LESSON PLAN
Balancing Profits and Paychecks:
Rights of Foreign Workers and Responsibilities of Their Employers

OVERVIEW
In this lesson, students will use a real-life situation—the construction boom occurring as Qatar prepares to host the 2022 World Cup—to investigate a workforce development plan for a fictional U.S. company. They will work in teams to research various facets of the issue and write final recommendations as if they were presenting written reports to higher management. The task will require them to learn about Qatar, consider ethical labor practices and human rights standards and think through workers’ needs as they make decisions about whether to invest company resources.

To prepare for their task, students will view clips from the documentary The Workers Cup, which provides students with an extraordinary opportunity to learn about the lives of foreign workers currently in Qatar.

OBJECTIVES
In this lesson, students will:

• Research, write and present business recommendations, either for or against investing in the construction of a fictional hotel in Qatar

• Consider ethical and legal labor standards, especially as they apply to hiring foreign workers

• Learn about Qatar

GRADE LEVELS: 11-14

SUBJECT AREAS
Business Ethics
Current Events
English/Language Arts
Global Studies
Law
Human Resource Practices
Research Skills
Sociology

MATERIALS

• Film clips from The Workers Cup and playback equipment

• Students will need Internet access for research

ESTIMATED TIME NEEDED
2 class periods plus work on projects outside of class

FILM CLIPS
Film clips provided in this lesson are from the documentary film The Workers Cup.
Access the streaming clips for free on POV’s website by visiting www.pbs.org/pov/educators. Borrow the full film from our DVD Lending Library by joining the POV Community Network: http://communitynetwork.amdoc.org.

Clip 1: Typical Work (4:50 min.)
This clip is the first 4:50 of the film. We see the typical work and working conditions in Qatar and meet Kenneth, whose hope for a pro soccer (football) career is exploited by an employment agent.
Clip 2: Modern Slavery? (3:05 min.)
The clip begins at 28:30 and ends at 31:35. During lunch in the cafeteria, workers who are also members of the company’s soccer team talk about what they miss from home and their definitions of “freedom.” Their conversation touches on issues of racism and whether the conditions of their employment are a modern form of slavery.

Clip 3: Pay and Recreation (4:05 min.)
The clip begins at 38:40 and ends at 42:45. The manager of the company soccer team calculates the cost of fielding a team and weighs it against the benefits. We also learn that a white collar foreign worker with eight years of service with the company still cannot earn enough to qualify for a visa to bring his wife to Qatar, nor can he earn enough to buy a car back home.

Clip 4: Housing (5:45 min.)
The clip begins at 57:30 and ends at 1:03:15. We learn that foreign workers outnumber Qataris and that those who choose to live outside of company camps live in squalor. We also see life in company housing and hear the story of a man who was stabbed by his roommate because his roommate believed that the company would only let him leave Qatar if it considered him mentally unfit.

ACTIVITY
The lesson takes place over two class periods with an intervening project.

CLASS 1
Introduce the assignment (see below).

Divide the class into teams. You can choose to have two large teams and allow students to figure out individual assignments within those teams, or you can divide the two large topic areas into smaller chunks that are assigned to more than two teams.

Begin the research process by showing the clips from The Workers Cup. Explain that students will see selected clips from a film about foreign workers who are building Qatar’s facilities and infrastructure for the FIFA World Cup (soccer tournament) in 2022. The title of the film comes from a football (soccer) tournament that FIFA sponsored for teams of workers from the companies involved in the massive construction efforts. Show all four clips sequentially, pausing briefly between each to allow students to link the film’s content to specific facets of their assigned tasks (looking at things like housing, wages and so on).

Allow teams time to meet and determine their work processes, including assignment of specific tasks

CLASS 2
Teams will share their findings and recommendations. You may want to take on the role of the chief executive who decides whether to accept or decline students’ recommendations. Or you might invite someone from the local business community to play that role. In either case, the role will involve questioning students about their research and conclusions.
THE ASSIGNMENT

**Scenario:** You work as a mid-level executive in a U.S.-based hotel chain operating properties across the world. It is a publicly held company, so it has a fiduciary responsibility to shareholders to provide a return on investment, and there is always market pressure to produce substantial profit.

The chain is considering the possibility of building a new hotel in Qatar in time for the 2022 World Cup. Due to the frenzy of World Cup facility construction, there are no native Qatari workers available, so you must recruit foreign workers. Planners estimate that hotel construction will take three years, so you must find workers who are both skilled and willing to live in Qatar for long stretches of time.

Further complicating the situation, Qatar has little housing available for the foreign workers streaming into the country. In fact, foreign workers outnumber the entire native population of Qatar, comprising 60 percent of the people currently in the country. That has led to concerns that foreigners might overrun the small nation, so the government (which grants construction permits) frowns on foreign workers interacting socially with people outside of the construction zones.

On the upside, the hotel would give the chain a presence in Qatar, home to a U.S. airbase. The long-term profit potential is quite good. Qatar's government has generally been welcoming to American investments, but as a small nation, it has only a limited amount of land to accommodate all interested companies. Competitors are already committed to building in the country, and the chain risks being squeezed out for decades if it does not act now.

**The Task:** Your job is to investigate your assigned topic related to labor and, together with your team, make a final recommendation about the advisability of the project. In other words, based on what you have learned about the labor situation, should your company commit to building a hotel in Qatar in time for the World Cup?

You can assume that others are working on other important aspects of the project, such as availability and cost of materials, design and infrastructure challenges and financing, so consider those areas extraneous to your task.

Because this is a fictional project, we understand that it may not be possible to obtain exact numbers, which means you will not know what overall project costs will be, so you need not come to a conclusion about profitability. Instead, emphasis should be on identifying the issues that the company must address and the likelihood that it could successfully address them.

Final reports must be in written form and must include the following:

- Background on Qatar, with information highlighted that might affect the labor issues you are assigned.
- The standards by which international human rights organizations would judge your company’s treatment of workers.
- A collective recommendation and an appendix that includes a research summary from each team member with analysis of that member's specific assigned issue. Individual team members who disagree with a team's final
recommendation may also submit their own recommendations (including justification and evidence).

Teams will also be responsible for orally presenting a 5-10 minute summary of their findings and recommendations and answering questions that classmates or “company executives” might have. Check with your teacher/professor about requirements for visual aids to accompany this presentation.

Team 1: Labor Laws and Standards

Issues to address include:

- Will you pay prevailing wages or a living wage?
- How many hours per day and per week will workers be required to work?
- Are employees eligible for overtime compensation?
- How often are workers paid and in what form?
- Are there required breaks during the workday? In areas where heat is an issue, will the company provide potable water?
- Will there be easy access to bathrooms? How often can workers take bathroom breaks?
- Will you bring workers from the U.S. or recruit from other nations?
- What sorts of safety training and/or certifications will be required?
- Will there be a worker’s comp system and/or health insurance?
- Under what conditions could an employee quit? Is an employee who resigns able to work for a competitor?
- Can a worker be fired at will or must it be for cause?
- Will the company accommodate a worker’s religious practices (e.g., guaranteeing certain holidays off or taking breaks during the day for prayer)?

Team 2: Human Resources Practices and Policies

- What will a standard length of employment term be?
- Do employees get vacation time?
- Who pays the costs to bring in employees from other countries? If employees need to leave, who pays to get them home?
- Do employees have freedom of movement? Who holds their passports?
- Will the company provide housing? If yes, what sort of accommodations will be provided? Will it be free or will the employees pay rent?
- Will the company provide transportation to work sites?
- Is there a system for workers to raise grievances and have them addressed?
- Will the company provide on-site basic health care?
- Will the company provide any type of recreational activities? How about amenities like Internet access (to facilitate contact with families back home)?
- Will workers be permitted to do whatever they wish during their off hours?
- Will the company provide uniforms and laundry services?
- Will the company provide meals? If so, will foods from countries of origin be included on the menu? Will accommodations be made for religious requirements?
- Will workers have to pay for any of the amenities provided?
EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS

Investigate how international sports organizations like FIFA or the International Olympic Committee choose sites for their events. Debate their obligations to ensure safe and fair working conditions for the people hired to construct the venues for their events.

After researching policies developed by existing multinational corporations, develop a human rights policy for your fictional company.

Provide actual numbers to the students and require them to do cost/benefit analyses of various recommendations or practices.

Research how current international trade agreements (such as NAFTA and TPP) will affect workers in Qatar, including their enforcement mechanisms. Research how amendments currently being debated might change whether and how companies can hire migrant workers in Qatar. Write a position paper that makes the case for a proposed amendment to the trade agreement you researched, and send it to your legislator.

Screen the entire film and brainstorm actions that students might want to take in relation to the current World Cup (which is in Russia) or in preparation for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

RESOURCES

POV: The Workers Cup
http://www.pbs.org/pov/workerscup
The site includes a general discussion guide with additional activity ideas.

The Global Compact: How to Develop a Human Rights Policy
This is a guide for businesses on developing a human rights policy that includes guidance on fair labor practices.

Living Wage Calculator
http://livingwage.mit.edu/
The site provides information about how a living wage is calculated, though it only covers the U.S. Additional helpful information can be found at www.universallivingwage.org.

Online Qatar: Living in Doha Qatar
www.onlineqatar.com/living/salaries-doha-qatar.aspx
General information on compensation practices in Doha is provided.

International Labour Organization
www.ilo.org
This agency of the United Nations recommends and reports on labor practices to ensure fair treatment of workers.

STANDARDS
Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects
(http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

SL.11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis and tone used.

SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed and the organization, development, substance and style are appropriate to purpose, audience and a range of formal and informal tasks.

SL.11-12.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

W.9-10.1, 11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.9-10.2d Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.

W.9-10.4, 11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

Content Knowledge: (https://www2.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp) a compilation of content standards and benchmarks for K-12 curriculum by McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning).

Language Arts, Standard 1: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
Language Arts, Standard 2: Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.
Language Arts, Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.
Language Arts, Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Faith Rogow, Ph.D., is the co-author of The Teacher’s Guide to Media Literacy: Critical Thinking in a Multimedia World (Corwin, 2012) and past president of the National Association for Media Literacy Education. She has written discussion guides and lesson plans for more than 250 independent films.