.1%	Only unprotected surface water nearby.
Information	16.1%	No access to radio, telephone, newspapers, or TV.
Nutrition	16.1 %	Nutritional status far below the norm.
Health	14.2 %	Not immunized; diarrhea not treated.
Education	13.1%	Never been to school.

Source: The State of the World's Children Report 2006, www.unicef.org/sowc06/pdfs/figure2_1_2005.pdf

5. When you have completed all the statistics ask, "How many students stood up more than once?"; "Did anyone stand up more than twice?"
6. Ask students:
- Were you aware of the different ways that poverty affects children in developing countries?"
 - What statistic most surprised you? Why?

The Cycle of Poverty

Directions:

1. Give each group one of the seven aspects of poverty to explore.
2. In each group, have students brainstorm answers to the following question:
 - What would be the effects on a child's life over time if this condition is not corrected? For example, "What would be the impact on a child from not having enough nutritious food?"

Encourage students to think beyond the obvious. For example: A hungry child might not be able to pay attention in school; a child who doesn't get enough nutritious food to eat might get sick more easily, etc.

3. Have groups share their answers to the whole class. Record their responses on the board or newsprint. Circle the answers that are offered by more than one group.
4. Discuss the following questions as a group:
 - Are there connections between these different aspects of poverty?
 - Does one lead to another? (For example, can poor sanitation lead to poor health?)
 - Does lack of one resource make it difficult to access other resources? (For example, can lack of education make it difficult to get access to information or health care?)

Homework

Directions:

Based on the skills, interests and age level of the students, assign one of the following homework activities:

1. What three things can you hypothesize using the map “A Decent Standard of Living,” available at: http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/pdfs/map_living.pdf. Remember to:
 - Compare
 - Predict
 - Contrast
2. Explore the interactive feature “Measuring Child Poverty” located at: <http://www.unicef.org/sowc05/english/poverty.html>. How is childhood poverty different from poverty in general?
3. Do research on poverty and education in other countries. Go to: <http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/statistics/database.php> to create customized statistical tables. Select the country and the statistics that you want to review.

Severe Deprivation Among Children In The Developing World By Different Deprivations

Type of Deprivation	% of Children Severely Deprived:	Definition
Shelter	33.9%	More than 5 people per room, or mud floor
Sanitation	30.7%	No toilet of any kind
Water	21.1%	Only unprotected surface water nearby
Information	16.1%	No access to radio, telephone, newspapers, or TV
Nutrition	16.1 %	Nutritional status far below the norm
Health	14.2 %	Not immunized; diarrhea not treated
Education	13.1%	Never been to school

Source: *The State of the World's Children Report 2006*, www.unicef.org/sowc06/pdfs/figure2_1_2005.pdf

LESSON 3

Himal's Story
How Poverty Affects Children
A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

MAPPING OUT SOLUTIONS

TOTAL TIME: 45 MINUTES

Objective

Students will discuss the types of programs that can help break the cycle of poverty.

Session Plan

- Opening Activity: 6 Minutes
- Reading To Learn: 10 Minutes
- Millennium Development Goals: 20 Minutes
- Vocabulary and Homework: 9 Minutes

Vocabulary

The following words may not be daily occurrences in a student's vocabulary. Feel free to use this list as a resource for students to expand their working vocabulary as they encounter these words in this unit.

- Attendance
- Millennium
- Proportion

Materials Needed

- Map "Education for All" (http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/pdfs/map_education.pdf) either as a projection or as group/individual copies
- Student copies of "Himal's Story: Part 2" (Handout #4)
- Student copies of "Statistics on Poverty and Education in Nepal" (Handout #5)
- Paper and pencils

Set Up

Access the map “Education for All” and either:

- Print copies of the map for each student or group of students, or
- Download and save the map to the classroom computer, or onto a DVD and display/project the map so all can see.

Opening Activity

Directions:

1. Show the map “Education for All.” Have the class look at the color key which shows the proportion of school-aged children who are actually in school. What can you tell about Nepal from this map? What can you tell about education in other countries?
2. Explain that education is one way to help people break the cycle of poverty. Ask the class why they think this is true.

Reading To Learn

Directions:

1. Distribute copies of “Himal’s Story: Part 2” (Handout #4).
2. After the students read “Himal’s Story: Part 2,” have them discuss:
 - The benefits of the Forum program for Himal.
 - Ways that it might be made better (not only for Himal, but for other children like him who might need similar programs).

The UN’s Millennium Development Goals

1. Explain to the class that all of the countries that are members of the UN agreed in the year 2000 to set goals for overcoming poverty, and improving health, education, the environment, and responding to other important global concerns. These are called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Two of the eight MDGs are:
 - MDG 1: By 2015, to reduce by half the proportion of people who live on less than \$1 per day.
 - MDG 2: By 2015, to make sure that all girls and boys complete elementary education.
2. Give out copies of Handout #5, “Statistics on Poverty and Education in Nepal.” Have students calculate:
 - By what percentage has boys’ elementary school attendance in Nepal increased since 2000? Girls’ attendance?

- By what percentage has the number of children finishing the fifth grade increased since 2000?
 - By what percentage has the average Nepalese's income increased since 2000?
3. Lead the students in a discussion that covers the following questions:
- What might be reasons that the percentage of boys going to elementary school has not increased?
 - What might be reasons that the percentage of girls going to elementary school has increased?
 - At this rate, do you think that Nepal will meet Millennium Development Goals 1 and 2 by 2015? Why or why not?
 - What might be making it difficult for Nepal to decrease poverty and increase the percentage of children going to school?

Homework

Directions:

Based on the skills, interests, and age level of the students, assign one of the following homework activities:

1. Divide the class into two groups. Assign one group as "adults" and the other one as "students"—this is each group's targeted audience. Have member of each group ask five people in their targeted audience if they know:
 - Whether or not there are any poverty issues in their community.
 - Any programs that are designed to help their community reduce poverty.
2. Separate the class into two groups. Assign one group as "pro" and the other as "con"—this is each group's point of view. Have each member of each group come up with two different reasons as to:
 - Why it was (or was not) a good idea for the countries that are members of the UN to set the Millennium Development Goals.

Learn more about the MDGs and what kids are doing worldwide to make a difference by checking out these online resources:

UNICEF's web section on the MDGs at www.unicef.org/mdg/.

UNICEF's Voices of Youth website at www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_2357.html.

Himal's Story—Part 2

While Himal was able to avoid joining the rebel army by coming to Biratnagar, going to school seemed like an impossible dream until someone from the Forum for Human Rights and Environment convinced his employer to send him to special classes. UNICEF has assisted with this program.

The Forum's staff visits the neighborhoods of Biratnagar and finds working children who are out of school. Then they convince the children's employers to send them to a two-hour daily class that lasts for 10 months. There, the children learn reading, writing, and math. Once they complete the classes, they go to regular schools, usually in the fifth or sixth grade.

In addition to classes, the children also go to clubs for working children, read books and watch television, participate in dances and theater, and learn about their rights.

These days, Himal does all his chores in the house and with the cows, and goes to class and to his club activities. Himal smiles when he is with his friends. He has just completed his first 10 months of classes, and is already reading, writing, and doing basic addition and subtraction. He is looking forward to studying more and continuing his education. He dreams of becoming a banker.

Himal, it turns out, is also a performer. A play that he and others from the child workers' club prepared for the International Day Against Child Labour won them first place in a contest organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Biratnagar. Last summer, Himal was chosen to be one of five teenagers from Nepal to go to the Young People's Festival in South Korea, where he performed traditional Nepali dances and met other young people from 32 different countries.

Most other Nepalese children are not as fortunate as Himal. Only 65% of children who go to elementary school finish the fifth grade, and just 31% go on to high school. The children of the poorest families are least likely to go to school. Over a third of Nepalis live on less than \$1 a day, which means that, although elementary school is free, many parents don't have the money to buy school uniforms, books, and supplies for their children.

1. What new opportunities has Himal had since he joined the Forum's program?

2. Based on the story, how would you describe Himal's attitude toward going to school?

Source: www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/full_child4.php

Statistics on Poverty and Education in Nepal

	2000*	2006**
% of elementary school boys who actually go to elementary school	80	80
% of elementary school girls who actually go to elementary school	60	67
% of elementary school children who finish Grade 5	52	65
Average annual income per person	\$220	\$260

* Statistics adapted from UNICEF's *2000 State of the World's Children Report* (www.unicef.org/sowc00/).

** Statistics adapted from UNICEF's *2006 State of the World's Children Report* (www.unicef.org/sowc06/index.php).

