

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

CSPE FOR WELLBEING

CSPE 101 | Newsletter | Spring 2024

CSPE
in 101
lessons

This newsletter explores some very important contemporary issues and matters of concern in society right now: The Referendums on Family and Care; The Electoral Commission; Pre-registration to Vote; International Women’s Day, 2024; Crack Down on Fast Fashion; War and Conflict; Humanitarian Aid; Coco’s Law and Re-turn it.

REFERENDUM

On Friday 8 March 2024, Irish Citizens are being asked to vote on two proposed changes to the Constitution. People have two separate votes to cast.

The Proposal: The Family Amendment

The Proposal involves inserting new text into Article 41.1.1° and deleting of the text in Article 41.3.1°.

The Proposed change Article 41.1.1° text in bold:

Article 41.1.1° *“The State recognises the Family, **whether founded on marriage or on other durable relationships**, as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law.”*

Proposed change Article 41.3.1° by deleting text shown with line through it:

“The State pledges itself to guard with special care the institution of Marriage, ~~on which the Family is founded~~, and to protect it against attack.”

Legal Effect of a YES Vote

The Constitution will change.

The Family based on marriage will be protected by the Constitution, this means the unit based on a marriage between two people without distinction as to their sex. The Family based on other durable relationships will also be protected and this means a Family based on different types of committed and continuing relationships other than marriage.

After this, the government can then introduce new laws.

The Irish Constitution, (Bunreacht na hÉireann) can only be amended if a proposed amendment has been approved by the people in a referendum.



The Proposal: The Care Amendment

In this amendment, there is one vote for two proposed changes. The proposal involves deleting Article 41.2.1° and Article 41.2.2° and inserting a new Article 42B, as shown below:

“The State recognises that the provision of care, by members of a family to one another by reason of the bonds that exist among them, gives to Society a support without which the common good cannot be achieved, and shall strive to support such provision.”

Legal Effect of a YES Vote

The Constitution will change. Articles 41.2.1° and 41.2.2° will be deleted, and a new Article 42B will be inserted into the Constitution. The new 42B would, firstly, recognise the importance to the common good of the care provided by family members to each other. Secondly, it would provide that the State would “strive to support” the provision of such care within families. The government can then introduce laws based on this.

Legal Effect of a NO Vote

Nothing changes in the Constitution.

Handy Tip: To help students understand the concept of a constitution it is a great idea to have a copy/copies of Bunreacht na hÉireann in your CSPE classroom. Students can then see for themselves the articles, clauses and amendments to date. The constitution is readily available online and in some bookshops. textbook.

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Electoral Commission is an independent body that oversees elections in Ireland.



It was set up in 2023.

- It informs the public about elections and referendums;
- it reviews constituency boundaries;
- it tells people about how to vote and encourages them to go out to cast their votes;
- it regulates advertising for election;
- it also maintains the Register of Electors and the Register of Political Parties.

It is always neutral and does not take any sides in an election or referendum.

THE EASY WAY TO SECURE YOUR SAY.

16 and 17 year olds can now pre-register to vote. You'll automatically be added to the Register when you turn 18. If you're 18 or over, you can register to vote or update your details online.

Visit checktheregister.ie today and secure your say.



checktheregister.ie

 **Rialtas na hÉireann**
Government of Ireland

Have you heard about the Pre Registration of 16-17 year-olds?

Changes were introduced under the Electoral Reform Act, 2022 which means that 16-17 year-olds can pre-register to vote. When you register, you join a 'pending electors' list and you will be automatically added to the Register when you turn 18. If you are 16 or over, why not do it today? Right now? In order to pre-register all you have to do is to go to [Check The Register](https://checktheregister.ie). You just need to have your **PPSN** and your **Eircode** to complete the process. Remember your vote is your voice!

Link to CSPE Specification: These themes may be explored when looking at 'Elections' in Strand 3: Exploring Democracy.

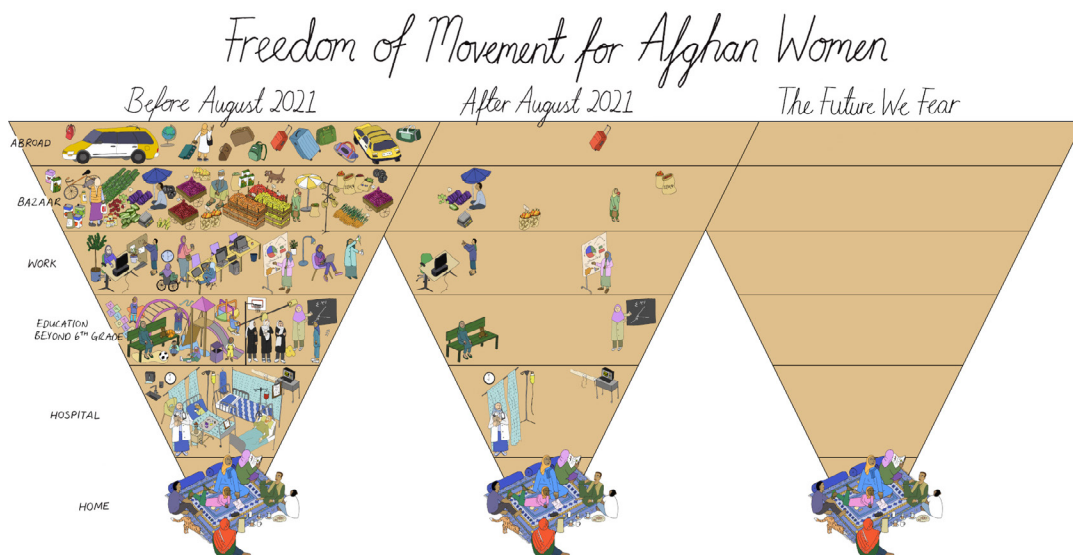
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 8TH MARCH 2024

From gender-based violence to unequal access to education and healthcare, women and girls continue to face myriad challenges that impede their full participation and empowerment in society. International Women's Day serves as a reminder of the urgency to address these issues and work towards a more equitable and inclusive world for all.

Let's take a look at one example:

The Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021. Women have been banned from going to parks, gyms, and public bathing houses. They have been stopped from pursuing education beyond the age of 11. Their ability to work outside of health and education is all but forbidden. The total effect of the Taliban's edicts and behaviours has largely resulted in the imprisonment of women within the walls of their homes.

For many women across the world, walking out their front door is an ordinary part of life. For many Afghan women, it is extraordinary. It is an act of defiance. Despite all these challenges, women have found ways to carve out pockets of hope. Afghan women are still forming new civil society groups to address community needs, running businesses, and providing health, education, and protection services. Afghan women will not give up their right to live full lives, equal in dignity. They will not accept living in a world where they are considered unworthy of living the same life as a man.



Afghanistan is not the only country in the world where women's rights are being rolled back. But what is happening in Afghanistan is an alarm bell for all of us because it shows how decades of progress on gender equality and women's rights can be wiped out in months. It is a clarion call to everyone that the fight for women's rights in Afghanistan is a global fight for women's rights everywhere.

In a world facing multiple crises that are putting immense pressure on communities, achieving gender equality is more vital than ever. Ensuring women's and girls' rights across all aspects of life is the only way to secure prosperous and just economies, and a healthy planet for future generations. So, what might your CSPE class do to mark International Women's Day (IWD)? Students could organise awareness-raising activities about women's and girls' rights and the importance of gender equality in your school. They could share stories about inspirational women, highlight gender-based challenges and promote campaigns for change. They could also engage in advocacy efforts by making contact with local politicians, signing petitions and supporting campaigns that promote women's rights.



Quick question

What action will you take to promote IWD in your school?

Link to CSPE Specification: This theme may be explored when looking at 'The Right to Equality' in Strand 1: Rights and Responsibilities.

CRACKDOWN HAPPENING ON FAST FASHION

Fast fashion is the term used to describe low-priced, stylish clothing that moves quickly from design, to the catwalk, to retail stores. It meets the latest trends. People can buy the latest fashion at cheap prices. New supply chains that have become faster and more efficient have made fast fashion possible. But there is a downside, people just keep buying and dumping and cluttering, not just their wardrobes, but the entire world. To produce all this fast fashion, many workers, especially young girls and women, work long hours in poor conditions for little pay.

The European Parliament and EU member states announced in December 2023 that new rules are coming to crack down on fast fashion and reduce waste, including a ban on destroying unsold clothes. There will be tougher rules on products to ensure they last longer and are easier to repair and recycle. The new law bans the destruction of unsold textiles and footwear and will apply two years after the law enters into force.

'It is time to end the model of "take, make, dispose" that is so harmful to our planet, our health and our economy,' said MEP Alessandra Moretti who led the legislation through parliament. 'New products will be designed in a way that benefits all, respects our planet and protects the environment,' she added.

The law will also set exact requirements for key consumer goods in order to increase the lifespan of the products. Priority will be given to 'highly impactful products' including clothing, furniture, mattresses as well as electronic goods. Goods must also be sold with a 'digital product passport', which could be a QR code, that will help consumers make more informed choices. Big companies will also have to report annually how much of their production they have discarded, as well as their reasons why. The EU hopes this will encourage firms to take more care about what they simply throw away.

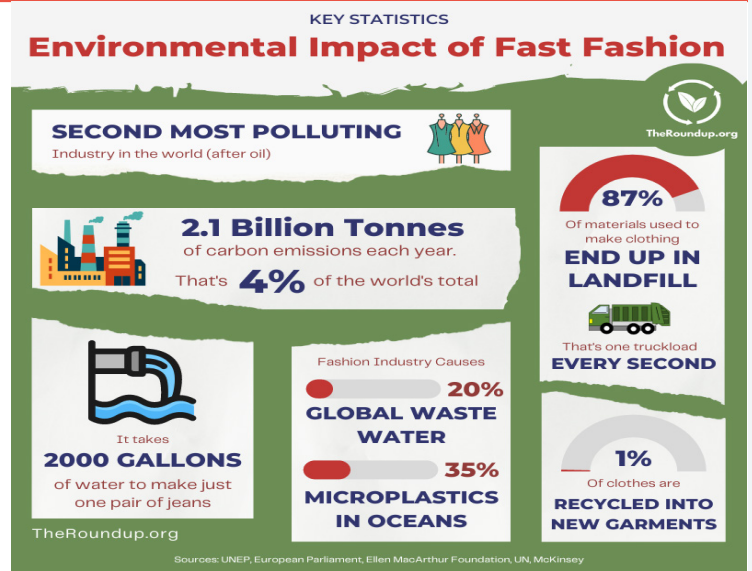
Quick question

Do you think that the days of Fast fashion are numbered?

Link to CSPE Specification: This theme may be explored when looking at 'Globalisation, Fast Fashion and Clean Clothes' in Strand 2: Effecting Global Change.

WAR AND CONFLICT

War and conflict remain pervasive in our contemporary world, prolonging suffering, destruction and displacement on a global scale. Despite efforts to promote peace and resolve disputes through diplomacy and international co-operation, numerous regions continue to be plagued by violence and turmoil.



During armed conflicts, war crimes and crimes against humanity are often committed, further worsening the humanitarian crisis. War crimes include a range of shocking violations of international humanitarian law including targeting civilians, indiscriminate attacks and the use of banned weapons. These atrocities not only result in the loss of life but also undermine fundamental principles of humanity and justice.

Similarly, crimes against humanity involve organized and widespread attacks directed against civilian populations. These crimes often include murder, enslavement, torture, rape and forced displacement, among others. Such actions not only cause immense human suffering but also violate fundamental human rights and break international law.

International tribunals, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), play a vital role in prosecuting individuals responsible for these grave offences and ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions.

Addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting dialogue, reconciliation and respect for human rights are essential for fostering sustainable peace and stability. Achieving lasting peace requires collective action, political will and a commitment to upholding the principles of humanity and justice in the face of war and conflict.

It's hard to believe, but there are 114 armed conflicts taking place around our world right now!



Quick question

Which wars/conflicts images come to mind?

Often women, children and journalists are the most vulnerable victims in these wars/conflicts. Women and children suffer the most in conflict zones facing heightened risks of sexual violence, exploitation and forced displacement. Women are often the primary caregivers and breadwinners in war-torn communities, struggling to protect their families amid chaos and destruction. Children, innocent bystanders caught in the crossfire, endure profound physical and psychological harm with their lives and futures shattered by the horrors of war.

Journalism is not a crime

Journalists risk their lives to report on conflicts, yet they are frequently targeted for their work, facing censorship, harassment and even injury and death. When their voices are silenced, the truth becomes a casualty of war.

All the latest information about these wars and conflicts can be found at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law (www.geneva-academy.ch)

**JOURNALISM
IS NOT A
CRIME**

HUMANITARIAN AID

When an emergency strikes, recovery can take a long time. In the meantime, people need help immediately. Today, humanitarian aid refers to logistical and material help sent into areas after man-made crises like war / conflict or natural disasters, such as floods or volcanoes, or sometimes in advance of crises so as to help to prevent or prepare for such situations.

Humanitarian aid comes in many forms, like water, food, shelter, medicine and education. It is sent to address immediate, short-term needs until bodies like the government can step in to replace it. UN organizations are now relied upon by the international community to coordinate humanitarian emergency relief in areas where national and local government can't cope.



An important benefit of humanitarian aid is that it can be quickly mobilized and sent to where it is needed. The members of the international emergency roster are always ready to go into action within 72 hours; UNDAC (the United Nations Disasters Assessment and Coordination) can be on the move within 12-48 hours of a request for help.

The aims of humanitarian action and aid are to save lives and relieve suffering in a manner that respects and restores personal dignity. Humanitarian aid's role in community restoration is also important.

In response to emergencies like natural disasters or war, communities around the world collect and share their resources, often sending aid far away. This human impulse continues in the form of humanitarian aid. For as long as human beings have existed, they have helped each other.

Examples of humanitarian organisations are:



The International Red Cross



Trócaire



Doctors Without Borders



Save the Children Fund



Irish Aid



Action Aid



Oxfam



Concern Worldwide

Humanitarian aid workers risk their lives in times of crisis to help people whose lives are destroyed by events beyond their control. Many of them are volunteers.

Have you heard of the Geneva Convention?

The Geneva Conventions is a body of Public International Law, also known as the *Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflicts*, whose purpose is to provide minimum, basic protections, standards of humane treatment, and fundamental guarantees to individuals who become victims of armed conflicts.

Watch the YouTube video: **What are the four Geneva conventions?** to learn more. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wF5Z1RHxKTs>



Quick question

How is the Geneva Convention relevant today?

Link to CSPE Specification: These themes may be explored when looking at 'Human Rights' in Strand 1: Rights and Responsibilities and 'The United Nations' in Strand 3: Exploring Democracy.

COCO'S LAW (2021)

Coco's Law became law in Ireland in 2021. It is a significant piece of legislation aimed at dealing with online harassment and cyberbullying. The law is named after Nicole 'Coco' Fox Fenlon, who tragically took her own life after experiencing relentless online abuse, including the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The law addresses the increasing amount of harmful content on social media platforms.



Coco's Law criminalises the spreading of intimate images without consent, recognising such acts as a serious violation of an individual's privacy and dignity. By imposing legal consequences on offenders, the law aims to prevent such harmful behaviour and provide victims with greater protection and recourse. Coco's mother campaigned tirelessly for this law, which sends a very clear message that online abuse will not be tolerated and that those responsible will be held accountable for their actions.

Beyond its punitive measures, Coco's Law also highlights the importance of education and awareness surrounding online safety and responsible digital citizenship.

To find out more about Coco's Law go to www.cocoslaw.ie

? Quick question

Who would you turn to if you were being bullied in person or online?

Link to CSPE Specification: This theme may be explored when looking at 'Human Rights' in Strand 1: Rights and Responsibilities and 'The Mass Media' in Strand 3: Exploring Democracy.

RE-TURN IT!

On the first of February 2024, Ireland's Deposit Return Scheme went live.

This means that when you buy a drink in a plastic bottle or aluminium or steel can that has the Re-turn logo on it, you pay a small deposit along with the price of the drink. When you return the empty, undamaged plastic bottle or can to the Re-turn machine, you get your full deposit back.



? Quick question

Is this a good idea?

Handy Tip: Organise a collection point in your school and raise money for a local worthwhile cause with the money you receive when you return your bottles and cans!

Link to CSPE Specification: This theme may be explored when looking at 'The Six Rs and Sustainable Living' in Strand 2: Global Citizenship.

SOME DESIGNATED DAYS COMING UP

March

8th International Women's Day
18th Global Recycling Day
22nd World Water Day
31st International Transgender Day

April

2nd World Autism Awareness Day
22nd Earth Day
28th Stop Food Waste Day

May

3rd World Press Freedom Day
9th Europe Day
20th World Bee Day