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# ALTERNATIVE INCOME

## SECONDARY LEVEL

### Free From Poverty Activity

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- **Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is for students to realize the ways people are affected by poverty around the world as well as the solutions Free The Children puts in place to help combat this global problem.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion, group work
- **Differentiated instruction:**
  - Simplified: Groups are assigned one project and must present their findings to inform the rest of the class.
  - Advanced: Students work independently and choose one project on which they create a diagram and written report.
- **Curriculum connections:** Business Studies, Canadian and World Studies, English, Health and Physical Education, Science, Social Sciences and Humanities, Technological Education.
- **Estimated time:** 1 hour
- **Steps:**
  1. Distribute B.L.M.1 and ask students to independently read “Breaking the Cycle.” After they have finished reading, ask students the following suggested questions:
    - What is the dilemma(s) that Leena and her family face?
    - What affect is poverty having on Leena and her family?
    - How is Free The Children helping free Leena and her family from poverty?
  1. Following this discussion, tell students that Free The Children works in a variety of ways to help free communities from the cycle of poverty. Show the class the following video about Free The Children’s Adopt A Village Alternative Income pillar:  
<http://www.metowe.com/artisans/>
  2. After viewing this video, ask the students to reflect on the ways Free The Children is working to free communities from poverty.
  3. Divide students into groups of four.
  4. Explain to students that alternative income programs target marginalized parents, especially women, providing them with resources to generate a sustainable source of income, increase their savings and even start their own businesses. Explain to pairs that every country and community faces different challenges whether it’s a lack of available jobs, restrictions due to traditional cultural practices or prevalence of child labour. Based on these challenges Free The Children chooses an appropriate alternative income program that will help free the specific community from poverty. Note to students that these projects are continually evolving as new technologies are developed and needs arise.
  5. The following is a list of alternative income projects Free The Children has implemented in one of the seven countries they work in. In their groups, ask students to go through the list and conduct a brainstorm around each project by answering the five W’s (who, what, when, where and why) and the impact they believe each project could have to help free communities from poverty.

- Animal husbandry program – animals such as goats and pigs are given to families for long-term income generation. Families can use the animals for their own consumption and as a sustainable form of income generation through the selling of these products.
  - Micro-credit loans – in Sri Lanka, these are loans that allow women to start, diversify and expand their own businesses. The objective of this program is to enable economic empowerment. Businesses include dry fish making and packing, cake-making, tailoring, petty trading, grocery shops, food processing and hairdressing.
  - Honey harvesting – in Kenya, local women are provided with the training and resources necessary to harvest honey. The honey produced is pasteurized, bottled and sold, providing the mamas with extra income.
  - Financial literacy workshops – these are business training sessions for community members that provide the education, tools and skills necessary to help them sustain their income.
  - Beadwork – in Kenya, women's groups are taught how to produce quality beadwork such as wire bracelets, wedding necklaces and key rings. These products are then sold at a local 'Duka' (shop) for profit.
6. When this is complete, hold a class discussion around student's ideas.

## Blackline Master 1

**Breaking the Cycle**

“There are not many jobs in my village,” laments Warnakulasuriya Don Edna Leena, 46. “The economy is bad especially because of the war.”

A mother of three, Leena is from a small fishing village called Sea Street, north of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She has lived her whole adult life in the shadow of Sri Lanka’s 26-year civil war that both deliberately and unintentionally destroyed the livelihoods of thousands of people.

For years, Leena and her husband tried to get a bank loan for their dry fish business. “We both have good knowledge of making quality dry fish, but we did not have the money to establish a strong business. We applied to the bank for a loan many times, but we were denied a loan because of our weak economic situation.”

Leena’s family was caught in one kind of cycle of poverty: they needed a loan to improve their business, but they could not get a loan unless they had a more successful business. As food prices increased daily, Leena struggled to provide her children with nutritious meals on a household income of a little over \$3 a day.

In 2009, Free The Children’s Adopt a Village program helped to create the Livelihood Development Society (LDS), an organization run by and for the women of Sea Street to promote sustainable development. The Society has a bank that pools the resources of these women and provides microloans and savings accounts.

“The loan from the LDS was the chance I needed to help move my family out of poverty,” Leena proudly states. “Today, I am entrepreneur, and my husband and I work together and we have a good business. I put money in my savings account regularly, and we are able to take care of our children properly, especially their education needs which is important for me.”

Through her \$500 loan with the Livelihood Development Society, Leena has tripled her household income, providing the start she needed to free her family from poverty. With that freedom, she has whole-heartedly turned her focus on feeding her children and making sure they can go school.