

# “Food for Thought” Hunger Awareness Activity

New Community Project  
For older youth and adults

This version of Food for Thought is designed for use in schools and other secular settings. (Another version of Food for Thought has been developed for religious groups.) The purpose of this experience is to help participants think about why some people in the world have so much more of everything—including food—than others, and what it feels like to live in a “global neighborhood” where there is such disparity.

Materials needed:

- work sheet for each participant (can be one-side clean sheet of paper)
- symbolic coins for participants
- items for center of each group’s table or area (see The Groups)
- adult convener for each group

Every participant gets a copy of the price list of items they can purchase with their “coins.” (can be printed on one-side-clean paper from master copy) (see end of activity for price list)

The Groups Participants are randomly divided into five groups representing various sectors of global society, from the 1 billion very poor (living on less than \$1 per day) to the billion-plus member “Global Consumer Class” with incomes of over \$7000 per year, which itself is divided into the wealthy and the very wealthy—Groups D and E.

## The Plan

STEP ONE: Setting the stage

Divide participants into groups, with one-fifth in Group A, one-fourth in Group B, two-fifths in Group C, with the remainder being divided in a ratio of 4/1 into Groups D and E (e.g., if there are 20 people remaining, 16 would go to Group D, four to Group E). After the groups assemble, the convener of each group reads aloud to the whole group (everyone in the room) the description of their group (first paragraph of group descriptive information). Begin with the Group A and move up to Group E.

STEP TWO: Choosing number of children

Each participant lives in a family with 2-6 children—the youngest two are grade school age, the remaining children are high school age. Give each participant construction paper and instruct them to cut out figures for the number of people in their household (two parents, plus the number of children they choose)—they can choose between two and six children.

STEP THREE: Making financial decisions

Participants are given a price list, and then are given their allotment of coins to use for purchases. Instruct them to do so, recording their purchases on their worksheets and reporting their decisions to the leader, who collects the coins for items purchased. If they chose to save any coins, they may keep these for use in the future. After the children have completed this exercise, give them a chance to tell about their decision-making process. (One at a time for a small group, ask for volunteers if a larger group.) Ask them to tell about the most difficult thing(s) they chose to forego purchasing, and how they felt about having as much money as they had to provide for their families.

STEP FOUR: Prepare for the meal by reading to the individual groups which country’s diet they will be eating. Following this, have one participant from each group tell all the other groups what their group will have for lunch, and what country it’s from.

STEP FIVE: Serving lunch/Dealing the Consequences Cards

STEP SIX: Follow-up discussion

## The Groups

### **Group A The really poor**

*Read to group: This group is comprised of one-fifth of the participants, and represents about one-fifth of the world's population—a little over a billion people. You are the world's poorest people; most of you live on less than \$1 per day. Children in this group often don't even finish elementary school; many of them become child workers at an early age (a child worker is someone 15 years old and under who doesn't attend school, but works in fields, mines, shops, and the sex trade). Not everyone in any of these countries is this poor—every country has rich people and some middle class people—it's just that the majority of people are very poor. Most of the families in this group rarely get enough to eat—and lots don't have clean water to drink. As many as one out of every ten children die before the age of five, and of those that live, many experience diseases or stunted growth due to lack of food or clean water. Countries where people in this group might live include most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and some in Central America and South Asia. Africa leads the list, however, with the 20 poorest countries in the world being on that continent. [Examples include Malawi, the Congo, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso. Point out on a map or globe, if possible]*

In the middle of their area is a container of fruit holding pineapples, oranges, cantaloupes, or similar produce. This fruit is not for this table's consumption—at one point (announced by convener) it will be carried by members at this table to Groups D and E—the rich world tables. The fruits were grown in the poorer country by multinational corporations for export to richer countries. (Many countries with large numbers of hungry people produce enough food to feed everyone—but the people are too poor to buy it and/or it is grown to be shipped to wealthier customers in other parts of the world.) There are also some boxes labeled "gold", "lumber", and "cotton". These will also be delivered to wealthier countries later on. And nearby are several containers for carrying water.

Each participant lives in a family with 2-6 children—the youngest two are grade school age, the remaining children are high school age. As participants make a decision about how many children to include in their family, remind them that as a poor family, having more children means more kids to do the work and perhaps earn money—or perhaps send to another country to work and send money back home—but it also means more children to feed and clothe and try to send to school. This is their first decision, and cannot be changed later on. After they have made the cutouts, have them name each "person" and introduce them to the rest of the group, giving each one a bit of a personality ("this is Anna, she's 11 and is really smart"). Each person in this group is then given 10 coins and a price list for items they need to run their household. They now must decide how they will spend their money. Participants record their purchases on their worksheet and report their decisions to the leader, turning in coins sufficient to pay for their purchases. After the children have completed this exercise, give them a chance to tell about their decision-making process. (One at a time for a small group, volunteers if a larger group.) Ask the group to tell about the most difficult thing they chose to give up.

### **Group B The poor**

*Read to group: "This group, also symbolizing just over 1 billion people, or about one out every five of the world's people, represents poor people who aren't desperately poor, but who still struggle to make ends meet and are only a stroke of bad luck away from catastrophe. Typical jobs include working in sweatshops—factories with long hours, harsh treatment and low pay—or selling things on the street. Their children are lucky to make it to high school. Girls from this group are often sent off to work as domestic servants for families that are a little better off—once there, they are often abused in one way or another. Young adults from this group often migrate to other countries—legally or illegally—looking for work. For instance, one out of*

*every 14 citizens of Honduras lives in the United States. Adults in these countries may work more than one job, and really have to struggle to earn enough to feed, clothe and house their families. If there's a sudden crisis like a sickness, injury or loss of work, they are in big trouble because they don't have any money in reserve or property they could sell. There are groups of people in each of these countries who are quite rich, even though most people are very poor. Regarding food, usually there is just enough to go around, although a significant percentage of children are "stunted", not growing as tall and strong as they should due to malnutrition. Having clean water to drink is often a real problem in these countries. Included in this category are India, Cambodia, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, South Africa, Guatemala (use a map or globe to locate these, if possible).*

In the middle of this group are some items of clothing, sports equipment and a box labeled "precious gems". This will go to Groups D and E at some point. Each participant lives in a family with 2-6 children—the youngest two are grade school age, the remaining children are high school age. Give each participant construction paper and instruct them to cut out figures for the number of people in their household—they can choose between two and six children. Remind them that as a poor family, having more children means more kids to do the work and perhaps earn money—or perhaps send to another country to work and send money back home—but it also means more children to feed, clothe and try to send to school. This is their first decision, and cannot be changed later on. After they have made the cutouts, have them name each "person" and introduce them to the rest of the group, giving each one a bit of a personality ("this is Anna, she's 11 and is really smart"). Each person in this group is then given 15 coins and a price list for items they need to run their household. They now must decide how they will spend their money. Participants record their purchases on their worksheet and report their decisions to the leader, turning in coins sufficient to pay for their purchases. After the children have completed this exercise, give them a chance to tell about their decision-making process. (One at a time for a small group, volunteers if a larger group.) Ask the group to tell about the most difficult thing they chose to give up.

### **Group C The global "middle class"**

*Read to the group: This group, representing about two-fifths of the world—or around two and a half billion people—has a bit more money for food, shelter, and education than the poorest people in the world. Some of them have jobs in factories called sweatshops, where they may earn \$2-5 a day; other families where parents work in the cities or own farms may earn \$10,000 or more per year—about one-fourth the average income in the United States. Many children finish high school, even though not everyone can afford this—and some go on to college. In countries like these, many people—sometimes millions—are very poor; however, there are also a good number of people who are very rich. It is often difficult for people in this group to get regular health care, and there are times when there's not enough food for their families. However, because "American" fast food and snack foods are now available in these countries, and because people don't do as much physical work, more and more people are overweight. Countries represented by this group include: Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, Thailand, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan —and the United States, where 16 million citizens live on less than \$2500 per person per year.*

In the middle of this table is a stack of clothing, shoes, electronics, and/or toys and a cut flower or two that this group will deliver to Tables D and E, as well as two cards that say **Higher Oil Prices**.

Each participant lives in a family with 2-6 children—the youngest two are grade school age, the remaining children are high school age. Give each participant construction paper and instruct them to cut out figures for the number of people in their household—they can choose between two and six children. Remind them that

as a middle class family, having more children means more kids to do the work and perhaps earn money—or perhaps send to another country to work and send money back home—but it also means more children to feed, clothe and send to school. This is their first decision, and cannot be changed later on. After they have made the cutouts, have them name each “person” and introduce them to the rest of the group, giving each one a bit of a personality (“meet Anna, she’s 11 and really smart”). Each person in this group is then given 27 coins and a price list for items they need to run their household. They now must decide how they will spend their money. Participants record their purchases on their worksheet and report their decisions to the leader, turning in coins sufficient to pay for their purchases. After the children have completed this exercise, give them a chance to tell about their decision-making process. (One at a time for a small group, volunteers if a larger group.) Ask the group to tell about the most difficult thing they chose to give up.

### **Groups D and E The global consumer class**

Divide the remainder of the children into one of these two groups, with a 4/1 ratio between Group D and Group E. Locate these two groups in the center of the room.

#### **Group D The Rich**

*Read to the group: This group represents about a little over a billion of the world’s population. You live in countries where the average per person income is very high—\$25,000 or more. While costs and services in these countries may be higher than in some poor countries, families here still have many more choices in terms of how to spend their money. Most children in these countries have the opportunity to finish high school, and many go on to college. Often both parents in a family work. It seems that even though they make more money, there are more things to buy and a great desire to have bigger and fancier material goods. Children often have afterschool jobs, but this is not so much to support the family as to give the young person money to spend on themselves. In the United States, for instance, the average teenager spends \$100 each week on things they want. Food is not a problem for this group—in fact, their main problem is too much food—around 65% of the people here are overweight! Countries in this group include Sweden, Iceland, Singapore, Kuwait, Qatar, France, Germany, the United States, New Zealand, Japan, Canada (use a map or atlas to point these out, if possible).*

In the middle of this table are three signs that say **Global Warming raises water and food costs by 1 coin each** and three **Toxic Waste** signs. These will be their “gifts” to the Groups A, B and C at some point in the process.

Each participant lives in a family with 2-6 children—the youngest two are grade school age, the remaining children are high school age. Give each participant construction paper and instruct them to cut out figures for the number of people in their household—they can choose between two and six children. This is their first decision, and cannot be changed later on. After they have made the cut-outs, have them name each “person” and introduce them to the rest of the group, giving each one a bit of a personality (“this is Anna, she’s 11 and is really smart”). Each person in this group is then given 35 coins and a price list for items they need to run their household. They now must decide how they will spend their money. Participants record their purchases on their worksheet and report their decisions to the leader, turning in coins sufficient to pay for their purchases. After the children have completed this exercise, give them a chance to tell about their decision-making process. (One at a time for a small group, volunteers if a larger group.) Ask the group to tell about the most difficult thing they chose to give up.

#### **Group E The Few, the Proud, the Very Rich**

*Read to the group: You are the 1000 richest people in the world. Half of these one thousand people are billionaires—or multi-billionaires; the rest only (!) have hundreds of millions of dollars. You and your 1000 rich friends are worth over \$2*

*trillion—twice as much money as the 700 million people in the 47 poorest countries in Africa have to live on in a year. You don't live in one particular country, although most of you live in the United States, Russia, Germany, other European countries, Japan, or the Middle East. You have enough money to buy whatever you want. You sometimes live in housing estates with guarded entrances. Your housework is done by maids—often immigrants from other countries. Your children usually go to expensive private schools. They don't usually have after-school jobs—they have an allowance and their own credit cards, so they don't have to work for spending money. You get the chance to own sports teams, travel in your own jet, even talk to presidents. Food? You eat whatever you want whenever you want from wherever you want—exotic dishes from around the world, cooked by your personal chef.*

This group is given two signs that say **One coin for charity** and three signs that say **Global Warming raises water and food costs by 1 coin.**

Each participant lives in a family with 2-6 children—the youngest two are grade school age, the remaining children are high school age. Give each participant construction paper and instruct them to cut out figures for the number of people in their household—they can choose between two and six children. This is their first decision, and cannot be changed later on. After they have made the cut-outs, have them name each “person” and introduce them to the rest of the group, giving each one a bit of a personality (“this is Anna, she’s 11 and is really smart”). Each person in this group is then given 50 coins and a price list for items they need to run their household. They now must decide how they will spend their money. Participants record their purchases on their worksheet and report their decisions to the leader, turning in coins sufficient to pay for their purchases. After the children have completed this exercise, give them a chance to tell about their decision-making process. (One at a time for a small group, volunteers if a larger group.) Was there anything they really wanted they couldn't purchase?

## The meal

Each convener should read the information about the meal to their group just before the food is brought to the table.

**Group A Malawi** The typical diet in this southeast African country is basically composed of two meals a day of nsima, a cornmeal based porridge / bread. The nutritional value of nsima is very low and it is not high in calories; a person eating one portion in the morning and one in the evening would receive approximately 160 calories a day. A healthy person needs a daily balanced diet of 2,000 calories every day. Mice are also eaten in Malawi. The mice are actually considered a bit of a local delicacy and are a rare source of protein in their diet. Malawians prefer field mice over “urban mice” since they are grain-fed and don't live around pollution like city mice. All over rural Malawi grass fires are set and a line of people catch the fleeing field mice. There are mice vendors that sell the field mice on the streets and on the national highways to commuters. When things are really bad in Malawi—if there's been a drought or flooding—and people aren't getting food, they may eat nyika (water lily). This would be the equivalent of being hungry enough to eat grass in the U.S. In addition, economic rules made by rich countries have led to a shortage of food and high market prices for what is available; prices that few can afford to pay. A typical daily wage is 20 kwacha (25 cents), but a kilogram (2.2 pounds) of maize (corn, the staple food from which nsima is made), which is about a day's worth of food for a person, costs 11-20 kwacha.

**Recommendation:** nsima (*recipe below*) with water (*water carried from another part of the building by the girls in the group in containers on their heads to simulate*

how most poor people have to walk for their water—and it's the women who do this job) (a bit of the food prepared for this group is reserved until the "food aid" arrives from the rich countries [see Card 6 below]) **Option:** if serving different portions of the same foods (rice, beans, apples, drink) to every group is the plan, then those in this group would get a half cup of rice, along with 20 or so beans in a broth. There is one apple for every five participants, and a container for water—the water must be carried by girls from some distant faucet and then run through a symbolic strainer to get out the bacteria.

**Group B Nepal** A typical Nepali meal is "daal bhaat," or lentils and rice. The "daal" or lentils are cooked in a thick soup with salt, garlic, turmeric, cumin, and other spices; in Nepal, this is best done in a pressure cooker, often over a woodburning fire. To eat, one mixes the "daal" with some rice using one's right hand only and then hastily puts a small handful into one's mouth. (That's right, kids, we're eating with our hands!) Daal bhaat is usually served with whatever vegetables are in season, cooked in curry until soft. On special occasions there are eggs or meat: chicken, goat, fish, pork, but never, ever beef (cows are sacred in Nepal, since it's a Hindu nation). Other things often served at a meal include fresh onions; "dahi," a fresh yogurt; "achaar," a kind of tomato salsa; and "chutney," a kind of pickle. Nepalese eat daal bhaat twice a day, every day, around 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning and 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening. But often, this is not enough. Every 10 minutes a child in Nepal dies of causes related to malnutrition—that's 50,000 Nepali children every year. Since Nepal has 10 times fewer people than the United States, that would be like half a million US children dying every year from hunger.

**Recommendation:** daal bhaat (recipe below) with a cooked vegetable of some kind—modest amounts per person (a bit of the food prepared for this group is reserved until the "food aid" arrives from the rich countries [see Card 9 below]) **Option:** if serving different portions of the same foods (rice, beans, apples, drink) to every group is the plan, then those in this group would get a cup of rice and two tortillas or a slice of bread, along with 30 or so beans in a broth. There is one apple for every three participants, and a container of water—the water must be symbolically run through a strainer before drinking, as there is no potable (clean) water available from a spigot in these countries).

**Group C: Ecuador** Meals in Ecuador often feature some combination of rice, potatoes, bread, and noodles, along with bananas (Ecuador is the world's largest exporter of this fruit, of which there are many varieties; might be good to include an unusual variety for this meal). Soup is also a part of most meals. Native plants of the Andes, potatoes are found in many recipes and used in a variety of ways. In ancient times they were prized for their nutritional value along with their ability to store well. There are hundreds of varieties of potatoes grown throughout the Andes. In larger communities, there is a market in a large open-air building that is filled with vendor stalls selling all kinds of fruits and vegetables. For common people, it is expensive to buy canned goods, so most food is bought at the market and prepared from scratch. In the rainforest, lemon ants are a delicacy—and they do taste lemony!

**Recommendation:** seco de pollo (stewed chicken accompanied by rice and avocado slices—easy on the chicken, as many Ecuadorians would not eat meat every day due to its cost) and locro (potato soup—recipe below) **Option:** if serving different portions of the same foods (rice, beans, apples, drink) to every group is the plan, then those in this group would get a cup of rice, along with a good portion of beans with plenty of tortillas or bread. There is one apple per participant, and a container of water—the water must be symbolically run through a strainer before drinking, as there is no potable (clean) water available from a spigot in these countries).

**Group D Iceland** Iceland is actually the best place in the world to live if determined by how long people live, how much income they have, and how educated they are. It is also a country with a lot lower emissions of global warming gases than other rich nations, because much of Iceland's energy is geothermal—from tapping underground steam. In the US, our energy comes mostly from coal, oil and nuclear power; the first two are fossil fuels that create a lot of CO2. In terms of diet, fish is the mainstay of the Icelandic diet, and fresh fish can be had all the year round. Icelanders eat mostly haddock, cod, plaice, halibut, herring and shrimp. Poultry farming is widespread in Iceland. Even though Iceland is situated near the polar circle, many garden vegetables are grown outside, including cabbage and potatoes. Other vegetables, fruits and flowers are grown in geothermally heated hot houses. Iceland has a range of traditional foods, called "*thorramatur*", which are enjoyed especially in the period from January to March. These preserved foods include smoked and salted lamb, singed sheep heads, dried fish, smoked and pickled salmon, cured shark and various other delicacies. Breads include *laufabrauð* (deepfried paper-thin bread), *kleinur* (similar to doughnuts) and rye pancakes.

**Recommendation:** Fish patties and caramelized potatoes (recipes below) (or you could go with a typical US fast-food lunch) **Option:** *if serving different portions of the same foods (rice, beans, apples, drink) to every group is the plan, then those in this group would get a cup of rice with some chicken tenders, along with a good portion of green beans or other vegetable with plenty of tortillas or bread. There is one apple and a cookie for every participant, and a container of favored water (lemonade, etc.).*

**Secret note to groups D and E:** *If Group B sends a trade delegation to demand higher wages, you have two options: a) fire them—and move your factories to the poorer countries of Group A OR b) agree to pay them a bit more. (Leader [inform the groups of these consequences only after their decision is made]: if the group chooses "a", Group B loses one coin per person due to the lost work; Group A gains one coin since they're getting sweatshops to employ some of their workers; Group D loses one coin since as Group B becomes poorer, they can't buy the products made by high-tech workers in Group D; and Group E gains two coins, since they own the factories and there will be more profit because they'll be paying the workers in Group A even less than they paid the workers in Group B.) (Also read to Groups D and E) If Group B tells you they are going to attempt to disrupt your economy by cutting back on their supplies of petroleum to you, you can either a) tell them to "go ahead, punks...make my day" OR b) tell them to go ahead, and invest in renewable energy to make up the difference OR c) go to war with them, taking control of their oil fields. Each option has an economic impact on your society which you will only discover after you've made your decision. (Leader [inform the group after their decision is made]: if "a", the cost to Groups D and E is 2 coins per person due to a downturn in their economies; if "b", the economic gain to Group D is one more coin per person due to creation of new jobs in the "green" economy and a healthier environment (fewer pollution-related illnesses), there is a loss to Group E, since this group owns the oil companies and their profits will go down, there is a gain of one coin to every other group, since the impact of global warming will be lessened and there won't costs from wars over petroleum; if "c", there is a cost of 4 coins per person in Groups D and E for the \$1 trillion that will be spent in the coming five years of warfare and occupation, and a cost of 2 coins for Group B, due to the damage brought by war.*

(Also to Groups D and E) If Group A approaches to invite someone from your groups to go and live with them to see what their life is like, you can accept or refuse this option. If you accept, you must send 2-3 people to live there, giving up the food and

other good things they have where they live now and living like the people in Group A. Once there, they will have to adjust their worksheets to live with the same number of coins as people in Group A.

**To Leader:** If Group A decides instead to explode a “dirty bomb” in a surprise attack on Groups D and E, 10 percent of the participants in these two groups will die, 10 percent will be sick and sent to the hospital, and everyone in these groups will give up 2 coins due to the economic and political problems this will bring.

**Group E Large mansion somewhere in the world** Due to its wealth, this group has its choice of foods.

**Recommendation:** Have someone serve as waiter and take their orders from a menu offering several different items. End the meal with big bowls of ice cream.

### **Pre-Meal**

Just before the meal is served, gain the attention of the entire group:

“We’re almost ready to eat lunch, but we have some sad news: If you were in Group A or B and the mother didn’t learn to read, that means her children are probably not as healthy as they should be, since she doesn’t always understand what foods are best for them or how to take better care of their health. If the mother can’t read AND you chose Food One, one child in your family died. Turn in the cut-out of that child to the group leader, announcing to your group the name of the child that died.”

### **Lunch time**

Place the food “family style” on the tables. Before serving, have someone from Group E read to the whole group: “The rich people of the world feel bad that you poorer people are having so many problems, so we have something for you. [Someone from Group E takes sign “One coin for poverty” to Groups A and B] Here’s a coin for you to help you and your family. Now each person in Groups A and B can purchase something else with their new coin.

### **Serve the meal**

**Consequences cards** (*to be read aloud to the entire group at intervals of every several minutes throughout lunch time*).

Card 1: Global warming is causing many changes to the earth, including to the supply of food and water—it will make both of these scarcer and more expensive—especially for the world’s poorer people. Since it is mostly the richer people who are creating the global warming gases, group D and E will now distribute their “global warming” cards to the other groups. Each person in these groups (A, B, C) must surrender one coin and take away something that coin would have bought, due to the effects of global warming.

Card 2: When someone gets malaria it costs the family lost time at work and the expense of medicines. If you are in groups A, B or C, and you didn’t purchase a mosquito net, you must surrender a coin—and give up what it would have bought. Tell your group what you’re giving up.

Card 3: Because of global warming and other environmental problems, as many as 150 million people will become refugees in the next 40 years. For instance, rising sea levels will make people have to leave their homes by the coasts, floods will destroy their crops, and droughts will make them have to leave their farms. Because the richest people are creating most of the global warming gases, these countries now have to take care of these refugees. One out of every 20 people in Groups A and B can now go to live with Group E and share their lunch (*number off, with the 20<sup>th</sup> person being selected—if fewer than 20 people in the group, keep circling the group until getting to the 20<sup>th</sup> person*). Each person from Group E must surrender two coins to help care for these refugees, reducing their purchases by this much. Report to your group what you gave up.

Card 4: If you are in group C, D or E and chose option Food 3 and either a television



or video games, this means you were eating an unhealthy diet and not getting enough exercise. This has led to 20 percent of the people in your group having health problems such as obesity, heart disease or diabetes. (*Number off—every fifth person must go to the hospital [lie down in a corner of the room for five minutes].*)

Card 5: If you chose neither House 2 nor clean water nor medicine, you've just lost a child to diarrhea. She or he got an intestinal illness from the parasites in the water, got a bad case of diarrhea, had no medicine to treat it, became dehydrated (lost too much water for their body to survive), and died. Turn in one child to the group leader; tell the group the name of the child you're giving up.

Card 6: People in Group A often work in fields or mines where foods or precious metals are produced for wealthy countries. Many people in Groups B and C work in sweatshops owned by corporations, producing toys and clothing that are sent to Groups D and E, as well as precious metals and cut flowers. In either case, most of the profit from the production of these products goes to the corporations based in the rich countries, with the actual workers often hardly making enough to feed their families. Groups A, B, and C will now deliver these products to Groups D and E.

Card 7: The people in the richer nations like receiving precious metals and other nice things like flowers from other parts of the world, partly because then someone else has to do the dirty work of mining or growing these things. Mining gold, for instance, uses mercury and cyanide—very poisonous chemicals. And when mining corporations owned by people in rich nations use these chemicals in gold mines in poorer countries, they often just let the waste go out into the streams and rivers. This affects the drinking water and fish that people down-river eat, making the people sick. Growing roses in Ecuador uses so many chemicals that the people working there are forced to quit when they reach 30 years of age—the companies are afraid if they work longer, their children will be born with birth defects caused by all the chemicals. So the rich countries have something to give the poorer people in groups A, B and C. (*deliver one Toxic Waste sign to each group*) (*then, after delivery*) Since a lot of gold items and roses are given on Valentine's Day, the person whose birthday is closest to Valentine's Day is the one who these toxic things has made sick—they have to go to the hospital (*move to lay down on the floor at the side of the room for five minutes*).

Card 8 (**secret card to be read only to Group B**): If you choose to do so, you can attempt to force Groups D and E to raise your standard of living. You can do this either by: a) sending a trade delegation there to demand higher wages OR b) telling them if they don't raise the price their corporations are paying your workers, you'll damage their economy by cutting off the portion of their oil supply that you control. Both strategies contain risks, but you can attempt them if you so choose

Card 9 (**secret card to be read only to Group A**): You don't have a lot of power to demand better treatment from the world's rich people. The best you can hope for is that something will happen to change their minds and hearts to work more for justice and fairness. Here are two ways you can try to encourage this: a) by inviting 2-3 members of each of Groups D and E to come to your area to live to experience what your life is like, and then go back and tell their friends later how hard you have it and what they can do to help OR b) you can blackmail them with a "dirty bomb"—a nuclear weapon exploded in one of their cities that will cause a lot of destruction and death. You can only choose one of these options to carry out.

Card 10: Because of poverty and the inability to feed their families, sometimes men and women from Groups A and B immigrate illegally to Groups D and E looking for work and trying to earn money to send back to their families. Choose one out of 15 people in Groups A and B to go to Groups D and E to live. When they arrive, they don't sit at the table, but help out these groups in any way they can and wait for the people from those groups to give them a little food.

Card 11: One of the nations represented in Group D is the United States. Let's imagine that the US government just gave \$1 million to provide emergency food aid for poor people in groups A and B. We're giving group D 10 coins to give as food aid. *[hand coins to this group]*. However, a US law says that this money can only be used to buy food grown in the United States—which is often more expensive than buying food in some other places in the world—and that it must be shipped on our own boats—also very expensive. Plus, some of the food is given to charities in the United States to sell to raise money for their programs. So six of these coins will stay in the US—and only four of them actually go to Groups A and B. Thanks to this aid, the people in Groups A and B now get a little more food. *[The four coins are given to Groups A and B, two each. When these coins arrive, a bit more food is brought to the tables of these groups.]*

Card 12: Because a lot of the world's oil is produced by countries in Group C and many of their people are still poor, they've decided to raise the price of oil for the richer countries. Give these cards to Groups D and E. Those in Group C get an extra coin and can buy something with it; people in Group D must give up 2 coins and what they had bought with these, Group E gives up three coins.

## Follow-up discussion

As this exercise concludes, it is important to discuss the process with group members. Some possible discussion questions:

- How did you end up in the group you were in? Was it because of anything you did or intelligence or looks? Is this how it works in the real world—or do people have a lot of say as to where they live or their standard of living? Give examples of people who sometimes do change their status—and those who can't. What are some obstacles to people improving their lifestyle?
- Groups A and B, what were you thinking about the people in Groups D and E having so much to eat? Did you do anything to try to change this? How did it work if you did?
- Group D and E, were you feeling good or bad by having so much more than the other groups? What power do you have to keep the poorer groups from having more of what you have?
- Group A, what do you need from Groups D and E to have a better life for yourself—what could they do or not do that would improve your situation? What do you think people in Groups D and E think about you? Is this fair?
- Groups D and E, in the long run, is there some advantage to you if Groups A and B aren't so poor? What might this be? In your groups you consume enormous amounts of stuff—they say 27 tractor trailer loads of materials per person per year. Is there any problem with this for yourselves or for the future? How do you think people in Groups A and B feel about you? Is it fair for them to feel this way?
- Should Groups D and E have to pay to help poorer people whose food supply is affected by global warming? Why or why not?
- Thinking about yourself, what has your interaction been with people less fortunate/poorer than you? Can you give some examples? Why are people poor—what are some of the factors that create poverty in our country? Abroad? How about people who are much richer than yourself—have you had interaction with this group? How do you feel about the fact that in the world, the richest 1 percent of the people own [nearly half](#) of the wealth? In a world with so many poor people, why don't the rich do more to help everyone have an equal chance? How might this be good for the rich in the long run? Are you rich?

**NCP action options:** Check out our [Spending Money](#) or [Consuming Appetites](#) fliers; take an NCP [Learning Tour](#) to poorer areas of the world for a first-hand look at “how the other half live”; become an [Apprentice](#) at our Sustainable Living Center where people from all walks of life are welcomed; apply to be a [Solidarity Worker](#) to spend six months or more working with people in other areas of the world.

*Food for Thought Hunger Awareness Activity*  
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## Recipes

### **Locro**

(Ecuadorian potato-cheese soup)

Yield: 4-6 servings

Ingredients: ¼ cup butter or oil

½ minced onion

3-4 cloves garlic

2 pounds potatoes

3 cups water or stock

1 cup milk

1 cup shredded muenster or mozzarella cheese

To make: Sauté → Simmer → Mash → Garnish

Heat the oil or butter over medium flame in a large pot. Add the onion and garlic and simmer until onion is translucent. Add the potatoes, water or stock, milk, salt and pepper and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until potatoes are falling apart, 30-45 minutes. Mash the potatoes up a bit with the back of a spoon to thicken the soup, but leave a little chunky. Remove the soup from heat and stir in the cheese. Adjust seasoning and serve immediately.

### **Nsima**

Ingredients: 1 cup ufa (cornmeal or cassava) for two people

2 ¾-3 cups water for each cup ufa

butter or margarine optional

To make: Use a wooden spoon to stir nsima. Heat the water in the saucepan until lukewarm. Mix a little of the ufa with the water, stirring well to make sure there are no lumps. Bring to a boil, stirring well, then lower the heat and let boil gently for a few minutes. The mixture should look like a thin transparent porridge. Sprinkle the remaining ufa over, a little at a time, stirring continuously to avoid lumps from forming, until the desired consistency is reached. Keep stirring until the nsima is smooth and well cooked. A little butter or margarine may be stirred in at this stage. Serve in a dish accompanied by a relish such as pumpkin leaves or tabasco sauce.

### **Dal Bhat (Lentil Soup & Boiled Rice)**

#### **Ingredients**

- 3 cups of water
- 1 cup red lentils
- 1 Tbs. peeled minced fresh ginger
- 1 tsp. seeded, chopped fresh green chili
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. tamarind concentrate

- 1 tsp. vegetable oil
- 1/4 tsp. black mustard seed
- 1/2 tsp. five-spice

### **Instructions**

Bring water to boil in pan over medium heat. Add lentils. Reduce heat and simmer covered until lentils are tender, about 15 minutes. They should break easily when pressed between thumbs and index fingers. Remove from heat.

Puree this mixture with ginger and green chili in blender until smooth. Return to pan and bring to simmer. Add salt, sugar, and tamarind and stir to dissolve the tamarind. Remove from heat.

Heat oil in a 6-inch skillet over medium-low heat. Fry black mustard seeds for a few seconds. As soon as the seeds start popping remove from heat and pour contents of pan over the lentil mixtures. Simmer 2 to 3 more minutes. Stir in five spice. Cover and let stand for a few minutes to help develop the flavors. Garnish with lemon wedges and cilantro and serve with boiled rice.

### **Fish Patties**

Ingredients: 500 g (1 lbs) Haddock Fillets, skinned

2-3 teaspoons salt

1/6 teaspoon pepper

2 1/2 tablespoons flour

1 tablespoon potato starch

1-2 eggs

1-2 onions

5 dl (1 pint) milk

Oil or margarine - for frying

To make: Mince the fish with the onions, at least twice. Stir in the flour, starch, eggs, salt and pepper, adding the milk gradually and stir well. Let stand for 30 minutes. Form the fish patties with a tablespoon and fry on both sides.

### **Caramel Potatoes**

Ingredients: 500 g (1 lb.) potatoes, medium size, cooked and peeled

40 g (1 1/2 oz) margarine

5 tablespoons sugar

To make: Place the sugar on a frying pan and heat until it starts melting, stir in the margarine. When golden, remove from heat, add potatoes, rolling them carefully around so they are completely covered with caramel.

## **Sources**

-Ranking of relative well-being of countries: 2007/2008 Human Development Report, United Nations <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008> and *The End of Poverty*, Jeffrey Sachs

-Poverty in the United States: US Government 2005 census data, analyzed by McClatchy Newspaper 2/24/07

-Individual US wealth statistics: Forbes Magazine list of billionaires

-Environmental refugees by 2050, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2006

*The price list can be formatted as "landscape" and put into three columns, so that each participant will only be using one-third sheet of paper.*

Price List

-Shoes for everyone in family: 1 coin

-Bus ticket for parent to ride to work every day: 1 coin

-Bicycle: 2 coins

- Car: 5 coins
  - Second car: 5 coins
  - Telephone: 2 coins
  - Cell phone: 3 coins
  - Television: 2 coins
  - Video-games: 1 coin
  - House 1: with a roof that doesn't leak but no running water: 2 coins
  - Clean water to drink: 1 coin
  - Electricity in the house: 1 coin
  - Latrine outside (toilet): 1 coin
  - House 2: with good roof, bathroom, electricity, clean water: 7 coins
  - Second House by the lake (can only buy after buying previous house also): 6 coins
  - Mosquito nets (to protect from malaria-carrying mosquitoes: 1 coin
  - Medicine when someone gets sick: 2 coins
  - Go to grade school (per child): 1 coin
  - Go to high school (per child): 2 coins
  - Go to college (per child): 3 coins
  - Mother learns to read: 1 coin
  - Savings: 1/2/3 coins
- MUST CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**
- Food 1: Not quite enough food for everyone in their family to always get enough: 1 coin (2-3 children) 2 coins (4-6 children)
  - Food 2: Enough food for everyone in their family to eat well: 2 coins (2-3 children) 3 coins (4-6 children)
  - Food 3: More than enough food, including snacks, desserts and fast food a couple times a week: 4 coins (2-3 children) 5 coins (4-6 children)