Welcome to Water Justice, a toolkit for youth groups. This resource aims to support young people and youth workers to explore the issue of water from a global justice perspective. It looks at water justice through the context of Malawi and Palestine as well as highlighting water justice challenges in Ireland.

This is the second year of our three-year journey exploring global justice. This year we have a blended digital and workbook approach to our resources, and the global justice theme for this year is water justice.

In this resource you will find activities exploring water justice in the context of Malawi and Palestine and Ireland as well as some introductory and reflective global justice activities that are digital and are hosted on our Tree of Justice.

The Tree of Justice is the central hub for our digital resources and videos, its located on our website: https://www.trocaire.org/our-work/educate

On the youth page of our website, follow the advice that Madzi the water drop has for you as you navigate the different activities on the branches of the tree. If you haven’t already explored our Exploring Global Justice resources from last year, you can also take a look here: https://www.trocaire.org/journey/tree-of-justice/#youth

The resource has been developed to deliver six week programme. On page 6 of this resource there is a suggested breakdown of each session; however, it is possible to use activities individually without delivering the full programme. A key part of this global youth programme is to build awareness and confidence among young people to act for global justice. You will find ideas to inspire youth-led action projects in the resource and on the taking action branch of the tree.

Creating a Safe Environment

In exploring global justice issues with young people, it is vital to create a safe space to encourage full participation in discussions. We strongly recommend that you create a group contract at the beginning of the programme. We advise that you read each activity in advance and modify it if you feel there is anything that may affect an individual. Always be aware of a young person’s reactions and follow up with them where appropriate. Always check in with your group to ensure the activities are safe for, accessible to and respectful of everyone. When in doubt, ask. Where adaptions are needed, ask your participants what feels comfortable for them and include support persons where appropriate. The content relating to the two focus countries Malawi and Palestine focuses on a number of perspectives, but there are many more. It is important as youth workers that we avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes through the activities contained in this resource.
What is Water Justice?

In a just world everyone will have access to sufficient supplies of safe and acceptable water, that is fully accessible and affordable for all. However, for many people around the world, this does not happen. This is an injustice.

Barriers that block access to safe water are the root cause of this injustice. These barriers arise from issues such as drought, floods, restricted access to safe water sources, pollution, and lack of control of local water sources. Other issues can increase people’s vulnerability to water injustice, such as climate change, migration, conflict, and population growth. Ongoing water injustice will result in increasing numbers of people being pushed into poverty, as it affects health, sanitation, livelihoods, education, and more.

Ensuring access to water is not only a global justice issue but also a crucial element of sustainable development and environmental stewardship. It requires concerted efforts at local, national, and international levels to address the barriers to water justice that persist around the world. Through the activities in this resource, we will use the context of Malawi, Palestine and Ireland to explore these global issues and their root causes.
Key Terms
There are many key terms used across the resources. Most of them are explained through the content and activities, but some might need some degree of pre-teaching, depending on the group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Justice</td>
<td>Global Justice is the idea that every person, everywhere in the world, is born with the same rights. This means that everyone should have equal access to resources and have the power to make decisions that affect their daily lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Justice</td>
<td>In a just world everyone will have access to sufficient supplies of safe and acceptable water, that is fully accessible and affordable for all. However, for many people around the world, this does not happen. This is an injustice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Stress</td>
<td>Water stress occurs when the demand for water exceeds the available amount during a certain period or when poor quality restricts its use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Cycle</td>
<td>The water cycle is a way that water moves all around the Earth. There are four main parts to the water cycle: Evaporation, Convection, Precipitation and Collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invisible Water</td>
<td>Is hidden water in the products, services and processes people buy and use every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather Events</td>
<td>Weather Event means flood, washouts, landslides, mudslides, earthquakes, storms, hurricanes and tropical storms or threat of such.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Justice</td>
<td>Climate Justice links human rights and development to achieve a human-centred approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its resolution equitably and fairly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td>Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to all of us.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development Education is often referred to by different terms, including Global Learning, Global Education, Global Citizenship Education, and Global Youth Work. No matter what name you choose to use, if you are educating for a just and sustainable world, you are delivering Development Education. Development Education is an important tool in making sense of the complex issues that prevail in our everchanging world. It is an active and creative educational process to increase awareness and understanding of the world in which we live. It should challenge perceptions and stereotypes by encouraging empathy, optimism, participation, and action for a just world. Trócaire uses Development Education to inform learners about global issues such as poverty, injustice, gender equality, humanitarian crises and climate change using a human rights lens. Our work engages children, young people, and educators through a process of interaction, reflection and action. They are supported to make connections between their own lives and international social justice issues, and empowered to make a positive difference in the world. You can find out more about Trócaire’s work in development education [here](https://www.trocaire.org/our-work/educate/)
Methodologies
The methodologies in this resource will support young people to examine global justice issues. As the youth worker in leading group discussions, it helps to adopt a justice-centred rights-based approach. By asking the following questions during the debriefs and discussions. You are applying a critical lens to the issues and topics that will be covered.

Role of Critical Questioning

Justice-Centred Approach

Who benefits?
Who suffers the consequences?
Who is responsible?
Is that fair?
How could the unfairness be stopped?
Who has the power to change it?

Rights-Based Approach

Who has the power in this situation? Who does not?
What rights are being fulfilled/protected in this situation?
What rights are being denied in this situation?
Does everyone have the same rights?
How can different rights be balanced where there is an apparent conflict of rights?
Who has responsibility to protect the rights of others?

Safeguarding disclaimer:
We recognise that any resources focusing on global issues can resonate with individuals because of their lived experience; therefore, we advise that you read each activity in advance and modify it if you feel there is anything that may affect an individual child. The content focuses on a number of perspectives, but there are many more. It is important as educators that we avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes through the activities contained in this resource.
The following table outlines the main activities contained in the Tree of Justice for this year and a suggested order in which to use these activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Session One</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Water Justice Video</td>
<td>Trunk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Water Justice Video Debrief</td>
<td>Trunk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Water animation</td>
<td>Trunk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Water animation Debrief</td>
<td>Trunk</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Session Two</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Water Quiz</td>
<td>Kahoot and Youth Booklet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Water PLINGs</td>
<td>Youth Booklet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Charades, How water is used</td>
<td>Youth Booklet</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Session Three</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td>How much water do I use</td>
<td>Youth Booklet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 9</td>
<td>Water Decetives</td>
<td>Youth Booklet</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Session Four</strong></td>
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<td>Step 10</td>
<td>Safe to Drink</td>
<td>Malawi Branch and Youth Booklet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 11</td>
<td>Problems and Solutions</td>
<td>Malawi Branch and Youth Booklet</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Session Five</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 12</td>
<td>Barriers to Water Justice</td>
<td>Palestine Branch and Youth Booklet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 13</td>
<td>Giant Steps</td>
<td>Trunk and Youth Booklet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Session Six</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 12</td>
<td>Taking action</td>
<td>Action Branch and Booklet</td>
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</table>
Malawi is a landlocked country in southeastern Africa

Malawi has a sub-tropical climate with two main seasons, namely the cool dry season between May and October with mean temperatures of around 13°C in June and July and the hot wet season between November and April with temperatures between 30°-35°C.

English is the official language, but the most widely spoken language is Chichewa...

HELLO, HOW ARE YOU?
-> MULI BWANJI

ELEPHANTS, LIONS, LEOPARDS, AFRICAN BUFFALOES, HIPPOPOTAMUSES, AND RHINOCEROSES LIVE IN THE COUNTRY.
Water justice in Malawi

Challenges
Malawi is one of the 20 poorest countries in the world and experiences considerable water stress. Water stress means it is particularly vulnerable to drought and extreme weather events particularly floods and cyclones, which are increasing in frequency and intensity due to climate change.

Big Issues relating to water in Malawi

Drought
In the last 36 years, Malawi has experienced eight major droughts, affecting over 24 million people.

Floods
Cyclone Freddy hit southern Malawi on 12 March 2023 bringing 300-400mm of rainfall in the first 48 hours alone. This brought sudden, violent and destructive flash floods and landslides.

Access to Water
1 in 3 people in Malawi don’t have access to clean water. That’s 5.7 million people.

Agriculture
Agriculture anchors Malawi’s economy, directly accounting for about one third of gross domestic product. Agriculture significantly contributes to employment, economic growth, export earnings, poverty reduction, food security, and nutrition.

Economy Climate
Shocks, low agricultural productivity, and slow structural transformation mean that poverty levels remain high in Malawi.

Clean Water and Sanitation Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all. Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is the most basic human need for health and well-being. Explore the Sustain Development Goals (SDGS) with our global goal photo pack. Email aine.odriscoll@trocaire.org for more information.

To find out more about Trócaire’s work in Malawi, watch our Water Justice video which is located on the Trunk of the Water Justice Tree. Trócaire is committed to fostering a culture of solidarity with vulnerable communities around the world. Raising awareness of the causes of poverty and crises is a key part of our mission, as is educating, inspiring and mobilising multiple audiences, including people in Ireland north and south, to take action in the name of global justice and the eradication of poverty.
Activity 1: water quiz

Aims
To explore relevant facts about water to frame future discussion on water justice

Materials
Water Quiz Questions or Kahoot Quiz Link, markers and paper, flip chart paper and PLiNG worksheet

Section One
Step 01:
Take our Water Quiz, split the young people into groups of 4 and hand each group a sheet of paper and marker. Explain that there are ten questions in the global water quiz. Explain you are going to read the questions and they must number and answer the question on their team paper. They must come up with a team name related to water and you can have a prize for the winning team.

Alternatively, they can play as individuals on Kahoot: https://play.kahoot.it/v2/?quizId=d98c57c4-3af6-49a9-88f9-d195d9ae2139

Step 02:
Read out the following questions (see worksheet on the next page) leaving enough time in-between each question for the young people to record their answers on their sheets. Its up to you if you want to score as you go or at the end of the quiz. In italics below are some comments that help discussions if needed.

Extension activity: Ask young people do they know what their human rights are…
If needs be you can refer back to our exploring human rights activity on the 2023 Tree of Justice.

Step 03: Quiz debrief
• Did any answer surprise you?
• What would you like to know more about?
• Did anything challenge your thinking on how we use water?
• Would anything you heard during the quiz challenge your actions?

Surely we have a responsibility to care for our blue planet.
— Attenborough

When you turn on you tap where does water come from? To find out: watch https://www.water.ie/help/supply/cloud-to-glass/

Section Two
Step 01:
Explain that everyone has the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation. This is a human right recognised by the United Nations General Assembly. There are five key elements of this right: Availability, Accessibility, Affordability, Safety. Ask the young people what they think the elements mean in relation to water. Give them a flip chart page and markers and ask them to draw a PLING chart like the one below.

Step 02:
Split young people into 4 small groups hand them a worksheet and ask each group to map out their own connection to water using a water PLING (PL.i.N.Gs: Personal, Local, National and Global levels of

Ask each group to consider how they connect with water Personally, Locally, Nationally and Globally and decide based on their P.L.I.N.G if they are water secure. Examples and worksheets have been provided below.

**Step 03:**

Once the groups have filled in their worksheet ask the young people to give feedback to the wider group. Read out the following definitions and then explore the worksheet they created with the wider group by asking the debrief questions below.

Water security defined by the United Nations is The capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against waterborne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability.

Water Insecurity: Water insecurity is the lack of adequate and safe water for a healthy and productive life. It is one of the greatest threats facing humans in the coming century. By 2030 half of the world is expected to be living in water stressed conditions.

**Debrief Questions:** Are we water secure and how? What if we were water insecure? How different would our lives be?

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**Summary**

Explain that for people living in Ireland, we get our water from different sources. Over 4 million people get their water from Usice Éireann. Around 11% of all people in Ireland get their water from private sources, like wells. This water is not supplied or checked by Usice Eireann. For almost everyone in Ireland, water comes from the tap. According to Usice Éireann, 99.6% of all of their customers receive a water supply that is safe to drink. On the rare occasion that water is not fit for human consumption in Ireland, the problem is usually fixed quickly. When issues are identified, they will recommend measures like a Boil-Water-Notice, or a Do-Not-Consum-e Notice.

- Have you ever had one of these notices in your area?
- Have you ever experienced a loss in supply of water due to bad weather, repairs, or something else? How did that effect your day?
- How you experienced any other issues related to water being available in your area? safe, affordable, accessible, acceptable?

For people in other parts of the world, their supply of water will also depend on where they live. Approx 46% of the world’s population (that’s over three billion people) do not have water piped to their homes. Some households in rural parts of Africa like Malawi may be many miles from the nearest source of water. People often walk a six kilometres round trip many times each day to collect water. Getting water can be a difficult and time-consuming task.

Ask the young people have they ever thought about where their water comes from? Do they know what happens to their water before it reaches the taps?

**Watch the our animation and Water Justice video in our tree of justice Trunk to learn more**
# Quiz Worksheet

## Q1. How much of the earth is covered by water?
That’s why we call it the blue planet.

- A 55%  
- B 65%  
- C 75%  
- D 85%

## Q2. How much of the earth’s water is fresh water that could be used by humans?
That’s why the famous quote says… water water everywhere but not a drop to drink! 97.5 percent is salt water. The rest is frozen in glaciers and ice caps or locked underground.

- A 2%  
- B 8%  
- C 15%  
- D 20%

## Q3. How long can humans can survive without water?

- A week  
- Two weeks  
- A month

## Q4. What percent of our bodies are composed of water?
We are made up of mostly water.

- A 20%  
- B 30%  
- C 50%  
- D 70% per cent water.

## Q5. What part of the body uses the most water?
Water is an essential part of keeping our brains healthy.

- Muscles  
- Bones  
- Brain

## Q6. The average Irish Person uses how many liters of water a day?

- In Asia the average is 237 litres per day  
- In Africa the average is 47 litres per day

- 69  
- 89  
- 129

## Q7. How many people around the world have no access to clean, safe drinking water at home?

- Over 2 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water at home, mostly in rural areas.

- 1 billion  
- 1.5 billion  
- 2 billion

## Q8. What takes the most water to make 10 pairs of leather shoes, 3 bikes, 300 chocolate bars?
It takes an estimated 8,000 litres of water to make one pair of leather shoes.

- 10 pairs of leather shoes  
- 3 bikes  
- 300 chocolate bars

## Q9. Think back to when dinosaurs ruled the world was there more same or less water in the world?
The same amount of water exists today as it did 65 million years ago. You are probably drinking the same water dinosaurs did way back then.

- More  
- The same  
- Less

## Q10. True or false Access to safe drinking water and sanitation are internationally recognized human rights?
International human rights law obliges States to work towards achieving universal access to water and sanitation for all, without any discrimination, while prioritizing those most in need.

- True  
- False
### Water PLiNG worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PERSONAL LIFE</strong></th>
<th><strong>LOCALLY</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eg: Everyday uses/access/sanitation/pollution</td>
<td>Community/recreation/reservoir/access/farming/pollution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NATIONALLY</strong></th>
<th><strong>GLOBALLY</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource/agriculture/island/pollution</td>
<td>Control/access/drought/pollution/conflict/climate change/inequality/gender/sanitation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity 2: Charades, How Is Water Used

Aims
Playing a game of charades helps young people appreciate how we use water in our daily lives in Ireland

Materials
Charades Cards

Step 01:
Make a copy of the Water Charades cards and cut them apart. Put them in a container or turn them upside down on a table.

Split the young people into 2 groups. Have a young person from Group A draw a Water Charade card. The young person will have 2 minutes to act out what is printed on the card. Only people from Group A can guess. At the end of the two minutes, if Group A has not guessed the correct answer, their turn ends and the acting young person returns to the group, after revealing the answer. The Water Charade card is discarded, and play continues with Group B.

If Group A has correctly guessed the charade, their score is posted on the board and the game continues with Group B, and so on.

Step 02:
Keep the score. Young people are not permitted to use sounds, props, or words during their turn at acting out the charade. The game ends after each group has had a turn or after each student has had a turn.

Summary
Explore how often in a day or week you might do the activities that you acted out in charades. Can you guess how much water a day you use each day? Move on to Activity 3 to explore how much water we use in our daily lives.
Charade Worksheet
Feel free to add more examples.

SHOWERING  WASHING HANDS  FLUSHING TOILET

BRUSHING TEETH  COOKING  CLEANING

DRINKING  SWIMMING  WATERING PLANTS
**ACTIVITY 3: HOW MUCH WATER DO I USE?**

**Aims**
To explore daily water usage for household tasks and to also understand how we use water and virtual water

**Materials**
Physical water use cards or digital activity on the Tree of Justice

**Step 01:**
Split the young people into 2 groups. Make two copies of the water cards on page and cut them apart and mix them up. Explain to the group that you are going to play a matching game. They will be given two sets of cards and they have to match water use cards to the amount of water they think the activity uses. This can also be played digitally on our Tree of Justice under the Malawi Flag Icon.

The group has 5 minutes to match the cards and then report back to the group how they decided to match. Each group takes a turn to report back.

Once the cards are correct, ask the young people to map out their individual water usage, what daily activities they do and how often and then add up the number of times they do that for the day. Does it stick with our daily water usage limits of 100 litres a day?

**Step 02:**
Read out the correct matches:
- Ask the group did they find anything surprising?
- What is our average daily water usage here in Ireland?
- How much water did you need? If you needed to, how would you carry this amount of water?

Explain that we use water not just to drink or shower, or wash our clothes use it through the products we consume too. An average person in Ireland uses 129 litres of water daily. An average person in Malawi uses 36 Liters per day. An average person in the West Bank in Palestine Uses:

Our water usage also includes the water needed to produce the products that we buy or eat. The water consumed to produce our food plays a part in our consumption too. It amounts to approx. 3496 litres a day per person. This invisible water that we consume without knowing is called virtual water. [https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/average-daily-water-usage](https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/average-daily-water-usage).

Virtual water in food is part of the “hidden” water in the products, services and processes people buy and use every day. Other examples include the water it takes to produce our smartphones, jeans, electricity and hamburgers. While it’s unseen by the end user, that virtual water has been consumed throughout the entire process of creating that product or service.

- 1 kilo of chocolate needs 24000 litres of water.
- 1 piece of paper 10 litres.
- 2700 litres to make one t-shirt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Water Usage per day per person in Ireland</th>
<th>Average Water Usage per day per person in Rural Malawi</th>
<th>Average Water Usage per day per person of a Palestinian in the West Bank.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>129 litres</td>
<td>36 Liters</td>
<td>82.4 Liters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Water Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAILY ACTIVITY</th>
<th>WATER QUANTITY PER UNIT:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brushing teeth (3 mins)</td>
<td>18 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flushing toilet</td>
<td>8 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing machine</td>
<td>65 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing dishes (by hand)</td>
<td>49 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing dishes (dishwasher)</td>
<td>20 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing car</td>
<td>200 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shower (10 min)</td>
<td>10 liters per min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>80 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water</td>
<td>2 litres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>1 litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total daily usage:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

What can be done? Conserving the water you use is one way of helping, but watching your shopping basket will have an even bigger impact. If we can be conscious of the products we buy and eat and choose less water intensive products we can make a difference. If manufacturers know that the consumers care, they might make some efforts to reduce their water usage during production.
# Activity 4: Water Detective

**Aims**
To offer an emotive experimental learning opportunity to increase awareness around safe water.

**Materials**
- 5 clear cups/glasses, 5 spoons or straws, marker to number cups, distilled or tap water with “Pollutants”
- **Example of pollutants - Any safe, nontoxic food can be used:**
  - Sight: drop of yellow food colouring or coffee
  - Touch: baking soda, clear syrup
  - Smell: vinegar, lemon/orange juice
  - Hearing: carbonated water

## Step 01:
Split the young people into three or four groups. Provide a workstation with 4 cups of distilled or tap water with small amounts of a ‘pollutant’ mixed into 4 of the cups and a cup with just water in it. Lay out spoons or straws for dipping in water.
- 4 clear cups/glasses
- 4 spoons or straws
- Marker to number cups
- Distilled or tap water with “Pollutants”

**Example of pollutants (any safe, nontoxic food can be used):**
- Sight: drop of yellow food colouring or coffee
- Touch: baking soda, clear syrup
- Smell: vinegar, lemon/orange juice
- Hearing: carbonated water

## Step 02:
Explain to young people that 4 of the 5 cups contain a mystery food that is considered a ‘pollutant’ in the water. Young people are to detect which cups contain mystery pollutants and which cup has unpolluted water by using their senses. Distribute to each group a water detective card and give the groups 10 mins to fill out the water detective clue card.

## Step 03:
Discuss the process with the young people, what did they do, how did they figure out what ‘pollutants’ were in the water.

### Debrief Questions:
What did the water feel like to see, touch, taste, smell, with pollutants in it? Would they drink the water knowing it might not be safe? What would they do if they had no choice?

## Summary
In parts of Malawi, filtering dirty water or adding is crucial for providing clean and safe drinking water, which is essential for the health and well-being of the population. There are several approaches that can be taken to address this issue. Remember that the choice of filtration method should be based on factors such as the level of contamination, available resources, and the specific needs of the community. Additionally, it’s important to involve the community in the decision-making process to ensure the sustainability and acceptance of the chosen solution.
## Water Detective Clue Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cup</th>
<th>Look</th>
<th>Listen</th>
<th>Smell</th>
<th>Feel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cup 01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cup 02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cup 03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cup 04</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Activity 5: Safe water

Aims
Explore how to filter water by making a water filter. This activity follows nicely from Activity 4 in the workbook. It’s an experimental physical learning opportunity. This activity can also be played digitally on the Youth section of our Tree of Justice under the Malawi Flag, https://www.trocaire.org/our-work/educate/

Materials
Flipchart paper. A 2-liter plastic bottle cut in half with the bottle’s top half placed it in the bottom, so the top looks like a funnel. You’ll build your filter in the top part. Dirty water (make your own with stuff like coffee grounds, dirt, crunched-up old leaves, cooking oil, or tiny pieces of foam). Spoon, pencil, and paper. As many of the following filter materials as you can get: gravel, sand (coarse and/or fine), cotton balls, coffee filter (a bandanna, old sock, napkin, or paper towel works too!)

Step 01:
Explain to the young people that in Malawi, the availability of safe water is a serious issue. If you haven’t already done so Watch the Water Justice video and water animation contained in the trunk of the tree.

In Malawi, as we saw in the water animation in the trunk of the tree, people often must walk many miles to their nearest water source, and often this water is not clean enough for them to use for human consumption.

Step 02:
There are many ways to purify dirty water. Ask the young people to suggest all the ways they can think of to clean dirty and write them on a flipchart page. See the following suggestions and possible drawbacks: This can be played at as digital activity on the Malawi Branch of the Tree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remove obvious large items</th>
<th>Always a good idea, but this does not remove smaller particles that are harder to see but equally dangerous if consumed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boil the water</td>
<td>Takes time to do this using an open fire, and availability and cost of fuel may be an issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlorine Tablets</td>
<td>Effective in removing invisible micro-organisms that cause sickness, but can be expensive, and not always available, as is the case in Malawi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a mechanical water filter</td>
<td>A good option, but they are not always available, and replacement parts can be hard to get. Not every country has a water system like in Ireland, which filters our water for us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build your own filter</td>
<td>This can work well, but it is essential to construct it in the proper way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 03:
Build a water filter! Using the Safe Water digital activity on the Malawi branch of the tree, ask the young people to rearrange the different components of a water filter into the correct order. This can be done individually or in groups on tablets or laptops, or as a physical activity. In pairs or small groups, ask the young people to decide what order to put the different layers in, and explain why you have chosen this order. Check the solution when you are finished.

**BUSHCRAFT WATER FILTER**: filter layer coarse to fine (more porous to less porous)

**DIRTY WATER**

**GRAVEL**

**GRASS**

**SAND**

**DIRT**

**CHARCOAL**

**FABRIC**

**CLEAN WATER**

**Physical activity:**
Bring in the different elements of a homemade water filter into the group or go outside with the young people and try to find all that you need nearby. Ask the young people to each bring in an empty 1 or 2 litre plastic bottle. Safely cut off the bottom of the bottle, turn upside down, and using the materials, ask the young people to complete their own water filter. Get some dirty water and use it to test how well the filter works. Do not drink the water! Give out the picture of the Water filter above to help the young people.

Explain that the slower the water passes through the filter, the better! The longer it takes for water to move through a filter, the cleaner it gets. Water slips easily through the filter materials, but bigger gunk, like dirt, gets trapped. The filter materials usually get finer and finer, so they can catch whatever was missed earlier. Activated charcoal can be near the end of the water’s path, because it uses an electrical charge to grab particles too small for us to see.

**Debrief Questions**
- Ask the young people what did it feel like to filter water?
- What was the hardest part of the challenge?
- Would they drink the water they filtered?
- How is safe and acceptable water linked to the right to water and sanitation?

**Summary**
We don’t have to think about filtering our water here in Ireland but in many parts of the world people have to treat their water before using it, or else it can cause health issues. Explore activity 6 to understand how this might affect day to day life in Malawi.
Activity 6: Challenges and Solutions

Aims
Rural communities in Malawi face significant challenges in accessing clean and reliable water sources, this case study examines the impact of limited water access has on daily life in a rural village in Malawi.

Age
Age +12

Time
30 minutes

Materials
Story Cards

Section One – Challenges
Activity also available as a pdf on our Tree of Justice.

Step 01:
Split the group up into groups of three or four. Cut out the following set of day in the life cards and distribute one set to each group. Cut out and copy the challenge card and the solution card giving ten of each to each group. Copy and distribute one definition card to each group for reference (see below for all cards).

Step 02:
Ask the young people to arrange the cards in order, showing the day in the life of a family in Malawi. See below for the correct order.

Step 03:
Once the order is correct, ask the young people to identify as many challenges as possible that Malita and her family face during the day. These challenges can be both related and unrelated to water justice issues. Write the challenges down on the challenge cards, and position them at the appropriate point in the day. Discuss these challenges as a group and allow groups to identify what challenges they may have missed. Which of the challenges do they feel are related to climate change? See below for ten possible challenges the students to young people may identify.

Step 04:
Everyone has the right to available; accessible; affordable, safe and acceptable water. Refer the young people to their definition card. Write these five words on flipchart and ask the young people to link the challenges they have identified, to these five elements of the right to water and sanitation. After this is complete, ask the young people the following question – Is the right of Malita and her family to water and sanitation being protected, or taken away?

Section Two – Solutions

Step 01:
Ask the groups to address each challenge with a potential solution. Ask them to write their suggestions on the solution cards. Encourage the young people to think about factors linked to the solution, like cost, the availability of materials, technical expertise, etc. Ask them to rank how realistic the solutions they have suggested are (groups may not be able to come up with solutions to all the identified challenges, this is ok. Perhaps discuss the more difficult challenges as a whole group).

Step 02:
Discuss with the young people the importance of finding local solutions to local problems if possible, and that local people are the leaders in this process. Encourage the young people to express their opinions on this, and to apply it to their own lives. How would they feel if there was a disaster or crisis in their community, and people from other countries came in and took the lead in dealing with the problems faced by the communities? What do they think is the best approach to situations like this? Is there a way to have a balanced approach, and involve everyone who needs to be involved and can help, whilst ensuring local people remain fully in control? Which of their potential solutions can be implemented locally, and which require some outside help?
DAY IN THE LIFE
When we get back home, we use the water to wash and for cooking breakfast if we have enough food to cook. After that I send the children to school. I am lucky I have enough money now to pay their fees. It is 1000kw (£1/71p) per child per term and there are 3 school terms a year.

DAY IN THE LIFE
We fill up a 20-litre container of water which I carry back and two smaller containers of 10 litres which the children carry. We would try to carry more but the distance is too far. It's a 4km/2.5 miles round trip to the well.

DAY IN THE LIFE
I wake up at 6am, I light the fire and wake the children, then go to the well to get the first water of the day. This is for washing and it takes about an hour to fetch it. We go early so that we can get there before the animals, who contaminate the water. In the dry season the well dries up and we must walk to the spring further up the mountain which add another hour to the trip.

DAY IN THE LIFE
The children walk 4km/2.5 miles to school where there is a bore hole, so they have access to water and get some porridge to eat. I try to make sure they go everyday but sometimes they are sick from the dirty water and must go to hospital. And other times they don’t go to school because they are too tired from fetching water all the time.

DAY IN THE LIFE
When the children leave for school, I go straight back up to the well to get more water. We need water for lots of different things so keep having to make the trip to the well sometimes up to 5 times a day. When I am on my own, I will try to carry two 20 litre containers instead of one, but this is very heavy and very tiring.

DAY IN THE LIFE
The children water the crops unless there has been a flood like when cyclone Freddy hit the area and the rain was so heavy it washed away half our maise crop. After they finish with the crops the children cook dinner while I go to fetch firewood or make charcoal, which I bring to the trading centre to sell roughly twice a week.
DAY IN THE LIFE

When the children come back from the well in the afternoon sometimes the water has been contaminated from the animals. When this happens, we need to use chlorine tablets if we have them from the government to treat some of the water for drinking. The rest of the water goes on the crops. The crops need a lot of water especially when there is a drought.

DAY IN THE LIFE

The children come home from school at around 1.30pm. They do their homework first if there is time and then there are lots of chores to do around the house and some work in the field. We grow maize, cassava, millet and pigeon peas which we use to feed the family and we grow tomatoes, Chinese leaves, and mustard that we eat and sell. Then I send the children back to the well for more water.

DAY IN THE LIFE

When I get back from the well, while the children are still at school. I will use the water for our animals. We have chickens’ goats and rabbits which are a source of food and income for the family. I managed to buy the animals with the money I have made from gathering and selling firewood and making charcoal. I get 2000kw (£2/£1.40) for a bundle of firewood and 5000kw (£5/£3.50) for a bag of charcoal.

DAY IN THE LIFE

After dinner if it’s still early enough I will go again to the well to get more water. Sometimes I have no choice to do this because the water has been contaminated by the animals. I must make sure I can get back before dark because once dusk arrives wild foxes and other animals become a danger.

DAY IN THE LIFE

When it gets dark it’s time for bed. If the children have not had time to finish their homework, they will try to do it before bed, but the light from the lamp is very bad, so sometimes they don’t get their homework finished.
Definition Card – The Right to Water and Sanitation

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation are internationally recognized human rights, derived from the right to an adequate standard of living under Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Key elements of the rights to water and sanitation are: Availability, Accessibility, Affordability, Quality & Safety, and Acceptability.
DAY IN THE LIFE
I wake up at 6am, I light the fire and wake the children, then go to the well to get the first water of the day. This is for washing and it takes about an hour to fetch it. We go early so that we can get there before the animals, who contaminate the water. In the dry season the well dries up and we must walk to the spring further up the mountain which add another hour to the trip.

DAY IN THE LIFE
When the children leave for school, I go straight back up to the well to get more water. We need water for lots of different things so keep having to make the trip to the well sometimes up to 5 times a day. When I am on my own, I will try to carry two 20 litre containers instead of one, but this is very heavy and very tiring.

DAY IN THE LIFE
When we get back home, we use the water to wash and for cooking breakfast if we have enough food to cook. After that I send the children to school. I am lucky I have enough money now to pay their fees. It is 1000kw (£1/€1.40) per child per term and there are 3 school terms a year.

DAY IN THE LIFE
The children water the crops unless there has been a flood like when cyclone Freddy hit the area and the rain was so heavy it washed away half our maize crop. After they finish with the crops the children cook dinner while I go to fetch firewood or make charcoal, which I bring to the trading centre to sell roughly twice a week.

DAY IN THE LIFE
When I get back from the well, while the children are still at school. I will use the water for our animals. We have chickens, goats and rabbits which are a source of food and income for the family. I managed to buy the animals with the money I have made from gathering and selling firewood and making charcoal. I get 2000kw (£2/€1.40) for a bundle of firewood and 5000kw (£3.50) for a bag of charcoal.

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The children come back from the well in the afternoon sometimes the water has been contaminated from the animals. When this happens, we need to use chlorine tablets if we have them from the government to treat some of the water for drinking. The rest of the water goes on the crops. The crops need a lot of water especially when there is a drought.

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After dinner if it’s still early enough I will go again to the well to get more water. Sometimes I have no choice to do this because the water has been contaminated by the animals. I must make sure I can get back before dark because once dusk arrives wild foxes and other animals become a danger.

DAY IN THE LIFE
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Possible challenges

1. Get up early to go fetch water in the morning.
2. Water contamination by animals
3. Distance to the water sources
4. Weight of the water they have to carry back to their home
5. Need to make money to pay for essentials like school fees
6. Having to go a number of times to the well (up to 5 times a day)
7. Not enough chlorine tablets
8. Drought
9. Floods and extreme weather
10. Safety while fetching water

Correct order of story cards

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## Possible solutions

| **Community-Led Water Committees** | Many rural communities in Malawi have established water committees composed of local volunteers. These committees are responsible for the maintenance and management of water sources, such as wells and boreholes. They oversee repairs, collect fees, and ensure equitable distribution of water resources. |
| **Borehole Installation** | NGOs and government agencies collaborate with communities to drill boreholes, providing a more reliable and safer source of water. These boreholes are often strategically located to serve multiple villages. |
| **Water Source Protection** | Communities are engaged in efforts to protect and preserve their water sources. This includes tree planting to prevent erosion, installing fences to keep livestock away from water sources, and maintaining cleanliness to prevent contamination. |
| **Hygiene and Sanitation Education** | NGOs conduct hygiene and sanitation education programs within rural communities. These programs raise awareness about the importance of proper sanitation practices and safe water handling. |
| **Rainwater Harvesting** | In areas with irregular access to groundwater, rainwater harvesting systems are promoted. Communities are trained in the construction and maintenance of rainwater collection tanks and systems. |
| **Women’s Empowerment** | Women often bear the responsibility of fetching water for their households. Community initiatives are aimed at empowering women and girls, including providing training and resources for income-generating activities to reduce their water-fetching burden. |
| **Partnerships with NGOs** | Many rural communities partner with NGOs specialising in water and sanitation projects. These organisations provide technical expertise, funding, and resources to improve water access in partnership with community organisations. |

## Summary:

Access to clean water and the effects of climate change are deeply intertwined in rural Malawi. Climate change means that local water sources dry up for longer periods, and also increasingly extreme weather leads to more storms and flooding which can contaminate water sources and damage homes and crops. Limited access to safe water sources exacerbates the vulnerability of communities to the impacts of climate change, creating a cycle of hardship. Addressing this issue requires a holistic approach, including improved water infrastructure, climate-resilient agricultural practices, and community education on climate adaptation strategies. International cooperation and support are also crucial to mitigate the challenges posed by climate change in rural Malawi.
The State of Palestine is often referred to as the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and we have used this term in this resource.

The OPT consists of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza. Some 4.5 million Palestinians live in the OPT (2.7 million in the West Bank and 2 million in Gaza). Levels of poverty are high in many Palestinian communities. The root causes of this lie in the systemic injustice faced by Palestinians under the ongoing Israeli occupation. Israel continues to displace Palestinian communities by force. Their land is often confiscated, a practice which has been ongoing for over six decades. Israeli settlements have been built on confiscated Palestinian land in the West Bank. This is despite settlements being illegal under international law.

Trócaire works with Israeli and Palestinian partners to support those affected by conflict and violations of fundamental freedoms.

The primary languages of Palestine are Arabic and Hebrew. Palestinians mainly speak Arabic and Israelis mainly speak Hebrew, but many people speak both languages.

It is important to view the topic of the history of Palestine and Israel through a global justice lens. Global justice is the idea that everyone, everywhere is born equal. This means that everyone is entitled to the same fundamental freedoms and to have their basic needs met. Palestinians and Israelis, and everyone who lives in this region, are entitled to this. You can find out more about the history of the region in the 2023 Tree of Justice – please note this content was written and published by January 2023 meaning that it does not contain reference to events in Israel and Gaza since October 2023.
On October 7th 2023, armed militants from Hamas breached the border with Israel at several points. They killed civilians and took hostages. At the time of writing, at least 1200 Israelis were killed and at least 220 hostages were taken into Gaza. Israel began its retaliatory attack against Hamas on October 7th. This involved intense aerial bombardment as well as a ground attack. This caused huge damage to homes, mosques, churches, schools and hospitals as well as damaging and destroying essential infrastructure like water pipes, wastewater and sewage treatment plants, and roads. Israel imposed a total blockade on Gaza on October 10th, 2023, cutting off water and food as well as other essential supplies like fuel and medical supplies to the civilian population. The UN Water and Sanitation cluster reported that as a result of this only three litres of water a day were available per person in Gaza at that time.

This is compared to the World Health Organisation recommended 50-100 litres of water required each day to meet basic health requirements. People were reported drinking sea water and from farm wells.

Article 54 of the Geneva Convention states that ‘It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population’. The decision to cut off water and food to the civilian population of Gaza was against international law. At the time of writing over 20,000 people in Gaza have been killed and 85% of the population have been forced to flee their homes.
Barriers to Water Justice in Palestine

**Aims**
Understanding challenges to water justice in Palestine

**Time**
30 minutes

**Materials**
Water justice video, flipchart paper and sticky notes

**Section One**

**Step 01**
Watch the Water Justice video contained in the trunk of the tree. If you have already watched the video, then revisit the Palestine section. While watching this section, as the young people to note down the names of all the different actors in this situation (e.g. Palestinians living in Gaza, Israeli Army), and what their role/position is in relation to the others.

**Step 2**
Draw a water power map on a flipchart paper and ask the groups, to discuss and position each actor on the ‘Water Power’ map in relation to how powerful you think they are, and also whether their actions indicate a commitment to water justice for the many, or the few.

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**Israeli military**

**Palestinian Authority**
The West Bank is governed by the Palestinian Authority and Gaza has been governed by Hamas since the 2006 elections.

**Palestinian residents of The West Bank**

**Palestinian residents of Gaza**

**Israeli water company**
People need to buy water and have to buy it from Israeli water company.

**Israeli settlers**
Section Two

Draw the table below on flipchart paper. Each group will be given a different set of colored post-it notes, one color per group. Explain to the young people that you are going to read out a series of statements (see below), and they must decide which barrier to water justice is being described. Once they have decided, they go up to the flipchart and put their post-it notes in the correct square. The group that gets the most correct post-it notes in the correct description wins.

Barriers to Water Justice Statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Israeli Blockade of Gaza</th>
<th>Deliberate Destruction of Water Infrastructure</th>
<th>Seawater Intrusion</th>
<th>Destroyed, Damaged or Failing Water Pipes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contamination of Ground Water Supply</td>
<td>High Financial Cost of Water</td>
<td>Harsh/Slow Permit Process for Palestinians</td>
<td>Population Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israeli Settlements</td>
<td>Unequal Distribution of Water Supply</td>
<td>Extraction Pressures on Water Supply</td>
<td>Water Agreements Ignored</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Deliberate destruction of water infrastructure** – The water system is often targeted for damage or destruction during conflict.

**Israeli Blockade of Gaza** – Israel restricts the import of materials needed for water infrastructure, making it challenging to address water supply and sanitation issues. Israel also controls most of the water resources in the area, limiting Palestinians’ ability to access and manage these resources.

**Harsh/slow permit process for Palestinians** – Palestinians struggle to get permission from Israeli authorities to build or repair water infrastructure, causing delays and complications in addressing water needs.

**High financial cost of water** – Palestinians do not have access to enough water, so must buy extra water from Israeli water companies. The cost can be very high, and it is a challenge to afford this essential resource.

**Water Agreements Ignored** – Israelis and Palestinians do not share water resources, and despite a plan for both to have access, this is now being disregarded by the Israelis, negatively affecting access to water for Palestinians.

**Israeli Settlements** – Settlers use up a disproportionate amount of the water resources in The West Bank, leading to shortages for Palestinian communities.
Destroyed, damaged or failing water pipes – Water supply is often disrupted which affects the distribution of water from its source to Palestinian homes and communities. This disruption can occur due to conflicts, natural disasters, or aging infrastructure. When pipes are broken or disconnected, water cannot reach its intended destination, leading to water shortages and the inability to access clean water for drinking, cooking, and hygiene.

Unequal distribution of water supply – Israeli settlements in the West Bank often receive better access to water sources, including a higher volume of water compared to Palestinian communities. Also, large amounts of water are pumped from Palestinian land for use in Israel.

Extraction pressures on water supply – Palestine, particularly Gaza, faces water scarcity due to its arid climate and limited water sources during the summer months. Over-extraction of groundwater exacerbates this problem.

Contamination of ground water supply – Occurs when pollutants, such as sewage, chemicals, or bacteria, enter the water sources, and can lead to serious health issues when consumed or used for personal hygiene. This restricts access to safe and clean water but also poses significant health risks to Palestinians who come into contact with it.

Seawater intrusion - In Gaza, the over-pumping of groundwater has led to the intrusion of salty seawater into underground aquifers, rendering the water undrinkable and harmful for agricultural use.

Population growth - Increasing population in Palestinian territories puts additional pressure on already limited water resources.

Summary:
The issue of water access in Palestine is complex and multifaceted, involving political, social, and environmental aspects. Addressing this challenge requires cooperation between stakeholders, equitable distribution of resources, and long-term sustainable solutions.

Extension
Ask the students to consider the situation in Palestine and compare it to the situation in Malawi. What do they see as common factors in both contexts? How are the barriers in each context similar? Different? Who holds the power in the situation in Malawi? Is it different? How so? Are the possible solutions in each context the same or different?
Activity 8 Giant Steps: Water Justice, a Global Perspective

Aims
Use role cards to understand our connection with water from a personal to global level. Explore this connection by roleplay. Using examples from around the world.

Instructions
1. There are 15 role cards. Give each student a role card. If there are more than 15 students, some of them can work in pairs.

2. Allow time for the young persons to familiarise themselves with their role (think about who they are, where they live, their family, what kind of life they have and so on).

3. Ask the young people to stand in character at the back of the room in a single row with their backs to the wall. They should not share their role card with anyone else. This activity will also work well in a larger hall, or outside if weather permits.

4. Explain that you are going to read out a number of statements (see below). After each statement is read out, young person must take:
   - A GIANT STEP if their character can do the action or if the statement fully applies to them
   - A BABY STEP if they can do it with difficulty or if the statement applies to them a little bit
   - NO STEP at all if they can’t do it, or the statement doesn’t apply to them

The aim of the activity is not to reach the other side of the room but to experience the life of their character.

5. Allow time for the group to reflect on each statement and then decide if they should take a step.

6. As the statements are read out, young persons begin to spread throughout the activity space, with some taking giant steps and others hardly moving at all.

Statements
- I live in a peaceful environment in a secure home
- It is likely that I have or will finish secondary school
- I could go to college when I finish school
- There are no money worries in my house
- I live in a safe place
- I look forward to my life ahead and my future is secure
- I have enough food to eat and water to drink

- My family rely on local water sources for our livelihood
- My family do not have to worry about where our water comes from
- Our water is always safe to drink
- There are no threats to our water supply
- The weather does not affect our family income
- My home is not affected by extreme weather
- If there are problems with our water supply, we are able to do something about it
Debrief. Take the group out of their character roles, and ask them to discuss as a group the following questions:

- Who moved furthest and why? (The person or people who moved the furthest should be the character who was the most water secure)
- Who got left behind and why? (The person or people furthest behind will be the most water insecure)
- How did you feel if you were moving fast and taking lots of steps?
- How did you feel if you were moving slowly and not taking many steps?
- Generally speaking, what are the main threats to water security coming through in the activity?
- Are there threats that apply to a lot of the characters?
- Are the any characters who faced a threat that no-one else or very few others faced?
- What are the consequences of water insecurity?
- What do you think are the implications are for the whole global community?

Allow the young people to feedback from their discussions of the above questions. Once each young person/group have had a chance to speak, choose one or more of the characters and pose the following question:

**What possible solutions can you come up with to make this person more water secure?**

**Summary:**
Using character cards to explain global issues in youth work fosters awareness, critical thinking, and empathy among young individuals while empowering them to take action and become informed global citizens.
Role cards

Josie – 17 year old girl – Cape Town, South Africa

“I live with my family in a suburb of Cape Town, quite close to Table Mountain. I have a part time job in the ticket office for the cable car. I go to a local school where I am in grade 12. I sit my final exams this year and hope to go on to university to study medicine. I like living in Cape Town, the summers are usually dry and warm, so we spend most of our time outside playing football and tennis. The winters can be wet but usually not too cold. However, a few years ago things got very dry. We had no rain for three years in a row during winter from 2015 to 2018, which meant that the city was hit by a drought, which we were not prepared for. The water levels in the city’s dams dropped really low, and the authorities brought in sever restrictions on water use. Level 6 restrictions meant that everyone had only 87 litres per day, which then went down to 50 litres, which is barely enough for a 90-second shower, some water to drink, cook and brush teeth, and one toilet flush per day. If it got worse, the government were going to move to level seven, which we called ‘Day Zero’, when the taps would be turned off and we would collect our water from distribution points protected by armed guards. Thankfully the rains came back and it didn’t happen this time.”

Jassim – 14 year old boy – Qatar

“I live with my family in an apartment in Doha, the capital city of Qatar. It is a great place to live, I have lots of friends, and there is lots for us to do in our area. I go to an international school, with lots of other kids from many different countries. The world cup was held here recently, and we all had a great time going to the matches, though we couldn’t get tickets to the final. My dad works as an engineer with the Qatari government. His job is to make sure there is enough water for everyone in Qatar to drink. He says he is very busy, working on some big projects. He brought me to see the place where they turn sea water into drinking water, it was very impressive. He travels quite a bit into the desert where he says they are building some big reservoirs to hold all the water that we need in Doha. It does get very hot here, especially in summer, and there is no rain at all really.”

Simon – 14 year old boy – Ireland

“During term time I get up around 7:30am to get ready to catch the bus to school. I live in the countryside, so the bus collects me at the end of the road. During the summer holidays we spend a lot of time exploring the area around my house and going on different summer camps. My favourite is Cul camp! When we have some good weather, my dad will bring out the paddling pool and fill it up. It is quite small, but still takes ages to fill with the hosepipe, and the water is cold at the start, but soon warms up. A couple of years ago it was really dry for a few weeks, and we weren’t allowed to use the hosepipe. This year the weather has been really bad. I heard on the news that July this year was the wettest one ever in Ireland! Thankfully we were on holidays in Spain where it was so hot! We had to make sure to cool down every day in the pools at our campsite, and drink lots of water.”

Daniel – 15 year old boy – Chile

“I live in Futaleufú, a town in central Chile in the foothills of the Andes mountains, near the border with Argentina. I go to the local school with my friends, and I quite enjoy living here. My parents own a rafting company, and we take tourists out on rafts on the Futaleufú River, and the Espolon River which has some great rapids, including some class 5 rapids that are very challenging. The river flows down from the mountains and through our town, I think it starts in Argentina. The whole way of life here in the town is based around the river and the mountains. People come here to go hiking up the glaciers, but it is not as easy now as it used to be. My father says the glaciers are getting smaller, he says you have to walk about 5km further up the valley to get to the glacier, than you did when he was my age. The rivers are also higher than they used to be, which has meant that some areas are closed now to fishing because they are flooded and too dangerous. The rapids are sometimes higher when the summer is hot, and the melting happens quicker or sooner than usual.”
Lujan – 12 year old girl – Palestine

“I live in a village in the Jordan Valley in Palestine. It is part of Area C, the part of my country under full control of the Israeli army due to the illegal occupation. I go to school in the nearest town, but the school is overcrowded, and we don’t have all the things we need for class. The school were building a new classroom, but the soldiers came in and knocked it down before it was finished. My father is a sheep farmer, we have around 300 sheep in the flock, and we also grow some crops, but not much because we don’t have enough water. My father has to buy enough water to fill our three tanks each day for the sheep to drink, and for our family to use. The nearby village used to have a well which we were able to use, but it has dried up. They say there is water underneath the ground, but the Israelis control most of it. They came and destroyed some pipes and a water tank that local farmers were using to get water for their farms. It seems that most of the water goes to the settlers, they are able to grow whatever they want.”

Parvati – 10 year old girl – Assam, India

“I live with my family in a small town just a few miles from Guwahati, which is the largest city in the Indian state of Assam. We live close to a tea plantation where both my mother and father work, which is close to the banks of the Brahmaputra River. I go to school in the local primary school, but not many students go there, and the teacher doesn’t always turn up. There are other private schools near me, but the fees are too high for my family to pay for me and my brothers. My parents don’t get a lot of money for working on the plantation, so we have a BPL (Below Poverty Line) card from the government to get extra rice, 5kg per person per month. It is hard to get clean water to drink, we often must buy it as well. My mother works for 13 hours a day picking tea and gets paid very little. My father works in the factory, and gets paid a bit more, but not much. The weather is dryer than it usually is, so not as much tea is produced, meaning less money for my parents. The plantation relies heavily on water from the river, but there is a problem with that now too. The Chinese plan to build a dam at great bend, just north of Assam, which will mean there is less water in the river, and less water for the tea crop.”

Peter – 14 year old boy – Cleveland, USA

“I live with my family close to the centre of Cleveland, just a little bit away from the shore of Lake Erie. My father is a truck driver, and my mother works in a local school as a cook, the same school I go to. I am in the ninth grade and hope to graduate from high school in a couple of years. I don’t think I can go to college, but I would like to travel and see other parts of America. Cleveland is a nice enough place to live. Summers here are quite warm, but the winter can be very cold with lots of snow. There is lots to do in the city, but things are expensive. I love basketball and went to a cavaliers game last year for my birthday. Even though both my parents work, we don’t have a lot of money. Dad often talks about the bills he has for water, and how hard they are to pay. I think he is behind in his payments, but he doesn’t really talk to me about it much. I know that they threaten to take away your home if you don’t pay your water and sewage bills, and they can also shut off your water supply if you don’t pay, which I know from school would not be a good thing.”

Farah – 9 year old girl – Bangladesh

“I live in a town in Bangladesh, near the mangrove forests of Sundarbans on the coast. My family are farmers, and we depend on the rice harvest every year for most of our money. We also have different crops like Mustard Oil and other types of fruit like blackberries. We get a lot more rain here than we used to, so we usually get water, and sometimes destroys our crops. My mum says that the water brings lots of sand, which is not good for the paddy fields. The rice doesn’t grow as well as it should, and we don’t have as much to sell. My father has to spend more money on water and other stuff for farming. Sometimes the sea is really high, and it leaves behind salt that also destroys the rice paddy. We do have a tap in the house, but it is often dirty, and makes us sick. I am still going to school, but I don’t know how long my family will be able to afford to send me. A lot of my friends have left with their families and went to the city. I really hope we don’t have to do this.”
Margaret – 16 year old girl – Malawi

“I get up early in the morning with my family. Before we do anything else, the whole family goes to fetch water from the shallow well. It takes about _________ to get there and back. Then it is time to get the younger children ready for school and go and get some firewood or make charcoal. Most of my day is spent doing chores, looking after the younger children, and fetching water. We usually have to go five times a day to get water. My mother carries as much as she can each time, sometimes 40 litres, but we still must spend a lot of time doing this. I used to go to school, but I stopped after five years. I am thinking about going back. It takes a lot of time and energy to get enough water for the family. In the dry season, when the well dries up, we have to walk even further upstream to a spring. The water patterns are changing and it’s making it harder to get enough water each day. Sometimes the storms come, and the floods wash away our crops. If I could change one thing about our way of life, it would be to make it easier to get water each day.”

Seán – 15 year old boy – Cork City, Ireland

“I live with my family in a small village in county Meath, close to Navan. I go to the local primary school, but in a couple of years I will have to get the bus into Navan for big school. I love where we live, it is really close to the Boyne River, which runs along the bottom of my garden. In the summertime, we do a lot of fishing in the river, looking for different animals, and if it is really hot, we sometimes go swimming down by the bridge where there is a small beach, but only if mum or dad come with us. Last year dad wouldn’t let us go swimming in the river as he said the water is bad, and we shouldn’t take a chance with it. I know he is involved with other people in trying to stop a local factory from putting more wastewater from their factory into the river. I am worried about this because I don’t want our river to be polluted. I also think we get our drinking water from the river. I know it is treated and made safe, but it still is a worry. I saw that even Pierce Brosnan made a video about this problem!”
Maria – 12 year old girl – Honduras

“I live with my family in a small village in the Aguan Valley in Northern Honduras. My family are farmers, we grow mostly corn, but a little cacao and some beans. I go to school in the village, but my two brothers work on the farm helping my father. When I finish primary school, I will work on the farm too. This is a dangerous place to live, many people are attacked and sometimes killed by the soldiers and police because of the iron oxide mine upriver. Some of the local people have been in prison for years for protesting against the mines. We need the water from the river for our crops, and for our family, but the water is dangerous because of the mine, they are putting things in the water that make us sick and kill our crops. We use the river water for washing clothes, but we can’t use it for drinking and cooking so we must buy more water which we can’t really afford. There are lots of protests about the mine, but no one listens to us, or speaks to us about it.”

Max – 13 year old boy – Newquay, England

“I live with my family in the town of Newquay in southwest England. It is famous for surfing and has a couple of really good beaches. Summers here are fantastic. As soon as the school holidays come around it time for surfing and just hanging out at the beach. Lots of tourists come here in the summer which is great, as my family own a small sandwich and ice cream shop, and we are always very busy in the summertime! In fact, the whole town relies on tourists coming to visit in the summer, and surfers coming all year round. Unfortunately, the water quality has not been great this past couple of years. There is always some sewage that gets released into the water when there is a storm, but it seems to be more and more recently. The lifeguards are always putting up the danger signs. Local people worry that it will drive tourists away from the area and make people swimming in the water sick. This doesn’t affect our water at home, it is still safe, but we all live in the ocean for the summertime, and I don’t want that to stop.”
Day of Celebration – World Water Day
World Water Day occurs every year on March 22nd. In 2024, this falls on a Friday just before the Easter break. Use this day as a way to celebrate all things water in your youth group, as well as raising awareness of water justice! The following are just some suggestions as to how you can integrate water issues into your youth group for the day!

A Pledge Waterfall – Create a waterfall of pledges in your club. Each water droplet coming down the waterfall can be an individual pledge from a young person, staff member, or anybody.

The Water Games – Run a ‘water games’ day (weather permitting).

Awareness raising campaign around your club using posters for world water day (could be run as a competition for younger members of your youth group).

Run a competition for young people to create board games based on water and enter our Game Changers competition.

Run a competition for young people to create short documentaries on water justice issues, and enter our The Right Focus competition.

Organise a clean up of a local river, stream or beach area.

Create posters or displays on what they have learned about water justice.