

THE LOLLY GAME: A DEMONSTRATION OF GLOBAL RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION

What are the facts about global poverty?

This activity provides a way of visualising some global statistics about hunger, access to water and sanitation, and resource distribution. It then leads on to some discussion about the implications of those realities.

The following steps outline the procedure for 30 students, so numbers will need to be adjusted for other group sizes (see the table on the following page). It is important to stress that this is a global view of the world, not a country-by-country view. For example there are the very rich and the very poor in many countries. On the whole, Australia is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, but we still have many citizens who are homeless.

1. Ask the **30** participants to stand on their chairs, forming a circle representing the total world population (currently just over 7 billion people). Tell them that each person represents **3.3%** of the world's population. (230 million people – approximately the population of Indonesia)
2. Ask **11** of the circle to stand on the floor. These people represent the **37%** (2.6 billion people) of the world without adequate sanitation. Being without adequate sanitation means not having somewhere safe and clean to go to the toilet and wash afterwards, and lack of sanitation is a major cause of illness and death.
3. Ask **6** of those standing on the floor to sit down on chairs, as they represent the **20%** (1.4 billion people) of the world suffering extreme poverty. Extreme poverty is defined by the World Bank as living on less than \$US1.25 per day. (A cause for hope is that 20 years ago this figure was 43%)
4. Ask **4** of this group to sit on the floor. They represent the **14%** of world population who do not have access to adequate shelter. (Not having access to adequate shelter means living in slums or being homeless)
5. Ask this group to put their hands on their stomachs as they also represent the **13%** of world population who experience hunger every day, and the **12%** of the world that don't have access to clean water.
6. Ask **1** of those sitting on the floor to lie flat on their backs representing the **3.2%** of world population that are child labourers.
7. Of those still standing on chairs, ask **3** (preferably one female and two males) to put their hands above their heads as they represent the **10%** of the world that has most of the world's available resources
8. The remaining people who are still standing on chairs represent those in the world that have modest incomes, 'just enough' to feed, house, and clothe themselves.

Distribution of lollies (resources)

Make sure there are enough lollies to have one for each person (in this group **30** lollies). Announce that the lollies in your bag represent the world's wealth. There is enough for each person to have a lolly but you are going to share them as the wealth is currently shared in the world. Give **25** lollies (**85%**) to the richest **10%** (give more to the males than the females); give the rest of the group the rest (**5** lollies – **15%**) to share between them all.

Some possible discussion questions:

1. Where do most Australians fit into this equation e.g. Standing/sitting?
(Note for the teacher: Australia is second out of 190 countries on the UNHDI – which measures wealth, income, education & health services. We still have inequalities though; 100,000 homeless people for example.)
2. How did those sitting feel when I gave them their 5 lollies?
3. How did those standing feel?
4. Did anyone think about how they were going to share them?
5. Did anyone think about how they might get some of the larger pile of lollies? Why or why not?
6. Would those standing have felt any different if they did not know that the others only got 5 to share?
7. What things are happening currently in the world that may be related to this unequal distribution? What is the relationship?
8. It has been argued that this level of inequality is at the core of much of the world's conflict. Do you agree/disagree?
9. What might happen between countries or between people in countries that is related to this inequality?
10. Is there anything we can do about it?

Below is a table with distribution for different class sizes. Numbers are approximate due to rounding.

Class Size	10	15	20	25	30	35	50
Percentage of world population	10%	6.7%	5%	4%	3.3%	2.9%	2%
Lacking adequate sanitation 37%	4	6	7	9	11	13	18
Living in Absolute Poverty 20%	2	3	4	5	6	7	10
Slum dwelling 14% Living in Hunger 13%	1	2	3	4	4	5	7
Lacking clean water 12%	1	2	3	3	4	4	6
Child Labourers 3%	0	0	1	1	1	1	2
Top 10%	1	1 or 2	2	2 or 3	3	3 or 4	5
Minties given to top 10%	8	13	17	21	25	30	43
Minties given to rest	2	2	3	4	5	5	7

Notes:

This activity is adapted from:

A Better World for All – Student Activities by Margaret Calder and Roger Smith, Commonwealth of Australia, 1993

Sources for statistics:

- World population – World population clock: <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>
- Extreme poverty – UN Development Goals Report: <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2012/English2012.pdf>
- Sanitation – UNICEF Water and Sanitation Report: http://www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/JMP-report-2012-en.pdf
- Clean water access – UNICEF Water and Sanitation Report: http://www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/JMP-report-2012-en.pdf
- Hunger – Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN: <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en/>
- Child labour – International Labour Organisation: <http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=13313>
- Slums – UN Habitat: <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getPage.asp?page=bookView&book=1156>
- Wealth distribution – University of California: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3iv048hx#page-8>