

SE and the inequalities

MODULE 2

Inequality is a persistent and deeply rooted issue that shapes the lives of individuals and communities worldwide. It manifests in the opportunities we have—or lack, the quality of life we experience, and the resources we can access.

This chapter delves into the origins of social inequalities, their far-reaching effects on society, and the ways they perpetuate global disparities.

START

ABOUT THIS COURSE

This course is one of the results of the **Better Cooperate! project**.

The project Better Cooperate! Education through and to the values of the social economy as a way to reinforce the society is a project combining the fields of education and social entrepreneurship in the activities of. Its aim is to increase the capacity of the social economy sector to carry out educational activities in the field of social entrepreneurship and thus to formulate an effective response to the challenges of the modern world and to increase the initiative and entrepreneurship of young people and their effective inclusion in the social and professional life of their societies.

Project Number: 2023-1-PL01-KA220-YOU-000158100

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Better Cooperate Course

1

SE and the primacy of
the values over the gain

2

SE and the inequities

3

SE and the local
development

4

SE and digital
transformation

5

SE and the ageing
society

6

SE and the climate
change

INTRODUCTION

Module 2 : SE and the inequities

Inequality is one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. It affects individuals, communities, and entire nations, shaping access to resources, opportunities, and quality of life. This course is designed to help you understand the roots of social and economic inequalities, their impact on different aspects of life, and the ways in which they can be addressed. The course will take you about **30 minutes**.

Throughout the course, you will:

- explore key concepts such as social class, privilege, and mobility
- examine the factors that contribute to inequality—historical, economic, political, and social
- learn how they influence access to education, healthcare, and employment

We encourage you to reflect, ask questions, and think critically about the inequalities you observe in your own community and the world. Together, we can work toward a future where opportunities and resources are accessible to all.

START



But first.... Let's check how much do you already know!

Social mobility refers to the ability of individuals or groups to move up or down the social hierarchy

True

False

Send

→ Next

Below are four images, each depicting a different situation. Your goal is to identify which one best illustrates systemic social inequality—a problem that arises from unfair structures in society rather than individual struggles.

You can select more than one answer



An online-only option



A homeless person



An agreement between
the rich and the political



A person doing a difficult
job

Send

→ Next



Now that the basis are settled, is time to start!

But before dive into the theoretical concepts of ageing, we want to reflect on how this complex phenomenon impact our basic societal needs.

Start the self reflection!



Educational inequality has no significant impact on social mobility

True

False

Send

→ Next



Now that the basis are settled, is time to start!

But before dive into the theoretical concepts of ageing, we want to reflect on how this complex phenomenon impact our basic societal needs.

Start the self reflection!



Przetłumaczone na angielski Arrange the sentences in the order in which the inequalities are formed

Wealth and power concentrate among a few



Inequality continues across generations



Limited access to education, jobs, and healthcare



Send



Now that the basis are settled, is time to start!

But before dive into the theoretical concepts of ageing, we want to reflect on how this complex phenomenon impact our basic societal needs.

Start the self reflection!

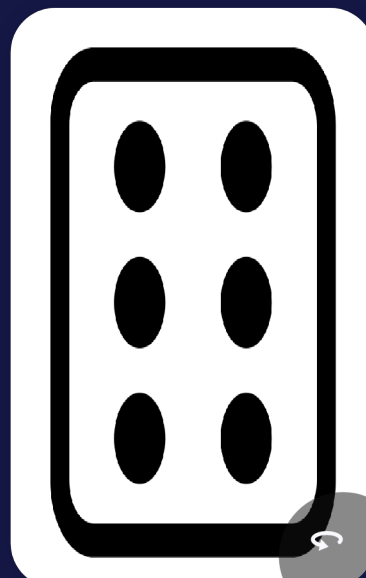
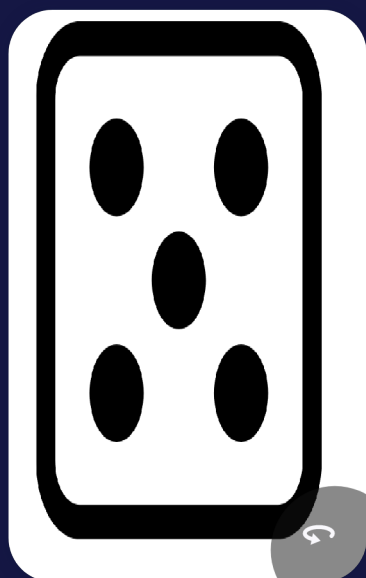
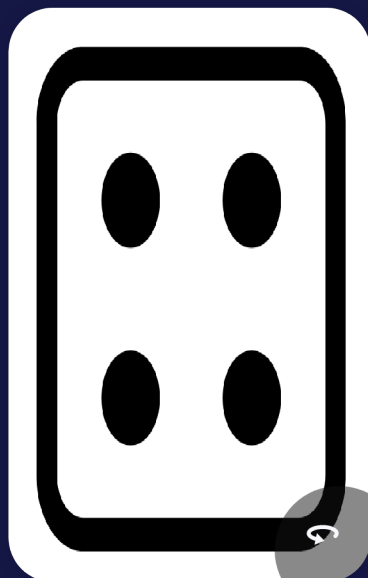
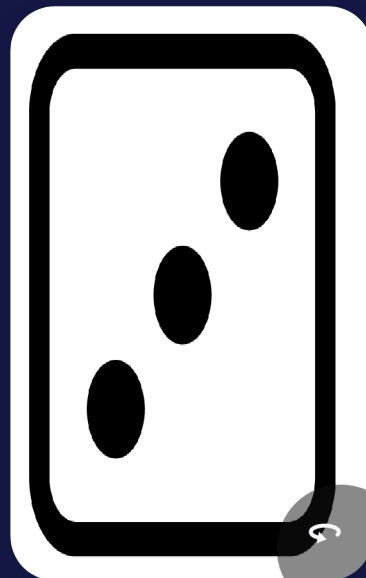
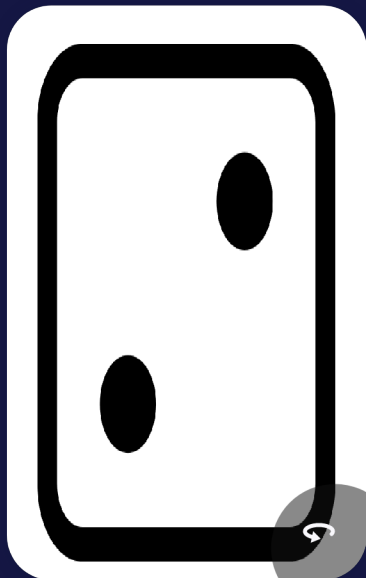
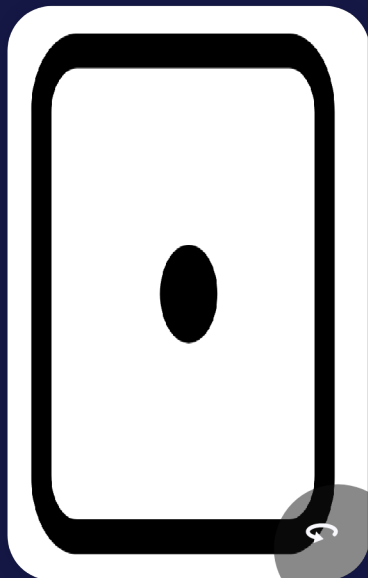


Consider the world around us...

some people enjoy financial security and access to countless opportunities, while others struggle to meet their most basic needs. Not everyone has the chance to live in a safe home, pursue education, or access essential healthcare. For many, dreams like traveling or choosing a fulfilling career remain unattainable luxuries. These gaps in wealth, opportunities, and resources highlight the stark reality of economic inequality and its impact on every facet of life.



[click here to see your future!](#)



Roll the dice and
see how your life
looks like!





Oh, you've finished already? we're very curious if you were satisfied with your results!

As you can see inequality is not a single, uniform concept—it takes many, many forms. Each affecting individuals and communities in distinct ways. To fully understand its complexity, it is essential to examine the various types of inequalities that exist in society.

NEXT



**Economic
inequalities**



**Social
inequalities**



**Structural
inequalities**



NEXT



in other words we can say that:

social inequalities are disparities in opportunities, resources, and privileges among individuals or groups within a society

NEXT



but did u ever
ask where are
they from?



Where does social inequalities come from?

social inequalities have accompanied humanity since the dawn of civilization, rooted in the early days of agriculture and the division of resources. Over time, these disparities became entrenched, shaping societal structures and influencing access to wealth, power, and opportunities. Today, inequalities are the result of overlapping historical, economic, political, and social factors that create barriers for many individuals and groups, limiting their access to resources, education, and healthcare.



Inequalities are the result of different factors:

- historical
- economic
- political
- social



Match reasons of inequalities with propper category!

Historical

1. Prejudices

2. Lack of representation

3. Colonization

Economic

4. Slavery

5. Job

6. Stereotypes

Political

7. Unjust policies

8. Cultural norms

9. Concetration of wealth

Social

10. Discriminatory law

11. Concetration of resources

12. Monarchy

CHECK



- 3. Colonization
- 4. Slavery
- 12. Monarchy

- 11. Concetration of resources
- 5. Job
- 9. Concetration of wealth

- 2. Lack of representation
- 7. Unjust policies
- 10. Discriminatory law

- 6. Stereotypes
- 8. Cultural norms
- 1. Prejudices

Are you familiar with a proverb “from rags to riches”?

It refers to the idea of “American Dream” - Americans traditionally thought the American Dream was based on success, fame and wealth through hard work and determination.

In reality we call this **social mobility** which means moving up or down in **social class structure**. If someone moves to a higher class, that's called upward mobility. If they move to a lower class, it's downward mobility.



NEXT



How do you think - which of this person has the easiest life and why?



NEXT

Sometimes we feel like others just have easier. Like they have some superpowers...

We call this **social privilege**. It means having special advantages, benefits, or power just because you belong to a certain group. These advantages are not earned—they come from things like your skin color, gender, sexual orientation, wealth, or abilities.

For example:

- Someone born into a wealthy family has access to better schools, healthcare, and opportunities
- Being part of a racial or ethnic group that is dominant in society often brings advantages that minority groups don't have

click here to watch
quick video



NEXT





You already know that access to resources and life opportunities are not equally distributed among all people

You may wonder if this is really a problem. Some argue that lack of access to certain resources can motivate people to exert more effort and work harder in pursuit of success. But does it really?

Economic analyses indicate that **social inequality generates more negative than positive effects**

NEXT



NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY



Impact on the individual



Impact on society



Global dimension



NEXT



Impact on the individual:

- shorter life expectancy;
- limited access to basic services (health care, education, water, sanitation, justice);
- limitation of human rights through discrimination and abuse;
- poverty and its effects



Global dimension:

Social inequality is evident not only at the level of individuals and communities, but also on a global scale. Wealth is distributed unevenly, leading to problems such as:

- migration crisis,
- erosion of social cohesion,
- political polarization,
- lower economic growth.



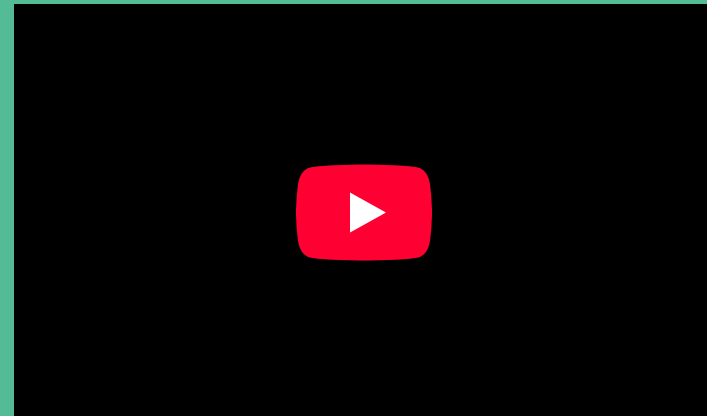
Impact on society:

- economic instability,
- lower social mobility,
- increased crime and violence,
- slower local development,
- higher social expenditures,
- higher infant mortality rates,
- lower levels of happiness,
- disintegration of trust and social cohesion,
- less willingness to act for the common good

Have you ever wonder what would a truly fair society look like?

Well...Philosopher John Rawls definately had. To answer this question he proposed a thought experiment called **the veil of ignorance**. He suggested that if we were to design a just society without knowing our future social status, wealth, health, or background, we would create a system that is fair for everyone

Watch a video illustrating this concept



NEXT



Match the Challenge to Its Impact

Below are common social inequalities and their consequences. Drag and drop (or mentally match) each inequality to its correct impact.

Unequal access to education

Income inequality

Discrimination (gender, skin color, disability)

Unequal access to healthcare

Limited political representation

Impacts:

Higher unemployment and fewer opportunities for advancement

Increased poverty and social divisions

Poorer health outcomes and shorter life expectancy

Fewer leadership roles for marginalized groups

Lack of skills and knowledge for better job prospects

CHECK

Unequal access to education

Lack of skills and knowledge for better job prospects

Income inequality

Increased poverty and social divisions

Discrimination (gender, skin color, disability)

Fewer leadership roles for marginalized groups

Unequal access to healthcare

Poorer health outcomes and shorter life expectancy

Limited political representation

Higher unemployment and fewer opportunities for advancement

There are a number of tools to help combat inequality - one of them are cooperatives

Research shows that **cooperatives**, with their focus on equitable distribution of wealth, play a key role in redressing income and wealth inequality in communities. Their operation is based on the fundamental principle of equality - every member of a cooperative has equal rights and can cast one vote in the decision-making process. Moreover, in cooperatives, the priority is people, not profit.

Cooperatives take different forms depending on their mission and the way they operate.



NEXT

TYPES OF COOPERATIVES



Consumer cooperatives

bring consumers together to collectively purchase goods and services at more favorable prices



Producer cooperatives

help farmers and small producers distribute their products



Labor cooperatives

bring together workers to jointly manage a company



Housing cooperatives

allow members to own or rent apartments on favorable terms



Social cooperatives

their goal is to support at-risk groups by providing stable jobs and professional growth opportunities



Financial cooperatives

offer banking and credit services on a shared ownership basis



Student cooperatives

support students in joint business and educational initiatives

NEXT



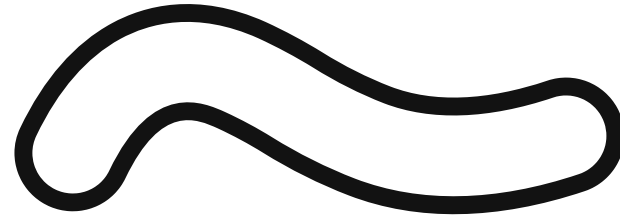
Looks like you already know quite a lot about inequalities and how to counteract them!

Ready to put your knowledge into practice?

Of course!



***And now let's test
the new learnings!***





Quiz

Question 1/

⌚ 00:30

What is the best way to ensure equal education opportunities?

Reduce the number of public schools

Make education more expensive to encourage competition

Provide free school meals and transportation for low-income students

Send



Quiz

Question 1/

⌵ 00:30

How can we reduce the income gap?

Eliminate job training programs

Lower taxes only for the wealthy

Increase the minimum wage and ensure fair labor laws

Send



Quiz

Question 1/

⌚ 00:30

What is an effective way to combat discrimination?

Ignore the issue, as it will solve itself over time

Encourage businesses to hire only people from dominant social groups

Enforce anti-discrimination laws in workplaces and schools

Send



Quiz

Question 1/

⌵ 00:30

How can healthcare become more accessible for everyone?

Increase the cost of medical treatments

Provide universal healthcare or subsidized medical care for low-income groups

Increase the cost of medical treatments

Send



Quiz

Question 1/

⌚ 00:30

How can more people have a say in government?

Ban new political candidates from minority groups

Promote equal voting rights and encourage diverse political representation

Restrict voting rights to wealthy individuals

Send

Congratulations! You have completed the Module!



You have now gained a deeper understanding of social inequalities—their causes, impacts, and possible solutions. By recognizing these challenges, you are better equipped to think critically about fairness, opportunity, and social justice in the world around you.

Key Takeaways:

- Inequalities exist in education, income, healthcare, and political representation.
- Social privilege plays a role in shaping opportunities for different groups.
- Policies and individual actions can help create a fairer and more inclusive society.

What's Next?

- Reflect on how social inequalities affect your community.
- Apply what you've learned to challenge unfair systems.
- Stay informed and support initiatives that promote equality.



Additional resources:



Play a game! Freerice is an educational trivia game that helps you get smarter while making a difference for people around the world. Every question you answer correctly raises 10 grains of rice for the World Food Programme (WFP) to support its work saving and changing lives around the world.



Want to learn more about inequalities? Check advanced course about Social Inequalities available in the Khan Academy - [link](#)



Beyond the Privileged Walk. If you are an experienced facilitator or you a member of a safe space group you may try to test this exercise on your own. Here's some useful materials: [link 1](#) or [link 2](#)



How the cooperatives change the world? Read the case study about women cooperative from Mali: [link](#)



Now that you learned about **social economy and the inequities** discover its role and challenges in the field of **local development** in the next Module of the course:

GO TO MODULE 3

Discover more about **Better Cooperate!** project on our website

