# DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Scotland's International Film Festival for Young Audiences



Teachers' Resource Pack: **Bullets** 

Senior Phase I Created by Andrew McLaughlin

Discovery Film Festival: Sat 21 October - Sun 5 November 2023

**DCA**Dundee Contemporary Arts







# Introduction

Discovery Learning Resources give you exciting classroom activities to enhance Curriculum for Excellence delivery.

They are created by classroom teachers and education professionals.

Each resource aims to:

- support and extend working with film in the classroom
- help prepare teachers for a class visit to a Discovery Film Festival film and to extend the impact of that visit for delivery of CfE
- develop confidence in Moving Image Education approaches and working with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacy/moving image texts

Each resource is free and available to download from:

http://www.discoveryfilmfestival.org.uk/resources:

#### **Bullets**

Dir: Peter Pontikis

Sweden 2023 / 1h35m

Swedish with English subtitles

## **Bullets**

## Synopsis:

Abdel is not a bad kid. He just wants to be liked. Living in an estate where danger surrounds him and loyalty is paramount, Abdel does his best to keep everyone happy. But when events overtake him, Abdel realises that it is impossible to remain loyal to his family, his friends, and his dreams all at once and the choices he makes have a huge impact on his life.

## **Advisory note:**

Strong language, drugs, guns, violence both threatened and real.

#### Themes:

Peer pressure, fitting in, seeking approval, found family, gangs recruiting the very young, education as a means of escape.

### Teacher's notes:

This pack is aimed at students in years S4 to S6 and who are aged 15+, studying PHSE and/or Modern Studies.

# Before watching the film

## **Activities**

Trailer: https://vimeo.com/781747043

#### In a PSHE class:

Discuss the ambitions of your pupils

- Who can help them realise their dreams?
- What obstacles might prevent them?

#### In a Modern Studies class:

Try to illicit the class's prior knowledge and understanding of Sweden.

- Ask your class to describe Sweden and create a mindmap/word cloud of the most common ideas.
- You may want to ask them to compare their ideas of Sweden with Scotland.
  - Is it a more diverse country than Scotland?
  - Is it a richer country?
  - Is it a more equal county?
  - Are the houses different?
  - Are the schools different?

Discuss social and economic inequality in Scotland.

- What is the nature and extent of inequality in Scotland? How do we know?
- What are the causes of social and economic inequality?
- What are the consequences of social and economic inequality on individuals, on families, on communities, on wider society?



## After watching the film

#### The individual and the collective:

Bullets is very much about Abdel's hard choices. We see him try to do the right thing, but routinely get pulled into the dangerous and chaotic world of the gang.

#### **PSE Class discussion:**

Making choices.

- What you would have done in Abdel's situation?
- How easy or difficult is it to do the right thing all the time?
- How do you think Abdel's situation contrasts with how those around him perceive his actions?
- Can you think of other situations where we judge people without knowing what they have actually been through? Has it happened to you?
- What lessons can be learned from a movie like Bullets when it comes to judging others?

I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all. **HWB 4-10a** 

I make full use of and value the opportunities I am given to improve and manage my learning and, in turn, I can help to encourage learning and confidence in others. **HWB 4-11a** 

#### **PSE Class discussion:**

Getting Support and Being Supportive.

Abdel's teacher tries to help him despite the Head Teacher's objections.

- What were his motives? Do you think his own backstory shaped this?
- Do you think that the school as an institution should have done more to help Abdel?
- Which other individuals or organisations should have done more?
- Why didn't they?
- How could you help a friend in a similar situation?

#### Research activity:

Have the class do some research to identify organisations the young people might turn to in Scotland.

I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

HWB 4-03a

#### In a Modern Studies class:

Ali tries to help his students develop positive ambitions and dreams.

- Why do you think so many of the students struggle to value this opportunity?
- What responsibilities and opportunities do you have as an individual to create your own future?
- Are you limited by something? If so, what?
- What responsibilities and opportunities do you have to help your friends/peers?
- Who else can support you to create your own future?

#### **Director's comment (Peter Pontikis):**

"Bullets is a project that sprung out of my own experiences as a substitute teacher in an area called Järva outside of Stockholm. When I started working there it was highly segregated, but not close to what it would be ten years later. Around 2017 the gun violence escalated at an alarming rate, and I reconnected with teachers and social workers that I knew back when I was working in Järva. I started interviewing them for what I thought at the time was a documentary. But soon I realized that this project would be far better as a fiction film especially after I decided to tell the story from the point of view of a 12-year-old boy. In the end Bullets is based a lot on research, but I think also that we, through the fictionalized accounts in the story, manage to bring out a higher truth about what it's like to grow up in an environment that doesn't aliow you to remain a child; and where the failings of the adult world constantly force new generations into a life of alienation".

 Does the fact that this film is based on real-life experiences of a teacher in Sweden surprise your class?

I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

HWB 4-03a

Based on my interests, skills, strengths and preferences, I am supported to make suitable, realistic and informed choices, set manageable goals and plan for my further transitions. **HWB 4-19a** 

Based on my interests, skills, strengths and preferences, I am supported to make suitable, realistic and I am investigating different careers/occupations, ways of working, and learning and training paths. I am gaining experience that helps me recognise the relevance of my learning, skills and interests to my future life. **HWB 4-20a** 

## **Coaching Session: Sacrifices and Achievement:**

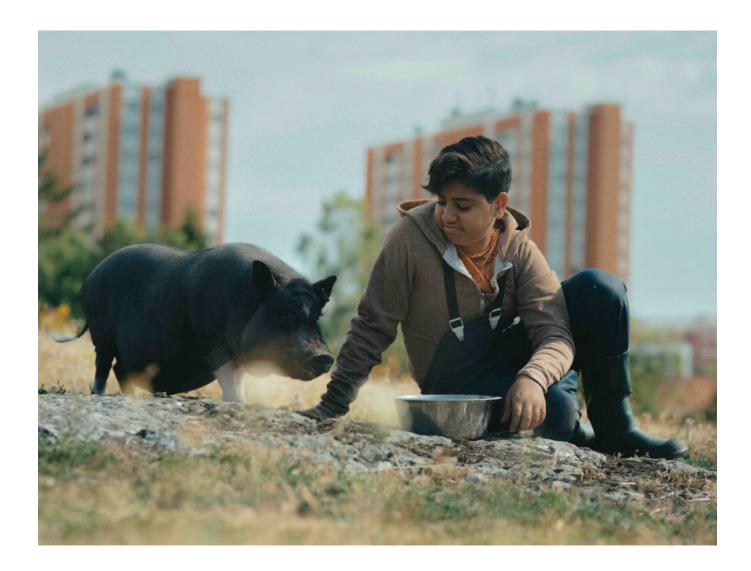
Use the "GROW" coaching model to help students identify the obstacles in their way of achieving the dream job/academic success/family life etc.

Help your students build a step-by-step plan towards their future goals.

I am developing the skills and attributes which I will need for learning, life and work. I am gaining understanding of the relevance of my current learning to future opportunities. This is helping me to make informed choices about my life and learning. **HWB 3-19a** 

Based on my interests, skills, strengths and preferences, I am supported to make suitable, realistic and informed choices, set manageable goals and plan for my further transitions. **HWB 4-19a** 

I can explain the importance and the enduring and complex responsibility of being a parent/carer, and the impact on life choices and options. **HWB 4-51a** 





#### **Modern Studies:**

Social and Economic Inequalities (SQA Nationals, Higher)

Throughout the film, we see signs that money is tight in Abdel's household.

- Was poverty important in shaping the choices made by Abdel?
- How widespread is poverty in Scotland?
- How can poverty be reduced? Who is responsible?
- What role can the voluntary sector play in reducing inequality? (Consider the urban farm in the film)

Throughout the film, we see signs that money is tight in Abdel's household.

- Is ethnicity linked to social and economic inequalities?
- What impact does race/ethnicity have on shaping some people's lives?
- To what extent did community identity affect the police's ability to intervene or support the community? Can you think of examples of this kind of strain in Scotland?
- Why might some communities not trust the police/other authorities?

I can explain why a group I have identified might experience inequality and can suggest ways in which this inequality might be addressed. **SOC 3-16a** 

I can contribute to a discussion on the extent to which people's needs should be met by the state or the individual. **SOC 4-16a** 

I can analyse the factors contributing to the development of a multicultural society and can express an informed view on issues associated with this. **HWB 4-20a** 

National 5 – Causes, Consequences and Responses to Social and Economic Inequality.

**National 5** – Responses to Crime – Police – effectiveness of the police in Scotland in tackling crime.

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### **Relationships:**

Abdel's friends routinely pick on him throughout the film, yet he remains loyal to them.

- Why is it so difficult for Abdel to break away this friendship group?
- Why does this leave him more vulnerable?

Abdel's uncle is an authoritative figure in his life but he judges Abdel without understanding the motives for his actions.

Why is this relationship so strained?

Abdel's mother is fearful for her son's future.

- How does this shape her relationship with him?
- How do Abdel's actions and choices impact on the relationship between his mother and his uncle?

I understand the importance of being cared for and caring for others in relationships, and can explain why. **HWB 4-44a** 

I recognise that power can exist within relationships and can be used positively as well as negatively. **HWB 4-45**a

I can explain the importance and the enduring and complex responsibility of being a parent/carer, and the impact on life choices and options. **HWB 4-51a** 



## **Useful resources:**

#### **Modern Studies:**

- Bailey, N., Bramley, G. and Gannon, M. (2016), *Urban and Rural Poverty in Scotland*. Available at https://www.poverty.ac.uk/editorial/urban-and-rural-poverty-scotland
- Dundee Courier (2021), Dundee firefighters attacked at Kirkton bonfire. Available at https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/dundee/2716149/dundee-firefighters-attacked-at-kirkton-bonfire/
- The Guardian (2023), More than 1,500 UK police officers accused of violence against women in six months. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/14/more-than-1500-uk-police-officers-accused-of-violence-against-women-in-six-months
- Scottish Government (2023), Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2019–22. Available at https://data.gov.scot/poverty/#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%2017,stagnated%20in%20the%20last%20decade

#### **PSE Class discussion:**

- My World of Work lesson resources:
   https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/teaching-resources/my-interests
- Open University, Using the GROW Coaching model:
   https://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-business/workplace-learning-coaching-and-mentoring/content-section-5.2
- Support and Connect Dundee:
   https://www.supportandconnectdundee.org/component/jbusinessdirectory/search





# **Evaluating this resource**

We hope that you found this resource useful and appropriate.

Please do send us any film reviews, letters from your pupils, documentation of classwork and your feedback by e-mailing **mike.tait@dca.org.uk**.

# Would you make a good Discovery Film Festival Case Study?

We are seeking a number of simple Case Studies in how teachers have used or are using Discovery films in the classroom across Curriculum for Excellence and across the Levels.

Any case studies that we develop would be intended for presentation on GLOW, the Creativity Portal and on Discovery Film Festival websites. We have a simple template to be completed and are keen to have classwork and documentation included.

If you would like to be a Discovery Case Study please e-mail sarah.derrick@dca.org.uk