Presented in September 2021 to the students in the Department of Anthropology & Sociology, University of the Western Cape, as part of Animals, Society and the Environment

Teaching Kindness and Compassion:

Humane Education as an antidote to violence

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The Humane Education Trust

Caring Classrooms

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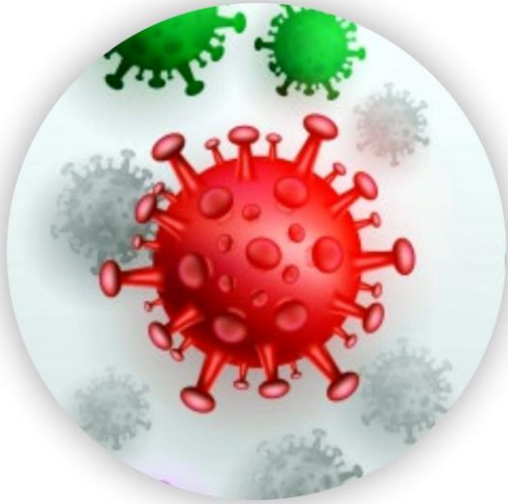
humane education

Rekindling the spirit of care and respect for life

Humane Education

Until the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, the major rationale for humane education was that treating animals badly brought about negative characteristics such as violent behaviour in humans, to the detriment of society as a whole.



Let’s take a look at this long-standing rationale first, before we examine COVID’s impact –
an impact which has resulted in a fundamental reconceptualisation of humane education.

The major rationale for humane education *before* **COVID**

George Angell,
founder of the Massachusetts SPCA
in the nineteenth century, is often called the
father of humane education.

He believed that…

> "every step in teaching kindness to animals is a step to prevent crime… a step in promoting the growth of those qualities of heart which will elevate human souls… and the time to start is early childhood."

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED120087.pdf

The major rationale for humane education *before* **COVID**

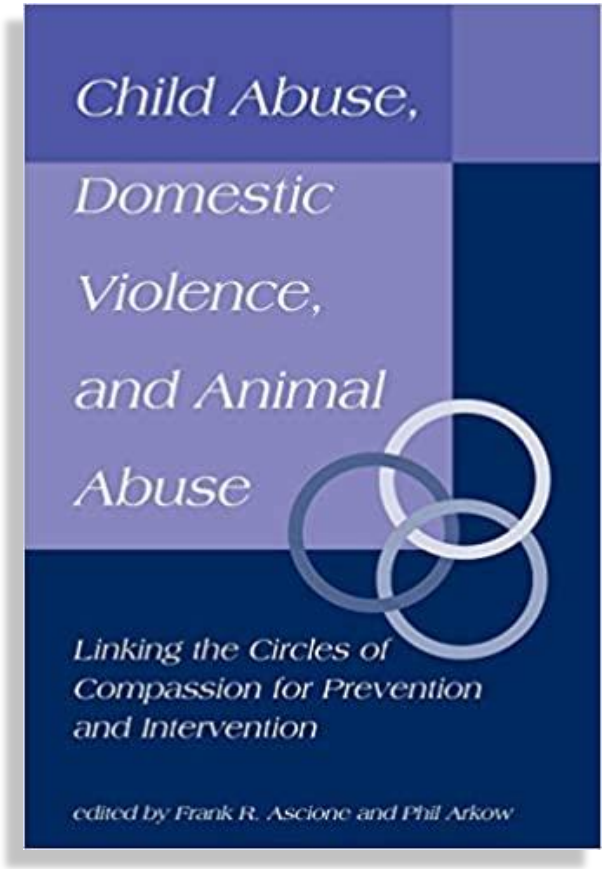
The Link

Over the decades much has been written about the link between animal abuse and human violence.

Animal welfare organisations made much use of *'the link'* in attempts to persuade people to be kinder to animals for their own sakes and the sake of society.

One of the most well-known resources in this regard is titled: **Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse – Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention.**

PHIL ARKOW
co-author of the book



The major rationale for humane education *before* **COVID**

CONCOURT

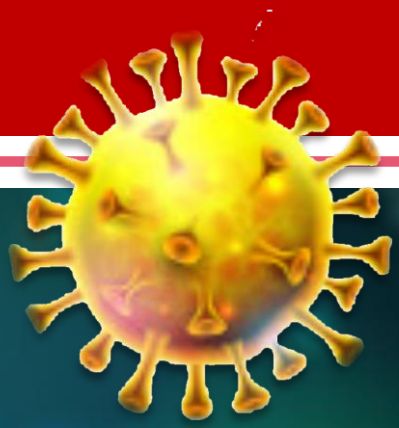
A judgment handed down by South Africa's Constitutional Court in 2016 notes that

> "animal protection safeguards the moral status of humans and the degeneration of human values."

CONSTITUTION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

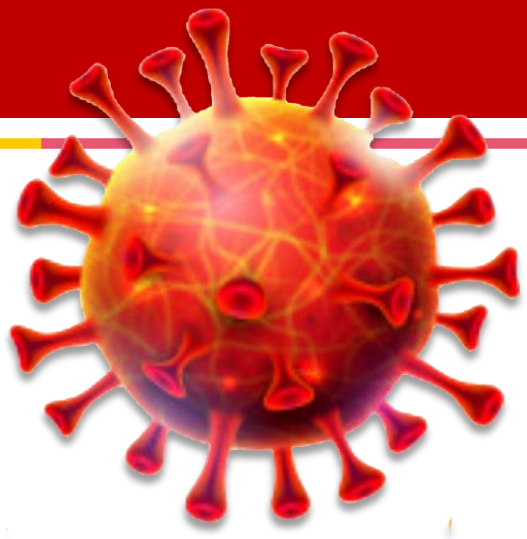
https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2016-12-08-why-a-constitutional-court-ruling-in-an-animal-cruelty-case-is-important-for-fighting-corruption/

Then along came **COVID**



The **onslaught of COVID-19** has profoundly
changed our understanding of humane education
and introduced an urgency for its implementation in schools.

Then along came **COVID**



The Implications

For the first time, humans got an inkling that
the way we treat animals has implications
for the health of planet earth **as a whole** including ourselves.

Who would have thought that a wild-caught pangolin (or maybe a bat)
caged in the torment of a wet market in far-away China, could possibly be
responsible for the outbreak of COVID across the entire globe.

While the link between animal abuse and human violence remains true,
the implications of animal abuse are now massively extrapolated such that
animal abuse literally threatens our own survival as a species.

Then along came **COVID**

Origin?

The World Health Organisation (WHO)
has announced it is still
not certain as to the origin of COVID-19.

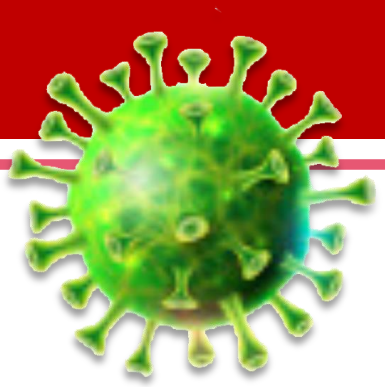
Did the virus jump species in the torment, torture and slaughter of a live animal market in China's city of Wuhan?

Or was it an accidental leak from a Chinese laboratory doing research on corona viruses?

Whatever the case, the WHO has classified COVID-19 as a zoonotic disease, transmissible from animals to humans.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-08-17/where-did-covid-come-from-report-on-infected-wuhan-wild-animals-sheds-new-light

Then along came **COVID**



Decimation of Wild Spaces

The blame for COVID-19 has been placed to a very large degree on humanity's invasion and decimation of wild spaces in order to grow food for the billions of farmed animals trapped in cages around the world.

We know now that viruses to which we have no immunity lurk in these places and that every eco-system that is destroyed to make way for soya to feed pigs and chickens on factory farms, brings us in contact with potentially deadly new viruses.

Decimation of Wild Spaces

Then along came COVID

Zoonotic Transmission

We know too, that poor animal welfare is a breeding ground for corona viruses that can be transmitted to humans, as evidenced in previous respiratory epidemics like SARS and MERS.

Then along came **COVID**

Consequences

In an article published by the *New York Times*, **Professor David Benatar**, head of philosophy and director of the Bioethics Centre at the University of Cape Town, says this:

"Simply put,
the coronavirus pandemic is a result of our gross maltreatment of animals...
Real prevention requires taking steps to minimise the chances of the virus or other infectious agents emerging in the first place". Such steps require "a compassionate appraisal of our treatment of nonhuman animals."

Read *New Scientist* to see how our abuse of nature makes Pandemics like covid-19 more likely

Picture: Selman Hoşgör *NEW SCIENTIST*

https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24933240-800-how-our-abuse-of-nature-makes-pandemics-like-covid-19-more-likely/

Then along came **COVID**

Humane Education

The *Humane Education Trust* is one of the first educational organisations worldwide to have developed cutting-edge, curriculum-aligned lesson plans designed to empower learners with the knowledge and understanding required to nurture the tiny green shoots of a One Health/One Welfare world.

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Rekindling the spirit of care and respect for life

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Here is an example of one
of our Lesson Plans aligned with
the Curriculum in Life Orientation
for Grade 9

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Rekindling the spirit of care and respect for life

Humane Education supports Life Skills in the Senior Phase

These lesson plans are designed to encourage teachers to bring in their own ideas to further inspire learner participation and development.

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Grade 9 Term 3

Topic: **Health, social and environmental responsibility**

- Health and safety **issues related to violence**
- Common acts of **violence at home, school** and in the **community**
- **Reasons** that violence occurs in families and communities and among friends and peers

- **Impact of violence** on individual and community health and safety
- **Alternatives to violence:** problem-solving skills and managing conflict
- **Protecting** oneself and others from acts of violence

The nature of *Violence*

Most people limit their conception of violence to behavior that involves **physical force** that is intended to **hurt, damage, or kill.**

Hurt or damage done to a person's feelings is known as emotional abuse but this can also be regarded as a form of violence and the impact can be even more hurtful, damaging and destructive than the harm caused by physical violence.

But what about **latent** violence ?

Definition of latent:
an adjective meaning **present but not visible or apparent.**

What about the word **inherent** ?

Definition of inherent:
existing in something as a permanent, essential, or characteristic attribute.

Is latent violence inherent in our prevailing Westernised diet, dense in **cheap** meat and dairy?

Let us consider violence as **experienced by FARMED ANIMALS...**

More than 70 billion land **animals are slaughtered** annually around the world, **for food.**

Let us consider violence as **experienced by FARMED ANIMALS...**

FACTORY FARMING FOR CHEAP EGGS

Most of them have lived lives of

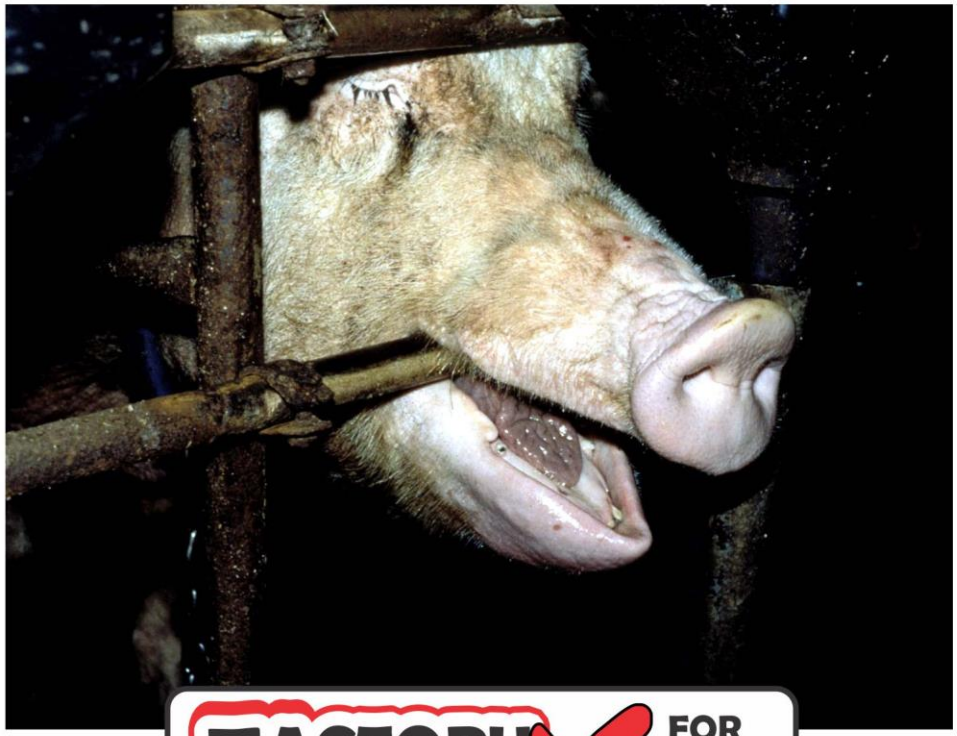
horrific confinement,

shut away from view on factory farms.

They are unable to express their natural behaviours and are viewed as units of production and treated as commodities.

Let us consider violence as **experienced by FARMED ANIMALS...**

Out of the sight of ordinary consumers,
they are out of mind,
valued only for the potential profit
to be made from them.



FACTORY FARMING FOR CHEAP MEAT

Violence **experienced by AQUATIC ANIMALS...**

In addition, an estimated 1.2 trillion **fish** and other **aquatic animals** are **hauled from the oceans** every year.

Sentience — and its **implications…**

We KNOW land animals are sentient.

*More recently science tells us that **FISH** are sentient too!*

See source information at end of Lesson Plan

Sentience — and its **implications…**

My Octopus Teacher, the award-winning documentary which shows how South African *Craig Foster* forged a relationship with an octopus in a kelp forest off the coast of Cape Town, is about **two highly sentient beings** – one being Craig Foster and the other, the octopus.

See source information at end of Lesson Plan

Class Exercise

Sentience is the capacity to suffer pain and misery as well as experience joy and well-being.

Legal acknowledgement of animals as sentient beings is slowly taking place around the world. Most recently, in April and May 2021, the UK introduced legislation so that vertebrate animals are legally acknowledged as sentient beings.

- Ask the learners to **research animal sentience.**
- **Which countries include animal sentience** in their legislation?
- Why does our **acknowledgement of animal sentience make demands** on us as humans?
- **What are** these demands?

Let us explore possible **reasons**

why the world continues to impose

latent institutionalized violence

?

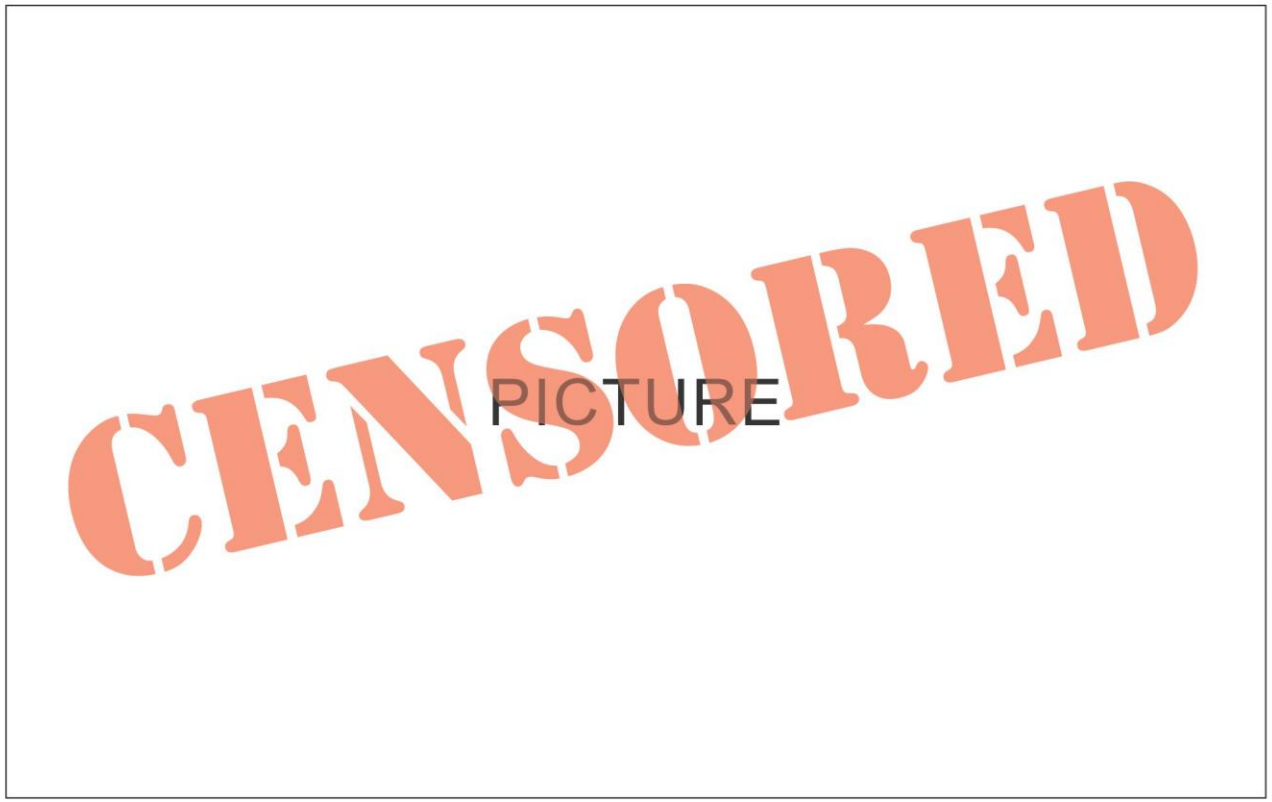
on sentient beings...

The following slides explore the FICTION [and the FACTS] inherent in latent violence in modern consumerism

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 1 The **feel-good** myth inherent in the term **humane slaughter**

The term is designed to reassure consumers that animals are *properly treated at slaughter*!



But the reality is far from that.

Cheap meat requires that animals are hustled through abattoirs at breakneck speed.

They experience pain, fear and terror at slaughter.

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 2 The necessity myth

We are told that food production must increase by 70% to feed the growing world population and **therefore further industrialization (factory farming) of animals is *necessary*.**

However, **we already produce much more food than is needed** to feed the growing world population.

The problem is that **around 60% of this food is lost or wasted** by being discarded by consumers or retailers, and through overconsumption beyond one's nutritional needs.

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 2 The necessity myth [continued]

In South Africa, some 10 million tonnes of food go to waste every year
mostly in landfill sites.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research has valued this loss at R61.5 billion.

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 2 The necessity myth [continued]

If food waste were halved, an extra 3.55 billion people could be fed.

This is more than the anticipated increase of 2.2 billion in world population by 2050.

See source information at end of Lesson Plan

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 3 The **inefficiency** factor in the conversion of cereals to meat and dairy

The **United Nations *Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)*** estimates that about **815 million people around the world suffer from chronic undernourishment...**

...while animals on factory farms consume 34% of total crop production.

See source at end of Lesson Plan

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 3 The inefficiency factor... [continued]

In South Africa it is estimated that
1 in 4 people are affected by hunger on a regular basis.

Based on these figures, it is arguably ***inefficient*** **to feed huge amounts of high quality nutrient-rich cereals to factory farmed animals** so that the middle classes can eat **cheap** meat, milk and eggs.

See source at end of Lesson Plan

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 3 The **inefficiency** factor... [continued]

'Hungry people are not concerned about whether they will be eating meat. They are concerned about whether they will be eating at all.'

— Lauren Hutton, consultant on peace and security in Africa, Daily Maverick 17 July 2016

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 4 Manipulation of consumer demand

Giant supermarket chains tell us supply is guided by consumer demand and the need to feed the poor cheaply.

But the low price of industrially produced meat and dairy at the check-out counter is deceptive.

It distorts the truth by ignoring the incalculable cost of industrialised agriculture (factory farming) to the environment and to human health.

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 4 — Manipulation of consumer demand... [continued]

This manipulation of our perception of price has been recognised by the ***UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)*** which has said:

‘ *In many countries there is a worrying* ***disconnect between the retail price of food and the true cost of its production.***

As a consequence, food produced at great environmental cost in the form of greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution, air pollution and habitat destruction, can appear to be cheaper than more sustainably produced alternatives. ’

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 4 — Manipulation of consumer demand... [continued]

A closer look at the hidden costs in *'cheap'* food:

Pandemics like Covid-19: Our invasion and destruction of wild places in order to make way for vast plantations of crops to feed animals in factory farms around the world, is considered dangerous and inviting of further zoonotic pandemics like Covid-19.

The FICTION [and the FACTS]

Fiction 4 — Manipulation of consumer demand... [continued]

The picture shows land in Brazil that *used to be* part of the Amazon rain forest.

Picture credit: Yasuyoshi Chiba/Compassion in World Farming.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has made the following appeal:

‘Humanity is waging war on nature.
This is suicidal. Nature always
strikes back and is already doing so
with growing force and fury.
Biodiversity is collapsing.
One million species are at risk of extinction.
Ecosystems are disappearing before our eyes.
Making peace with nature is the
defining task of the 21st century.
It must be the top, top priority
for everyone, everywhere.’

See source at end of Lesson Plan

Class Exercise

Many farmers have already turned to ***regenerative agriculture*** to play their part in the healing of nature.

Ask the learners to study regenerative agriculture here:

https://www.regenagsa.org.za/regenerative-grazing/

- Mark down the salient points on how regenerative agriculture heals nature.

We can *stop* the Violence!

We know now that the impact of violence reaches further than what we experience, see, hear and feel in our own homes and communities.

We can stop the violence against Earth herself by exploring the latent, inherent violence that we have unknowingly, and unintentionally made part of our daily lives.

With this awareness a humane ethos will begin to filter through society at every level.

Class Exercise

When asked in 2021 if it would consider a **phase-out of eggs from hens in battery cages in favour of cage-free eggs,** a leading South African supermarket chain responded as set out here... >>>

'Market forces such as consumer demand are a critical driver of food production decisions."

Some 2,5% of our eggs are free range and we would be very happy to source larger volumes should consumer buying patterns lean that way. Currently they do not.

In our business we on-goingly discussed the matter of cage-free egg production with our main suppliers. They have indicated that, apart from most farmers not actually having the space at their disposal for barn or free-range egg production, the cost of switching over to cage-free eggs will increase egg prices quite substantially. This will not only put a relatively affordable protein source out of reach of a large portion of South Africans, but also place the entire egg production industry under pressure which in turn would lead to job losses and ultimately create a food security risk.'

Write *a detailed response to this letter...*

based on the knowledge derived from this Lesson Plan.

Source Information

Fish
https://www.ciwf.eu/media/7437870/why-fish-welfare-matters_the-evidence-for-fish-sentience_ciwf-2019.pdf

Octopus
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3s0LTDhqe5A

Cows
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/28/arts/music/cow-concert-scandinavian-cello-school.html

Food waste
https://www.wwf.org.za/?21962/The-truth-about-our-food-waste-problem#:~:text=In%20South%20Africa%2C%2010%20million,chain%20%E2%80%93%20from%20farm%20to%20fork

http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en/

https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/hidden_hunger_in_south_africa_0.pdf

Antonio Guterres
https://unfccc.int/news/un-secretary-general-making-peace-with-nature-is-the-defining-task-of-the-21st-century

This lesson plan also serves
the following **topics** in the **following grades:**

Grade 10 Term 2

Topic: **Social and environmental responsibility**

- Contemporary **social issues** that impact negatively on local and global communities
- **Concepts:** social and environmental **justice**
- **Social issues:** poverty, food security, food production, violence, unequal access to basic resources

Grade 11 Term 2

Topic: **Social and environmental responsibility**

- Environmental issues that **cause ill-health:**

  * **Inhumane farming** methods
  * Impact of **depletion of resources** such as fishing stocks, firewood and land
  * **Climate change:** causes, impact on development, mitigation and adaptation

Grade 11 Term 4

Topic: **Democracy and human rights**

- Identify and critically analyse various **moral and spiritual issues** and dilemmas:
    * right-to-life
    * euthanasia
    * cultural practices and traditions
    * economic issues
    * environmental issues
- Respect **differing opinions**