Degrees of Inequality

Objective: to consider what factors (such as gender) might affect the life opportunities, power and influence that someone has.

**Total time: 50 minutes**

*Before the class print and cut out role play cards*

• Explain to pupils that they are going to play a game to investigate what factors affect the life opportunities, power and influence that someone has.   
*You might like to discuss as a class’ initial thoughts and ideas. What factors might affect the life opportunities that someone has? What do you need to have in order for a good life?*

• Ask pupils to line up at one end of the room. Organise pupils into groups and give each group one of the role play cards.

• Explain that the role play cards represent fictional people living in different countries around the world. Ask pupils to spend a few minutes imagining the daily life of the person whose role they are playing and to think of a name for their character.

• Read out the list of statements below and ask those groups whose character agrees with the statement to take a step forward.

• Eventually the groups will be spaced out across the room according to how many steps they have taken forward.

Statements

1. You receive or received a primary school education.

2. You can afford to meet your basic needs.

4. You are never short of food.

5. You can afford to see a doctor and buy medicine when you have health problems.

7. You have the power to influence people in your community.

8. You have people who care about you and protect you.

10. You have enough money to save some for later.

11. You have enough spare time and money to enjoy leisure activities with friends.

12. You are satisfied with your life.

13. You live in a sturdy house safe from bad weather.

14. You can afford to go on a foreign holiday at least once a year.

• Once you have read out all the statements, ask the groups to stay where they are and introduce their character to the rest of the class. Encourage pupils to give reasons for their decisions about how many steps they took.

• Ask the other groups if they think that each character is correctly placed in relation to others, for example: Do you think the single mother should be further forward than the 15-year-old boy? Encourage discussions when there is disagreement.

• Ask pupils to identify what factors affect the life opportunities, power and influence that

someone has, for example age, gender, disability, conflict, poverty and climate change.   
Ask pupils to identify which characters they think might be negatively impacted because of their gender. How might this person be affected and why? Do you think this is fair?

## Role play cards

You are a 9-year old girl living in Bangladesh. You have been taken out of school to look after your younger brother and sister whilst your parents work long hours at a clothing manufacturer. Your brother is the same age as you but has been allowed to stay at school. Your parents believe your brother has a better chance of getting a well-paid job to support the whole family if he completes his education.

You are a 19-year old woman and currently pregnant with your first child. You are a refugee and have travelled to Greece from Syria in pursuit of a better life. Your husband is working long hours labouring for a small salary that covers the rent for a room in a shared house.

You are the teenage son of a prominent politician in California. You live in a nice house with staff to help with security, cleaning and cooking. You are currently deciding which University to go to next year.

You are a male banker living in Dubai. Your job is very well paid, you live in a mansion and your wife doesn’t have to work. Both of your daughters attend private school.

You are a single mother living in Manchester. You receive support from the government, but this isn’t enough to cover food costs for your family of three. At the end of the month you have to use a food bank. You are searching for a job but are struggling to find an employer that will allow you to finish at 3pm so you can pick your children up from school.

You are a male farmer in Vietnam and own a small rice paddy. You make just enough money to look after your wife, two young children and elderly parents. But climate change is making the weather more unpredictable and as a consequence growing conditions are deteriorating making it harder to produce enough rice.

You are a female surgeon working in a private hospital in Paris. You live in a beautiful city centre apartment and have no partner or children. You would like to start a family and are looking into adoption.

You are a 15-year old boy living in Mississippi. You have been in a wheelchair since birth, the nearest school is a 30-minute bus ride away. Your local council has had to make budget cuts. And there is no money for the specialist bus that takes you to school anymore.

You are a female university student in Brazil. Your family do not have a lot of money, but you are exceptionally gifted and have received grants from the university which has allowed you to attend and study law. Your father has been ill and has had to stop working. To support your family, you are working nights at a local fast-food restaurant.