

SOLUTIONS TO WORLD HUNGER

SECONDARY LEVEL

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL #1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Activity snapshot:

In small groups, students will be assigned a specific strategy for solving world hunger—distribution, education, technology or debt cancellation. Each group will receive a brief explanation of their solution and a potential problem with that solution. As part of a structured, round-table discussion, all four groups will envision a plan to address world hunger that solves each identified strategy problem by combining aspects of all four solutions. While the objective is to create one plan comprised of opinions from all groups, consensus will be a challenge. This mirrors the reality of creating plans in global issues. Any difficulties are to be expected and should be discussed during the closure debriefing.

Rationale:

In the most extreme cases of poverty, people live on less than \$1 a day. Almost half the world—that's three billion people—lives on less than \$2 a day. It is difficult and often impossible to meet nutritional needs on this kind of a daily budget. Hunger is a major barrier to breaking the cycle of poverty; when people, especially children, are hungry, they are unable to learn, grow, fight disease or play. There are many schools of thought when it comes to finding solutions to world hunger. Though there is value in each of these philosophies, they all fall short of being a complete solution on their own.

Objectives:

- By creating their own development strategy that holistically approaches a problem, students will gain an understanding of the complexities of world hunger and development strategy.
- Students will explore diplomacy by working together to build a consensus.

Time: Two 60-minute periods

Materials: Handout/worksheet S7: Philosophy Handouts

Steps:

1. In a large group discussion, briefly review the issue of world hunger.
2. Divide the class into four groups. Explain that there are many differing schools of thought when it comes to solving world hunger. For the purpose of this exercise, we will focus on four different approaches. Each group will represent one philosophy.
3. Hand out one philosophy to each group from the paragraphs on S7: Philosophy Handouts. Each group will represent their philosophy in a round-table discussion that will combine all four philosophies into one solution framework.
4. Groups will split up and spend the remainder of the period creating a list of five benefits of their philosophy and five challenges or potential reasons why it cannot be a long-term solution to world hunger on its own.
5. Possible extension: teacher may assign at-home research in preparation for the round-table to take place next class.
6. At the beginning of the next class period, each group will choose one student to represent their philosophy at the round-table.

7. Remind students that though they may not personally agree entirely with their philosophy, their goal in this exercise is to negotiate so that is as much a part of the unilateral solution as possible while coming to a consensus with the other three groups.
8. The exercise will begin with one representative from each small group meeting at the round-table to present their groups' philosophy in two minutes. After all presentations are made, students will return to their small group and create a strategy which combines all four philosophies to their liking. They will have 30 minutes to draft this strategy.
9. Representatives will then return to the round-table for the first round of negotiation. Each will share the new strategy and attempt to generate one strategy acceptable to all.
10. The activity is complete when the round-table group produces a written resolution which the teacher approves as a plan that effectively combines all four philosophies.

Written reflection:

Ask students to respond to the following questions:

- What do you see as the most difficult challenges to resolving a health crisis?
- Why is it so difficult for different groups of people to agree?
- Is consensus necessary? Why/why not?

Closure:

Come together in a large class discussion to assess the negotiations. Ask students to share their experience. What worked well? What did not work well? How do they feel about the plan they have developed?

Assessment Suggestions:

- Student participation during large and small group activities.
- Written reflection to gauge the depth of understanding.

Handout/worksheet S7

PHILOSOPHY HANDOUTS

Distribution:

The problem of world hunger is a problem of distribution. The amount of food produced by the entire world could feed seven billion people. The world population is estimated to be about six billion. There should be enough food for everyone, and yet many people are malnourished while food goes to waste in many developed countries. By redistributing the world's food resources through aid programs, we can ensure that everyone is properly fed.

Problem: How does better distribution ensure that developing regions are empowered to eventually solve their own hunger problems? What other development measures are necessary to strengthen a society? Is there a place for food distribution, perhaps early on in a development strategy?

Education:

Education is the solution to world hunger. By teaching people how to grow food more efficiently, they will be better able to meet their own food needs. Even a basic primary education—which is not directly related to agricultural training—will better prepare people to meet their own needs because they will be able to earn a better income and provide for their family.

Problem: How can education be a priority when children are too hungry to learn and families cannot afford to send their children to school? What other development measures are necessary to strengthen a society so that education can be effective?

Technology:

World hunger can be solved by technology. Many countries do not have enough land that is good for farming. People are unable to grow enough food and/or a variety of food to make up a nutritionally-balanced diet. In addition, droughts and floods can jeopardize a whole season of crops, placing a community at great risk for starvation. Technology can help to solve these problems in many ways. Mechanization of farming implements, artificial fertilizers and genetically modified crops that resist hard weather fluctuations are three technological solutions to hunger in the developing world.

Problem: How will these technological advancements affect the environment, considering that they are genetically modified and/or not native to the area? What happens when the fertilizer or special seeds run out, or the machinery breaks? What other development measures are necessary to strengthen a society so that technology can be effective?

Debt cancellation:

The crushing effect of world debt in developing countries is responsible for the world hunger problem. Governments in developing countries are unable to spend needed funds on relieving hunger because so much of their budget goes towards repaying debt, and the restrictions on their loans prevent them from needed social spending. By eliminating debt, we give developing countries the freedom to solve their hunger problems for themselves.

Problem: In cases where government is corrupt or under-developed, how does the cancellation of debt guarantee effective social spending? What other development measures are necessary to strengthen a society so that debt cancellation can be effective?