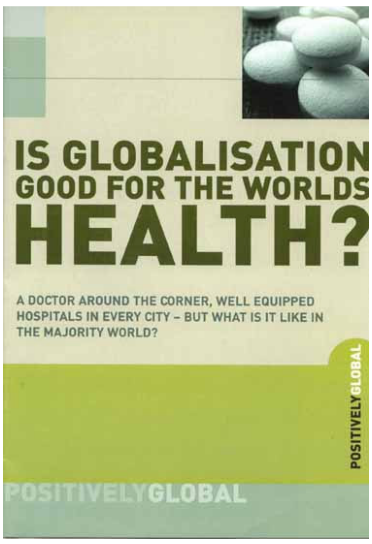
Yorkshire & Humber Global Schools Association

. . . *CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES* . . .

Who is to Blame?



Aims
Through this activity the students will explore the idea of 'global responsibility' by learning how the actions taken in one part of the world can have consequences in another many thousands of miles away – in this case the Inuit people living in the Arctic Circle.

You Will Need
A copy of the story from the Guardian Weekly 2004.
Copies of the Facts and Explanations sheet.

Summary
Tell the class you are going to read them a true story from the Guardian Weekly published in 2004. They are to concentrate very carefully because afterwards they will have some work to do.

Draw the diagram below on the board - *This is called a 'Development Compass Rose' and is a way of focussing thinking and discussion on specific aspects of a problem*

N
(Natural)

W
(Who is responsible)

E
(Economic)

S
(Social)

There are two ways in which you can now proceed:

EITHER

Ask the students to discuss in pairs or small groups:

N – what natural events are causing the problems faced by Lucy Q; eg breastfeeding

S – how have the life-styles of groups in one part of the world impacted on the life-style of the Inuit? eg Cultural habits – eating caribou, walrus

E – What are the economic factors influencing the situation? eg Industrialised countries need for pesticides

W – Who or What is responsible? Is it manufacturers? Is it governments for not legislating? Is it us?

One or two students can be asked to tell the group who they think is responsible for Lucy`s problems.

OR (if you think the students need more help)

Segment the information as follows:

Before you read the story to the class prepare the **FACTS** on sheets of paper each large enough for the class to read and display.

Display the **EXPLANATIONS** on a table or other area in the classroom.

After you have read the story to them:

Ask one student to read out a FACT.

Ask another to examine the displayed EXPLANATIONS and suggest one.

Ask the class to decide which area of the Development Compass Rose this could be attached to.

Learning Outcome
As a result of this activity students will have learnt about the interdependence of countries and the effects on the environment of the use of a resource (geography) and will have learnt about the world as a global community and the environmental implications of this.

Taken from 'Positively Global - Is Globalisation Good for the World's Health?' published by Leeds Development Education Centre

Available from the Yorkshire and Humber Global Schools Association through the Go-Global Resources Distribution Service – email goglobal@leedsdec.org.uk

Guardian Weekly April 2004

The dark season had ended, and a fierce Arctic wind was howling across the icy sea as Lucy Qavavauq finished a supper of caribou soup. Then she sat down to nurse her first born child. As the baby fed, the mother wondered whether the boy was drinking poison – contaminants found in tests of Inuit who eat caribou and other Arctic animals.

It is a dilemma confronted by many Inuit mothers. Scientists say the Arctic, once considered pristine and unspoilt, has become a sinkhole for pollutants. The contaminants, produced because of the manufacture of pesticides, include heavy metals, mercury, polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs), DDT and others which come to the Arctic by winds and currents from tropical and temperate countries. The toxins enter the food chain and accumulate in human tissue.

"On a human level, we are being poisoned from afar," said Sheila Watt Cloutier, the chairman of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, a group of activists which represent Inuit in Greenland, Canada, Russia and Alaska.

Canadian Government studies have found that many Inuit have dangerously high levels of PCBs and DDT in their blood, fatty tissues and breast milk.

" The more I think about it the more scared I get" says Lucy as she feeds her baby." I know there is a risk of passing contaminants to him but I also know that breast feeding is best"

"The Inuit are facing the beginning of a possible end of a way of life that has allowed us to thrive for millennia because of climate change caused by global warming." Sheila Watt Cloutier says, " It is predicted that in some 50 years polar bears, walrus and some species of seals will be pushed to extinction. What will become of our culture if this comes to pass?

There is also concern that the Inuit are threatened by PCB contamination from the now abandoned U.S. Early Warning Radar sites built in the 1950s.

FACTS

Lucy is worried about breast feeding her baby
The Arctic is no longer the clean, pristine place it once was
The Inuit have dangerously high levels of PCBs, and DDT in their blood, fatty tissues and breast milk
The Inuit are facing a possible end to their way of life
Polar bears, walrus and some species of seal are in danger of being extinct in 50 years time because of climate change

Explanations

The contaminants are a by-product of the manufacture of pesticides	Early Warning Radar sites were never safely disposed of by the U.S. government
The toxins enter the food chain and accumulate in human tissue	Consumer demand contributes to manufacture of toxins
The toxins are capable of travelling thousands of miles and are brought to the Arctic by air and water	Lack of awareness in industrialised countries contributes to pollution
Manufacturing nations are contributing to Global Warming	Manufacturers of toxins do not abide by government legislation