# Crisis in Yemen

**Age range:** 11 - 18 years  
**Time:** approximately 30 minutes

## Outline

This learning workshop uses an opinion continuum activity to encourage young people to think through their views on a controversial issue, such as the crisis in Yemen.

An opinion continuum is a helpful way to explore complex issues and diverse viewpoints. For example, how do we make sense of the fact that Britain both provides humanitarian aid to Yemen and sells weapons to Saudi Arabia, a country deeply involved in the conflict?

Just how should young people respond to this puzzling situation? The opinion continuum activity will help them to think critically, question their assumptions and reach new conclusions.

How to run an opinion continuum activity is outlined in full in this Oxfam guide: Oxfam (2015) – Global Citizenship in the Classroom (page 16).

The guide may be downloaded free from the Oxfam Education website.

## Learning objectives
- Participants apply prior learning to deepen their understanding of the Yemen crisis through discussion and questioning each other’s opinions.
- Participants articulate their opinions clearly and review them in the light of the opinions of others.

## Outcomes
- Participants develop a deeper understanding of a complex emergency, such as the Yemen crisis.
- Participants critically analyse the best response to the Yemen crisis for active global citizens.

## Key questions
- What are the relationships between conflict and humanitarian crises?
- What are the roles of the British government and public during a crisis like the one in Yemen?

## Resources
- PowerPoint presentation: Crisis in Yemen.
- Action Guide: Crisis in Yemen.

## Curriculum links

**England**
- KS3 & KS4 Citizenship (2014) – Purpose of study, aims, subject content.

**Wales**
- ESDGC (Choices and Decisions) and PSE (Active Citizenship) – National Curriculum for Wales.

**Scotland**
- Social Studies – Scottish Curriculum for Excellence.
Session outline

1. Before you begin

Young people should have a basic knowledge of the Yemen crisis.
- View and discuss the PowerPoint presentation in this resource.
- If you have time, share and discuss media reports of the Yemen crisis.

2. The Opinion Continuum (30 mins)

This activity requires space for a continuous line (real or imagined) to run from one side of the room to the other. A real red line (possibly made by using red wool, string or chalk) would provide a visual link to Oxfam’s red line campaign.

In the activity, participants are invited to stand or move along the line depending on their level of agreement with a number of statements, from totally agree to totally disagree. The statements may be adapted depending on the age of the participants and the length of time available.

One end of the line represents total agreement with a statement, whilst the opposite end of the line represents total disagreement. All the points in-between represent different degrees of agreement and disagreement. Therefore, everyone’s view will fall somewhere on the line. There are no right or wrong answers.

From Oxfam (2015) – Global Citizenship in the Classroom (page 16)

Begin the activity by asking the young people to stand along the line. Explain the activity and read out the first statement [see below]. Ask the learners to move to the position on the line that best represents their opinion. Then ask volunteers at different points on the line to briefly explain why they have taken their position. In light of the opinions expressed, ask if any participants would wish to change their position and explain why.

Repeat the process by reading and reviewing the remaining statements.
At the end of the activity debrief the young people.

- How many of them changed their positions after hearing others’ opinions?
- What led them to change their minds?
- What have they learned from the activity?

To encourage the young people to practise their negotiation skills, you could divide them into groups and ask them to come to a group view about each statement.

**Possible Statements**
These may be adapted depending on the age of the participants and the length of time available. However, aim to discuss Q14 and Q15 in order to explore the responses the young people could have to the crisis.

1. I already knew something about the Yemen crisis before today.
2. Yemen’s people need peace more urgently than food and water.
3. Countries at peace do not have famines.
4. It’s not possible to provide effective humanitarian aid during a conflict.
5. Poverty and inequality cause conflict.
6. Conflict causes poverty and inequality.
7. It’s important for people to know about what’s happening in Yemen.
8. The main responsibility for the crisis in Yemen lies with the government and people of Yemen.
8. The main responsibility for the crisis in Yemen lies with the government and people of other countries.
10. Crises like Yemen can be solved.
11. If the conflict in Yemen ended tomorrow, it would be quite easy to end the humanitarian crisis.
12. It’s important for a country like Britain to have a strong weapons industry.
13. Countries should be free to sell weapons to whichever other countries they want.
14. The most effective thing young people can do is to fundraise for the DEC Yemen crisis appeal.
15. The most effective thing young people can do is take part in the red line campaign asking the British government not to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia.

**Differentiation**

*Make it easier:* Reduce the number of statements and simplify the language.

*Make it harder:* Add additional statements and discuss participants’ responses more fully.
What to do next

- **Move on to the Action Guide.**
  Young people are asked to fundraise for the DEC Yemen crisis appeal and/or participate in Oxfam’s Red Line for Yemen campaign to stop the export of British weapons to Saudi Arabia, for use in Yemen.

- The Oxfam Education website has additional free, downloadable resources to support young people’s understanding of conflict and complex emergencies. [bit.ly/ConflictResourcesOE](http://bit.ly/ConflictResourcesOE)

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