

# Rag Trade

These ideas can be used for

- Cross-curricular topic work involving children's different languages
- Language classes in the community
- MFL classes

See also resources on powerpoint ([link](#))

A community teacher devised sessions for mainstream school and Bengali class, drawing on his own experience of working in a clothing factory in Tower Hamlets. He also discussed child labour conditions in Bangladesh. Pupils wrote questions to send to children in Bangladesh and a mainstream teacher visiting the country brought back answers. This material was used for a roleplay concerning the experiences of child factory workers. Children brought in their old clothes as costumes, ripped to make them look more authentic, and they became strongly engaged with the topic:

*I didn't know all this before and my Bengali teacher made a difference because he's from Bangladesh and he taught us a lot about it... It helped when our teacher took the questions to Bangladesh because it was very interesting to see what they actually said.*

## Resources

- Photos from internet on child labour and protests about working conditions
- Keywords in Bengali (could also be provided by parents in other languages)
- International links with schools in Bangladesh

## Lesson structure

- Use photos and key words to prompt discussion around child labour, working conditions
- Children think of questions to take home to parents using different languages
- Bring back answers, compare them and discuss issues arising
- Write questions for children who work in the rag trade in Bangladesh and go to night school, and for children who go to day school
- Teacher brings back answers to compare and discuss
- Roleplay an interview with child factory workers in Bangladesh (in Bengali with English translation) and an interview with children who do not work in factories

## Aspects of learning

- Engaging children in meaningful issue with a focus on social justice
- Thinking through ideas in Bengali and English
- Using transliteration as a bridge to Bengali script
- Empathy through role-plays and preparing costumes
- Developing speaking skills

## Home-school links

- Draw on community teacher's and parents' experiences of working conditions in the UK and home countries
- Children compare their own experiences with those of children from a variety of social backgrounds in their country of origin