

HELPING HANDS

A Development
Education Resource
for Early Childhood
Education



Trócaire

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Trócaire	3
How to Use this Resource	4
The Story of Nomatter and Forward	5
THEME ONE: EXPLORING AND THINKING	
Learning Experience One: From Ireland to Zimbabwe	6
Learning Experience Two: Exploring Landscapes	6
THEME TWO: IDENTITY AND BELONGING	
Learning Experience Three: Fair Shares at the Market	7
Learning Experience Four: Helping	7
THEME THREE: COMMUNICATING	
Learning Experience Five: Showing our Similarities	8
Learning Experience Six: Our Common Home	8
THEME FOUR: WELL-BEING	
Learning Experience Seven: Food Sensory Exploration	9
Learning Experience Eight: We Need Water for Food	9
Learning Experience Nine: The Importance of Water	10
Learning Experience Ten: Building a Path to the Global Goals	10

ABOUT TRÓCAIRE

‘Trócaire’ is the Irish word for compassion. For almost fifty years, Trócaire has put the compassion of Irish people into action. We work in partnership with communities in more than twenty countries to relieve poverty and tackle injustice.

We support people to use their own power to create positive and lasting change.

Trócaire was set up in 1973 with two main aims:

- Support and advocate for people in the wider world who are living in poverty
- Educate people in Ireland about global poverty and justice issues

Trócaire believes that every woman, man and child is born equal. We understand poverty as being more than the absence of basic needs. It is the absence of opportunity, the lack of power, a lack of voice and a lack of control over one's life. We see that real and lasting change happens when people secure their basic human rights. We influence this by working in partnership with local communities affected by poverty and injustice.

Partnership means working with individuals, communities and local organisations to help bring about the change they want to see in their lives. Fundamentally, partnership is about solidarity, respect and empowerment.

Trócaire's development education work is rooted in the Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the Global Goals. Sustainable development means developing in a way that will not harm the lives or ignore the rights of future generations. Climate change and Covid-19 have been devastating for communities around the world, including here at home. However, it has also brought communities together with a strong sense of compassion and caring for one another. It served as a reminder of how dependent we are on the world around us and everyone living in it.

TRÓCAIRE'S WORK IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe is a country located in Southeast Africa. It was once regarded as the great hope for Africa.

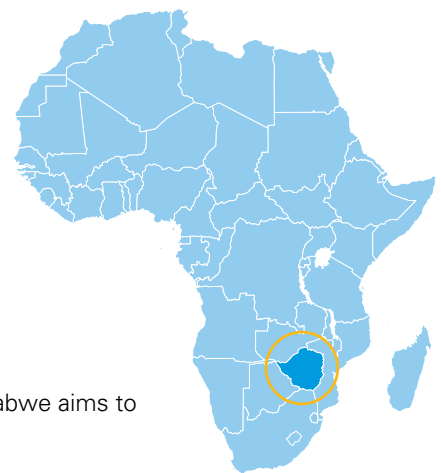
However, it has not been able to reach its potential due to a series of crises, including climate change and economic and political instability. Zimbabwe has been very badly affected by climate change. Approximately 70 per cent of people in Zimbabwe rely on agriculture, but rising temperatures and worsening droughts are leaving farmers without harvests, making it harder for them to survive.

In Zimbabwe, violations of human rights remain pervasive. Citizens for the most part remain unaware of their civic, economic and social rights. Women suffer disproportionately the effects of poverty and human rights abuses. Violence against women, in all its forms, continues to be recorded at extremely high levels.

Trócaire's work in Zimbabwe aims to achieve:

- The development of **sustainable and resilient livelihoods**. We support communities to increase their resilience to withstand climate shocks, and to increase food production.
- Stronger **human rights** protections. Our work involves influencing the government of Zimbabwe to address human rights violations and supporting citizens to demand their rights.
- **Women's empowerment**. To protect women from violence and encourage them to have a stronger voice.

For more information about Trócaire's work in Zimbabwe, click [here](#).



HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Welcome to Trócaire's 2022 educational resource for early childhood education settings.

Trócaire has produced resources suitable for use with three- to six-year-olds since 2005, enabling educators to bring global justice themes into early childhood education – both with pre-school and early primary school children. This resource focuses on the lives of two children, Nomatter and Forward, who live in Matabeleland South Province in Zimbabwe.

The resource is structured in two parts:

- 1) **Twelve photocard**s, which show the daily lives and community of the children. Each photograph is accompanied by information and questions to support educators. The photocards are available **as a [printable PDF or slideshow online](#), or in hard copy**. If you would like a hard copy, please contact the Trócaire team. Contact details are provided on the back of this resource.
- 2) **Ten learning opportunities** which enable children to explore some of the content of the photocards, starting from the perspective of their own lives in Ireland. These are grouped together under four themes. Accompanying each learning opportunity you will find the numbers of the photocards that are relevant to that activity. You may wish to explore all of the photocards with the children in your group at the beginning of your work on this topic, and

then revisit the relevant photocards before or after completing each activity. After each set of learning experiences, you will find some suggestions for reflective questions that can be considered during circle time.

Framework and Curriculum Links

The activities in this resource are structured under each of the four Aistear themes (Exploring and Thinking, Communicating, Identity and Belonging, Well-being), and each activity is linked specifically to one aim and learning goal from within that theme.

Each activity is accompanied by the relevant goals from Aistear, from the Northern Ireland pre-school curriculum, the junior and senior infants social, personal and health education (SPHE) and geography curricula, and the relevant Northern Ireland Foundation Stage learning goals.

Note for Educators

Many of the challenges that Nomatter, Forward and Thandekile face have been exacerbated by Covid-19. Many families in Ireland have also faced challenges as a result of the pandemic. You may find it useful to read the stories and resource fully, and adapt anything that could be sensitive for your children.

Development Education: Best Practice for Early Childhood Educators

- Avoid a 'tourist curriculum' approach of emphasising the exotic. Instead, focus on day-to-day similarities between children – play, food, daily routine.
- Use similarities as a starting point for introducing differences.
- When discussing the hardships people face in other countries, make sure to also talk about the ways they themselves overcome those difficulties – instead of what we in Ireland do to help.
- Use open-ended questions to discuss photographs: 'I wonder ...' 'Maybe there is ...'
- Always talk about children and places by their specific names: 'Nomatter and Forward who live in Matabeleland in Zimbabwe.'



Nomatter (11) and her brother, Forward (8), walking to school, Zimbabwe. Photo credit: Cynthia R. Matonhodze

THE STORY OF NOMATTER AND FORWARD

This resource focuses on the lives of Nomatter (a girl aged eleven) and Forward (a boy aged eight) who live with their mother, Thandekile, in the Matabeleland South Province in Zimbabwe.



The family's life has been changed enormously by the Covid-19 pandemic, through the death of the children's father, Donovan, and the economic hardship they have faced since. These hardships have come at a time when climate change and drought have challenged Thandekile's ability to grow food for her family. Trócaire's partners support Thandekile through the provision of a community garden, where food can be grown and where information on watershed management and planting methods is provided. It is also used as a centre for Covid-19 awareness training.

What's in a Name? Blessings Bestowed

In parts of Zimbabwe, children are named to reflect things happening in the lives of their family when they are born. Nomatter and Forward's names reflect the hopes and wishes of their parents. Nomatter's name reflected a wish that she might make a difference in the world, no matter what. Forward was named with hopes that he might grow to help his family, and humanity, to move forward into a brighter future.

Zimbabwe Fact File

Achieved independence: 18 April 1980

Capital: Harare

Population: 14.65 million

Official Language: Sixteen official languages including English

Average life expectancy at birth: 61.5 years

Literacy rate amongst population aged fifteen and older: 88.7 per cent

Percentage of population living at or below national poverty line: 38.3 per cent

Prevalence of HIV: 12.8 per cent

Rural population with access to electricity: 20 per cent

Maternal Mortality Ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births): 458 (compared with 5 in Ireland)

THEME ONE: EXPLORING AND THINKING

Aistear	Aim 1/Learning Goal 5	Aim 1/Learning Goal 4
	Children will develop a sense of time, shape, space and place	Children will learn about the natural environment and its features, materials, animals, and plants, and their own responsibility as carers
Junior and Senior Infants (Primary School Curriculum)	Geography Strand/Strand Unit: Human Environments/People and Places in Other Areas Content Objective: Develop some awareness of people living in other areas; acquire some awareness of different types of homes in places outside the locality	
NI Pre-School	Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Learning about the diversity of others	
NI Foundation Stage	The World Around Us: Show curiosity about the living things, places, objects and materials in the environment; be aware of different lifestyles	

Learning Experience One: From Ireland to Zimbabwe (Photocards: 1, 2, 3, 4)

- 1) On a map or globe, mark the journey from Ireland to Zimbabwe using a piece of string.
- 2) In a large space, make two marks using chalk or tape, leaving plenty of space between them. Tell the children that one mark represents 'Home', and the other 'Zimbabwe', where Nomatter and Forward live.
- 3) Ask the children to consider the other places they know, starting from places in their own neighbourhood, then expanding to places in their town, other places in Ireland and any places abroad they might know or can find on a local map. Agree a simple chalk symbol for each category (or small blocks or toys of different shapes): My Neighbourhood; My Town; My Country; The Wider World. Mark each place on the floor in relation to 'Home' and 'Zimbabwe'.
- 4) Divide the children into four groups and assign each group a category. Ask each group to place a chalk circle or piece of string around all the places in their category; for example, the My Neighbourhood group should place a chalk circle or piece of string around all the My Neighbourhood symbols. Then ask the children to see how many steps it takes to get from 'Home' to various places, including Zimbabwe, and encourage them to describe the distance.



Learning Experience Two: Exploring Landscapes (Photocards: 2, 3, 4, 5)

- 1) Build a simple small world model of Ireland's physical landscape, showing important features like the sea around the island of Ireland, grassy fields, green mountains, rivers, the animals we have, typical houses. Spend some days engaging children in discussion and play interacting with the landscape.
- 2) Leave the photocards you have already studied visible and within reach of the children, and encourage the children to inspect the photographs closely again. What colour is the earth outside the school and homes? What do the trees look like? What animals can be seen? Is it dry or wet? Are the houses different from or the same as houses in our town?
- 3) Explain to the children that they will be making a small world model of the land that Nomatter and Forward live on, based on what they have seen and learned from the photocards. Ensure that there are appropriate objects to hand (sand, earth, blocks) and give the children time to build their own small world of Zimbabwe. This might be done in a sand and water tray, for example.
- 4) When they have finished, ask the children to work in small groups to describe the main features of the landscapes they have made, and how they are different from the landscape in Ireland.



Time for Reflection

What questions would you like to ask Nomatter and Forward? What would you like to tell them about your life in Ireland? Do you know anybody who lives in a different country? What do you know about their life?

THEME TWO: IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Aistear	Aim 3/Learning Goal 3	Aim 3/Learning Goal 5
	Children will interact, work cooperatively, and help others	Children will have a sense of social justice and recognise and deal with unfair behaviour
Junior and Senior Infants (Primary School Curriculum)	SPHE Strand/Strand Unit: Myself and the Wider World/Developing Citizenship Content Objective: Suggest ways of helping other people at home, in school and in the local community; recognise that each person has an important contribution to make	
NI Pre-School	Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Listen to stories about people and places; observing aspects of nature	
NI Foundation Stage	Personal Development and Mutual Understanding: Develop a sense of what is fair; realising what makes other people feel happy or sad; beginning to take responsibility for what they say and do	

Learning Experience Three: Fair Shares at the Market (Photocards: 5, 6, 7, 8)

- 1) In each group, appoint two children as market stall owners and the others as shoppers. Distribute play food and/or pictures of food to the stall owners and distribute play coins unequally to the other children. Allow the groups to role-play a market scene, with the stall owners deciding how many coins to take in exchange for the items the children want.
- 2) After a few minutes, stop play and discuss: Do all of the shoppers have fair shares of food? Did

anyone think of sharing, and if so, how did they do that? Ask the stall owners how easy or difficult it was to do their job. How did you feel? Was it fair or unfair?

- 3) Then ask the children to play again, this time thinking more about everyone getting a fair share. End the activity by discussing how people felt about sharing.



Learning Experience Four: Helping (Photocards: 5, 6, 7, 8)

a) Who Does What?

- 1) Print out, or ask the children to draw, pictures of a child, a teacher and a parent.
- 2) Discuss the jobs done by each person each day to help other people.
- 3) Create picture cards that each show one daily job, with five or six cards for jobs done by each person (child, teacher, parent). Jobs might include brushing teeth, putting on a coat, making dinner, going to school, tying shoelaces, cutting the grass, teaching in the classroom.

- 4) The children should match the jobs to the person responsible for them.

b) How We Help: 'Our Jobs' Charades

Use the picture cards to play charades with the class. Each child should select one card without letting the others see it and use actions to depict their job while the rest of the class guesses. When somebody guesses a job correctly, they must say how that daily job helps others before taking their own turn.



Time for Reflection

Consider why fairness, sharing and helping are important. How do other people feel when we don't share? What do we do when we play games to make sure things are fair or unfair?

Reflect on the photocards. Where do you see kindness and sharing in the story of Nomatter and Forward?

THEME THREE: COMMUNICATING

Aistear	Aim 1/Learning Goal 6	Aim 4/Learning Goal 1
	Children will express themselves creatively and imaginatively using non-verbal communication	Children will share their feelings, thoughts and ideas by story-telling, making art, moving to music, role-playing, problem-solving and responding to these experiences
Junior and Senior Infants (Primary School Curriculum)	SPHE Strand/Strand Unit: Myself and Others/My Friends and Other People/Relating to Others Content Objective: Curriculum links text box: amend colouring of box so that each of the four curricula are clearly separated (as done in all of the boxes on other pages). Strand/Strand Unit: Myself and the Wider World/Developing Citizenship Content Objective: Appreciate the environment and realise that each individual has a community and individual responsibility for protecting and caring for the environment	Geography Strand/Strand Unit: Environmental Awareness and Care/Caring for My Locality Content Objective: Develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of and enhancing the locality; identify, discuss and implement simple strategies for improving and caring for the environment
NI Pre-School	The Arts: Experiment with various media and tools such as paint crayons, brushes, fingers, sponges Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Learn to cooperate, take turns and share	
NI Foundation Stage	The World Around Us: Identify similarities and differences between living things, places, objects and materials; understand the need to respect and care for themselves, other people, plants, animals and the environment Personal Development and Mutual Understanding: Beginning to recognise similarities and differences in families and the wider community; understanding that everyone is of equal worth and that it is acceptable to be different	

Learning Experience Five: Showing Our Similarities ([Photocards: All](#))

- Using the themes from the photocards, ask the children to reflect on what they share with Nomatter and Forward.
- Invite the children to stand up when you call out something that they share. For example:
 - » Stand up if, like the children, you like to play with your friends.
 - » Stand up if, like Nomatter, you have a younger/older brother or sister.
 - » Stand up if, like Nomatter and Forward, you grow food in your garden.
 - » Stand up if, like Nomatter and Forward, you play football.
 Make sure to continue until every child has stood up at least once.
- Take a few sheets of poster paper and on each

draw a large symbol for one of the main similarities; for example, family, football, school, food.

- Explain to the children that you will make posters to show what you share with Nomatter and Forward.
- Prepare the room for hand printing. Tracing with markers will also work.
- Lay the sheets out. Ask each child to select the poster or posters that show something they share with Nomatter and Forward, and print or trace their hand's shape onto it. Hang the sheets to display the class's similarities with Nomatter and Forward.



Learning Experience Six: Our Common Home ([Photocards: All](#))

- Spend some time considering the cartoon images depicting, [Our Common Home](#), which are available to view online as part of a slideshow.
- Ask the children what they see in each image, and what they feel when they see it. Ask them to think about any time they have seen similar things in their own lives; for example, litter on a beach.
- When the children are very familiar with the images, explain that you will show an image and they should remember how that image makes them feel, then begin to move their bodies in response to the image.

Time for Reflection

What things do you do every day that help others feel happy or safe? What do you think Nomatter and Forward do with their family? What are the things you do to take care of the planet?

THEME FOUR: WELL-BEING

Aistear	Aim 3/Learning Goal 5 Children will care for the environment	Aim 4/Learning Goal 6 Children will be active citizens
Junior and Senior Infants (Primary School Curriculum)	SPHE Strand/Strand Unit: Myself and the Wider World/ Developing Citizenship Content Objective: Appreciate the environment and realise that each individual has a community and individual responsibility for protecting and caring for the environment	Geography Strand/Strand Unit: Environmental Awareness and Care/Caring for My Locality Content Objective: Develop a sense of responsibility for taking care of and enhancing the locality; identify, discuss and implement simple strategies for improving and caring for the environment
NI Pre-School	Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Helping to care for plants and animals; taking some responsibility for caring for their environment; talking about environmental issues The World Around Us: Showing respect for living things; planting and growing; taking some responsibility for caring for their own environment	
NI Foundation Stage	Personal Development and Mutual Understanding: Raising awareness of their attitudes to others in the school community; beginning to take responsibility for what they say and do The World Around Us: Understand the need to respect and care for themselves, other people, plants, animals and the environment	

Learning Experience Seven: Food Sensory Exploration ([Photocards: 8, 9, 10](#))

- 1) Gather together various food items that have distinctive smells, shapes and textures, including a range of fruits, vegetables and dry items like beans and pasta. You might also ask the children to bring items from home.
- 2) Give the children time to explore the items, modelling language that is typically used to describe texture (rough, smooth, hard, soft) and smell (strong, sour, sweet, no smell).
- 3) Using either a feely bag or a blindfold, ask one child at a time to select an item, feel it and smell it carefully, then describe their experience and say what the item is.

Learning Experience Eight: We Need Water for Food ([Photocards: 11, 12](#))

- 1) Introduce the activity by reflecting again on where our fruits and vegetables come from, and explaining that we will be growing food together.
- 2) There are two simple ways to carry out this planting exercise. If the materials are available, method (a) is closer to how food grows in nature and will make the conversations with children clearer.
 - a) You will need soil, small individual seed pots or yoghurt pots and lettuce seeds. Lettuce seeds can be planted between March and June. Choose slightly larger pots and plant two or three seeds per pot to avoid disappointment. Plant seeds in soil. Water immediately, and then once every three to four days, if soil becomes dry.
 - b) Alternatively, gather some broad bean seeds, kitchen roll and glass jars. Put a small amount of water in each jar. Dampen a few sheets of kitchen towel and push them down into the jar. Place a broad bean seed in each. They should be lightly sprayed with water every few days.
- 3) Each child's seedling should be labelled. In addition, create one extra seedling jar or pot, but omit the water to begin with, and do not water it at all. Label this clearly and explain to the children that we will be watching it to see what happens when our food does not receive any water. If you wish, you may also add seeds that receive too much water.
- 4) Each day, monitor which seeds grow and which do not. Over time, the seeds with water will germinate, while the seed with no water (or too much water) will not. Children might use a piece of paper and simple symbols to mark whether their seed, and the seed without water, grow each day.
- 5) Once the watered seeds have germinated, reflect on what has been learned about how water is needed for our food.



Time for Reflection

Where does our food come from? Does anybody have food growing in their garden, or does anybody live on a farm that grows food? Why is food important for us? Do all children have enough food, do you think?

When our food is grown in nature, where does the water it needs come from? What happens when it does not rain? Remind the children that Nomatter and Forward often eat food they have grown themselves, and reflect on how important water and rain are for them.

Learning Experience Nine: The Importance of Water (Photocards: 11, 12)

- 1) Start with a visual timetable of each child's daily routine. This may be provided, done together, or done individually, depending on each child's age.
- 2) Ask the children to think about morning, afternoon, and night-time, and about any

times when water is used. Taking their suggestions, draw a class portrait of the ways water is used.



Learning Experience Ten: Building a Path to the Global Goals (Photocards: All)



- 1) Print the two [Global Goals posters](#) and place them on a wall at a distance from the children. Explain that every country in the world, including Ireland and Zimbabwe, is trying to achieve the same goals so that children's lives get better everywhere.
- 2) Explain how fairness, sharing, helping one another and minding nature all help us to achieve these goals. Reflect on the activities the children have done and the themes of fairness, sharing, helping and minding nature.
- 3) Now, begin to walk from one end of the room to the other, explaining to the children that to take a step forward, you have to think of one thing you can do to help achieve those goals; for example, you might say, 'I can place paper in the paper bin,' and then take one step forward, and so on.
- 4) Explain to the children that they are going to create a path towards the Global Goals. Each child should think of one thing they can do that will allow us to take a step towards the Global Goals. They will then spend time drawing a picture of themselves doing this.
- 5) Once the children have completed their artwork, you may like to physically construct a trail towards the goals, using sticks and card.
- 6) In turn, ask each child to lay their picture on the ground along the trail and tell the class what they can do: 'I can ...' They will then stand alongside their picture.
- 7) Once every child has completed this, they will have made a line to the Global Goals.

Time for Reflection

How many people did it take to build a complete path to the Global Goals? Reflect on the importance of cooperation, working together and helping one another.

Consider what kinds of actions Nomatter and Forward might take to build their path. Are they the same as or different from yours?

FURTHER RESOURCES: DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

Just Children: A Story Sack to Explore Global Justice (Trócaire). This story sack from Trócaire includes a puppet, rhymes, CD and photographs of life in Kenya, and can be ordered from Trócaire at the contact details below.

South and North, East and West: The Oxfam Book of Children's Stories (Oxfam). Edited by children's author Michael Rosen, a collection of children's stories from around the world.

Around the World (Oxfam). A series of photo books, including *Home*, *Playtime* and *Bicycles*, that explores familiar daily topics in the lives of children around the world.

Mama Panya's Pancakes: A Village Tale from Kenya (Mary and Rich Chamberlain). A picture book telling the story of a young boy and his mother as they walk to the market in their village in Kenya.

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www.trocaire.org/resources

Search for education resources for early childhood educators:

www.developmenteducation.ie

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Cover image: Thandekile (31) with her daughter, Nomatter (11), and son, Forward (8), inside their house in Zimbabwe. Photo credit: Cynthia R. Matonhodze

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