

Lesson 1 – Who is Esther Duflo?



(Photo credits: see below)

Task:

Research on the internet which of these three women is Esther Duflo and why she received the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel (“Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences”) in 2019. Highlight what was particularly special about her research work.

You can present your result in different formats (poster, brief presentation, video clip).

The video clip “Nobel Prize banquet speech” will provide an introduction to the topic:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjE6ZK8vvcE>

Photo credits (Wikipedia / CC BY-SA 2.0)

- Online Science Days 2020/Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings
- https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esther_Schweins#/media/Datei:Esther_Schweins_Frankfurter_Buchmesse_2018.jpg
- https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esther_McVey#/media/Datei:Official_portrait_of_Esther_McVey_crop_2.jpg

Lesson 2 – What Causes Poverty?

The Vicious Circle of Poverty

The World Bank describes people as poor if they have less than 1.25 US dollars per day to live on, which is a little more than 30 euros a month. According to this definition, about 20 percent of the world's population, or 1.5 billion people, are classified as poor.

But being poor does not only mean that people cannot provide themselves with sufficient vital goods and services. Those who are poor do not have a share in important areas of social life. He or she has no possibility to shape life on his or her own responsibility and such persons usually have no possibility of political influence.

Poverty has many faces: low levels of education and training, unemployment and underemployment, poor living conditions, malnutrition and even starvation, poor health, a low life expectancy and much more.

The causes of poverty are complex and yet have one thing in common: the poor have too little incomes and assets. And poverty is hereditary. Evidence shows that children from poor families are frequently affected by poverty when they become adults, as are their children. People in poverty generally have worse starting conditions in society, economic life and politics.

Why is that the case?

Why are people unable to earn enough money – and why do they pass this condition on to their children?

(Text by Dr Peter Kührt)

Task:

What mechanism prevents children from lifting themselves out of poverty with great difficulty? Sketch a graph that clearly explains and clarifies the causes and entrenchment of poverty.

You can present your results in different formats (poster, sketch, PowerPoint).

The Nobel Poster “Addressing the root causes of poverty” provides an introduction to the task – download the German version at:

<https://www.mediatheque.lindau-nobel.org/GetFile?id=38547>

The English Version is available here:

<https://www.kva.se/en/publicerat/ekonomipriset-2019-nobelaffisch>

Lesson 3 – How Can We Fight Poverty?

Poor Health Care: An Example From Africa

According to a recent study, about 50 percent of the people in many African countries often have no or only insufficient access to health care. The majority of those surveyed were critical of the role of their own government. In their opinions, the governments in almost all countries do not do enough to improve preventative and general health care. After unemployment in first place, poor health care is seen as the second largest problem in African countries.

50 per cent of those surveyed do not have sufficient access to medical care, and every seventh respondent has to pay bribes in order to receive medical treatment.

Rural regions are often particularly disadvantaged because local health care is much worse than in cities. Only about half of those surveyed in rural regions have a hospital nearby.

(Text by Dr Peter Kührt, according to: <https://www.gemeinsam-fuer-afrika.de/gesundheitsversorgung-in-den-laendern-afrikas/>)

The causes of poverty are very complex. Which means fighting it is as well.

In their field experiments, the Nobel Laureates for Economic Sciences Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer found out that many seemingly proven methods and means of development aid have little or no effect.

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Tasks:

1. Choose one of the questions below. Read the information text “Poor Health Care: An Example From Africa”, visit the recommended websites and form your own opinion about your question. You can also carry out further research on the web if you like.

2. Then write a short answer to your question and copy it into the right column in the Padlet page as a post: https://padlet.com/Lehrer_Online/8b0fsxvpsvmfgm9a

You can also call up the Padlet page using this QR code. (NOTE: If you use this Padlet comments can be seen by all users and thus also by other teaching groups. In addition, this Padlet might already contain comments.)



If you are already familiar with *Padlets*, you can set up your own Padlet page for your class using this template. You can present the results offline using a *board* or *pinboard*.

3. Then look at the work results of the other groups on the Padlet page. You can comment on and like posts.

4. Finally, answer the online questionnaire

<https://www.lehrer-online.de/unterricht/sekundarstufen/geisteswissenschaften/politik-sowi/unterrichtseinheit/ue/armut-ursachen-und-loesungsansaetze/>

Questions about Task 1:

- Why do smaller classes, more and better school books and free school meals not automatically lead to better learning results?
- Why do Esther Duflo and her two colleagues recommend allocating pupils into classes according to their abilities rather than their age?
- Why do many children in developing countries not attend school or only do so irregularly?
- Why does more financial aid for developing countries not automatically lead to better health care and healthier children?
- Why can a simple MP3 player be more effective than a fiscal funding programme?

Recommended links:

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/impooverished-economics-unpacking-economics-nobel-prize/>

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2019/popular-information/>

Learning target checks (can be called up interactively at: <https://www.lehrer-online.de/unterricht/sekundarstufen/geisteswissenschaften/politik-sowi/unterrichtseinheit/ue/armut-ursachen-und-loesungsansaetze/>)

What makes successful education in developing countries more likely?

- Free lesson materials
- Free school meals
- Extra tuition for weaker learners (x)

Which employment status for teachers tends to be better for pupil's learning success?

- Teachers with tenured civil servant status
- Teachers without special employment status (x)

What leads to better learning results?

- More books
- Free school meals
- Adjusting lessons to the learning level and children's knowledge (x)

What best encourages school attendance?

- General health care such as free mosquito nets (x)
- Free school meals (x)
- Free school uniforms
- Free school books

What do Duflo, Banerjee and Kremer think?

- More development aid leads to better health, better education and more prosperity in every case.
- Large measures are more effective than small measures.
- Fighting poverty is complex and complicated. Money alone does not help in every case. (x)
- The effectiveness of aid programmes must be systematically investigated through experiments in order to find out which measures are most successful. (x)

Which statements are correct?

- Illiterate people do not use MP3 players at all.
- Electricity supply is decisive for the use of mobile phones and MP3 players. (x)
- Actually, everyone in Africa speaks English.
- Audio books can improve people's health and lead companies to be founded. (x)