



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Level Examination
June 2012

Citizenship Studies

CIST4/TN

Unit 4 Global Issues and Making a Difference

Pre-release Topics

NOTICE TO TEACHERS

Candidates will undertake a study in regard to **one** of two pre-release topics. This document suggests the background research that you should ensure candidates cover.

During the examination, candidates will be required to answer **two** questions in Section B based on the topic that they have studied.

You may give the information in this document to candidates.

Candidates are **not** permitted to take this document or any associated notes into the examination.

CIST4/TN

Pre-release topics

EITHER

Topic 1: Transition towns

Background research suggestions

- Obtain information on the movement: its aims, how it operates, how it has developed, etc.
- Research the concept of Peak Oil and its relationship with climate change.
- Critically review the Transition Model adopted by the movement.
- Consider the impact in those communities where the Transition Model has been adopted (eg Totnes, Devon).
- Relate the appropriateness of the Transition Town initiative to your local community: ask yourself, could such a movement thrive here?
- Consider the way in which the movement has grown globally: how does it interact with and differ from other international organisations concerned with combating climate change?
- What characterises the relationship between Transition Town activists and other groups in their community?
- Critically assess the extent to which the Transition Town movement enhances or detracts from local democracy.
- Compare the effectiveness of the Transition movement in meeting its aims with the effectiveness of central government and intergovernmental organisations.

General advice

The Transition Town movement is catching on in communities throughout the developed world. A simple internet search will reveal a wealth of material without the need to visit specific towns. At the end of 2010, there were over 170 communities adopting the Transition Model in the UK, and over 300 worldwide, so it should be possible to make contact with a group near you. Most established groups would be happy to share their progress with other communities and may be prepared to give a talk in your locality.

There are useful critiques of the transition model itself and the achievements of the movement to date linked from the main websites below. Students should also apply critical thinking developed from study of citizen-led movements such as Fairtrade and other community-based groups.

Suitable websites to use as starting points for research are transitiontowns.org/ and transitionculture.org/

OR

Topic 2: The Co-operative Bank

Background research suggestions

- Research the history of the co-operative movement within the UK and the range of businesses and organisations which now form part of the Co-operative Group. In particular, find out about the social and political aspects of the organisation, the role of members and customers.
- What is the presence of the Co-op in your own community? Research the local history of the Co-op in your community. If there is no presence, can you explain why this is the case? Find the nearest Co-op retail outlet to your home or college.
- Research the role of the Co-operative Bank within that wider organisation.
- Consider the ethical position of the Co-operative Bank. How does it differ from other banks in the way in which it operates?
- Investigate the financial practices and profitability of the Bank, relative to other banks.
- Investigate the campaigns run by the Co-op Bank. How are decisions made on which campaigns to support, and how effective are they?
- Critically assess the extent to which the Bank is successful in meeting its stated aims. To what extent does its ethical stance enable it to gain customers that other banks cannot?
- Investigate the way in which people you know have been influenced by ethical considerations regarding their choice of bank.
- Consider the claim that customers are misled by the ethical statement of the Co-operative Bank into believing that all their investments meet high ethical standards.
- If possible, interview customers and/or employees of the Co-operative Bank to find out about their views on its ethical position.

General advice

The co-operative movement has a long history in the UK but its very familiarity can mean that its potential to 'make a difference' is overlooked. The environmental campaigner Jonathon Porritt describes it as "a sleeping giant whose time has come". It is hoped that students will combine internet research with investigation of local co-operative enterprises (which now include Somerfield and the Britannia Building Society). The use of interviews or/and questionnaires to investigate the influence of ethical factors on their peers' (or others') choice of bank could also be useful research.

Critical voices exist both within and outside of the movement but students should also be able to apply some of the critical thinking developed from study of other aspects of the specification, for example in consideration of FairTrade, ethical trading, global finance, campaign methods, etc.

A useful starting point is the latest sustainability report on the Co-op group of businesses: see www.co-operative.coop/sustainabilityreport

For more specific examples of the Bank's ethical policy, visit www.goodwithmoney.co.uk/good-for-everyone/

END OF TEACHERS' NOTES

There are no notes printed on this page