

## The Web of Connections (Time: 20-50 minutes)



### Overview

This activity will help foster understanding of hunger in the context of other social issues. After participating in this activity, group members should be able to more effectively speak about the ways in which hunger is connected to other issues in the world which also impact the plight of those in poverty. Using a ball of string and cards that represent these various issues, group members will construct a "web" of connections between the given topics.

## **Goals**

- The students will gain a better understanding of the interrelated nature of social problems on a global scale.
- The students will engage in a dialogue about the connections between various advocacy issues: hunger, poverty and disease.
- The students will create a visual of the web of injustice.

## **Materials**

- 1 ball of yarn
- Up to 10 advocate title and description sheets
- File folders (optional)

## **Instructions**

### Preparation

1. Print the advocate sheets on card stock, front and back with the front label corresponding to the "write-up" on the reverse side.
2. If card stock is not available, print advocate title and description sheets separately.
3. Cut file folders in half. Staple the label on one side and matching description on the other.

## **Introduction**

1. Hand out a card to all participants in the activity. You may use all 10 or you may reduce the numbers if you so choose.
2. Begin by saying something like: "We will look at the way in which different issues are related to poverty, hunger and disease. You are an advocate for your particular issue. By representing this particular concern, it is your job to explain the link between your concern and others."
3. Let participants read over their descriptions and think about possible links between their concern and the others represented.

### Completing the Activity

1. The activity should begin with the Hunger Advocate. The hunger advocate should use the material from the description but does not need to read directly from the card.
2. Encourage participants to present as advocates for their positions. For example, "I am advocating about the issue of hunger. One of the causes of hunger is poverty. People are unable to buy food, so they experience hunger. In fact, 1 person in 7 goes to bed hungry every night. This is why I must join with the poverty advocate to work on alleviating both hunger and poverty."
3. After the case is stated, the Hunger Advocate should explain a connection between his/her issue and another in the group. Words in bold offer clues about connections, but these are not the only connections. For example, the hunger advocate will pass the ball of yarn to the extreme poverty advocate, because he/she sees how the struggle against hunger is related to poverty.
4. The Hunger Advocate should then pass the ball of yarn to that advocate.
5. The new advocate (the person with the yarn) should now advocate their position, explain the connection between their concern and another one in the group that has not yet participated, and pass the yarn to that advocate.
6. Repeat Step 5 until all participants have had a chance to make a connection. NOTE: The last participant will need to connect with an advocate that has already gone. This is ok!
7. Closing Questions. Engage students in a discussion about this activity. For example,
  - What advocates are missing in the circle? Why should they be included?
  - What connections were the most obvious? The least?
  - What are some other important connections that could be made in our circle? For instance, how are Hunger and Education related? (If that connection was not already made.)
  - How does this exercise influence your feelings about the struggle against injustice? (Hopeful, discouraged, curious, etc.)

## Evaluation Questions Web of Connections

County\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Program\_\_\_\_\_

Age: 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

\_\_\_\_Male                      \_\_\_\_Female

Where I live is considered to be      \_\_\_\_Urban \_\_\_\_Rural

Race: \_\_\_\_White \_\_\_\_African American \_\_\_\_Hispanic

      \_\_\_\_Native American    \_\_\_\_Asian    \_\_\_\_Other:

**Think about what you knew, understood or believed before you participated in this session and then after you participated in this session.**

	Before this Session				After this Session			
	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot	Not at all	A little	Some	A lot
I understood that hunger is related to many other problems in the world.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I felt like I could make a difference in global problems.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I knew that disease rates can be made worse by hunger and malnutrition.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I understood how important it is for me to advocate on behalf of those affected by global injustice.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
I believed in the power of advocating about my passions to make a difference in other areas of injustice.	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

## **HUNGER ADVOCATE**

Around the world, one person in seven goes to bed hungry each night. In essence, hunger is the most extreme form of **poverty**, where individuals or families cannot afford to meet their most basic need for food.

Undernourishment negatively affects people's **health**, productivity, sense of hope and overall well-being. We need to address hunger not just by giving food, but helping farmers in poor countries grow better crops and helping countries build farm-to-market roads so farmers can **supply** distant cities. (Source: Hunger Report 2004, Bread for the World Institute. [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org))

## **HEALTH & HIV/AIDS ADVOCATE**

More than 38 million people around the world are infected by HIV/AIDS, 25 million in Africa alone. The spreading HIV/AIDS epidemic has quickly become a major obstacle in the fight against **hunger** and **poverty** in developing countries. Because the majority of those falling sick with AIDS are young adults who normally harvest crops, food production has dropped dramatically in countries with high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. Left untreated, AIDS leads to an early death for people in their most productive years who are needed to raise crops and families, **teach** school and care for the sick. (Source: State of Food Insecurity in the World 2003.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/006/j0083e/j0083e00.htm>)

## **CLEAN WATER & SANITATION ADVOCATE**

One person in seven has no access to clean water for drinking, cooking or washing. In addition to spreading disease, this has multiple negative effects — girls growing up in villages without water are far less likely to **attend school** because they're too busy spending hours walking to and from the nearest water source. Bad health caused by poor sanitation has a knock-on (secondary or incidental) effect on the family economy and **nutrition**. Building safe water supplies, improving sanitation through well-constructed latrines and teaching communities about safe hygiene practices are a few ways to improve the **health** of many around the globe.

(Source: WaterAid [www.wateraid.org](http://www.wateraid.org).)

## **EDUCATION ADVOCATE**

Parents in Malawi know just as well as parents in Missouri that education is crucial to their children's future. But around the world, 104 million **children** do not go to school, because their parents cannot **afford** fees, books or uniforms. Providing education for **women and girls** would have a dramatic impact on the poor in developing countries. (Source UNICEF: The State of the World's Children 2004 [http://www.unicef.org/sowc04/sowc04\\_girls\\_positive\\_force.html](http://www.unicef.org/sowc04/sowc04_girls_positive_force.html))

## **ORPHANS & CHILDREN ADVOCATE**

Every three seconds a child dies of causes related to extreme poverty, hunger and disease. Around the world, millions of children have already lost one or both parents to **AIDS**. Unless more is done, there will be 25 million of these children around the world by 2010. Children are more vulnerable to **disease** when their bodies are weakened from **hunger**. (Source: State of Food Insecurity in the World 2002. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y7352e/y7352e00.htm>.)

## **FAIR TRADE ADVOCATE**

As much as people in poor countries appreciate development assistance, no one wants to rely on a handout — they want to trade their way out of **poverty** — but international rules make it difficult. Farm and trade policies in the United States and the European Union are creating hardships for family farmers everywhere. Seventy-five percent of poor people in developing countries—some 900 million people—depend on **agriculture** for their livelihood. A fair trade system would give people in poor countries the chance to earn their way out of **poverty** by participating in the world economy. (Source OxFam America [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org))

## **ANTI-CORRUPTION ADVOCATE**

While corruption is harmful to all governments, losing resources to corrupt leaders is particularly devastating in poor countries where every dollar lost results in one less child in **school** or one less well dug to provide **clean water**. Contrary to popular opinion, a large portion of the United States Agency for International Development is channeled through existing private relief and development agencies, like Catholic World Relief, World Vision, CARE, Mercy Corps and many others. **Education** is essential for understanding the reality of global development. (Source: USAID, [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov))

## **DEBT CANCELLATION ADVOCATE**

Every year Sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region of the world, spends \$14.5 billion repaying debts to the world's richest countries and international institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. For example, the civil conflict in Burundi resulted in an increase in health problems related to malaria, a decrease in education for children and emotional trauma from years of civil strife. But the money needed to address these concerns is diverted to pay off international debts. Though we've made efforts to relieve the unpayable debts of many nations, poor countries still spend more each year on debt than on **health** care or **education**. (Source: AFSC, <http://afsc.org/africa-debt/talking-points.htm>)

## **EXTREME POVERTY ADVOCATE**

Extreme poverty means living on less than \$1 a day, unimaginable to us as Americans. In the developing world, more than 1.2 billion people currently live below the international poverty line. Many people are unable to feed their families, because they cannot make a decent wage to buy or produce **food**. (Source: Human Development Report 2003, Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty, United Nations Development Programme. [www.undp.org/hdr2003/](http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/))

## **WOMEN & GIRLS ADVOCATE**

Throughout the world, women work to provide for themselves and their families. They labor hard, but often their work is valued far less than that of men. In many families, women and girls are the last in line not just for food but for medical care as well. Pregnant women, new mothers who breastfeed infants, and children are among the most at risk of **malnourishment**. (Source: World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/en/> )

# **HUNGER ADVOCATE**

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