

Divided World

An brief introduction to global inequities for older youth and adults
New Community Project

Divide the group into four groups, with 1/6 in one group, 1/6 in another, then 1/3 and 1/3. Select these groups randomly, by the first to arrive, color of shirt, color of hair or other random criteria. (At some point in the activity discuss this--that they did nothing to "deserve" their place in the world--which is really the way it is--where and to whom we were born pretty much determines our economic and social fate.)

Give 3/4 of whatever it is you want to give--symbolic food, tokens representing riches, space in the classroom--to one group of 1/6, as these signify the Rich World--the Middle Class and up in the Industrialized Nations (Japan, USA, Canada, Great Britain, France, Germany), along with the upper class in the oil sheikdoms, Russia, Brazil, etc. (symbolic tokens here could include cars, bank accounts, medical care, clean water, more than enough food, sanitation, houses that are secure, etc.). Give half of what remains to another group of 1/6--this would be the Second World--Russia, the Asian Tigers (S. Korea, Malaysia, etc.), Brazil, 1 of 5 US children who live in poverty along with the poor in other wealthy countries (this group has some cars, adequate food [including increasingly US fast food], adequate shelter, sanitation, less-than-adequate health care). Divide the remaining half of the "goods" into 1/3, 2/3, and give the 2/3 of half of 25% to the "Developing World"--Costa Rica, Ecuador, Cuba, the Balkans, Thailand, India, China, Native Americans in US (25% of whom live in poverty). For these people, their water needs treatment, and they experience lack of health care, food insecurity, education only through high school; there are also pockets of child workers, sex workers, and sanitation is rudimentary (pit toilets). Give the remaining 1/3 to the Poor World--most of Africa, N. Korea, Burma, Nepal, Haiti. These societies are characterized by high rates of child mortality, maternal mortality, unclean water, cooking with dung or firewood, education up to fifth grade, chronic hunger, lack of sanitation, malaria, cholera, diarrhea, and other diseases are rampant.

Label each group to signify who is represented by their group (the various countries and/or groups of people within countries).

Help the group identify some of the causes of poverty:

- gender (women represent the majority of the world's illiterate population as well as those in poverty) (in Nepal, there is a saying "to be born a daughter is a lost life")
- race (in the United States, African American households have 16 times less wealth than white households; Native American average household income is over \$12,000 less per year than white households)
- place of birth (it would be very hard to escape the poverty trap if one were born in Haiti or Sudan)
- lack of power (sweatshop workers can't make corporations pay better wages, since they don't have leverage--the corporation will just move to another country--or their own government will crack down on them)
- bad governance (Burma, Zimbabwe, N. Korea) (these governments are not accountable to their own people and invest huge amounts of the nation's resources in keeping themselves in power)
- lack of power II (countries with natural resources often have to turn to outside corporations to extract them--who in turn make all the money (other than what they give in kick-backs to local elites/officials))
- trade policies, including subsidies and tariffs by rich countries which discourage poor countries from having a market here (such as heavily subsidized US cotton--which then undersells cotton produced more cheaply in Africa), war (Iraq, Sudan, Congo), environmental demise (global warming will reduce grain harvest in Africa by 286 million tons per year by 2100)

An option could be to get into the dynamics of the interchange between the rich and poor worlds, using some of the Consequences cards from the Food for Thought simulation

http://www.newcommunityproject.org/pdfs/hunger_awareness_activity.pdf