

# Activities for Global Economic Awareness and Activism

## Global Economic Awareness

**Goal:** To illustrate to students the imbalances of the current world order.

### PROCESS:

1. Present students with Scenario I from the Findlay-Kettering Committee on International Awareness Fact Sheet.
2. Present students with Scenario II from the Real Global Village.
3. Divide students into groups to demonstrate global distributions of wealth and purchasing power.

**Scenario I:** Imagine that we could compress the world's present population of over six billion persons into one town of 100 people, with all of the existing human ratios remaining the same, there would be:

- 6 North American (Canada and the USA) citizens
- These 6 North Americans— a mere 6% of the town's population— would receive 59% of the town's income.
- This would be the direct result of their controlling over half of the town's available material resources.
- The 6 North Americans would have an average life expectancy of 70 years.
- The other 94 would have an average life expectancy of less than 40 years.
- The lowest income group among the North Americans, even though it included a number of people who were hungry much of the time, would be better off by far than the average of the other townspeople.

**Scenario II:** In this village of precisely 100 people, with all of the existing human ratios remaining the same,

there would be:

57	Asians	70	would be non-white
21	Europeans	30	would be white
14	from the Western Hemisphere, both North and South		
8	Africans	70	would be non-Christian
		30	would be Christian
52	would be female		
48	would be male	89	would be heterosexual
		11	would be homosexual
6	people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all 6 would be from the United States		
80	would live in substandard housing		
70	would be unable to read		
50	would suffer from malnutrition		
1	would be near death, 1 would be near birth		
1	(yes, only 1) would have a college education		
1	would own a computer		

### QUESTIONS:

- Could such a town, in which the 94 non-Americans were quite aware of both the fact and means of the Americans' advantages, survive?
- Could the 6 North Americans continue to extract the majority of raw materials essential to their own standard of living from the property of the other 94 townspeople?
- While the 6 North Americans were using over half the resources to maintain their own comfort, could they at the same time convince the other 94 to limit their population growth by saying that resources of the town were limited?
- Would some of the 6 North Americans have to become soldiers and would some of their material and human resources have to be devoted to military efforts in order to keep the rest of the town at its present disadvantage?
- What roles might technology play in this village?
- Should all of us try to learn more about the have-not nations of this world and become more aware of their importance to our well being?

## Distribution of Wealth

Divide the class into groups to demonstrate the distribution of wealth of the world with the use of peanuts. This example is based on groups of forty students. Use proportions adjusted to class size.

Region	Number of Students (Based on share of world population)	Number of Peanuts* (Based on GNP)
Asia and Australia	24 (60%)	7 (17.5%)
Africa	4 (10%)	1 (2.5%)
USA and Canada	2 (5%)	13 (32.5%)
Latin America	3 (7.5%)	2 (5%)
Western Europe	3 (7.5%)	10 (25%)
Eastern Europe, Russia and Middle East	4 (10%)	7 (17.5%)

\*About 85% of the world's economic activity (GDP) is controlled by the richest fifth of all people in the world. The total economic activity of the top 200 corporations is nearly twice the amount of the poorest four-fifths, or 4.5 billion people. While incomes have increased over the past forty years, the relative positions of people in dollar-rich versus dollar-poor countries remains the same. Currently, over 50% of the world has an income of \$300.00 or less per capita per year.

Ask the students how they feel about the distribution of "wealth."

- Is it just?
- Should it be changed?
- If so, how might you change it?
- Have you ever experienced a similar situation where something was distributed so unevenly? What did you do?
- What roles does technology play in distributions of wealth?

## Purchasing Power

Now with the class divided, demonstrate the global purchasing power of these regions of the world, using peanuts again. This example is also based on a class size of forty students so adjust accordingly.

Region	Number of Students (Based on share of world population)	Purchasing Power (Based on "real" GNP)
Asia and Australia	24 (60%)	11 (27%)
Africa	4 (10%)	1 (2%)
USA and Canada	2 (5%)	13 (33%)
Latin America	3 (7.5%)	3 (7%)
Western Europe	3 (7.5%)	9 (22%)
Eastern Europe, Russia and Middle East	4 (10%)	4 (10%)

Ask the students how they now feel about their global purchasing power (Ask the previous questions, and add):

- What can be done with "surplus" goods and services (peanuts)?
- What ought to be done?
- What roles might technology play in this scenario?
- What if more than food (peanuts) are needed or desired?

## Resources for Global Economics (for Teachers)

### **Child Labour: Costly at Any Price**

CoDevelopment Canada  
205 2929 Commercial Drive  
Vancouver BC V5N 4C8  
Phone: 604-708-1495  
Fax: 604-708-1497

**Email:** [codev@web.net](mailto:codev@web.net)

Global Sweatshop Curriculum Packet  
Campaign for Labour Rights  
1247 "E" Street, SE  
Washington DC, 20003  
Phone: 541-344-5410

**Email:** [clr@igc.apc.org](mailto:clr@igc.apc.org)

<http://www.summersault.com/~agj/clr/>

Next Steps in Global Education  
The American Forum for Global Education  
120 Wall Street, Suite 2600  
New York, NY 10005  
Phone: 1-800-813-5056  
Fax: (212) 624-1412

<http://www.globaled.org/order.html>

United Food and Commercial Worker Union  
Child Labor Links

<http://www.ufcw.ca/pubs/clabour/links.htm>

Child Labor: ILO Kids

US International Labor Organization

<http://us.ilo.org/ilokids/>

*Learning Materials for Your Classroom:  
Development Education Program*

### **Getting Down To Data**

World Bank

<http://www.worldbank.org/html/schools/>

### **The Paper Trail: Connecting Economic and Natural Systems**

Sustainability Education Center,  
The American Forum for Global Education  
120 Wall Street, Suite 2600,  
New York, NY 10005

Tel: 212-624-1300

Fax: 212-624-1412

**Email:** [globed120@aol.com](mailto:globed120@aol.com)

<http://www.globaled.org/sustain/sustain.html>

### **Wear Fair Action Kit**

Labour Behind the Label Coalition

606 Shaw Street

Toronto, ON M6G 3L6

Phone: 416-532-8584

Fax: 416-532-7688

**Email:** [perg@web.net](mailto:perg@web.net)

<http://www.web.net/~msn/5cats.htm>