

Social and Spiritual Development Strand  
Social Science

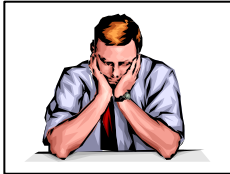
Unit 4: Contemporary Issues

## Module 4.1 Framework for Studying Issues

*Lawyer tampered with  
vital documents*

Give  
serious  
thought to  
corruption  
at election  
time

Number of  
TB patients  
increasing



**STOP TRIBAL FIGHTING,  
GET ON WITH LIFE**

**Student Support Material**

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## Unit outline

<b>Unit 4</b>  <b>Contemporary Issues</b>	4.1	<b>Framework for Studying Issues (Core)</b>
	4.2	Population Studies (Optional)
	4.3	Disaster Management (Optional)
	4.4	Women and Equity (Optional)
	4.5	Crime, Punishment and Justice (Optional)

## Icons



Read or research



Write or summarise



Activity or discussion

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# Module 4.1: Framework for Studying Issues

## Knowledge

By the end of this module students will:

- Understand that a major issue exists because different people have strongly felt, but different ideas about it
- To be able to provide basic / factual information about at least one issue at local, provincial, regional, national and global level

## Skills

By the end of this module students will be able to:

- Collate, analyse and respond to the range of information
- Summarise information to find general conclusions
- Predict consequences
- Debate issues critically
- Analyse cause and effects of events / issues
- Think critically to come up with alternatives and solutions to problems

## Values / attitudes

By the end of this module students will:

- Appreciate that issues have multiple facets
- Have developed a concern for well-being of all people
- Be able to change a situation because they have the knowledge and skills to work towards solutions
- Have developed the ability to be open-minded
- Be able to promote a just society
- Have developed an interest and willingness to discuss and make others aware of problems and issues

## **Topic 1: Identifying issues**

Contemporary issues are those which are discussed and debated widely in the community. Some issues are brought to notice by **interest groups** and others by the **media**. The media tends to focus on issues which are short-term eg natural disasters. It is difficult for the media to generate and maintain interest in issues which develop over time such as global warming, soil erosion. Interest groups take a longer view. They help influence decision-making by presenting a collective viewpoint. Issues can arise from events, results or consequences. Many issues are unresolved.

Issues can be drawn from any field eg society, economy, environment, beliefs, culture, for example:

- Evolution and the origin of the earth
- Violence in the media
- Forms of discrimination
- Relations between ethnic groups
- Operations of multinational companies
- Population control
- Urban sprawl
- Exploitation of natural resources
- Pollution
- Decline of rural communities
- Habitat destruction
- Immigration
- The impact of tourism
- Refugees
- Rights of indigenous peoples

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### **4.1 Activity 1**

*Select three of the issues above and discuss them in groups. Explain, using specific examples, why each one is an issue. (For example population control is an issue because of different views about birth control, poverty, health, AIDS, food shortages.)*

*Which of the issues listed above are applicable to PNG? What other issues can you think of that affect people in PNG?*

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Sometimes it is only specific examples which become issues. The economic use of natural resources is not an issue but the mining of beach minerals at a world heritage site, or the culling

of Canadian seals or the harvesting of sea cucumbers could become issues if groups in the community argue from different premises or value positions.

What might be an issue in a society tends to change as time passes. This is because of factors such as political sensitivity, new technology, social reforms, mass media communication, all of which can raise or resolve matters at issue in society.

### Viewpoints – social, economic, political, spiritual, ethical

Information about contemporary issues can be biased. It is usually put together by people with a particular perspective, depending on their background and beliefs. There are many viewpoints we can use to investigate issues. For example, the information we collect about corruption will be very different if we are examining it from an economic perspective rather than as moral or social issue.

'Contemporary corruption is born of greed and its birthplace is the corridors of power. In essence, it is the politicians' greed for power and material wealth.'

Alois Ruarri, Bumbu

'We, the ordinary people, are sick and tired of seeing good and viable institutions being run down through misappropriation and abuse of offices and privilege by a few selfish and greedy people.'

Paul E Nerau, Boroko, NCD



*Port Moresby housing*



*Villagers returning home*



*Coastal development*

## 4.1 Activity 2

*A villager has been accused of theft. Discuss the issue using the following characters in a role-play – his mother, his friend, the pastor, the school principal, a trade storeowner, a village counsellor*

## Bias in pictures, words and statistics

### *Pictures, magazines, newspapers*

In most books photographs are important sources of evidence. The problem is how can an accurate and balanced view be given with only one or two pictures? The photographer and the author have selected from many possibilities, and in that sense the impression given is biased. All pictures in books and on television and in newspapers are biased in this sense.

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### **4.1 Activity 3**

*How accurate are the claims made about these pictures? What other evidence would you like to have before judging if the pictures were accurate or not?*

*What is likely to influence a photographer or author to select some pictures rather than others?*

*What would you photograph in your local area to attract tourists? What would you photograph to attract aid funding?*

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### *Words - facts or opinions?*

Writers select from what they see and describe places from a personal viewpoint, just like photographers, and this shows in what they choose to write about and in the words they use. On some occasions they try to ignore their personal opinions and feelings, and describe places exactly as anyone else would, but it is very difficult to be 'objective' in this way. It would be most unusual to find two people describing a place in the same way. These personal differences are usually greater when it comes to explaining past or present events, and such explanations depend very much on the beliefs and attitudes of the writer. It is well known that two people can describe and explain what has happened in completely different ways. The descriptions and explanations you read are biased in the sense that they are often one person's view and interpretation. Written evidence, like picture evidence, needs to be read with caution.

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### **4.1 Activity 4**

*Agree with several friends to describe either a scene or an event without talking about it beforehand. Compare your descriptions and explanations.*

*Divide into two groups, one male and one female, and write down three statements about each of these issues – tribal fighting, domestic violence, universal education. Write the statements on the board. Are there any differences?*

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*Read the extract about Shanghai. What do the following words or phrases mean 'came under the iron heel of imperialism'; 'in collusion with'; 'feudal landlords'; 'bureaucrat-capitalist'; 'lorded it over'; 'ruthlessly fleeced them'; 'Infested with a multitude of exploiters and parasites'. From the use of these particular words, what do you think are the writer's feelings about the events described?*

*The writer was Chinese. Should that make the description and explanation more or less reliable? Say why.*

*The writer was a communist. Should that make the description more or less reliable? Say why.*

*Does the date of the writing matter? Say why.*

### **The City of Shanghai**

The town of Shanghai was established 800 years ago. After the Opium War of 1840, it came under the iron heel of imperialism. Because of its favourable location, the imperialists chose it as a jumping-off point for further inroads into other parts of China. It was here that they forcibly set up foreign concessions, stationed troops, seized the Chinese maritime customs, and established banks and business firms. In collusion with Chinese feudal landlords and bureaucrat-capitalists, they engaged in speculative and criminal activities, lorded it over the Chinese people and ruthlessly fleeced them. Old Shanghai was also infested with a multitude of exploiters and parasites who looked upon this crime-ridden port as an adventurers' paradise. To the labouring people, however, Shanghai was a hell on earth. Thousands were faced with insecurity and the constant threat of unemployment, and thousands had to struggle along on the verge of starvation.

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### **Statistics**

A great deal of information we receive about the world is in the form of statistics or diagrams based on statistics. As with pictures and words, statistics have to be treated with caution. For example, they may have been collected in an unreliable way or they may be dated. Even when the figures are reliable, accurate and up to date, selections usually have to be made from the mass of available data. Very often those that prove a point are chosen, while others that might make a view less convincing are ignored. There may be bias not only in the selecting of statistical data, but also in the way in which it is presented. It is well known that all sorts of people cleverly use statistical diagrams, graphs and maps to give a particular impression they favour. Statistics, whether in the form of numbers or graphs, diagrams or maps, must be read with great care.

## Number of TB patients increasing

TUBERCULOSIS was recorded as the highest cause of admissions to the Port Moresby General Hospital last year. The hospital's chief physician Dr Goa Tau said 753 TB patients were admitted to the hospital last year and up to last Monday. This figure was from the total hospital admission of 3669. More than 20 per cent of the TB admissions and 55 per cent of the patients stayed at the hospital for a week. TB is the second highest cause of deaths at the PMGH. Sixty-three people died from TB, two deaths less than the number of deaths from HIV/AIDS. Other causes of admission to the hospital were malaria 334, pneumonia 225, snakebites 197 and HIV/AIDS 161. Admissions to the division of Internal Medicine at the hospital recorded a death rate of 15 per cent which Dr Tau said reflects the health status of the community that PMGH was serving. Dr Tau said for those patients that were admitted, 24 per cent of them died during the first 24 hours from admission.

*Post-Courier, 31 January 2001*

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### 4.1 Activity 5

*What are the statistics in the article above being used for? Are there any problems with the figures when you try to do calculations such as the % of people dying from TB or AIDS? Can you present these figures in graphical formats?*

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Divisions of opinion about an issue may be due to:

- Conflicting value stances
- Use of power
- Location of the issue and protagonists
- Humanitarian ethics
- Ecological distinctiveness
- Benefits gained by different groups eg Resource development or conservation

We need a framework of ideas, including those derived from ethics, about the issue. This should be associated with reflection and action. Our reflection will involve elements of analysis and criticism.

Some perspectives:

respect for life	respect for reasoning
fairness	concern for the welfare of others
respect for diversity	peaceful resolution of conflict
justice	responsibility
freedom	honesty
integrity	ecological sustainability

## Ethical considerations

As human knowledge of the world and technological capacities increase, the need to make moral choices and value judgements increases. Ethical issues arise from immediate personal opportunities and problems requiring value -judgements about the right, good or best things to do or say. Ethical values and beliefs have both a personal and a social dimension. For example, each individual's values and beliefs are developed and nurtured within particular social and cultural contexts.

Most people live in and move between several different value systems. It is seldom possible to limit our social participation to groups in which all members share all of our values. Value differences and conflicts are an inevitable aspect of communal living. This is especially so in contemporary forms of multicultural societies. Most communities, small and large, experience some tension between 'traditional' values and 'emerging' or 'changing' values. This tension is often very strong in societies experiencing rapid change in lifestyle opportunities, available resources and technological development.

## **Topic 2: Framework – global, regional, third world**

There are a number of issues which are listed in textbooks which are worthy of being included as contemporary issues, but what makes them significant? Are they significant everywhere or to select areas? Are they applicable to developed countries or only to developing countries?

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### **4.1 Activity 6**

*Examine the following list of issues. Why are they significant? Who do they affect most? Who is actually concerned about them?*

- *Media violence*
- *Population control*
- *Habitat destruction*
- *Child pornography*
- *Arms trade*
- *Erosion*
- *AIDS*
- *Drug trafficking*

*Study a collection of newspapers for one week. Identify the issues reported. Which ones affect you or your local community only? Which ones are national and which are significant all over the world?*

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### **Civil war**

One widespread constraint on development is conflict between people within a country. Such disharmony may show as violent protest, harsh control, terrorism or guerrilla fighting or outright civil war. People are wounded, killed or imprisoned, services disrupted and property destroyed. Valuable resources are spent by police, armed forces and the groups involved in the conflict. This violence may well be seen by the different sides as necessary to control terrorism, to gain justice or freedom, or to prevent an opposing group from running the country. The result may be greater justice for the majority of the people, and so a more developed society, but during the conflict there is bound to be a great drain on material and economic resources.

*Post-Courier, 6 December 2000*

### Refugee at PNG border

MUARA TAMI, Indonesia: Refugees fleeing clashes between separatists and troops in Irian Jaya were yesterday backed up at the Indonesia province's border with Papua New Guinea. Indonesia police and immigration officials at this border post said 200 people had arrived since Papua New Guinea closed the crossing on December 1. Families from the Dani tribe, based in West Papua's central highlands, had been travelling to the checkpoint in groups of 30 to 40 since November 29, said Corporal Rob Alwi, one of two guards at Muara Tami.

*Post-Courier, 6 December 2000*

## 4.1 Activity 7

*Draw up a chart listing places throughout the world where civil war is taking place. Include Bougainville on your chart.*

*Your chart might look like this*

Location	Groups involved	Reason for war	Effects of war

### Health care

During the latter part of the twentieth century the main causes of ill-health and death in the developed countries are heart disease and cancer, accidents on roads and illnesses related to industrial activity. Increasingly there are fears of widespread disease or death through nuclear accident or warfare. In the underdeveloped countries the problems of ill-health and preventable death are more closely related to malnutrition and infectious disease, both of which could be controlled if money and resources were available. Many people argue that it is far better to use the limited resources available to improve health care at the village and local level rather than in large and expensive modern hospitals. This approach, sometimes known as 'primary health care', consists of training health workers to give basic advice to people in scattered rural communities on hygiene, healthy eating, drinking clean water and improving sanitation. Help and advice is also given on family planning, and dispensing simple drugs. Health care for all, with a minimum of preventable ill-health and death, is a basic measure of development within a country.

*List some of the health care programs operating throughout PNG. How successful are they? Why?*

*What progress has been made in educating Papua new Guineans about HIV/AIDS? What obstacles do the educators face?*

## Investigating contemporary issues

When investigating contemporary issues you may find it useful to use the following points to help you develop your knowledge and understanding of the issue.

- Read or view the material dealing with the issue
- Name and briefly outline the issue
- Who are the main people involved in the issue?
- Identify the scale at which the issue is relevant. Is it a global, national, regional or local issue?
- Describe or map the area where the issue is relevant
- List the main sources of information about the issue
- State whether the sources used present different points of view on the issue. If so, list them.
- State whether the sources of your information are reliable
- Outline the actions people could take to address the issue. What would be the likely outcome?
- Consider how the media has influenced your study of the issue
- Explain how the study of the issue has affected your own views on the issue



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### 4.1 Activity 8

*Choose a contemporary issue and collect material from the media and other sources dealing with the issue. Using the approach in the box 'Investigating contemporary issues', prepare a presentation on the issue. Use one of the following formats: an oral report, a written report, a poster, a video, an audio recording or a wall display.*

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## Role of the media

The media highlights some issues and ignores others. Understanding how the media selects and presents information will help you use the information it offers. Newspapers and magazines are used selectively by readers—that is, they read the material they find interesting and pass over the rest. This allows newspapers and magazines to cover a wider range of issues in greater depth than television and radio. Television and radio need to attract and maintain an audience's interest. They tend to focus on those issues that are likely to appeal to their audience.

The type of media also influences how they cover issues. Newspapers and magazines report on issues in detail, using photographs to support the report. Television news, on the other hand, is often built around visual images with the commentary playing only a supporting role. Television news suits those issues that produce graphic, action-based images. **Interest groups**, such as Greenpeace, use this to their advantage. They achieve worldwide coverage for their environmental concerns by staging protests that attract the media's attention. The

media prefer issues that involve conflicting viewpoints. Conflict between conservationists and loggers, for example, is more 'newsworthy' than issues that involve less conflict.

The media also choose issues that are short-term. This means that they can tell the complete story. Stories about major natural disasters, for example, capture and maintain an audience's attention, and are then over. It is much more difficult to generate and maintain interest in issues that develop over time, such as global warming, soil erosion and salinity. Important issues must also compete with other sources of news, such as politics, the economy and sport.

Information about contemporary issues can be biased. It is usually put together by people who have a particular perspective or point of view. This perspective may depend on their background and beliefs, or on the beliefs of the media organisation. Be aware of this as you use information from the media. Think about who put the information together and what their bias might be.

## Interest groups

Interest groups bring issues to the public's attention. Interest groups are an important part of our democratic society. They help people influence decision-makers by putting forward a collective point of view. Examples of interest groups include trade unions, professional associations, business groups, farming organisations, the Church, ethnic associations, pensioner groups, conservation groups and groups that promote other issues, such as the Right-to-Life group.



### 4.1 Activity 9

*Collect cartoons related to issues. Use them to develop a contemporary issues wall display. Prepare your own cartoon to illustrate a contemporary issue*

*Brainstorm and list as many interest groups as you can. Is anyone in your class a member of an interest group? As a class, select three or four*

issues. *Brainstorm the types of interest groups likely to be concerned with these issues.*

*Outline the role of the media in defining contemporary issues. Outline the differences in the ways newspapers and the electronic media (radio and television) report contemporary issues.*

*How do interest groups use the media to gain publicity for their campaigns? Why are interest groups an important part of a democratic society? List some interest groups active in PNG.*

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### **Topic 3: Processes for investigating issues**

Each of these three overlapping aspects of learning about issues can be taught and learned. Each requires the development of a range of skills, (process approach) but no single process of enquiry is appropriate to the study of all issues. This is because of the importance of the character and context of the issue.

The study of issues involves a combination of:

- **Inculcation** – instilling values in students through the way we present information, talk, or interact in the classroom
- **Knowledge** – the study of issues requires a base of information. A values- clarifying activity such as “how do you feel about ...?” is pointless unless students have some knowledge of the subject
- **Reflection** - looking back, persistent and careful consideration of an idea in the light of the evidence supporting it and the ethics framing it. Reflection enables us to realise the consistency of a set of related ideas and helps us become aware of and reconcile multiple realities
- **Action** – commitment, eg excursions and field trips which promote service learning, writing to influential persons etc, organising petitions, speaking at meetings, fund raising for causes, joining organizations.

There are a number of focus questions that help us enquire into issues:

- How ought I/should I proceed in arriving at a socially responsible response to an issue?
- Where is my response likely to lead?
- What is the likely effect on others?
- Which responses to an issue, after examining the evidence, promise the best consequences?
- Is it likely that I will think well of myself when looking back on my action(s) or if my action was examined by others?



## Analysing values

Values analysis involves the gathering, analysing, organisation and appraisal of facts in order to understand value positions held by individuals, groups or organisations. The process of values analysing can assist students to:

- Identify values involved in an issue, situation or problem
- Distinguish facts from interpretations of facts or opinions
- Identify different kinds of bias in statements
- Identify values implicit in laws or rules and their manner of enforcement
- Give reasons based on evidence, for either accepting or rejecting particular values
- Predict outcomes from given value positions

### Get your facts right on AIDS

I have no doubt that Jerry Marai of UPNG had the best intentions in writing his piece in the Post-Courier (January 12), titled "Highlighting the facts about the AIDS disease".

However, his letter contains a number of inaccuracies. Some of these could have the effect of misleading those people who also have good intentions, that is, to avoid getting AIDS.

AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV. In PNG, more than 90 per cent of infections are contracted (as indeed is the case of the majority of infections in the world) by heterosexual intercourse. This disease was first recognised by doctors in the 1970s, although it was most probably present in the human populations for many decades prior to this.

One does not have to be "extremely promiscuous" or "tend to have more than 50 sexual partners in one year" to get AIDS. Indeed, one act of sex with an infected person can transmit the virus to you. In fact, the last two women I cared for who had AIDS were virgins before they got married, and vouched that they had never had sex with anyone apart from their husbands in their lives.

Nevertheless, because of the simple fact of statistical probability one is more likely to catch HIV the more sexual partners one has. But because those who tend to have more sexual partners tend to team up with partners who are also more likely to have multiple sexual partners, "promiscuity" makes for geometric risk of getting HIV.

"An auto-immune response", is not the reason that HIV infected persons get sick and die from AIDS. HIV destroys the immune cells that help our bodies fight infections. When the number of these important immune protection cells gets to a very low level, our bodies can get sick (and die) from the many common infections that would not cause a normal person to get sick at all, or only develop a mild illness.

The PNG blood banks screen all donated blood for HIV antibodies, these screening tests will detect more than 99 per cent of HIV infections. Only in the very rare situation where a person who has recently contracted the HIV infection (and his body has not had time to make any antibodies yet) that it is possible that the blood bank may contain HIV that is undetectable by screening tests. However, to avoid this rare scenario, the blood bank asks all persons who have had unprotected sex outside marriage in the last year not to donate blood.

Finally, once again one must emphasise that the best and most sure way not to get HIV/AIDS is to abstain from sex until marriage and then to hold exclusively to one's lifetime partner. However, for those who are unable to adhere to that ideal, all sex that is not with one's lifetime partner should be covered by a condom. The problem for many young people is that they do not know who their "lifetime partner" is. For this reason one must recommend that all sexual activity before marriage should be covered by a condom too.

Dr Glen Mola, Division of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, UPNG.

*Post-Courier*, 24 January 2001

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## 4.1 Activity 10

*Study the letter above and complete the activities.*

*What is the issue? What values is the author displaying?*

*Collect a range of views about the issue. Collect facts which can be put forward to support each side of the issue. Make a decision, as far as the facts allow, concerning the issue.*

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## Clarifying values

Clarifying values is a reflective and sharing process in which values-related issues are discussed, or where values-related issues arise out of activities or situations in the classroom or the school. Questions assist us to become aware of our personal value positions regarding these issues and to explore the validity of these positions within a non-threatening environment. The process of values clarifying can assist us to:

- Understand our own and others' values
- Work through what may be confused values
- Change or maintain our values in the light of new experience or
- Enhance communication and personal relationships

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## 4.1 Activity 11

*Tribal fighting is an issue which frequently makes the news in PNG. Identify the decisions or actions taken by major participants in tribal fights and the reasons why their decisions and actions were taken.*

*Why has the letter about tribal fighting (next page) been written? How is the writer's view different from that of participants in these fights?*

*What do you think about tribal fighting? What might you do if conflict arises in your community?*

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## Stop tribal war, it's too costly

I have now lived in the province of Enga for a period of six years. During that time I have witnessed and heard of much fighting and the tragic results of it. Firstly, there is the large scale murder of grandfathers, fathers, uncles and sons. Children are left fatherless. Wives are left widows without husbands to look after them and their children.

After it is all over and peace documents are signed, large amounts of money and other commodities have to be found to pay the compensation bills. But is that the real cost? No! What about the houses that have been burned down with the family's bedding, clothing, cooking utensils and tools and implements to build houses, cut timber and work the gardens. Mothers and children are forced to flee from the fighting area and find a place to live with their relatives elsewhere. Children are uprooted from schools. Their education is interrupted and for many, ended because when the fighting is over there is no longer any money for school fees. All the money is needed to pay for the compensation bill.

The next question concerns the health of the warring tribes, both during and after the fighting. The Highlands climate is not a kind one. If there is no proper shelter or suitably warm clothing and bedding there is much suffering. It is cold at nights and there is good rainfall most of the year. It is a climate that is well suited to the agricultural industry. But during tribal fights, gardens are deliberately destroyed and timber stands are cut down and burned. The results of all this is hunger, malnutrition and sickness of all kinds and there is no money for medical assistance. Access to free medical services are also often disrupted if it means travelling through enemy territory

Most of these conditions are preventable if there was no tribal fighting. As more and more guns enter the province the fighting has increased over the last few years. Children as young as 10 to 12 years old are carrying guns around being taught to kill and destroy property. These children should be in school being educated and taught to become good citizens, not hardened criminals!

As a result of the tribal fighting the economy of the province has deteriorated over the years. And some businesses pull out and others choose not to invest in Enga because this would not be an economically sound decision to make. The people are getting poorer, sicker and becoming less educated. The cost is indeed high.

The solution is simple. Stop the tribal fighting. Disarm the criminals. Move into the 21st century as peaceful, law-abiding citizens. Learn to settle your differences in a mature manner and work through the law courts which have been established for this purpose. Educate your children to build an agricultural economy, care for government and business institutions such hospitals, health centres, schools, post office, banks, government offices and business houses.

In simple words, "Wake up to your responsibilities and recognise that fighting does not fit into today's world". The real cost of tribal fighting is a cost that is far too high to pay. Nobody can afford it.

Dorothy Powriel, Sopas Adventist Hospital, Mt Hagen

*Post-Courier*, 23 January 2001

## Consequence charts

A consequence chart is used to record what we believe to be the likely consequences of a decision or action. Charts can take different forms and enable us to explore cause and effect relationships, alternative consequences or the likely consequences of alternative actions or decisions.

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### 4.1 Activity 12

#### Multinational corporations

Businesses that have branches or subsidiary companies in more than one country are often known as multinationals or transnationals. There is nothing particularly new in this, but in the three decades since the Second World War there has been an enormous growth in their number, size and economic power. A relatively small number of these giant corporations nowadays have a considerable influence on what we can eat, drink, wear, read, listen to, and how money is managed and what work is available. They are important if not always obvious features in the lives of most people.

*The Nike company is going to build a factory in your local area. The company will need land, employees, transport and communication facilities, fuel for plastic-making furnaces. What benefits will come from their presence? What problems will be experienced? How will different groups in the community feel – the landowners, young unemployed people, local government authorities?*

*Explore the consequences individually, in groups or jointly as a whole class. Give reasons for the consequences chosen. Present your findings as a consequence chart.*

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## Debates

A debate is a formalised discussion in which opposing points of view are advanced. It allows us to take a position on an issue and justify that position, perceive other points of view and to analyse relative strengths of arguments. A debate can take several forms:

- *Example A* - A Round Robin provides opportunity for each person to state a point of view and a supporting argument.
- *Example B* – People are divided into two groups according to their chosen point of view. Each side alternately puts forward a persuading statement.

- *Example C* – Each person adopts a point-of-view and develops supporting arguments, They present their arguments in a persuasive manner and counteract arguments in response to opposition;
- *Example D* - Parliamentary debate. In parliamentary debates: there are two teams, (the affirmative and the negative team) of three speakers who take turns to debate a topic. The debate proceeds with alternate speakers from each team developing their arguments and *rebutting* the opposing team's arguments.

## Evaluation and decision-making

Decision-making is the process of choosing from two or more alternatives. Decisions are best made after gathering information about the situation/event, considering the formation of possible alternatives before choosing between alternatives. Part of the process is the analysis and evaluation the possible outcomes of the decision.

- Be aware of problems/situations in the class/community which require decisions to be made
- Prepare role-plays or simulations when decision-making is involved
- Be prepared to allow students to make decisions with unexpected outcomes
- Use texts in media, literature, films, computer programs that involve making decisions.
- Students can evaluate others' values and their own by using assistance such as discussion cards, role-plays, cartoons, simulations, providing choices and value surveys

Evaluation involves weighing options, consequences and evidence in decision-making contexts in order to make decisions and take action in just, caring and effective ways. The evaluation process often requires us to make decisions between values which are in apparent or real conflict.

### **Migrant labour and family life**

If it is impossible to find employment near home the only solution (apart from being supported by family or state) is seek work elsewhere. People have migrated in search of work since the beginning of recorded time, and the process continues today. Migration can be both within a country and between countries. Sometimes an individual or a whole family will move permanently to a new place. An alternative is where a man or woman leaves home for a temporary period of work in a distant place, sending money home to his or her dependents. In some cases temporary migration is by choice because it provides a salary higher than at home, or for promotion in a job. Far more often, however, there is no choice, and the migrant worker reluctantly leaves home to work away from the people and the place he or she prefers. Through no fault of their own millions of men and women through the world have to become migrant workers and lead lives that may be materially acceptable but unsatisfactory in many other ways. The quality of life of families left at home is also diminishes as the price for some material security.

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 **4.1 Activity 13**

*What choices do families have?*

*What impact does working away have on the worker, the family at home?*

*What if the worker does not go away and there is little or no income?*

*Which is the better choice*

*Do you know any families who have this type of life? What strategies do they have to cope?*

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## Moral dilemmas

A moral dilemma depicts an apparent conflict between two or more courses of right action. Moral dilemmas can occur in many spheres of our lives.

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 **4.1 Activity 14**

*Try to think of some examples of something which was "right, when done in one particular situation, or with one particular person or group, but "wrong" in another set of circumstances. Try to explain what made it "right" and what made it "wrong".*

*Abortion is never taken lightly. The dilemma is to do with the rights of the woman against the rights of the unborn child. Which should be considered the more important?*

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## Problem-solving

Problem-solving involves finding answers to questions and difficulties which arise in the many and varied contexts of social relationships. Problem-solving can span personal, social, cultural and environmental contexts. Problem-solving may include:

- Decision-making and action about a social need or conflict
  - Exploring and understanding the feelings, values and attitudes of others
  - Analysing values and behaviour
  - Developing group skills and interpersonal relations
  - Improving the lifestyles of the participants
  - Planning futures
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## Alternatives to schooling

It is increasingly believed that the difficulties are so great that there is little hope of formal schooling meeting the needs of millions of children - and adults - for education and training. Many alternative methods are being tried throughout the world, and great hope is placed on radio and television for 'distance learning'. Remote parts of the world can have access to quality educational programmes and skilled teaching through the use of satellites and receiving dishes. Film, music and drama can also be used to support the formal teaching in schools. In many parts of the world youth groups, adult education centres, women's organisations, co-operatives and workplaces and village councils provide important opportunities for learning and training. Economic and social development of a country may well be handicapped by the lack of enough engineers, agricultural scientists, doctors, teachers, scientists, technicians and so on. That shortage is not due to the lack of ability of its people, but a lack of money and resources to provide the education and training that they need and could benefit from.

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### 4.1 Activity 15

*Identify some of the obstacles to providing 'universal primary education' in PNG? What solutions can you suggest?*

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## Resolving conflict

Resolving conflict involves analysing conflict situations in an objective and systematic way and being able to suggest a range of non-violent solutions. Those involved have to:

- Recognise the need to resolve conflict
- Determine the issue to be resolved
- Be aware of the value stances of the people involved
- Express their feelings about the problem or issue
- Listen attentively to opposing opinions or points of view
- Work towards achieving a joint solution to the conflict

## Role-play

Role-play involves taking on and acting out roles of real or imaginary individuals in varied, non-threatening simulated situations in order to clarify values and develop empathy with other people.

- Explain the role-play to the whole class so that they begin from a common understanding of the situation
- Cast beginning students with learners who are competent and relaxed. Acceptance of the role-play by some will give others more confidence.
- Avoid placing students in their usual life role as this can be self-defeating and will limit possible experiences for the students
- Be prepared to intervene where necessary
- Stop the drama after main behaviours and points have been observed
- Debrief role-play participants. This is an essential step as it helps players out of their roles. They must be disassociated from the role, both in their own eyes and the eyes of other students.



## **Topic 4: Current affairs**

The study of current affairs and special events adds relevance, reality and immediacy to the social science program. Meaningful bridges can be built between life in and out of school and college and between the past and present. Student's interests can be extended and deepened as they investigate events and issues related to their own concerns, to long-term social trends, and to actions of individuals and groups.

Events which are part of the news provide a valuable source for discussion and inquiry. The growing supply of information through the media, as well as access to technology such as computers and the internet, means students can be aware of events that may be quite removed from their local community. Information in the public domain can emphasise the significance of an event or situation.

The following criteria should be used by lecturers and classroom teachers to select events for study. It is important that events and issues selected are important, not trivial.

- **Educational value** – will students learn something significant? What contributions can be made to knowledge, skills and attitude objectives?
- **Appropriateness** – Is the topic appropriate in terms of the maturity of students? Is it appropriate in terms of community conditions and feelings?
- **Relatedness** – Is it related to past and future learning? Can it be related to basic units of study?
- **Available information** – If needed, can background information be obtained? Are suitable teaching materials available?
- **Available time** – Is there enough time to develop suitable understanding?
- **Reliability** – Is accurate information available? Can facts be differentiated from opinions? Can any bias in the information be detected and analysed by students?
- **Timelines** – Is up-to-date information available? Is it related to basic trends?

Current affairs of special significance cannot always be dealt with in the daily or weekly timeslot, nor can they always be incorporated into units of work. An important community, regional or national problem (tsunamis, floods), a major election, activities related to anniversaries (Mt Lamington), the coming of the country to international importance (Sandline, OK Tedi) – any of these may require an intensive short unit using current materials and related background materials.

Whichever approach is used, effort should be made to have students attain the highest levels of thinking and understanding. The first level is the routine reporting of events. At the second level, the reporting of events is followed by discussion of the most interesting points. At the third level, students use problem-solving and critical thinking skills to explore the significance of the event or issue.

A range of teaching strategies and activities which can be used in the study of current affairs (and issues) are described below. These activities are suitable for students of all ages, including those in primary school.

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 **4.1 Activity 16**

*You are about to introduce the study of current affairs to your upper primary school class. In groups, pairs or individually, select an activity from the list below and prepare material suitable for use in an upper primary classroom. If possible, use your lesson material during practical teaching sessions.*

*Set up a news bulletin board, assign a group of four or five students to add current news items each week, and encourage other students to bring items on a voluntary basis. Alternate those in charge.*

*Make a ‘**Who’s who in the news**’ board on which students post names, photos and articles of people related to units of study.*

*Have students use the **5 W’s and H** to analyse and report news stories: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?*

*Conduct round-table and panel discussions in which four to six students plan and present the topic and respond to questions from the class.*

*Make scrapbooks or notebooks that include events on a topic over a period of time to show how one event is related to others, how individuals and groups interact, how consequences flow from the decisions people make, and how changes are made in response to various conditions and demands.*

*Have students find examples of bias – a slanted view, an unfair opinion, an unreasonable judgement. Have them analyse how the bias can be corrected.*

*Ask students to detect stereotypes – oversimplified and usually false representations of a person, place or thing. Have them discuss how the stereotype can be corrected.*

*Analyse and evaluate news reports, editorials and letters to the editor to identify point of view, positions on issues, bias, stereotypes, and prejudice.*

*Clip an article from the newspaper, duplicate and distribute it, and discuss it in terms of these questions: How important is the event? Locally? Nationally? What people are affected by it? How many? How important will it be in five years from now? Why?*

*Check reports using the following questions – Is it accurate? Is it up-to-date? Who reported it? How can the facts be checked? Are there opinions in it? What do others say?*

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