

## Activity: Poverty Scramble

### Objectives:

- To develop an understanding of the injustices of poverty
- To develop critical thinking skills
- To promote respect for human dignity and a sense of justice

### You will need (depending on size of group):

- 100 coins or counters
- 3 or 4 pairs of socks
- Paper and pens

### Instructions:

#### Part 1:

- The aim of the game is to get as many coins as possible. The only rule of the game is that no player may touch another player at any time.
- Get participants to sit in a circle.
- Give 3 or 4 people a pair of socks to wear over their hands. Tell them they must put them on their hands and keep them on during the game. Postpone any discussions of the reasons for sharing out the coins and socks until the debriefing.
- Give 4 pupils an additional 5 coins before the game starts (20 coins)
- Scatter the other 80 coins in the middle of the circle.
- At the word Go! Participants gather up as many coins as possible. Allow for about 90 seconds (it may be over sooner).
- Divide the group up into the following subgroups:
  - 6 or more coins: people will be able to meet all their basic needs and most of their wants.
  - 3-5 coins: people will be able to meet their basic needs.
  - 2 or fewer coins: people will have difficult surviving due to inadequate shelter, lack of food, lack of education to get a good job.

#### Part 2:

- Tell participants that they may, if they wish, give coins away to others. However, they are not required to do so.
- Allow 2-3 mins for participants to redistribute the coins if they wish.
- Then ask them to get back into their groups:
  - 6 or more coins: people will be able to meet all their basic needs and most of their wants.
  - 3-5 coins: people will be able to meet their basic needs.
  - 2 or fewer coins: people will have difficult surviving due to inadequate shelter, lack of food, lack of education to get a good job.
- Ask if anyone has changed category as a result of giving or receiving coins.

### Part 3: Creating economic fairness

- In their 3 groups (great wealth, some wealth, little wealth) hand out pens and paper and ask each group to create a plan for the fair distribution of the coins, in order to decrease the gap between the different categories of wealth. Each group should:
  - Explain what needs to be done
  - Describe what the group plans to do and why
  - Show why their plan is fair
- Feedback each groups ideas as a larger group.

### Part 4: Feedback and reflection

How did you feel about the way in which the coins were acquired and distributed? Was everyone treated fairly?

Why did those who gave coins away do so?

How did those of you who received coins in part 2 feel? Grateful? Patronised?

How did the plans for distributing the wealth differ between the three groups? Why?

### Tips for facilitators:

- Try to get participants really in the spirit of the game. You could create feelings of privilege and disadvantage by giving, for example:
  - Those with great wealth tables, chairs, glasses of water, biscuits and so on...
  - Those with some wealth some chairs.
  - Those with little wealth nothing, expect maybe a circle on the floor in which the people should sit.

### Ideas for action:

- Make contact with your local SSVP Conference who work with disadvantaged people in your community and see how you can assist with their work.
- Foodbank collection
- Collection for the Ozanam Centre
- Spread the word!

This game has been slightly adapted from The Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People (2012) [http://www.eycb.coe.int/Compass/en/pdf/2\\_41.pdf](http://www.eycb.coe.int/Compass/en/pdf/2_41.pdf)

