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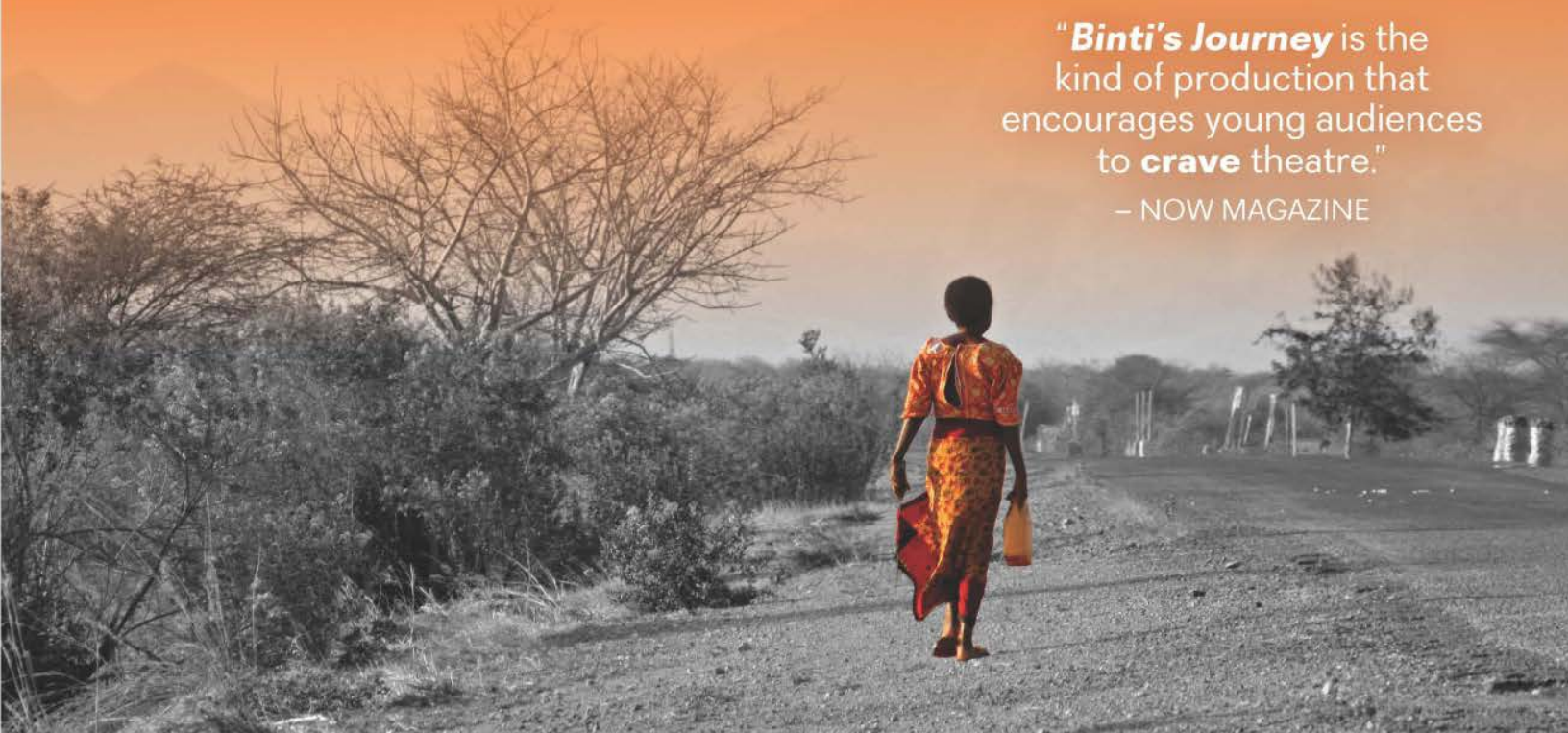
An anthem to hope, courage and the  
resilience of youth

# Binti's Journey

Adapted by **Marcia Johnson**  
from the novel *The Heaven Shop* by **Deborah Ellis**

"*Binti's Journey* is the  
kind of production that  
encourages young audiences  
to **crave** theatre."

– NOW MAGAZINE



## Guide for Educators

## Introduction

### Shaping Space

In presenting any piece, there is discussion of how best to use each element of performance in order to further and deepen the story. In sharing the experiences of Binti and her family, it was critical to raise a testament to the power of the human spirit and community as a primary resource. Gogo's power is rooted in her compassion and determination to use her voice to speak up for what is right. Binti finds that in sharing her life with all her cousins—and there are no 'pretend cousins,' after all—she can reach greater fulfillment than a prefect pin ever provided. Jeremiah shows the change that can come from turning a personal challenge into a strength. Memory stands as a pillar of female leadership and an example of the mark one can make on others simply in a determination to live, and live lovingly. Only a tree stands at the center of the stage, a living, growing entity with a strong spine, swayed by the cycles of the natural environment it is grounded in. Similarly, Binti's family will have seasons of plenty and seasons of struggle, but they reach outwards and upwards together.

All these characters need, they possess within themselves, and thus so much of the story too is shaped through the human body and voice. Encourage your students to engage every sense.

The choral voice of Gogo not only responds to the growing wisdom and cohesion of a family, but the ringing cries of real life Gogos who are standing up and fighting in Africa – and Canada too.

**How does the music stretch beyond words and enhance the story through the emotions and physical feelings it evokes?**

**Attend to the physical movement of the actors – how do they shape space?  
How do they create a world for the audience?**

Like these actors, young people, peer educators, Gogos and other community leaders are using often little more than their voices and their determination to shape a new world, one that takes better care of its women and children and fosters a community that heals together and stands together. We invite you and your students to do the same.

**What does their brighter, better world look like?  
How can they join together and allow their voices to ring out to bring it about?**

*In the old days, when there were still lion around, if a lion came into our village and carried away our young, we did not keep silent! If we were silent, it would keep eating our children. We had to make noise, to bang pots and yell....There is a lion in the village!*

*There is a lion in the village now.*

## The Play and Personal Health

With changes in the Health and Physical Education curriculum, we understand that many schools and families are re-negotiating how best to guide students in understanding and making decisions about their physical, mental, and emotional health. Each character in the play has a life touched by HIV/AIDS and its stigma, even if they do not carry the virus in their blood directly. While it is critical that we advocate for the well-being of all people across the globe, it is also necessary that we promote support, kindness, and awareness in our own backyards. Throughout the unit, activities such as “What is HIV/AIDS?”, “What is Stigma?”, “Power and Consent,” and “Young Voices” allow students to use Binti’s experiences as a framework for tapping into concepts of sexual health in relation to their own lives. The Canadian Extensions section also provides some suggestions of ways you might tie other Canadian current events into their exploration of the play and their personal development. These activities are designed in direct alignment with the new curriculum.

## Using this Guide

This guide offers a variety of activities that can be used towards a cross-curricular mini-unit. It culminates in a radio play assignment where students are invited to identify a particular ‘lion’ that they feel it is important to respond to. However, most activities are designed such that they can also be completed independently in alignment with your specific classroom plans. Each activity includes a list of required materials and related curriculum outcomes. Many of the exercises are supplemented with extension opportunities and/or reflection questions to customize as best suits your class.

The ‘Ongoing Discussion Points’ section below highlights some themes that you may wish to return to with your class throughout the exploration. Because there are a wide array of activities you might select to try with your students, a brief summary of each lesson is included. Activities have been broken down into ‘Primary’ and ‘Secondary’ activities. The primary activities are included in this document. Following these exercises, there is a list of secondary exercises broken down by ‘Act’ or stage in the suggested progression of the activities. The secondary exercises themselves are available in a separate document if you are interested in using them with your class. At the end of this document, you will also find a set of additional resources. We wish you much joy and many discoveries as you explore!

## Ongoing Discussion Points

You might choose to repeatedly come back to some discussions so that students can build links between lessons, perhaps extending your class work to include a growing visual support. For example, you might post a ‘Class Journey’ tree, much like that at the center of Binti’s journey, where students can add their ideas about different issues using paper leaves. Different ‘branches’ of discussion might include:

- What are global issues that we should stay informed about?
- What are local (national, community or school) issues that we should stay informed about?
- How can we contribute to change? (Alternately, how can we be “peer educators”?)
- What does an ethical storyteller do?

## Summaries of Primary Activities

**KWL Chart** – In this activity, students identify what they already know and would like to know about Africa, Malawi, and HIV/AIDS. Classes are encouraged to have a discussion about how they can be confident that what they ‘know’ is truthful, and how myths might be perpetuated about other cultures or places. Students can then engage in independent exploration to further their knowledge on areas of particular interest.

Related Curricula: Social Studies, Geography, Language – Media Studies.

**Where in the World is Binti Phiri?** – Using the still image provided or the interactive link, explore a map of Malawi and familiarize students with some basic information about its terrain, relative size, and history.

Related Curricula: Social Studies, Geography.

**Guided Visualization: Living in Rural Malawi** – This activity aims to help students visualize some common features of day to day life of a student in rural Malawi. Resource links for an extension art activity inspired by a Malawian artist, Elson Kambalu, are included.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Art, Language – Oral Communication.

**Let’s See the Numbers** – Students are encouraged to move around the classroom to physically represent key statistics about life in Malawi. The research provided includes information about literacy and day to day schooling, the impact of HIV/AIDS, access to technology, and other considerations.

Related Curricula: Social Studies, Math.

**What is HIV/AIDS?** – This activity, tied into the updated HPE curriculum, provides suggestions of a few videos available online to review key information about HIV/AIDS with your students. Key considerations for each video are listed, including overviews of content, whether there are explicit references to safe sex practices, and stylistic choices. The final extension video is accompanied with a question handout to enhance student comprehension and reflection. The focus of the handout extends from basic information about HIV/AIDS to media literacy and the issue of stigma and discrimination.

Curriculum Links: Health and Physical Education, Language – Media Studies, Science and Technology.

**The Rights of the Child** – This activity asks students to review the UN Rights of the Child and draw connections to the events of *Binti’s Journey*. Through choral speech and gesture, they can highlight some of the rights that go unfulfilled, or use tableaux to represent both the problems in the treatment of the orphans and how things might have been if they were properly protected.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama, Social Studies, Geography, Language – Reading

**Being Thoughtful Supporters** – This activity helps students refresh their understanding of the categorization of IGOs, NGOs, and MNCs. Students begin by brainstorming about the goals of

different types of groups such as responsible governments and volunteer charities, then are asked to connect this back to the specific types of organizations. Then, using online resources or the provided handout, they can review profiles of real world organizations and determine whether each would be classified as an IGO, NGO, or MNC. While some, like OXFAM, are relatively easy to categorize, groups such as The Wikimedia Foundation pose a greater challenge. To extend this activity, you might ask students to investigate where they can find information about different organizations' accountability and ethics.

Related Curricula: Social Studies, Geography, Language – Reading & Media Literacy

**Being Thoughtful Supporters (Gr. 8 Extension)** – this activity is designed to support students in understanding that no organization is perfect, and encourage strategies for making informed decisions about different charities. Using the example of We Charity (formerly Free the Children), they can collaborate with classmates to review various sources documenting the organization's work and analyze its effectiveness. A series of guiding questions are provided, guiding students to first evaluate the source's text structure and credibility of the information before they gather specific proof to help support their opinions on the organization. Students wrap up by identifying both the charity's strengths and areas for improvement.

Related curricula: Geography, Language – Reading & Media Literacy

**Taking Out a Micro-Loan** – This is a two part exercise. In Part I, students are introduced to the concept of micro-loans and can view profiles of different women who have used loans from the Micro-Loan Foundation (MLF) to establish their own businesses and support their families. Students can use their drama skills to break into small groups and create 1-2 minute pieces to share different women's stories with their peers. In Part 2, they are challenged to complete some of the key calculations behind obtaining a micro-loan and using those funds for business. The final questions, using values drawn from the MLF's annual reports, provide students with a broader understanding of the impact of micro-loans for families in developing countries.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama, Mathematics

**Advocacy with Integrity** – This activity is centered on a UNICEF podcast, "If Something is Wrong Around You, if Something is Not Working in Your Community, Act." This activity aims to challenge students to practice listening skills and engage in personal reflection in response to the podcast, which features the stories of two female activists in Africa, Dr. Tererai Trent and Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg and what motivates them to create change. A questions sheet is provided, moving from supporting comprehension of the podcast to asking students to reflect on the qualities of a good advocate and changes they would like to see in their community.

Related Curricula: Language – Oral Communication

**Young Voices: Spreading Awareness Through Art** – This is a two part exercise. In the first part, students are guided through an exploration of choral speech using song lyrics. This activity requires some space and adaptability, as the teacher is asked to play the role of conductor to a whole-class experimental symphony of voice and gesture. In the second part of the exercise, students split into smaller groups to create a choral speech piece of their own. As the basis for

inspiration, each group can be provided with the profile of a musical artist who is working to raise awareness about an issue of personal importance. Students can draw from sample songs by those artists in creating their piece. Featured artists include: a First Nations hip hop artist who, at 16 years old, has already spoken at the UN and served on a presidential youth council because of his work advocating for the environment; a Nigerian equal rights advocate for persons with disabilities who only began to fully explore the power of her musical talent after a car crash rendered her paraplegic; and an Afghani-born teenage ‘raptivist’ who overcame immense barriers to create an original music video advocating for child brides, earning a scholarship in the US and an escape from her own arranged marriage.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama & Music, Social Studies, Geography, Language – Oral Communication

**Telling Each Other’s Stories** – Throughout the exercises, the idea of responsible storytelling is repeated. How does it feel to have someone else tell your story? What are some of the challenges in being a respectful storyteller? In this lesson, students share a story with a peer, who then adopts it as their own and finds a new retelling. Debrief as a class about how it felt to watch their stories being adapted, any shifts in a sense of ownership, and ways things changed in the retelling. For an optional extension, students can then work in larger groups to re-tell a classmate’s story through tableaux, mime, and/or choral speech.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama

**Culminating Exercise: Writing Radio Scenes** – Students can close their exploration and bring together the performance skills they have built by working in small groups to create a radio play scene about an issue of personal importance. This is an opportunity for students to identify an issue they feel is especially problematic and use art as a medium to share their concern with their peers – to bang pots and yell! A sample assignment sheet is included.

→ Want to experience the form further? A series of links are also provided to contemporary ‘radio’ pieces that offer a forum for African voices.

## Primary Activities

### KWL Chart

Original exercise created by Jessi Linn Davies, adapted from the UNICEF guide for *The Heaven Shop*. Modifications made by Victoria Roberts.

Curriculum Links: Social Studies 6 – B2.2, B2.5; Geography 8 B2.5; Language, Media Studies 6/7/8 1.5, 1.6

Materials:

- Writing materials
- Access to print and/or online information resources (e.g., library booking, BYOD, etc.)

*“Do you know where Canada is?” Machozi asks.  
“I’m not sure,” Binti admits. “Is Canada in Malawi?”*

Davies points out, “In Binti’s Journey, the characters know a lot about their own country, but not much about ours. What about us? What do we know about Africa and its country Malawi? What can we do to learn more?” Ask students to create a chart with three columns: one to list information they **Know**, one to identify information they **Want** to Know, and one to record What they have **Learned**. Have them split their chart into three rows, one each for focusing on Africa, Malawi, and HIV/AIDS. Provide time for students to fill out the first two columns for each focus. Davies encourages having a whole class discussion about things they have identified in their ‘know’ column: “how do they know these things to be true?” At this point, you might move straight into the students’ exploration, or participate in some of the prologue activities and ask students to continue to update their chart. Before working on their final personal inquiry, you may discuss the reliability of sources and what it means to be critical consumers. Then allow students some time to explore online or print resources to find more information on topics from their ‘want to know’ column. Davies emphasizes that it can be helpful to “instruct [your students] to be on the lookout as ‘myth-busters’ to identify popular myths about any of these issues and the truth to disprove those myths.”

### Context: Where in the World is Binti Phiri?

Curriculum Links: Social Studies 6 - A2.2, B2.3, B3.6; Geography 7 - A3.3; Geography 8 - A2.4

Materials:

- Laptop and projector

*I stepped off the bus. Mount Mulanje rose above the town rock and glorious with patches of mist stuck here and there for decoration. It sat in a cushion of deep green slopes and rose up all of a sudden as if it had been wandering and just decided that this would be a good place to stay.*

- Binti



This map plots key locations in Binti’s journey. The link below provides an interactive version of the map where each plotted point is accompanied by a brief description of Binti’s experience. For extra detail, click on the figure on the bottom right map corner. This will activate a series of dots that you can drag and drop the figure onto to access a street view.

- Point 1: Blantyre, where the story begins.
- Point 2: Lilongwe, where Binti and her sister travel with their aunt and uncle.
- Point 3: Mulanje, home of Grandmother Gogo and Cousin Memory – not to mention Jeremiah, the peer counsellor.
- Point 4: Muloza, Junie briefly lives here.

Malawi is referred to in the tourist industry as the “heart of Africa” for its friendly citizens and beautiful scenery. It is bordered by Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zambia and features lakes, rivers, plains, plateaus and mountains. As a result, some areas have harsh soil that must be painstakingly tilled by subsistence farmers, while other areas have some of the richest soil quality in Africa. In fact, Malawi is Africa’s second largest tea producer. It has five national parks, a

series of islands, and a major wildlife reserve. Malawi was one of Britain’s colonial holdings known as Nyasaland. The impact of British influence can still be seen in day to day life. Children may attend private or government funded schools. Private schools are more expensive, but often have much more resources. Rural government-funded schools are often undersupplied with furniture, textbooks and other equipment. Most schools, private and government-funded, require students to wear uniforms, and what we would refer to as grade levels are called “standards.”

Relative size:

- It varies from about 80-160 km across, i.e., approximately the distance on the 401 from Mississauga to Pickering at its narrowest, or round-trip at the widest points.
- 840 km north to south, slightly more than the distance from Toronto to Quebec City
- 118000km<sup>2</sup>, i.e., slightly smaller than Nova Scotia and New Brunswick combined.
- A population of about 16 310 000 residents, so while it is about the same area as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, it houses about 10x as many people. Alternately, its population is about 6x that of Toronto.

<https://www.mapcustomizer.com/map/Binti's%20Journey%202017>



## Guided Visualization: Living in Rural Malawi

Curriculum Links: The Arts, Art 6/7/8 – D1.1; Language 6/7 – Oral Communication 1.5, 1.6

Materials:

- Laptop and projector
- Pencils and paper
- Setting sun picture printouts or painting supplies
- Black paper, glue and scissors

*My fingers get hungry to draw.*

- Kwasi

For this exercise, you might introduce the visualisation and encourage students to sketch key images as you read aloud to them. Afterwards, engage in a reflection discussion. What images or sensations stood out to students? What was challenging to visualise? It is important to keep in mind that, while this visualisation is written considering patterns of experience, this does not reflect the life of all individuals. With this in mind, what were some things that students learned about life in rural Malawi? Were there things that surprised students? For an extension, build on students' sketches while taking inspiration from a Malawian artist.

Extension:

Elson Kambalu is a Malawian artist who was awarded an MBC Innovation Award for Art in 2015. He works in a variety of forms, including painting, sculpture, fashion and graphic design, writing (including poetry) and film. As outlined in the CNN article below, his original arts mission grew out of a desire to represent Malawi beyond the stereotypical images that catered to the tourist market, and he did not begin to experience notable success until into his 30s. Over time, he expanded his goal to include finding ways to empower other artists as well. He founded Malawi's first art education center for adults, Art House Africa, and eventually expanded the organization to incorporate children's classes as well. His CNN interview can be found at <http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/01/world/africa/elson-kambalu-malawian-artist/>.

Kambalu shares many images of his work on his facebook and twitter pages. In particular in his photography, he often plays with silhouettes on bold sunsets and mists to showcase Malawian people and key objects in the landscape. Examples of sources to find his work are listed below.

- Twitter (@elsonkambalu) → posts on October 5, 2016 and February 8, 2016
- Facebook (Elson Aaron Kambalu) → photos → albums: "Lake of Stars Festival in Pictures" (fall 2015); "Karonga, Northern Malawi, Beautiful" (March 2016); "Chickangawa" (April 2016); "Lilongwe – Hometown" (April 2016); and "Lake of Stars" (September 2016).

Note: because social media is such a flexible form, we recommend previewing the links relatively close to the time that you view them with the class.

For the extension, you might opt to create Kambalu-inspired images. As you read the visualisation, encourage students to sketch particular images that pop into their heads. It need not be a complete scene, simply bits and pieces that stand out to them as they go will give them a

starting point. As a class, view some examples of Kambalu's work, including shots of both people and objects. For the background, you might allow students to select and print images of colourful or otherwise bold skies, or work with painting techniques to create their own. From there, students can pick out 1-3 elements (depending on scale) from their sketch to outline and cut from black paper. They can then glue this to their background to complete the image. As they create their picture, you might encourage students to engage in some reflection:

- Think about detail work in silhouettes like this. How is emotion or energy conveyed through posture or natural elements?
- Why might Kambalu have chosen the specific postures or items that he did?
- What do they think he is trying to share about the country he loves through the image?
- Why does the silhouette they have chosen stand out to them?

### *Visualisation*

A rooster at a nearby house crows. I stretch slowly on my cot, my eyes still squeezed shut, but I can hear my brothers and sisters moving around. My mother, I'm sure, is already up starting the fire. It has been a better growing season this year, so we will be able to have breakfast before we go to school. I pull on my clothes and stretch even taller, then sneeze. The thatched roof makes me do that sometimes. Because it is a Wednesday, I get to wear my regular clothes instead of my uniform. Since so many kids at our school only have one set of school clothes, they do this so that our parents can wash and mend them.

I go outside and see my mother crouched in front of the fire. She is reheating nsima, maize porridge, from last night. It is light, easy to scoop out of the pot. This will be handy, as I will have to poke and prod some of my younger siblings and cousins to get them along the way for school. I am not the oldest, but my sister has already finished Standard 8, so she stays home and helps there instead. High school is just so expensive that my parents cannot afford to send her right now. My older brother too, is staying home to help father till some of the tougher soil. He was halfway through Standard 6 when he started helping father every day, but my parents say they will send him back next year as long as the crops hold out. The land is much softer here than where we lived before, at least. My uncle passed away from pneumonia last year and so we moved in with my aunt and her four children. Between the little ones and all their friends, I often can't keep up with all of the noise and giggles and whooshing bodies. I am hoping that if my brother and sister are able to help out at home enough, my parents will be able to send me to high school. The uniforms and supplies can be expensive, even if school itself is free. My parents are determined one of us will finish all of school, but I don't know if it will be me.

The sun is peeking up, so I scoop some porridge out of the pot. Mother scolds me that it will burn, but I quickly blow on it. I have a tough, strong body and a job to do. It is up to me to begin finding all the little ones to get some food and walk to school. I will drop the two youngest off at the nearby community center building for preschool with the volunteer ladies, but the rest go to primary with me. I get them lined up, watching the slowest lick the last of the porridge off their fingers and we set off down the dirt road. Our neighbour's goats are beginning to kick up a ruckus. She just bought two new babies and they are so sweet, but they run around and bleat loudly much of the day. I hope I will get to play with them after school. We drop the little ones

off – the volunteer ladies welcome them with big smiles, though not much else. Our primary school gets a little money and supplies from the government, sometimes, but the preschool does not get any so it is hard to buy books and toys.

We take a shortcut through a maize field to get to our primary school. Many others have taken this path before us – it is beaten down. I send all of the others ahead of me and follow at the back, the tall stocks lightly grazing my shoulders in a kind of light little tickle. The weather is warm now, but relatively dry. It is not so bad here, but where we used to live the rainy season washed away part of the school building. Some years we were unable to go back for months at a time. We break through the edge of the field to a wide dirt road. About 20 more minutes of walking on our sandaled feet and we will arrive at the school. It is a kind of big, brick hut with latrines dug out back. There are also some plants growing around the front. Sometimes the teacher gives us large hoes and we help to break up the soil here too. It's especially funny to watch the standard 1s and 2s – the tools are larger than they are, but most of them are very determined to help. Those days can offer lots of giggles.

There is an extra roofed structure with open walls built off the side of the building. The village here has gotten so big that there was no longer enough room in the school house to fit all of us. They had enough money to build the extra shelter, but not to hire a second teacher. We alternate days between the big kids and the little kids in the building, and our teacher tries to help all of us. I think there are more than 80 children here now, but it is hard to tell. Some, like my brother, come to school off and on so it can take a while to finish. In my class there are tall gangly young men and fully developed young ladies, older teenagers. Other children cannot always attend due to sickness, and others become orphaned and move. But today the big kids are in the school room. It is dim, but there are cut out squares in the brick walls that allow shafts of light to shine in. I settle in on the dirt floor with two of my friends. The teacher begins a math lesson, drawing with chalk onto the wall. There are a few piles of tattered books stacked in the corner. When I was in Standard 4, we had a few math textbooks to share. The government has not been able to send us new books for a while, though, and most of the Standard 5 math books are too worn to use. When it comes time for English and Chichewa, our language classes, there are enough for us each to sit side by side with a friend and share a book.

We stay at school a few hours, and then I have to herd all of the children back home again. We begin our chores right away. My sister has already been to the water pump down the hill several times, bringing back big plastic buckets balanced on her head. If you try to carry it in front of your body, too much slops out and it takes forever to bring back enough. She sets the freshest one down next to me and wipes the sweat from her forehead. Now that it is early afternoon, it is almost 30 degrees. The bucket is orange, but I can see flecks of the old white-grey logo on it. It is well cleaned out now, though. I splash some on my face, but not too much. I learned how to balance the jug a long time ago, but I don't like going to replace water if I don't have to – it takes too long. Today it is my job to sweep the dirt outside the front of the house smooth. Many of the younger children go out to find pieces of dry wood to keep the fire going. My brother has had a productive day, so father will send him over to the nearby church. A charity group raised money to buy some footballs, so he will go kick the ball around for some fun with a few other boys. If enough arrive, they will have a big game. He is taking a few of my younger sisters with him. They will be able to play their own games in big circles with the other

children their age. We know lots of games, but my favourites are the ones with lots of singing. Normally I go with them, but today I will stay home. I have a little bit of homework to do, and we are running low on kerosene. I don't want to have to use it up lighting a lamp tonight to work.

The children return with my brother a little over an hour later. Soon the sun will be setting, oozing bright reds and oranges across the sky. I have finished my homework, so I have a little time to help feed the neighbour's goats with her. She is starting a business with them, teaming up with some other ladies in the village to get a loan. One of the babies snuggles in to me and gives a quiet, happy bleat. I can smell the potatoes my mother is cooking, even from three huts over, so I know it is about time to go home. We sit together at a low table and pass dinner around. I look at all the faces of my family members, the firelight from outside lighting up their faces in flashes and flickers. There are many of us, and we make a good team.

### Let's See the Numbers

Curriculum Links: Social Studies 6, B2.2; Math 6/7/8 Proportional & Data Relationships

Materials: N/A

*That's my son....He is the second son I have lost to AIDS. I have lost three daughters, too.*

- Gogo

Numbers cannot tell us the whole story, but they can help to give some insight into how many people share certain experiences. In this exercise, students will use their bodies to represent different statistics related to life in Malawi. If space is tight, you may number students and mix them up in a line, then ask certain number ranges to step forward or back to help represent values (mixing up the order avoids always having groups step forward in blocks). Alternately, you might have students stay at their desks, and use gestures like sitting vs. standing, holding up a hand or a certain number of fingers, etc. Once you work through some examples with students, split them into groups and give each group a few more statistics. They can determine how to represent them as a group, and then share with the rest of the class. Following are some examples of statistics and movements. In selecting different values to share, you might consider what you feel your students will be most surprised by or able to connect with.

#### ***Sample Statistics with Movements***

- Ask students 1-6 to stand up/step forward and hold up 10 fingers. Explain to the class that each of these students represent 10 children. This is the number of students that the government recommends be in a class for every one teacher (60:1). Ask students 7-9 to also stand up and hold up 10 fingers. The new total is the number of students that many teachers support in public schools, especially in rural areas (90:1).
- In the next set of statistics, reporting was done based only on male/female as gender options. You might take some time to discuss with your students how many studies often fail to recognize non-binary identities, one of many systemic practices that can contribute to marginalization and often stigma – an important issue throughout the unit. However, we still feel that it is important to understand that women in particular face some major challenges in Malawi, and so have included some of this information.

Depending on the composition of your class, you might opt organize your students in ways other than their own identified gender as you explore the following statistics, ultimately creating one group that represents those identified in the study as females, and another to stand in for those identified in the study as males.

- Explain that those representing females are 3% more likely to contract HIV
- Ask 40% of the female representatives to step forward, and 40% of the male representatives to step back (your approach will depend on your class size). The individuals who are forward represent the proportion of individuals of that gender over the age of 25 that have a secondary (i.e., Gr.10-12) education
- Have students reorganize back into their line. Ask every fourth individual representing males to step back, and every third person representing females to step back. Those standing forward represent roughly the proportion of adults that UNESCO believes were literate in 2015 (73% of males and 59% of females).
- Have all students whose number is a multiple of five (or otherwise enough to represent about 20%) move to the front of the room. This represents the number of students who are repeating a year of education as a result of absenteeism. Causes include school inaccessibility during rainy season, illness of the student, illness or death of a family member, needing to help support family at home and early pregnancy.
- Ask students 1-8 to stand at the front of the room, with student 1's back to the rest of the group. Malawians are 7x more likely to own a cell phone than subscribe to internet (most recent reports indicate 6 114 300 cell users vs. 870 000 internet subscribers)
- Ask odd numbered students to sit down. Those sitting represent the number of adults who report knowing all the main ways of preventing HIV transmission. Studies show that the longer a young person is in school, the more likely they are to know how to prevent HIV and the less likely they are to contract it. This is especially true for girls.
- Ask students to get into groups of 10. Ask all but one member of each group to sit down. Those standing represent the number of adults living with HIV.
- Ask students to get into groups of 3. Many government-funded schools lack basic resources, including blackboards and desks. In the schools that do have them, it is not uncommon for up to 3 students to share each desk.
- Ask students whose numbers are multiples of 4 to remain standing while everyone else sits. The standing students represent the proportion of people who are cell phone subscribers. Cell signal in Malawi is typically only available in urban areas (i.e., where less than a quarter of the overall population actually lives.), and even within those areas reception is often quite poor.

Additional statistics you may want to substitute or incorporate include:

- 40% of the country's export revenue comes from tobacco sales
- About 60% of teachers in Malawi are male
- Only about 20% of teachers reach retirement while still working in education. 30% currently pass away during their teaching career. While there are a variety of factors that contribute to this statistic, one of the ways HIV/AIDS indirectly influences children's

lives is increased absenteeism and death of thousands of infected teachers each year. The remaining individuals will leave the profession to pursue other work.

- About 73% of people in Malawi live below the international poverty line.
- Most public schools in Malawi are in session for about 3-4 hours per day (compared to 6-7 in Canada, not including extracurricular activities)
- Government policy states that there should be one copy available of all relevant textbooks to each individual student (i.e., 1 for English, 1 for Chichewa – one of the more common languages – and 1 for mathematics, at each grade level). In reality, however, only about 40% of schools are able to provide at least one language studies textbook for every two students. About 60% of schools require three or more students to share each language studies book. The statistics become slightly worse when mathematics books are factored in. Textbook availability also varies by grade; in some of the lower levels, the average student to book ratio can be as dire as 18:1.
- The World Health Organization recommends that individuals consume about 200L of milk annually; however, Malawi's consumption averages to only 5L/person each year.
- 80% of the population in Malawi lives in rural areas (by contrast, as of 2011, 81% of Canadians lived in urban areas and 19% in rural areas according to Statistics Canada).
- Malawi has been a multi-party state for the past 23 years (you might ask students to find groups where the sum of their ages roughly totals this value, give or take a few years). By comparison, Canada has had multiple federal parties since Confederation in 1867.

### What is HIV/AIDS?

Curriculum Links: Health and Physical Education – (Gr.6) C3.3, (Gr. 7) C1.5, (Gr.8) C2.4; Language, Media Studies 6/7/8 – 1.2, 2.2; Science and Technology 8, Cells – 1.2, 3.6.

Materials:

- Projector, laptop and wifi or downloaded version of one of the videos
- Optional: handout of questions (extension video)

*There is a lion in the village now. It is called AIDS and it is carrying away our children.*

- Gogo

The following YouTube videos provide some information to help students review and expand their knowledge of HIV/AIDS. There is a brief description of the style and contents of each clip, as well as particular considerations such as explicit references to safe-sex practices. The third suggested clip is the longest option, but discusses related issues such as stigma in greater depth. A series of viewing questions is included to pair with this video.

Short video intros to the topic of HIV/AIDs:

- a) “HIV and AIDS – explained in a simple way” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzXgCW9YcNg>

This clip contains:

- A short, scientifically based explanation of what HIV/AIDS is and how it interacts with the immune system
  - Cartoon-style visuals and metaphors to underscore the facts
  - A brief history of the discovery of the disease, including references to the resulting discrimination of gay individuals
  - A quick review of preventative measures towards the spread of HIV, as well as a basic explanation of how medications act on the virus
  - A more western-focus on the discovery and impact of the disease (although it does draw attention to the lack of medication access in sub-Saharan Africa)
  - Explicit discussion of safe-sex practices
- b) “Explaining HIV and AIDS for kids” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHtC1JpAQPI>

This clip contains:

- A brief, scientifically based explanation of how HIV/AIDS interacts with the body, supported by visuals
- A focus on making the distinction between what it means to have HIV vs. AIDS
- Statistics of infection rates on a yearly, daily and hourly basis, as well as the prevalence of infection in Africa compared to the overall HIV-positive population.

Extension Video: Introducing AIDS and Issues of Stigma

“HIV/AIDS Education and Awareness” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqlyEYOI754>

This video contains:

- A lengthier exploration of the impact of HIV/AIDs, covering topics such as the spread of the disease, how it interacts with the immune system, and social impacts of HIV
- Characters Marla, Nicholas and Eddie the dog as guides
- An attention to myths surrounding the spread of the disease
- Brief but explicit references to safe sex practices
- A spoken-word poem on the social impact of AIDS and the importance of empathy
- Helpful repetition of key points

Rather than assigning all students the “understanding” questions, you might opt to split students into groups that are each responsible for a few. After watching the video, discuss all the answers as a class. You might have a class discussion of the reflecting questions, do a think-pair-share, a gallery walk, or pick two or three for an exit card.

## *HIV/AIDS Education and Awareness – Video Viewing*

View the video and respond to the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

### **Understanding**

1. Define:
  - a) Stigma
  - b) Discrimination
2. What are 3 myths about ways HIV can be contracted (hint: 'No HIV Risk')?
3. List 2 reasons why the sister in the story is sad.
4. How can you tell if someone has HIV?
5. In the story, the brother is HIV-negative and the sister is HIV-positive. What does this mean?
6. What are the 3 ways that HIV can be spread?
7. Does someone have to be sexually active to contract HIV? Explain.
8. What happens to the immune system when a person becomes infected by HIV?
9. What does AIDS stand for?
10. What is the difference between being HIV-positive, and having AIDS?
11. What should someone who is HIV-positive make sure to do? List 2 things.

### **Reflecting**

12. Why do you think the brother and sister telling the first story were animated with their faces always in shadow?
13. Why do you think the video starts with the story of the brother and sister before explaining the science behind how the disease affects the body?
14. What do you think is the purpose of the empathy poem near the end of the video?
15. What is the difference between "stigma" and "discrimination?" What are some other characteristics that you know are "stigmatized" or that result in people being "discriminated" against?



## The Rights of the Child

Curriculum Links: The Arts, Drama – B1, B2.1; Social Studies 6 – B1.2, B2.2; Geography 8 – B1, B1.3; Language, Reading – 1.1, 1.4, 1.6

Materials:

- Printouts of the UN Rights of the Child

*Aunt Agnes took everything from Junie and me...All we had to wear was our school uniforms and our night dresses...When I tried to stand up for us, I would get punished.*

- Binti

When Binti and her siblings move in with their aunts and uncles, it is clear that the adults are prioritizing their own children's needs over the now-orphaned siblings. Despite harsh treatment and even abuse, the children do their best to remain hopeful and find ways out for themselves. Unfortunately, the challenges they face are all too common for HIV/AIDS orphans in Africa. To improve the status of children around the globe, the United Nations established the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, although most countries have agreed upon the rights, there are many children whose needs are still not met – even here in Canada. This activity allows students to review the Rights of the Child and compare them to the play. What are some ways in which Binti and the other children were not properly protected?

As a class or in pairs, allow students to read through the Rights of the Child. Depending on your class, you may select the version of the rights in “child friendly language,” or the UNICEF Fact Sheet. You may wish to assign certain ‘article’ ranges to different groups of students and let them know they will be summarizing their section for the rest of the class. Come back as a group – was there anything the students found confusing? Surprising?

Next, break students into groups of 4-6. Ask them to think back to the play and identify which of the rights Binti and the other children were denied. Have them place stars next to the rights that were compromised on their sheet. How many did they find? As an optional step, you may ask each group to select five of the starred rights and list, on a piece of paper, the article number and a specific example of how it was unfulfilled in the play. They can submit this list to the teacher. Finally, students can compose a dramatic response to these issues.

Option A – ask each group to select 3-5 rights that were compromised in the play. Using choral speech skills and a gesture for each, ask them to create a short but dynamic piece highlighting those rights. Present their ‘Composition of Rights’ to the rest of the class.

Option B – ask each group to select 3 rights that were compromised in the play. Using pairs of tableaux, students can represent how each right went unfulfilled in the play and what it might have looked like if the right was upheld. Allow students some freedom in how they would like to order the series (e.g. alternating unfulfilled/upheld? All the unfulfilled moments followed by all the moments that could have been?) Share with the class. Can other students identify which right is being highlighted in each pair? Were there certain rights that were addressed more often than others? Why do students think this is?

### Reflection Questions

- Which of the Rights of the Child did you have the strongest emotional reaction to? In 2-3 sentences, explain why you think this might be the case.

- Do you feel that the Rights of the Child cover all the important things? Why or why not? If you feel it doesn't, what is a right that you would add?

Links:

- Rights in Child Friendly Language: <https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf>
- UNICEF Fact Sheet Summary: [https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights\\_overview.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf)

## Being Thoughtful Supporters

Curriculum Links: Social Studies 6 – B1.2; Geography 8 – B1.2, B3.5; Language 6/7/8, Reading 1.4, 1.6 & Media Literacy 1.2

Materials:

- Somewhere to record ideas during whole-class discussion (e.g., whiteboard)
- Internet access and personal devices OR copies of the organization profile handout

*Go out to the front office. They'll give you some papers that will explain all that we are doing here. Storytime also publishes comic books on HIV/AIDS, nutrition and all sorts of things.*

- Mr. Wajiru

There are many things that motivate us. Sometimes we take actions for our own well-being, and sometimes we take action for the well-being of others. Just like individuals, organizations have goals and tasks. “Gogo’s Family” and the Storytime organization have a goal of providing education through various types of media, which Mr. Wajiru reminds the reporter. This exercise reviews the difference between IGOs, NGOs and MNCs and asks students to think critically about the goals that influence organizational actions.

Begin with a discussion of goals or motivations with your students. You might even start by providing a personal anecdote and asking students to identify what you were trying to achieve through the actions that you took. Building from there, you might remind students that organizations have goals too. Ask them to brainstorm the main goal(s) of:

- A responsible government
- A business
- A charity that runs volunteer programs
- An advocacy group

Try to encourage students to recognize how money fits into or influences goals. For example, it might be a part of an organization’s motivation, or it might limit some goals. Explain to students that while these types of groups may work on a local basis, many work in multiple countries.

Review the definition of IGO, NGO and MNC with students. You can then provide them with the handout (included following) with profiles of different organizations or allow students to peruse the organizations’ websites in order to determine which category each falls under. If you are allowing students to do a web search, you might first work as a class or split them into small groups to determine how they are going to approach their search. What kind of information do they need to determine what kind of organization they are looking at? What kinds of pages on

the websites might contain this type of information? Review student responses or discoveries from their web search. You might also choose to debrief the search; what information was hard to find? Was there anything that was in an unexpected place?

Now that students have seen some examples of each type of organization, ask them to think back to the organizational goals they brainstormed. IGOs are usually made up of governments, MNCs are typically businesses, and NGOs may engage in fundraising, provision of goods and services, and advocacy. Thinking about those goals and the activities of the different types of organisations, ask students to think of a few challenges that each type of organization might face or create. IGOs might run into challenges if member nations disagree as a result of differing values, for example. NGOs that rely on donations might not be able to support all of their programs each year because their income stream can be especially variable, or may find that their efforts are blocked by governments of the countries where they are trying to help. MNCs may contribute to inequitable distribution of resources by paying low wages to the labourers while the heads of companies in more affluent urban areas benefit from the profits.

#### Extension Option:

Not all organizations are equally responsible. If your students have heard of sweat shop labour, they know that some companies underpay and mistreat their employees. For some businesses, outsourcing work is a way to decrease costs and/or increase production speed by operating in countries that have fewer human rights protections. Similarly, charities can vary in how cost-effective they are in their operations. It can be helpful to do a little homework to ensure that corporations are treating employees properly and charities are making the best use of funds. As a class, conduct an investigation to figure out where students can find resources that they can use to make informed decisions. Most charities and many businesses now include an “accountability” or “transparency” page on their websites. Annual reports can also be a great place to start. In addition, there are a number of third party evaluators that review such organizations. Regroup. What have students discovered? What resources were most helpful? Did they learn anything that challenged their view of a particular organization?

#### Reflection Question

- If you were going to form your own international organization, what would its purpose be? Would you want it to be an IGO, an NGO, or an MNC? Why?

#### For the Teacher: Organizations Profiled

- OXFAM – an international rights advocacy group working to end poverty. With a branch in Malawi, this NGO’s focus on empowering women and providing the means for sustainable family businesses aligns well with Binti’s story.
- The United Nations – this IGO is one of the key international affairs organizations, particularly with regards to safety and security.
- NIKE Inc. – a sportswear company. With stores in 120 countries and factories in 42 (most of which are sub-contracted), Nike has a clear commercial focus. However, they also support a variety of youth empowerment initiatives spanning both athletics and arts, as well as the Special Olympics. Nike offers a recognizable example to students and can

also be used as a base for discussion of the controversy surrounding many MNCs, where outsourcing provides cheap labour and materials to increase profit margins.

- The Jane Goodall Institute – an NGO focused on nature conservation on an international scale. While many of the organizations discussed in this unit place an emphasis on human rights, the JGI aims to educate about the environment, while simultaneously viewing human health and empowerment as the first step towards protecting our natural world.
- The Wikimedia Foundation – the organization created to sustain the free status of the various wiki initiatives is both a not-for-profit organization and an MNC, as it was incorporated in 2003. It is included to show the diversity of the MNC category.

## *Classifying International Organizations*

Read through the following profiles of different organizations and compare them to the definitions of IGO, MNC, and NGO. In the designated spot, identify which category you think each organization fits into.

**Intergovernmental Organization (IGO)** - an organization made up of 2 or more sovereign states, or of other IGOs, focused on a particular goal or series of goals. An IGO is officially created through formal agreements such as treaties or charters.

→ “Sovereign State” refers to a territory with defined borders that has its own independent government to create laws for its people. For example, since 1867 when Canada gained its independence, it has been a sovereign state organized by the federal government. However, when settlers first came here, Canada was controlled by the ruler of England so was a colony instead.

**Multi-national Corporation (MNC)** – can also be referred to as a transnational corporation. Any group of individuals who have registered to operate as one single body, usually for the purposes of business, are considered a corporation. The organization becomes an MNC when they operate in multiple countries at the same time.

**Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)** – any group of individuals or organizations that are not related to the government and have come together voluntarily to provide services or advocate for the rights or needs of others. The large majority of these organizations are not-for-profit, i.e., they only seek enough funds to sustain their operations and support their causes. Although they are typically not created by a government, they may receive money from the government as well as individual and organizational donations and other fundraising efforts. NGOs may work on a local, national, or international scale.

Review the profiles of the following organizations. Identify whether each is an IGO, NGO, or MNC.

### **OXFAM**

OXFAM is an organization with 19 branches working in 90 countries. OXFAM’s Canada branch in particular is operating in 17 different countries, including Malawi. The organization’s goal is to help families overcome inequality and poverty, with a special focus on women’s rights. They advocate for official policy changes, but also try to provide more general education to change people’s attitudes and behaviours. They also help provide people with services such as emergency relief after events like weather disasters. Donations and volunteer efforts also allow them to provide concrete resources for health and businesses such as clean water and livestock. OXFAM is governed by a board of directors, and the organization acts through both paid staff

and volunteers. They are funded by individual donors, government grants, and other organizations.

I think OXFAM is a(n): \_\_\_\_\_

### **The United Nations**

The United Nations, founded by Charter in 1945, is an organization composed of 193 member states. Due to the scale of the organization, it address a variety of issues such as peace, climate change, human rights, health emergencies, and gender equality. At present, they have set a series of millennium development goals to try to address key global issues. If you have ever read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or Convention of the Rights of the Child, you have seen a document created by the UN. The UN takes action in a variety of ways. For example, when concerned with human rights or international disputes, they may investigate violations, help to negotiate treaties, deploy member nations' peacekeeping troops, and institute economic sanctions on nations that fail to uphold certain standards. Their environmental efforts include research and education programs, developing sustainable energy initiatives and working with governments to develop risk reduction plans for weather disasters. Member nations discuss issues and make decision through a variety of committees and councils, such as the General Assembly, Security Council, and International Court of Justice. All the pieces of the organization are overseen by the Secretary-General, appointed by the General Assembly based on the Security Council's recommendation, who acts as both an administrator and advocate.

I think the United Nations is a(n): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Nike, Inc.**

Nike is an organization that produces and sells sports products, operating in over 120 countries. Nike products are made in factories in 42 different countries, largely in Asia and South America. The company mission is to "bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world" and note that "if you have a body, you are an athlete." Nike also partners with organisations in countries such as Brasil, China, Russia and Turkey to support active school programs. They also work with community organizations and football clubs in Europe to help make physical activity and team sports more accessible to children. Nike is also a sponsor of the Special Olympics. The organization is governed by a board and administrative team. It is funded through profits from product sales and investors.

I think NIKE Inc. is a(n): \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Jane Goodall Institute**

The Jane Goodall Institute is an organization focused on nature conservation, in particular chimpanzees and their habitats. Jane Goodall was a researcher who spent extensive periods living with and studying chimpanzees; in addition to making key scientific discoveries related to chimps and chimp behaviour, she also developed a belief that everything is connected. As a result, JGI is involved in a wide variety of initiatives, many of which start with ensuring

human needs are met and opportunities are opened for underprivileged groups. For example, the institute helps to provide clean water to communities, jobs and scholarships for women, and leadership programs for youth in over 100 countries. They work with communities near key natural areas, especially chimp habitats, to develop conservation efforts specific to their area. When possible, they tie these efforts to business initiatives that benefit the community as well, such as developing environmentally responsible apiaries, farms, and coffee plantations. JGI also continues to engage in conservation research, including tracking information about variety and population of species in at-risk areas. They provide education through billboards and speaking tours alongside peer and youth education programs. The organization is governed by a board of directors, and its work is carried out by both paid staff members and volunteers. They are funded by government grants and donations from individuals, businesses, charities, and schools

I think the Jane Goodall Institute is a(n): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Wikimedia Foundation Incorporated (WMF)**

The Wikimedia Foundation is a not-for-profit that owns internet domain names of wiki-related projects. Its purpose is to help ensure that wikimedia's open-content projects have enough funding to remain free to web searches. Its projects include Wikipedia, wikiversity, wikinews and wikibooks. Wikimedia can be accessed and edited by users around the world. Although When wikipedia was originally developed in 2001, it was funded by a for-profit organization called Bomis. This proved to be too expensive, so the Wikimedia Foundation was formed as a charity to support the projects. It became an incorporated entity in the US in June 2003. The corporation has also been recognized in Japan and the European Union. The foundation has 280 employees, and is overseen by a board and executive director. It is funded by public donations and grants.

I think the Wikimedia Foundation is a(n): \_\_\_\_\_

## Being Thoughtful Supporters – Grade 8 Extension

Curriculum Links: Geography – B3.5; Language, Reading 1.4, 1.6 & Media Literacy 1.2, 1.6, 2.1  
Materials:

- Printouts of the following articles or internet access and personal devices
- Chart paper or white board

*Me, Kwasi and Memory were running the new Heaven Shop Coffin business and taking care of ourselves and the little cousins. When we had extra, we shared it. That's how Gogo would have wanted it.*

- Binti

When Canadians have extra, it is wonderful when they look to charities to share it. Fortunately, there are a number of charities around the globe making a positive impact on human and environmental well-being. However, whether we are supporting these groups with our money or our time, it is important to ensure that they too are being responsible, covering their basic operating costs and then maximizes each dollar spent and minute given. This exercise aims to help students explore strategies for making informed decisions about how to share their extra.

Split students into groups and provide each with access to one of the following sources on Free the Children (now known as We Charity) and their partner organization, Me to We. A variety of types of pieces are included to help students consider issues such as bias and reliability. They also vary in complexity, so you may choose to plan groups ahead of time to provide sources that challenge students based on their level of readiness. You might approach this in one of two ways:

- a) Have each group read one article, then discuss the provided questions and record key ideas. Ask students to list pros and cons about the organization(s) based on the article they were provided. You may ask them to highlight or otherwise reference the statements in the article that support their arguments so they can refer back to their 'proof'. Use these for a class discussion to create a master pro-con list or have an informal debate about whether the class members would feel comfortable donating to the charity.
- b) Have each group read one source, then discuss the accompanying questions and record key ideas. They are going to be an 'expert' on that particular information source. Next, mix up the groups in a jig saw so that all groups have at least one 'expert' for each article. Ask each student to summarize their findings to their group mates. Then have each group determine one strength of the organization, one concern about the organization, and one way the organization could improve. Share these with the class.

Reflection Question: After your investigation today, would you support this charity? Why? Suggest 2-3 ways they could be more accountable?

Sample Sources:

1. Charity Intelligence – review of We Charity/Me to We. This website, designed to review the efficacy of different charities, provides specific facts about We Charity's finances and impact in target areas. In general, many of the statistics reflect notable positive change,



particularly in education for girls and improved water access in developing countries. There is also a list of funding sources and expenditures. NOTE: the introduction to the charities provided here might be beneficial to review with all students before splitting into groups, depending on the class' familiarity with Me to We and We Day.

<https://www.charityintelligence.ca/charity-details/82-we-charity-free-the-children>

2. Teacher's Blog Review – a teacher shares her personal We Day experience. This personal blog entry critiques We Day, one of Me to We's main advocacy-raising pushes in North America and the UK. Although the basis of the piece is personal opinion, she includes some valid criticism and some of her basic observations about the event are reflected in other articles. Some of the language is a little complex, especially for the Gr. 6 level, and it does focus on a teacher's perspective rather than working from the position of a student. However, this can be a good basis for considering bias and fact vs. opinion.  
<http://theyee.ca/Opinion/2013/10/30/A-Teachers-Critique-of-We-Day/>
3. Huffington Post UK – The Damaging Effect of Volun-tourism. Although there is some clear bias throughout the article, it provides some clear context about what We Day is and how it works, before moving into a discussion of volun-tourism and some of the negative impacts it can have on communities.  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/iram-sarwar/voluntourism-travelling\\_b\\_4931814.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/iram-sarwar/voluntourism-travelling_b_4931814.html)
4. Glass Door Reviews – the perspective of Me to We employees. As this site in particular changes with regular reviews, this is one that should be reviewed shortly before providing access to students. Although employer reviews are a less common text for the classroom, this may be an interesting perspective for students to explore. Oftentimes, a full picture of an organization's attitudes and conduct can only be gained by including an understanding of the experiences of those who work within it.  
<https://www.glassdoor.ca/Reviews/Me-To-We-Reviews-E704455.htm>
5. Me to We – the partner charity's own account of their impact. You might encourage the experts on sources 1 and 5 in particular to compare notes – do their findings align?  
<https://www.metowe.com/about-us/our-impact/>
6. We Charity Financials – the core charity's overview of financials and partnerships with organizations like West Jet. Although brief, the use of bar graphs and images allows for an examination of text features within the overall piece.  
<https://www.we.org/about-we-charity/financials/>

## *Critical Questioning – Perspectives on We Charity/Me to We*

Read the article assigned to your group and discuss the following questions. Jot down key ideas on a separate piece of paper.

### BEFORE READING:

1. Who is the author and/or the organization? Can you think of any reasons they might have had a bias?

### DURING READING

2. Are there any terms, statements or text features that you find unfamiliar or confusing? Underline 1-2 and look them up or discuss with another member of your group.

### AFTER READING

3. What is the author's overall argument or impression?
4. What facts are used to support the author's key points?
5. What features of the article, if any, help you understand their point better?
6. Are there any specific statements that reflect bias in the writing of the article? Are there any other text features that suggest to you that bias might be present?

## Taking out a Micro-Loan

Created by Emily Dyson, OCT.

Curriculum Links: The Arts, Drama 6/7/8 – B1.1; Mathematics 6/7/8 – Quantity Relationships, Operational Sense, Data Relationships

Materials:

- Worksheet

*Things go wrong. People get sick. We should be planning for when things don't go well. We should be putting money aside.*

- Junie

### Part I: See the Faces

Students might be familiar with the concept of going to the bank and getting a loan here in Canada, but did they know that in some places around the world, loans can start as small as \$50? When Junie does the books for the coffin business in Blantyre, she is dismayed that they are struggling to save funds and emphasizes the importance of financial security. In developing nations like Malawi, there are a number of families who obtain these microloans to run businesses that will help them achieve this same notion of security that Junie advocates for. The Micro Loan Foundation (MLF), based out of the UK, is one of many charities that provides microloans – and they report that 60% of their clients are able to “save regularly.” MLF focuses on female clients in rural areas of Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Women organize into groups of about 10-15 to qualify for a loan. This helps MLF be more efficient and ensures that the women have a support system. In addition to the loan, clients are given business and financial literacy courses. Overall, MLF has 140 000 clients with 500 000, 57% of clients see an increase in household income as a result of how they use their loan and 71% of clients are “food secure”

The following link includes profiles of some of the women that MLF has loaned funds to in Malawi. After sharing some of the context information with your students, and explaining the concept of a micro-loan, you might opt to read some of the profiles together.

<https://www.microloanfoundation.org.uk/Files/MicroLoan%20Case%20Studies%20Booklet.pdf>

### Extension

Split students into small groups and provide each one with a woman and her story. Ask them to present that client's experience in a 1-2 minute piece. Depending on what other activities you have chosen to explore in the unit and your students' drama background, you might provide additional expectations such as including at least 2 tableaux, incorporating soundscape and/or actor-produced sound effects (i.e., not recorded), or using at least 3 elements of choral speech.

### Part 2: See the Numbers

The following math activities allow students to apply their math skills in a microloan case study. Although the Part A scenario is fictional, it's based on the reality of many real clients. The values in Part B come directly from MLF's finance reports, so when students complete this exercise they are working directly with actual-world values.

## *Applying the Math of MicroLoans*

### **Part A**

You and your family live in Malawi and have recently received the happy news that you are expecting another child. However, in order to provide food and school supplies for your growing family, you will need to find a way to make more money. You have spoken with others in the community and have found four other like-minded individuals who would like to start businesses. Your business will focus on weaving blankets and rugs, as well as repairing used clothes so that they can be used again by others.

To be able to start this new business you must find a location to run the business, as well as buy all of the materials required for weaving and repairing items of clothing. To buy a small shop it will cost \$38 and to buy all of the materials to get the shop started it will cost \$12. Along with these initial costs, you will need to spend approximately \$5 a month on new materials. To be able to afford all of these costs you will need to take out a loan. Fortunately, a MicroLoan Loan Officer from the MicroLoan Foundation lives in a nearby village, and is able to come meet with you and your colleagues. As a group, you all receive training from the Officer, and then you are given your loan.

When taking out the loan you would like to be able to pay off all of the initial costs, as well as be able to support the new business for the first 3 months.

How much should you be asking the Loan Officer for?

Initial Costs = \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly Costs x Months = \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Loan = Total Initial Costs + Total Monthly Costs

= \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_

= \_\_\_\_\_

If you are paying 2% interest every month on the loan, how much money will you owe the MicroLoan Foundation after 10 months?

Convert 2% to a decimal...

\_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 100 = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Interest = 2% as Decimal x Months x Total Loan

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

Total Loan with Interest = Total Interest + Total Loan

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}} + \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

If you want to make even payments each of the 10 months, how much will you be required back to MicroLoan each month?

Monthly Payments = Total Loan with Interest ÷ Months

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \div \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

It costs someone \$1 to have their clothes repaired and \$4 for a woven rug. If the business sell 5 rugs and repairs 6 clothes in a month how much money will they earn?

Money from Rugs = Cost of Rug x Number of Rugs Sold

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

Money from Clothes = Cost of Repairing Clothes x Number of Clothes Repaired

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

Total Money Earned = Money from Rugs + Money from Clothes

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}} + \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

$$= \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

How much money will you have leftover if you must pay your monthly payments?

Profit = Total Money Earned – Monthly Payments

= \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

= \_\_\_\_\_

### Part B

Looking back at the year 2015, the MicroLoan Foundation gave out 50,000 loans to 26,000 clients.

	Malawi			
	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>Loan Book</b>				
Number of loans made (000s)	50	67	63	61
Number of clients (000's)	26	30	27	23
Average value of loans made (GBP)	55	54	62	67
Repayment rate (%)	96	95	99	99

How much money approximately did the MicroLoan Foundation give out to their clients?

Amount of Money Loaned = Number of Loans Made x Average Value of Loans

= \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

= \_\_\_\_\_

The clients have a 96% repayment rate. How much money is the company receiving back in payments?

Convert 96% to a decimal...

\_\_\_\_\_ ÷ 100 = \_\_\_\_\_

Repaid Money = Amount of Money Loaned x Percent

= \_\_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_\_

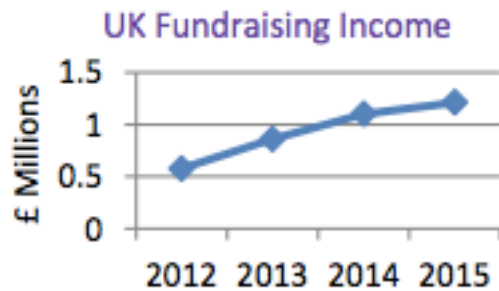
= \_\_\_\_\_

Unpaid Loans = Amount of Money Loaned – Repaid Money

= \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

= \_\_\_\_\_

To be able to support all of these unpaid loans the company must receive donations. In the year 2015 they raised approximately 1.25 million dollars (\$1,250,000).



With all of the fundraising, how much money do they have leftover to cover company costs to ensure that the MicroLoan Foundation can continue operating and providing loans to thousands of families.

Operating Cost Money = Fundraising Income – Unpaid Loans

= \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

= \_\_\_\_\_

## Advocacy with Integrity

Curriculum Links: Language 6/7/8, Oral Communication – 1.5, 1.6, 1.8

Materials:

- Computer and speakers, with wifi connection or downloaded file of the podcast
- Question handouts

*“There’s not much food,” Binti warns Kwasi when he arrives in Mulonje. “There’s more than I had at Uncle Mloza’s house...There’s more here than at prison too,” he points out. And in no time at all, Kwasi pays his happiness forward. “Kwasi was so much help at Gogo’s house,” Binti explains, “I introduced him to all the cousins. All the little ones loved him.”*

The cousins at Gogo’s house may not be rich, but they have each other and enough to get by on. Kwasi shows appreciation for what he has gained and an immediate willingness to contribute. In this exercise, students are asked to listen and respond to a UNIEF podcast interview with two African activists, who identify gratitude and community as some of the key driving factors in their success. The piece challenges listeners to reflect on how they identify challenges in their community, and where they can draw strength and motivation from. While this piece comes from UNICEF’s “Beyond the Classroom” series, the organization releases a number of podcasts, including pieces that focus on HIV awareness and peer education programs.

“UNICEF Podcast #81: If Something is Wrong Around You, if Something is not Working in Your Community, Act.” Hosted by Alex Goldmark.

[https://www.unicef.org/adolescence/index\\_70160.html](https://www.unicef.org/adolescence/index_70160.html)



## *'If Something is Not Working in Your Community, Act' – Podcast Listening*

Listen to “UNICEF Podcast #81: If Something is Wrong Around You, if Something is not Working in Your Community, Act” hosted by Alex Goldmark and respond to the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

### BEFORE LISTENING

1. Identify one strategy that you will use to engage in active listening.

### AFTER LISTENING

#### **Understanding**

2. In one sentence each, explain who Dr. Tererai Trent and Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg are/what they do (i.e., why are they appropriate guests for this podcast)?
3. Dr. Tererai Trent shares a story passed down from her mother about “burying her dreams.” What did she take away from that story?
4. Dr. Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg comments: “I work with a community that is very much, I like to say, my way of being, instead of being a period at the end of the sentence of this generosity that had come into my life, really being a comma to keep that story going and to make sure that story of generosity and impact continues, and especially continues when we think about young women and young African women even more specifically.” What is the metaphor she uses here? What is the goal that she is trying to explain?
5. What does Dr. Kamau-Rutenberg mean when she says she works “with an eye for the future, not an obligation to the past”? What emotion does she caution against using as a motivation for social change?
6. Dr. Kamau-Rutenberg explains that “so much of young women’s lives is circumscribed by a sense of obligation. A good girl does this, a good girl does that, and autonomy and choice is taken away by obligation. And so, I, because of the line of work that I’m in, because of what I do every day, I tend to think not so much about obligation but rather choice and autonomy and what you want to do. And so I see what I do as a way of investing forward, not feeling obliged.”
  - a. What does it mean to have “autonomy”?
  - b. In 1-2 sentences, describe the challenge that Dr. Kamau-Rutenberg states that many girls in her community face.
  - c. In 1-2 sentences, explain how autonomy fits into Dr. Kamau-Rutenberg’s vision of what it means to be an activist.

7. Dr. Trent notes that for her “it’s also a moral obligation; I come from a society that says ‘I am because we are,’ since we are, therefore, I am. And it becomes part of who I am, and...I have that moral obligation to give back to my community. No one is forcing me, but also recognizing that, to be who I am is because of others. I stand on the shoulders of many, many people and I have that moral thing to give back to my community.”
  - a. What does the saying mean, ‘I am because we are’?
  - b. Describe one way that you have been shaped by your relationship with others.
8. What does Dr. Kamau-Rutenberg mean when she argues that if you offer help “with gratitude and abundance” and a desire to “magnify that for others” you will be more successful than if you have a sense of guilt? Explain in 1-2 sentences.
9. Both of the doctors end by giving a piece of advice to young people who want to be leaders. Summarize one of these pieces of advice in 1-2 sentences.

### **Reflecting**

10. Alex Goldmark, the host, describes hearing “duty...passion, and even a little bit of defiance” in the women’s voices. What traits do you think advocates should have?
11. The speakers on the podcast discuss the idea that social change can be positive when it comes from a place of gratitude. What are some things that you are grateful for?
12. Dr. Trent comments that “I also realise that...in my community, we never had women as role models. Our role models have always been boys and men. And by educating girls now they see me coming back and building schools and promoting education, promoting equality. And I think it speaks a lot to, yes we can also have women as role models. These are the things that really drive me, to make more girls, more women, everybody, be a role model in our own community.” Here, Dr. Trent discusses how female role models were missing from her community when she was growing up. However, by trying to contribute back through education, she has become a female role model and hopes she has helped to create the circumstances where anyone can be a role model. Pick one of the next two options to respond to:
  - a. Identify a role model you appreciate having in your community and explain why.
  - b. Is there a type of role model you feel is missing from your community? Describe what is missing and explain why you think it would be beneficial.
13. What kinds of things do you hope to see in the future? (You might think about your school, community, city, country and/or the world)

## Young Voices: Spreading Awareness Through Art

Original process drama exercise created by Christine Jackson, adapted by Victoria Roberts.

Curriculum Links: The Arts 6/7/8, Drama – B1, B2, B3.2 & Music C2.1, C3.1; Social Studies 6 – B1.2; Geography 8 – B1.4; Language 6/7/8, Oral Communication 2.4, 2.5

Materials:

- At least one device per group with an internet connection

*I am a peer counsellor and I travel on my bike to talk to other young people – well, any people, actually – about protecting against AIDS, and how to take care of themselves if they have AIDS.*

- Jeremiah

Earlier in the unit, students had an opportunity to consider how their spending can influence others. Art can also be a tool for fostering change. In the following exercise, students will develop some of their choral speaking skills and learn about young artists from all over the world who use music as a springboard for activism. Many of these artists have come face to face with the issues that they advocate for, in some cases on a daily basis. Like Jeremiah, they are peer educators in many senses of the term.

### Part 1: Practicing Choral Speech

(If your students are familiar with choral speech, you might opt to skip or accelerate Part I.)

Select 6-8 lines from a piece of music that is meaningful to you, or speaks about an issue you feel is important. Read through the whole piece as a class, then show students the specific lines you have chosen. Assign small groups one line to focus on (e.g., 3 students focus on line 1, 3 students focus on line 2, etc.). You might opt to have one line that the entire group speaks as well. Give students some time to review and practice effective ways to present their lines. Establish a performance space in the room, doing your best to create multiple levels (standing on chairs, risers, etc. as you feel is safe) facing towards you. Take some playtime. You might coordinate with your students to plan hand gestures to show them what you want (e.g., holding up 3 fingers with one hand and pointing cues the whole group, just pointing at an individual cues only them, putting a hand up in the air cues the full class line, etc.). Some techniques you might experiment with:

- You might point to different groups and have them say their lines individually
- You might point to individuals and have them share their line
- You might play with the speed of lines in succession (e.g., do we hear the whole line before moving on, or is there overlap with the start of the next line)
- You might play with the order of lines overall, returning to some here and there
- You might have a particular group say their line but starting at different times so there is overlap
- You might have line groups stand together, then see what happens when they are spread apart.
- You might experiment with group reactions to some lines through sound, word, or gesture. You might take specific ideas from the group, or have students respond spontaneously. These might be in unison, canon, or individualised.

Debrief as a class. What was interesting? What was confusing? What kind of mood did different sounds create? At this point, you might want to create a short but final class product. Write out a speaking order, but continue to support as a kind of ‘conductor.’ Run through a few times so students can learn who speaks before them (i.e., learning their cues). Do a final performance together.

## Part 2: Showcasing an Activist

Now, you might give students time to create their own mini-version. Split students into groups, and provide each one with an artist profile. In organizing groups, you may wish to make groups slightly larger than normal to provide more options for choral performance. There are a wide range of musical styles featured, and you may also decide to take that into consideration in planning your groups. If students will still benefit from smaller groups as they build their teamwork skills, you might consider having different groups cover the same artist. This presents an opportunity to compare where their artistic choices are similar and different.

The students’ first task is to pick a few key facts they think the class should know about the individual they are reviewing, ideally one fact per person in the group. Depending on the students, you might let them select facts at their discretion. Alternately, you could allow students to silently read over their profiles and then brainstorm as a class a few things in particular that might be important to share (e.g., the issues that the artist focuses on, where they are from and/or where they focus their efforts, etc.) Afterwards, ask students to listen to a recording of one of the artist’s songs. They should pick 6-8 lines from the piece and adapt it into a choral performance to share with the class. Encourage them to take into consideration the strategies from before. Share the facts and adaptation with the class. Finish by debriefing.

### Reflection Questions

- What were some challenging parts of the artistic process?
- Did you have disagreements about artistic choices in your group? How did you resolve the issues?
- If you were to repeat this exercise with a new song, what would you do differently?
- All of the artists come from different places. How do you think this background influenced their work as advocates? Their music?

### For the Teacher: Featured Artists

We understand that students and their families have a wide range of beliefs and priorities. These advocates were selected, not to forward specific social-political agendas, but because they are youth who have found something they believed deeply in and committed to using their art to try to make change. Following is a list of the individuals profiled and some additional resources if you want to learn more about the artists before bringing them into your classroom.

- Xiuhtezcatl Tonatiuh – the now-16 year old activist uses hip hop and rap in order to advocate for sustainable environmental practices. He has received numerous awards, been invited to speak at the UN multiple times, and served on Obama’s youth council.

His presence in interviews and short films is one of warmth and charm. His thorough research and deep convictions regarding environmental protection is clear.

- An interview in Norway with Fredrik Skavlan where the young man advocates for the power of youth voices, shares a particularly significant memory of achieving change, and explains what motivates him at such a young age.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwQz68727OI>
- “Kid Warrior – The Xiuhtezcatl Martinez Story” is a short film profile of Xiuhtezcatl and his younger brother. While brief, the film offers a poignant view of the boys’ passion, but also the challenges they face in their time spent campaigning and in the face of peer criticism. The eldest brother explains how his Indigenous upbringing contributes to his beliefs and his understanding that a true warrior advocates for what he believes in. While Xiuhtezcatl is normally very professional, he shows a more relaxed side in this clip which is also reflected in the use of explicit language.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M\\_EK\\_9m1H88&t=317s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_EK_9m1H88&t=317s)
- Grace Jerry – Now in her mid-30s, Grace’s growth into a young leader is rooted in a car accident she experienced at only 21 years old. The wreck turned her into a paraplegic, and in the face of the resulting challenges she was inspired to turn her hobby of gospel singing into a tool for advocacy. With a law diploma and strong sense of determination, she has founded her own non-profit. In her interview with NPR, she speaks candidly about the challenges that come from being wheelchair-bound in a nation where many buildings lack wide enough bathrooms, if they have formal bathroom facilities at all. She also opens up about the emotional struggle of coming to terms with her paraplegia. In her social media presence, her religious devotion and zest for life is clear.
  - An interview with Grace post-YALI conference. She speaks about her Music for Toilets initiative, the impact of the YALI conference on her advocacy efforts, and some of the core political challenges for persons with disabilities in Nigeria.  
<http://kriphopnation.com/grace-a-jerry-what-is-happen-in-nigeria-africa-activism-music/>
- Luke Wallace, a BC ‘folktivist’ focuses with determination in his music and film-making efforts, working to advocate against fossil-fuel expansion in BC. His lyrics are quirky and straightforward; listeners are unlikely to catch a love ballad from the CBC-featured artist whose music is unapologetically centered on environmental concerns with titles such as “Mess We’ve Made” and “Don’t Tell the Taxman at the Peace River.” He occasionally collaborates with other young singers, releasing pieces as the Luke Wallace Band.
  - His Summer 2016 TEDx talk opens with a performance of one of his songs, “Little Rivers Matter Too” and goes on to call for unity in a climate where he feels industry divides us. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nu63hfy6hQc>
- Sonita Alizadeh, an Afghani-born ‘raptivist’ who spent much of her childhood in Tehran, uses music as a platform to advocate against the traditional practice of selling young girls into arranged marriages. Almost forced into arranged marriage at 14, her connections with a not-for-profit allowed her to showcase an original piece in a music video. It helped earn her a ticket to the US and a formal education, and drew international attention to the

larger social issue. With time, her parents came to understand and support her choices. This may be a particularly charged topic for some students, but her story shows the power of music and dedication in changing people's minds. It is also a key lesson to students that it is irresponsible to judge all members of a particular culture based on some individuals' practices.

- This CNN article offers more detail about the abuse Sonita saw her peers suffer, and her experiences growing up in fear of the Taliban. It also offers a deeper explanation of her complicated relationship with her parents, whom she explains have ultimately come to understand and support her choices and her use of music as a tool for advocacy. It also contextualizes the practice of selling daughters into arranged marriages as child brides with some key statistics.  
<http://www.cnn.com/2015/10/11/world/afghanistan-rapper-sonita-alizadeh/>
- Sonita's story was documented in a Women Make Movies piece, garnering awards at the 2015 Sundance Festival. The page for the documentary can be found here: <http://www.wmm.com/sonita/#synopsis>

## *Young Artist Profile 1*

### **Grace Jerry**

At the age of 21, Nigerian Grace Jerry was in a car accident. As a result of the crash, the young woman found herself confined to a wheelchair. Initially, it took a heavy toll on her spirit. However, over time, she used it to build a career and a leadership role. She became the co-founder of a not-for-profit centered on breaking down barriers for children, youth and women with disabilities called Inclusive Friends, as well as a spokesperson for WaterAid Nigeria. She also earned the crown of Miss Wheelchair National Queen when she was 29. In an interview with NPR, she explains that, despite her crown, she faces the very challenges that she is fighting to alleviate on a daily basis. She recalls being invited to attend leadership conferences, only to learn upon arrival that the buildings lacked elevators and key meetings were taking place on higher floors. “How am I supposed to influence decisions when I can’t even attend the meetings?” she has commented.

A core part of her development as a leader came from the decision to turn her long-time hobby of Gospel singing into a profession. In addition to meeting with political leaders to advocate for equality for Nigerians with disabilities, she began throwing benefit concerts. Her most recent campaign is ‘Music for Toilets’. The fundraiser series works to ensure that students with disabilities have access to clean water and flushing toilets, features absent from many special needs schools. At age 34, she was invited to attend President Obama’s Young African Leaders initiative, where she spent six weeks studying leadership alongside 499 other activists and entrepreneurs. Her song, “E Go Happen,” was selected as the theme for the event’s official tribute video. The singer explains “today music is more than just holding the microphone; it has become my medium for engagement....a chance to provide more water sanitation and hygiene facilities for schools and communities for persons with disabilities. A chance to sing about ending gender-based violence as violence affects women with disabilities too. We will continue to raise our voices to address issues that affect us until our dream of achieving an All-inclusive Nigeria and the African continent is a reality.”

For more information, see:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/08/03/429022875/wheelchair-beauty-queen-sings-for-toilets>

Video for “E Go Happen”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-N8ibkOnmI>

## *Young Artist Profile 2*

### **Sonita Alizadeh**

Sonita was still elementary school age when political unrest forced her out of Afghanistan with her mother and siblings. Living in Tehran, she was unable to attend school and spent time cleaning bathrooms at a refugee center. She did, however, become connected with a not-for-profit organization that helped her learn about karate, photography, and music. She discovered a love for rapping, which she turned to her advantage when her family told her at 14 that she was going to be entering into an arranged marriage. Her brother was engaged, but the family did not have the funds to pay for his bride. Their only solution was to marry Sonita and use her dowry. A director with the not-for-profit offered to pay a small sum for the wedding to be delayed, and her parents agreed. They used the time to shoot a music video for her original song "Brides for Sale." She composed her lyrics reflecting on the experiences of her friends, many of whom were abused and forced into marriages before the age of 15. Her video received international recognition, and she soon moved to the US where she had been offered a scholarship to attend high school. Worried about how her parents would react, she didn't tell them until she was already in the states. Over time, however, her parents have come to understand and support her choice, she reports. It is a complicated issue. "She loves me, I know that" she says of her mother, who had also been a child bride educated that the practice was simply tradition. "The older generations, they are teaching us these old traditions, but we can change them. Not all of them, but some....My family they changed their minds. If I can change their minds with my music, then maybe I can change the world."

For more information, see:

<http://www.girleffect.org/what-girls-need/articles/2015/11/meet-sonita-the-afghan-rapper-ending-child-marriage-one-song-at-a-time/>

Video for Brides for Sale, with subtitles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n65w1DU8cGU>



## *Young Artist Profile 3*

### **Luke Wallace**

Luke Wallace is a Canadian-grown folk musician and University of British Columbia student, determined to use his musical talents to help advocate for environmental preservation efforts. In addition to singing, the young man is versed in piano, trumpet, banjo, harmonica and guitar. He began experimenting with song writing at age 15. In his early 20s, he began meeting with Indigenous peoples, conservation groups, and other organizations in BC to draw attention to environmental issues threatening the west coast. In addition to releasing two albums, he collaborated to create films detailing the issues. In particular, his film *One Big Coast* aimed to document the perspectives of a variety of people whose lives would be impacted by fossil-fuel expansion in Kitimat. He then took his voice to The Conference of Youth in Paris, where he lead a workshop called “Music for Change.” The ‘folktivist’ explains “in every great social movement in the last 100 years there has been music. Sometimes it is the music that inspires the change, other times it is the change that inspires the music....Science gives us hard objective truths about our world. Music gives those truths purpose and reason.”

For more information, see:

<http://www.lukewallacemusic.com/>

<http://www.geog.ubc.ca/interview-with-es-student-musician-filmmaker-luke-wallace/>

Video for “Throw a Boat Down”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZI7d4YgUIQ>

## *Young Artist Profile 3*

### **Xiuhtezcatl (Shoe-tez-caht) Tonatiuh**

Xiuhtezcatl, now 16, began his journey as a youth activist at the early age of 6. Today, he is the Youth Director of Earth Guardians, an organization his mother originally founded. The Earth Guardians, working as separate crews, identify as “a tribe of young activists...stepping up as leaders and co-creating the future we know is possible” focusing on environmental stewardship. Xiuhtezcatl has engaged in protest marches, attended meetings of various governments, spoken to major groups including the UN, and served on former US President Obama’s youth council. One of the most central elements of Xiuhtezcatl’s advocacy efforts are achieved through art, however. He is of Aztec descent, and his father has raised him with an understanding of key beliefs and ceremonies which include a significant dance component. He attributes his understanding of the importance of our environmental resources and his affinity for hip hop dance to his Indigenous upbringing. He is also a talented rapper. The Youth Guardians Crews write music to draw attention to environmental concerns, and Xiuhtezcatl travels performing with his younger brother and sometimes his sisters. One of their newest songs, “Speak for the Trees” was named as the theme for COP21, a major UN conference on climate change. The young man explains that he hopes that the work and sacrifice he puts in now will inspire political leaders to take charge and take care of the earth, preserving it for future generations. In an interview with Fredrik Skavlan in Norway last November, he emphasized that “young people have power. Our voices are powerful.”

For more information, see:

<http://www.earthguardians.org/>

<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/meet-the-teenage-indigenous-hip-hop-artist-taking-on-climate-change-20150713>

Video for “Speak for the Trees”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BELUCOnQh6Y>

## Telling Each Other's Stories

Curriculum Links: The Arts 6/7/8, Drama – B1, B2, B3.2

Materials

- Open Space

*So much of what happened in that play was like what had happened to Junie and me when we left Blantyre. I hated that I didn't know what was going on and what I was supposed to do.*

- Binti

This exercise allows students to increase the stakes by telling one another's stories. Debriefing the experience can be helpful in understanding the importance of respect and thoughtfulness in creating art that reflects the experiences of others.

### Warm Up

Ask students to walk around the room, switching directions every 20 seconds or so. Once a comfortable pace is set, ask them to observe another person in the room. What is their pace? Are they carrying tension? Etc. Encourage them to keep that person in their peripheral vision. Over time, try to observe 2-3 people simultaneously. How many can they keep track of? Narrow back down to one person. Try to, in a respectful and controlled manner, shadow their movements. Finish with a quick debrief. How did they feel knowing someone else might be shadowing them? What was challenging about the experience? How did they feel taking on someone else's physicality?

### Exercise

Ask students to find a partner and share a personal story. Remember to warn them that this will be disclosed to other members of the class aside from their partner, so they should make sure they are comfortable with other people knowing about the experience. You might give students prompts such as 'most dramatic injury' or 'travel stories.' The stories should take 1-2 minutes maximum to tell.

Each partner shares a story, while the other makes observations. In addition to the events, they should try to observe things like their partner's gesture and vocal expression. They may ask them to repeat the story once. Then have them practice telling their partner's story.

Have pairs join into groups of 4, each person sharing the story they developed. Then debrief as a class. How did it feel to watch your story being told? What kinds of issues do we need to keep in mind in relation to respect? Who did it feel like the story belonged to? What changed in the retelling?

### Extension

Originally created by Jessi Lynn Davies, with modifications by Victoria Roberts.

Have students get into groups of about 5, and each share a new story. As a group, pick one person's story to develop for performance. You might have the individual whose story is

selected narrate a series of tableaux, or create something that includes mime and/or choral speech. As with the fairytale adaptations, encourage students to think about their story structure. Are they maintaining a clear beginning, middle, climax and ending? Finish with a second debrief. From the perspective of the person whose story was selected, how did this process feel different from the partner stories? What about from the perspective of the actors? Did the sense of who the story belonged to feel different, here? What changed in the retelling?

### Culminating Exercise: Writing Radio Scenes

*In the old days, when there were still lions around, if a lion came into our village and carried away our young, we did not keep silent! If we were silent, it would keep eating our children. We had to make noise. We had to bang pots and yell...there is a lion in the village.*

*There is a lion in the village now.*

- Gogo

As a final response to one of Binti's passions, you might select a radio play scene for a culminating project. Depending on your students' drama background and the activities you have selected from the guide, there are a number of ways you might adapt this. A sample assignment sheet is included.

We encourage you to use the radio play as an opportunity for students to research a cause they feel is important as a basis of their piece, just like Deborah Ellis and the artists at Theatre Direct. We suggest 1-2 periods for research, 2 periods for writing and rehearsal, and 1 period for performance or recording. You might begin this process by asking students to create a plan for how they will use their time, and identify key tasks in the creation process. Encouraging students to check in with their timeline at the beginning and/or end of each period can be helpful. Feel free to encourage students to create a relaxing environment for performances. Radio plays are primarily an auditory form, so feel free to make the classroom as comfy as possible! For example, you might turn off the lights and allow students to select alternative seating. We also suggest allowing performers to use their scripts during the performance, focusing on story and vocal quality rather than memorization. After performances, you might also wish to have the cast stay at the front and do a short Q&A (or in theatre terms 'talk back') where the class can ask questions about the piece and the group's chosen issue.

The sample assignment is designed to create a radio-style scene for live performance, without the use of any pre-recorded sound effects. However, depending on the resources available at your school and the needs of your students, you may have groups record their piece. This can be beneficial during the assessment process, allowing you to review the work multiple times if necessary. Class listening sessions can also then be spread out over the course of a week or so, incorporated into your classroom routine as appropriate, which can be particularly helpful for students with attentional difficulties or anxiety.

## On the Airwaves Today

Although radio drama is a key component of Canada's artistic history, other forms of media bubbled into prominence. Especially with the rise of digital podcasts and the continued popularity of radio in countries like Malawi, however, artists are showing that radio drama can still make a powerful impact. Explore the following links to discover more!

- ➔ DW Learning By Ear – this website features a wide variety of clips ranging from crime series to informative segments. Created by African contributors, the piece (available to stream or download as pdf texts) include commentary on health, economics and politics, share traditional community stories, advocate for the environment, and more.  
<http://www.dw.com/en/top-stories/learning-by-ear/s-11908>
- ➔ NPR Goats and Soda on *Bahati* – the impact of a radio soap opera that caught the attention of teens in Malawi and Tanzania. Written by African youth and artists, the soap follows a pregnant 16 year old and her struggle with depression. Taking learning a step further, the host facilitated phone-in Q&A sessions about mental health throughout the 30-episode run.  
<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/04/17/474380027/this-radio-soap-opera-isnt-your-typical-tearjerker>
- ➔ Profile of 'Tisinthe,' created by Theatre for a Change – This radio program takes 'choose your own adventure' to the next level! Exploring common challenges for young people in Africa, the artists invite listeners to call in to take on character roles and try different tactics to reach a positive outcome. Tisinthe, which means "let's change," provides education on issues such as health and sexuality, and leaders of 'Listening Clubs' comment that they love the way adolescents have shifted their behaviour and attitudes as a result of the program.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otUpDf63sBs>

## Lions on the Lines

During an interview with Binti, the reporter comments “ ‘Gogo’s Family’ deals with serious issues like AIDS, crime, people losing their jobs”; similar to “Gogo’s Family” and *Binti’s Journey*, you will be writing a radio scene to share an educational message with your classmates about something important to you, i.e., a ‘lion’ threatening your community (local, national, or global). In small groups, you will **choose and research a topic**. You will then write an extended scene about the issue, using fictional characters. Your piece should include **at least 1 soundscape and mix of 3 additional sound effects and choral speech techniques**. Effects can be created using your voices or found objects, but **cannot be pre-recorded**. Once the rehearsal process is complete, you will share your work with your classmates. In a traditional radio play, there is no way to see the actors, so you will need to focus on using different vocal techniques to heighten the dramatic experience. However, this also means that you **will** be allowed to have your script during the performance. After sharing, **each member of the group will complete a written reflection**. Enjoy your exploration - this is a time to ‘bang pots and yell’!

Things to think about while researching:

- Not all children whose parents die as a result of AIDS end up living with family members who mistreat them, but it is not uncommon. Similarly, not all families in Malawi get their water from wells and pumps, but this is also an experience shared by many. The artists behind *Binti’s Journey* looked at patterns and incorporated them into Binti’s story. What are some experiences that individuals affected by your chosen issue have in common?
- Who is fighting this issue, and how? Is there anything we can do?
- Have we gathered our information from reputable sources?

Things to think about while writing your piece:

- Have we tried to share important facts through interesting dialogue (instead of having long chunks of speech explaining things to the audience, i.e., exposition)?
- Have we paused regularly in the writing process to read through the lines out loud?
- Have we thought about places where we can incorporate soundscapes or sound effects?
- Have we done our best to show respect to the people whose story we are telling?

Things to think about while rehearsing/performing:

- Have we created at least 1 soundscape?
- Have we included at least 3 different additional sound effects/choral speech techniques?
- Have I thought about the quality of my voice and different vocal strategies to create a distinctive voice? If I am playing multiple characters, have I used a variety of vocal techniques in order to show the difference between characters?
- Have I been focused during rehearsal and used my time effectively?
- Have I been a respectful team member, sharing my own ideas while also encouraging others and being willing to try new things?

## Reflection Questions

- Pick 2 of the following:
  - Identify one strategy that you or your group used at any step in the creation process (research, writing, rehearsal or performance) that worked well.
  - Identify one challenge that you or your group encountered in the creation process. In 2-3 sentences, explain what you did to overcome it.
  - If you were repeating this process again, what is one thing you would do differently to improve?
- Identify one thing that your group did to try to be ethical storytellers (i.e., how did you show respect for the issue and the people it impacts in your artistic process)?
- If your classmates only took away one thing from your performance, what would you hope they learned?
- Pick 1 of the following
  - Identify a choice that another group made that stood out to you. What effect did it have? (E.g., was there a soundscape that effectively created a specific mood? Was there a line that you had a strong emotional reaction to?)
  - Identify one important thing that you learned from another group's performance.

## List of Secondary Activities

The following lessons are available in a separate document. The names of primary activities are also included here to show where these activities might fit into a mini-unit progression.

### Prologue: Previewing Activities

The lessons in this section are designed to contextualize life in Malawi and help introduce students to some of the key issues in the play, such as HIV/AIDS and the stigma it carries. Exercises also work to begin to set the foundation for understanding the form of adaptation and what it means to be a compassionate citizen.

### KWL Chart

#### Where in the World is Binti Phiri?

#### Guided Visualization: Living in Rural Malawi

#### Let's See the Numbers

**Creative Play** – introduce students to some of the challenges of being physically active in rural areas with limited resources. Suggestions are provided for playing soccer and netball, some of the most popular activities, with your class. Alternately, challenge students to make up games that do not require any equipment and share them with their peers!

Related Curricula: Health and Physical Education, Language – Oral Communication

**Binti's Coming** – this variant on Captain's Coming can be used as a part of DPA or a drama warm up to introduce students to some of the new language they may encounter during the play.

Related Curricula: Health and Physical Education

#### What is HIV/AIDS?

**What is Stigma?** – Also drawing from the new HPE curriculum, this discussion donut activity provides prompts asking students to reflect on stigma and discrimination. Students are encouraged to work in partners to generate examples of these issues, reflect on how it might impact individuals' day to day life, and how they can work to be accepting citizens.

Curriculum Links: Health and Physical Education

**What is an Adaptation?** – Before attending the performance inspired by Deborah Ellis' novel, *The Heaven Shop*, it may be helpful to explore the concept of adaptation with your students. This initial activity provides a foundation for later lessons, asking students to adapt a fairy tale or other familiar story into tableaux. A variety of extensions and reflection questions are included to



challenge students, setting up for an exploration of topics such as ethical storytelling, vocal skills and strong physicality in performance.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama, Language – Media Studies

## Act I: Understanding Change-Making and Advocacy

Split into three strands, Act I lessons are designed to introduce students to different forms of making change, such as through donations of time and money or using art to raise awareness. Threaded throughout are examples of young people who are striving to make a positive impact on our world. Activities are also provided to begin to encourage students to make informed and ethical decisions. How can students be sure that the organizations they are supporting are really making an impact? What are the dangers of promoting only a single view of a major issue or the struggle of a group of peoples? In strands 2 and 3, a handful of lessons are rooted in new drama techniques to create a base for extending student understanding and sharing new insights.

### **Strand 1: Global Issues and Informed Choices**

#### **The Rights of the Child**

**Power and Consent** – This activity asks students to consider how power operates within relationships. Examining specific examples from the play, they are invited to analyze both where power is wielded well and unwisely. Students are then challenged to determine criteria for more ethical decision making, and use role play to imagine what might have been. An optional extension takes this deeper into the realm of sexuality and consent, considering the power of knowledge and social dynamics in sexual decision-making for underprivileged women like Memory and Junie. The extension wraps with an examination of organizations who are standing up not only to support these women but put in place protocols to prevent such imbalances.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama, Art; Health and Physical Education, Geography.

**Clean Water Access** – This lesson uses discussion and a demonstration to provide an introduction to the importance of water to individual health and the challenges many communities face in accessing clean sources. Next, students are asked to determine the volume of water an average Canadian household might use in a day, and place this in context with rural communities in countries like Malawi that rely on wells for their improved drinking water. Resources and prompts are provided, or you may opt to challenge your students to come up with their own plan for solving the lesson’s inquiry. If you wish to take this exploration further, a link to a UNICEF mini-unit is provided, as well as articles documenting the challenges faced by groups of Canada’s FNMI peoples living on reserves that lack clean water.

Related Curricula: Social Studies, Geography, Science, Mathematics

#### **Being Thoughtful Supporters**

#### **Being Thoughtful Supporters (Gr. 8 Extension)**

## **Strand 2: Change Through Change – Using Funds in Advocacy**

**Ethical Buying** – Introduce students to the idea of ethical consumerism, a form of political activism predicated on the belief that in purchasing items we implicitly support the processes behind their production. Students are asked to make some observations about different symbols used to indicate fair trade and organic products. They can then use the provided handout to learn more about the process behind those certifications, identify commonalities and differences, and determine an appropriate format for organizing their information. The final reflection questions ask students to consider their preconceptions about the certifications and whether they would influence their purchasing choices in the future. To help students solidify connections to their own day to day lives, two extension suggestions are also provided.

Related Curricula: Social Studies, Geography, Science and Technology

### **Taking Out a Micro-Loan**

**Youth in Business** – This two part exercise can be completed as individual lessons or as a set to help students develop their vocal performance skills and see how some young entrepreneurs are working to tackle local and global issues. Part I guides students in exploring three different vocal qualities and considering how voice can be used to give audiences a sense of character in performance. Links to examples are provided. In Part 2, students can practice using these, and other, vocal qualities to create character in a radio commercial. As the basis of the commercial, groups are provided with profiles of young entrepreneurs and asked to share information about the individual, their product, and their purpose. Creative youth are highlighted, such as a young woman who is using profits from her nation-wide lemonade sales to help save bee populations and a pair of siblings who have created their own clothing line in order to provide school uniforms to students in India.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama, Social Studies, Language – Oral Communication.

## **Strand 3: Advocacy Through the Arts**

### **Advocacy with Integrity**

**Outlining Purpose: The Director’s Note as Writing Form** – Through this exercise, students are asked to examine samples of Director’s Notes for various productions of *Binti’s Journey*. After reading through the texts, they are asked to think of it as its own form or genre and compare the samples to create an outline of its characteristics or definition. The activity culminates in a class discussion about students’ conclusions. An interesting extension discussion can also be drawn from the note composed by the original director, ahdri zhina mandiola. In all of her writing, mandiola opts to eschew the use of capital letters in all of her writing. Challenge students to consider why this might be before sharing the artist’s own reasoning and its cultural significance.

Related Curricula: Language – Reading

## **Young Voices: Spreading Awareness Through Art**

**The Importance of Multiple Narratives (Version 1)** – this activity encourages students to begin to think about the ethics behind storytelling, especially when the story is about someone else’s experience. Drawing from Robert Munsch’s *Put Me In a Book*, students can play with the form of tableaux to physicalize the story of a young woman who becomes trapped in a storybook, completely at the whim of the author. Additional discussion prompts are provided to encourage students to think about what it might feel like to be misrepresented, reflect on the consequences of stereotypes, and maybe even discuss groups whose stories they rarely even see. Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama, Language – Reading

**The Importance of Multiple Narratives (Extension Version)** – this exercise extends the ethical considerations brought up in the previous exercise about the power of a narrative (or the absence thereof) on real people. However, this exercise is based off of a TedTalk better suited for older students, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s “The Danger of a Single Story.” A series of suggested stopping points and discussion questions for understanding and reflection are provided. After viewing, students are asked to complete a post-it activity to generate some ideas about the “dangers of single stories,” the “benefits of multiple stories,” and “ways to encourage multiple stories.” Related Curricula: Language – Oral Communication

**Ethical Adaptations** – This lesson asks students to think thoughtfully about how artists’ choices shape a story. The activity sheet provides some background for students on the research and development process behind the original novel, *The Heaven Shop*, and Theatre Direct’s adaptation of the story. One of the core challenges in adaptation is determining which elements of the original story to keep, to leave behind, and to alter. Using a chart that compares differences between the novel and the play, students are challenged to think about how the changes might affect the audience’s perception of the story and characters, and brainstorm reasons the artists may have elected to make those changes. Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama, Language – Reading.

## **Act II: Art into Action**

In this culminating section, students are encouraged to dive deeper into what it means to be an ethical storyteller, engaging in hands on practice. Lessons are also designed to inspire students to begin thinking about the types of changes they want to see in the world, and how they might be able to use art to help create those shifts. The section culminates in a radio play assignment that students can use to tie together their discoveries about drama, the world, and their particular passions.

**Internal Dialogue: Writing in Role** –Sometimes there is no easy decision. Why do students think Binti, Kwasi, or Junie pursued the course of action that they did when they found

themselves between a rock and a hard place? What factors would they have needed to consider in the decision making process? How would it have impacted the play if they had made an alternative choice? In the internal dialogue activity, students consider these questions as they craft a poem or monologue reflection on a morally ambiguous choice that a character was forced to make in the play. For an optional extension, they can perform their pieces for a peer and practice giving constructive feedback.

Related Curricula: Language – Writing, The Arts – Drama

**Introduction to Soundscapes** – Soundscapes are a powerful tool in theatre. In *Binti's Journey*, we see their impact as they are used in harmony with strong movement and physicality to shape entire environments out of thin air. Students can also use them to set the stage in their dramatic performances, especially if they are exploring radio plays. This playful activity encourages students to use their voices and found objects to create a series of soundscapes, working from fostering a sense of a physical environment like a forest or a busy street to experimenting with mood. The exercise culminates in the creation of a soundscape for Gogo's legend on the origin of the stars.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama

**Create a Legend** – This activity challenges students to continue to build on their drama skills by creating a new legend while also considering the power of stories in our culture. What values are present in Gogo's legend? What values are reflected in the student's own pieces? What kind of a world would we have if their legends shaped our culture?

Related curricula: The Arts – Drama

**Who Do You Love? Finding Personal Inspiration** – In this activity, students use a music video created by Canadian artists, Marianas Trench, as the impetus for an exploration of their own passions. The video for the Top 10 single, *Who Do You Love*, was released in Fall 2016, and featured the artists giving back to causes near and dear to their hearts. Students are asked to engage in a critical viewing of the video, exploring how relationships and values are reflected through the visual medium. After their analysis, they are challenged to break out into groups and create a pitch for their own video of the same style. Who would they include in it? What causes would they draw attention to? How can they use visuals alone to communicate key ideas?

Related Curricula: The Arts – Music, Art; Language – Media Studies

### **Telling Each Other's Stories**

**Drama in the News** – Powerful theatre often affects us because of its sense of verisimilitude, allowing us to engage emotionally with challenging and complex issues. Some plays draw very directly from individual's lived experience; *Binti's Journey*, for example, is based on research and interviews with real children in Malawi and Zambia. In this activity, students are asked explore news stories about issues of personal importance, then create a short performance that draws from a real life event. For an extra challenge, you may ask them to incorporate language directly from their news articles as part of their story or dialogue. After sharing their pieces,

students can reflect on some of the challenges of representing non-fiction events and what it feels like to tell the story of someone they have never met.

Related Curricula: The Arts – Drama, Language – Media Studies

### **Culminating Exercise: Writing Radio Scenes**

## Additional Resources

### Canadian Extensions

Sometimes it can become all too easy for students to look at global issues and feel as though similar issues could not, and have not, ever developed in Canada. However, it is important to recognize that major issues occur in our own communities as well. Some activities throughout the unit have built in opportunities for Canadian-content extensions. Here are a few links to other events that you might opt to explore with your class.

- Home Children: after Confederation, a number of orphaned, abandoned and/or poor British children were sent to Canada. The belief of many philanthropists and church organizations that helped in these efforts was that the children would find a better life in the new country. In some cases, juvenile migrants did flourish. In many others, however, they were mistreated or even abused by the families that took them in as a source of cheap farm or domestic labour. It can be difficult watching Binti and her siblings suffer at the hands of their aunts and uncles, and it is important to understand that the impulse to utilize orphaned children as a labour force is not absent from Canadian history.
  - Curriculum Links: History 8
  - For a starting point, see: <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records/home-children-1869-1930/pages/home-children.aspx>
- FNMI Youth: There are a number of resources available regarding the history of residential schools and their impact on Canada's FNMI peoples, and an exploration of these issues and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is a key part of a thorough understanding of Canada's development as a nation. One specific issue you might focus on with students in considering the legacy of this historical background is the disproportionately high numbers of First Nations youth involved in Canada's criminal justice system, often reaching the point of incarceration. Similar to Kwasi and other orphaned males in Malawi who often face stigma and are frequently imprisoned, the federal government acknowledges that "systemic discrimination and attitudes based on racial or cultural prejudice, as well as economic and social disadvantage" play a role in this issue in Canada ([www.oci-bec.gc.ca](http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca), linked below). They further recognize that this issue cannot be decontextualized from Canada's history, but rather that colonialism and the residential school system have been key contributing factors.
  - For basic statistics and information provided by the Canadian government, see: <http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/oth-aut/oth-aut20121022info-eng.aspx>

- For a CBC article reviewing the issue, see: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indigenous-youth-overrepresented-justice-system-1.3554394>
- For an Aboriginal Peoples Television Network spotlight on the Feathers of Hope initiative, which aims to connect FNMI youth with peers, elders, and youth amplifiers to engage as a community, learn cultural practices, and share their knowledge and experiences, see: <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/07/13/indigenous-youth-explore-identity-culture-at-feathers-of-hope-forum-in-thunder-bay/> (Note: the 2016 report, which draws on the youth participants' recommendations for how to improve the judicial system and other services can also be found online).

Curriculum Links: Geography 7/8, History 7/8

- HIV Stigma in Canada: While HIV infection rates are proportionately much lower in Canada in comparison to Malawi, stigma against HIV-positive individuals is still an issue, especially for gay men. For Binti, simply being related to an individual who is confirmed to have died of AIDS is enough to trigger hurtful behaviours on the part of her uneducated family members. Through her relationship with Jeremiah, Binti is able to recognize that she, too, harbors some bias. However, over time she works to overcome this issue, recognizing that, as Kwasi puts it. “AIDS affects the blood, not the heart.” HIV stigma has come into Canadian news most recently as part of the Liberal Government’s 2015 election platform, where Trudeau’s party promised to eliminate restrictions on male blood donors who have sex with men. Some citizens expressed frustrations when, rather than eliminating the policy that required men to abstain from intercourse with other men for five years before donating, the waiting period was reduced to one year. Although a potentially sensitive topic, discussions like these can help to contribute to a fuller understanding of sexual health and informed choices.
  - This 2012 Public Health Agency of Canada report provides an overview of HIV and AIDS rates in Canada. Although there is a more recent 2014 report, this extended page offers a number of graphic representations of key statistics. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/aids-sida/publication/survreport/2012/dec/index-eng.php>
  - This Global News article gives a platform for Ontario doctors who argue that the 1-year waiting period as excessive, explaining the technology used to screen for infection. <http://globalnews.ca/news/2792150/canadas-limitations-on-gay-blood-donations-ridiculous-hiv-researchers/>
  - The Canadian Blood Services website has a dedicated FAQ page related to donations by men who have sex with men. Amongst other information, it recognizes that there are no such limitations on women who have sex with women, and references the consultation processes with individuals who receive the blood donations. [https://blood.ca/en/men-who-have-sex-men/MSM\\_FAQ](https://blood.ca/en/men-who-have-sex-men/MSM_FAQ)

Curriculum Links: Health and Physical Education 6/7/8

## Related Texts

Through their exploration of different unit activities, we hope some students may find themselves particularly drawn to some key issues or themes. For an extended discussion of topics touched on in this unit, a handful of related texts are listed below, some of which may be recommended for independent exploration for interested students. All should be available through the school or public library system, or free online.

- *We Are All Made of Molecules*, a novel by Susin Neilson. Through the alternating (and incredibly colourful) narratives of Stewart and Ashley, Neilson gives voice to two adolescents in the midst of blending families. Both incredibly bright Stewart and simultaneously well-meaning and overly-dramatic Ashley face social struggles at school. Additionally, both are still coming to terms with the circumstances of their parents' previous marriages, Stewart's mother having passed away and Ashley's father having recently found the strength to admit to his family that he is gay. Despite their initial struggles, the reluctant roommates ultimately come together to stand up to the bullying they each face and create an initiative for change in their school. This book is almost guaranteed to generate laughs, and offers a wonderful springboard for discussions of discrimination and the power of student initiatives for change.
- *The Truth Commission*, a novel by Susan Juby. Through the form of a senior report for her teacher at her Vancouver-based arts school (complete with footnotes and other text features), Normandy details a semester of exploration. When she and her two best friends initially strike out to investigate rumours and seek the truth, they have no idea the way they will shake up their school community. But in the meantime, Normandy has secrets of her own that she hasn't voice to even her closest friends. Her older sister, famed for a graphic novel series loosely based on her own family, has abruptly returned home from university. While Normandy begins to worry that her sister may have faced a dark experience at school, her own investigations lead her to discover her sister has some unexpected secrets of her own. The warm-hearted text straightforwardly acknowledges social issues within the school, and offers a challenging dimension to the debate of who has the right to tell one another's stories.
- *Walking Home*, a novel by Eric Walters. When civil unrest erupts in brother and sister Muchoki and Jata's village in Kenya, they soon find themselves placed in a refugee camp with their mother. Here, they mourn the death of their father in the violence, but slowly begin to build relationships with other members of the camp. However, this doesn't last for long. When their mother passes away, the siblings embark on a journey—on foot—to the village of their mother's family, a place they have never seen and will take them through harsh weather and even harsher streets to find. The novel has a companion website where students can access additional audio clips, pictures, and extra information related to the text. Much of this website was compiled by Walters in the process of writing the piece, as he undertook the same journey as his protagonists prior to writing the text. The piece offers grounds for discussion of stereotypes and discrimination. When considered in light of Walters' own walk through Kenya, it offers fruitful opportunity for discussions of ethical storytelling.

- “Water’s Worth,” an NPR *Planet Money* Podcast (12:20). Best suited for older students due to its more complex language, this podcast examines the water shortage in the African country of Lesotho. Initially rich with water resources, the country became entangled in a deal with South Africa that is now putting its own people in a state of drought. The host travels with representatives of Water Aid, talking to citizens and documenting the issue with rich imagery.
- “The Afterlife of a Shirt,” an NPR *Planet Money* Podcast (20:08). While wandering through Blantyre, Binti describes the market of “jeans, shirts, dresses and sweaters that people from America didn’t want anymore” and notes that her sister, Junie “could spot something great in the middle of a large pile of ugly things.” This piece follows a t-shirt from donation through sorting, shipping, alterations, and eventually re-sale in a market in Africa. Through a discussion of market demands, the economic series creates a forum for an examination of differing ways of life and values. Please note, part of the piece examines the type of t-shirt slogans that influence a garment’s saleability and one sexually explicit slogan is referenced.
- “A 12-Year-Old Girl Takes on the Video Game Industry,” an NPR *Planet Money* Podcast (17:07). *Binti’s Journey* takes time to recognize issues of particular relevance to women in Malawi, as well as the power of peer educators. The unit as a whole works to draw attention to youth initiatives for change, and encourages students to consider which narratives dominate our society and which groups often remain absent. This podcast ties a number of these issues together as it details the experience of a young girl who realised that almost all of the free game characters were male; in order to play as a female, gamers had to devote hours to unlocking achievements or pay additional fees. Determined to investigate the pervasiveness of this issue, she designed a robust review system and shared her findings. To her surprise, they were picked up by the New York Times. The hosts speak to the young woman, as well as other experts and stakeholders to investigate other groups who are under-represented amongst characters. They also examine other ways in which particular groups are targeted with higher prices on products such as last minute plane tickets and fair-trade coffee.

### Connecting with the Artist: Deborah Ellis

Deborah Ellis, Ontario-born author of *The Heaven Shop* has dedicated much of her professional life to highlighting global issues for youth audiences through fiction and non-fiction texts, with a particular emphasis on issues of war and women and children’s rights. She has been recognized by the Ontario Forest of Reading program five out of the past seven years.

- For details on the research process for some of her past projects, written as she was beginning to plan the trip that would inspire *The Heaven Shop*, check out her interview at: <https://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/profiles/ellis.html>
- For more background, Ellis’ blog, information on other texts and teacher resources, see her website: <http://deborahellis.com/>
- Want to connect? Ellis has been relatively quiet on social media over the past few months, but historically has made an effort to connect with students through her twitter account, @DebEllisAuthor.