



ALTERNATIVE INCOME

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Barriers to Sustainable Income

Core Activity

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to educate students on the causes of poverty and the barriers to sustainable income.
- **Instructional method(s):** Class discussion, partner work, class presentation
- **Differentiated instruction:**
 - Read the scenarios as a class and decipher the barriers together.
 - Students read the scenarios independently and share their thoughts with the class.
- **Estimated time:** 45 minutes
- **Steps:**
 1. Now that students have a strong understanding of poverty, explain that there are many barriers in place that restrict families from earning a sustainable income. Explain that they must understand these barriers in order to build a well-rounded and educated opinion on this issue. It is only with this knowledge that will they be able to create positive change.
 2. Begin by asking students to define the term “barrier,” listing off what some of these barriers might be. Make a list on the board.
 3. Divide the class into four groups.
 4. Cut out the scenarios found on BLM 1 and distribute one to each group.
 5. Explain to students that each group is going to be given a scenario. In their scenario they will read about the life of a child around their age from Kenya, Ecuador, Haiti or India. They must read their assigned scenario and determine the different factors (barriers) in their life that play a role in keeping that family in poverty.
 6. After students have had a significant amount of time to examine their scenario, bring the class back together.
 7. Ask each group to read their scenario to the class and explain the different barriers that exist in this person’s life. At the conclusion of each presentation, open up the discussion to the rest of the class, asking them to add any additional thoughts about the scenario and poverty.
 8. Before the conclusion of this activity, ensure that students are aware that there are a variety of reasons why communities around the world are unable to break out of the cycle of poverty. Explain that now they are going to move on to discover ways that these barriers can be broken down to free communities from poverty.

BLM 1

Scenarios

Kenya

You are a 10-year-old girl from Kenya, living in a beautiful rural place called the Maasai Mara. You have four brothers and two sisters. You live in a small one-room mud hut called a *boma*. There is no electricity or running water in your home and there is a small fire pit in the center of the room where you and your mama (that's what they call mothers in Kenya) cook food for the whole family. Because of this, your *boma* is often dark and smoky.

It is your mama's job to take care of the family and do all of the household chores while your dad often gets odd jobs in a busy market town called Narok, a few hours away, so your dad is often away from home for days at a time. As the oldest girl, it is your responsibility to help your mama with the daily chores. Every day, you collect water for your family so they can cook, clean, bathe and drink. The closest water source is the Mara River, which is three kilometers away from your *boma*. Your family needs five buckets of water a day, but because each one weighs 20kg when it's filled, you are only able to carry one bucket at a time. This means that you have to take five trips a day to the river. The river water is dirty and your brothers and sisters often get sick from drinking it.

Your local school is 5km away from your house. To get to school, your siblings walk for one hour each way in the hot Kenyan sun. You cannot go to school because you are too busy fetching water and helping with household chores. Your home is 10km from the nearest medical clinic and the big hospital is 15km away. This is a very long distance to walk and an expensive trip by bus.

India

You are an eight-year-old boy living in Rajasthan, India. You have a younger sister and your parents work very hard every day to provide for your family, but even then you do not have much.

Your sister got malaria a few years ago and became very sick. Unable to pay for the doctor visits and medicine on their own, your parents were forced to take out a loan from a local businessman. As a result, your parents owe him a large debt.

The businessman owns a fireworks factory one hour away and he told your parents that they could pay off their debt by sending you to work in the factory. He told them that you would be well-fed and would go to school, something your parents could never afford, so they agreed.

You now spend your days working in a hot, dark room assembling fireworks. Sometimes the fireworks go off unexpectedly and burn the kids in the factory. You are fed two meals a day, both of which are small and not very healthy, and they often upset your stomach. You never get to go to school. When you get sick, the factory owner doesn't let you go to the doctor or get medicine. At the end of each day, you sleep on the floor of a dirty building with many other children who work in the factory.

The businessman told your parents that you would be paid 20 cents a day, but now he says that they have to pay interest and the cost of feeding you too so it will take a very long time to pay off their debt.

Haiti

You are a 13-year-old boy living in Haiti. Your family home was in Port-au-Prince where you lived with your mom, dad and two sisters. On January 12, 2010, your house was destroyed in the worst earthquake your family has ever seen. You were able to help your mom and two sisters make it to safety; however, your dad was off at work and was killed when the disaster struck.

With no place to live, your family decides that you must move to the countryside where there was less damage from the earthquake. Together, you gather all of the belongings you can salvage from your house and travel to a rural area called the Central Plateau.

When you arrive at the Central Plateau, international relief organizations have set up camps in some fields around a community. You and your family are given a tent and a small patch of ground. As more and more people like you come here looking for a place to stay, it gets very crowded in the camp. To help out, you accept another family of four to live in your tent with you. You share supplies but as the weeks wear on your tent begins to tear, your supplies begin to wear out and the prospect of getting food aid is fading fast.

Many people in the camp are injured from the earthquake or have fallen ill because of the conditions in the camp. The nearby hospitals are always full and the local doctors are overwhelmed with work. There is a community water well where you can collect fresh water; however, this is shared with the entire camp and sometimes it breaks.

There is one school in the area that your sisters are able to attend, but each class has 40 kids for one teacher and you can't afford to buy them notebooks or pencils. As your family runs out of money, you and your mom are finding it difficult to find a job. Neither of you completed primary school and there are few opportunities in the countryside.

Ecuador

You are a nine-year-old girl from San Miguel, Ecuador. You are part of an indigenous community that lives high in the mountains. You have one sister and one brother and you all live in a small cement structure with your mom and dad. There is no electricity in your house, nor is there running water, but you are able to collect drinkable water from a local well just outside of the village.

You live just 15 minutes away from the local school; however, you only reached Grade 3 and have since had to stop attending school to help your mom with the household chores. Your younger sister, who is still in school, knows that education is important but has trouble focusing because her classroom is dirty and dark.

There are few jobs in the community so your brother and your dad often have to leave for weeks at a time to do construction work in different cities around the country. Your mom tends a small plot of land near your house, but it only grows enough to feed the family. You also have a few goats and sheep that you and your sister take care of. Your mom sometimes sells them at a market, but she has to sell them for a low price because she travels far and needs the money badly.

When there is a bad growing season, your family only has potatoes to eat. Due to the lack of proper nutrition, you and your siblings often get sick. Though sometimes your mom makes herbal remedies, when you get very sick, you must travel for a few hours to see a nurse and get simple medicine.