

## **Assembly – Justice – myfishbites.com**

This is an assembly on justice, in terms of the developing world. It can be used in conjunction with the assembly on poverty as the two tie in quite closely.. loads of facts (see foot of page)

### **EXERCISE**

Get 4 people up the front, 2 physically larger stronger people and 2 less strong people. The 2 strong people represent developing countries, the 2 weaker people represent developed countries. Have a ball of string and get the 2 developed 'countries' to hold on to one end of the string with their hands.

Then start talking about slavery and how we hoped we had got rid of slavery. But no. We have economic slavery. Take the other end of the ball of string and wrap it around the 2 individuals representing developing countries. Each time you talk about another level of unfairness, wrap another piece of string around the 2 developing countries. Eventually have a few strands around and show how the 2 developed countries can control the developing countries by gently tugging them. That represents how we have economic slavery today.

### **So what factors do we talk about?**

1. Developing countries have to pay to import to developed countries 2. Developed countries can export to developing countries with no penalties to pay 3. They owe money to the developed countries with interest now higher than the actual amount owed 4. Western businesses have access to very cheap labour, charge high prices in the West, yet pay workers very little 5. Organisations like the World Trade Organisation have not made it easier for developing countries to pay back money 6. The West could easily choose to waive interest repayments on loans but have chosen not to 7. We enjoy a very high standard of living because we oppress other countries

### **FACTS**

- 48 million children in Africa could be given schooling (and their first ever chance to read and write) for the price of just 2 United States stealth bomber planes. World leaders have promised to provide a free primary education for every child in the world by 2015. They have yet to put any resources into action for this.
- The debts of 22 African countries could have been completely written off for just half the amount of money the US Congress authorised for the war in Iraq in 2003. The other half of that money could pay for what the UN needs to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS in Africa three times over.
- Fourteen years ago, world leaders promised to cut agricultural subsidies that cause crop over-production and dumping. They haven't. This means that millions of tonnes of food are wasted every year unnecessarily

- HIV / AIDS has orphaned over 12 million children in Africa
  - Malawi spent over \$50 million in debt repayments to rich western countries, despite serious food shortages
  - Rich countries spend \$1 billion a day subsidising their own farming enterprises and then dump this subsidised produce on developing countries, driving down the price of local produce and devastating local economies and lives
  - As the leaflet says, the Iraq conflict showed that when leaders (like George Bush and Tony Blair) get together they can make things happen, even if you don't agree with their actions. What politicians need to do now is declare a war on poverty in developing countries (and their own countries!)
- (Facts above from Oxfam leaflet, 'What Africa needs now is a war.. on poverty' 2003)
- The world's 10 richest people could easily write off Third World debt with their combined wealth

## **VIDEO**

They are videos and CD-ROMs produced by Tearfund (for example on HIV / AIDS) and others that can help to illustrate your assembly. Go visit [www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org) for more resources like this. The videos are quite powerful. As ever, try to keep clips less than 3 mins, certainly less than 5 mins.

## **INTERVIEW**

If you know someone or couple who has been abroad or been a missionary, worked for a charity, do a short interview with them or let them briefly speak. Obviously check what they're like with young people and up-front. If not, is there a teacher in the school who has done something like this?

## **ACTION**

What action can we take as we can feel hopeless.. the truth is we aren't hopeless and you can make a difference. Whatever you think about the war in Iraq and other wars, British young people made their voices heard and stood for something they believed in. Why not show the same kind of commitment to worldwide justice in terms of poverty and stopping bad stuff happen..

Paraphrasing a famous poem - 'It is enough for bad men to prosper that good young people do nothing..'

1. You can sponsor a child or family in countries. Various charities operate this kind of scheme
2. Contact your local MP, head teacher, Prime Minister or whatever to make your voice heard. Join organisations like Tearfund, Oxfam, Christian Aid etc.

3. Support people through money. Partner organisations like Tearfund who make sure that money isn't just handed out but that local communities are empowered to learn new skills, take ownership of projects and develop themselves with support

4. You can volunteer to work with organisations. This may be working for a charity shop, volunteering to deliver letters, pick up goods etc. This may be in your local community. Remember that not all poverty is international.

5. Challenge people to think what they can do. Offer to give support or talk to you after the assembly etc.

## **MORE FACTS**

(From the United Nations Development Programme)

- A quarter of the world's population, 1.3 billion people, live in severe poverty...

- Nearly 800 million people do not get enough food, and about 500 million people are chronically malnourished. More than a third of children are malnourished.

- In industrial countries more than 100 million people live below the poverty line, more than 5 million people are homeless and 37 million are jobless.

- Of the world's 23 million people living with HIV/AIDS more than 93% live in developing countries.

- More than 840 million adults are illiterate - 538 million of them are women.

- Around 2 million children died as a result of armed conflict in the last decade.

- In developing countries 160 million pre-school children are underweight.

- 1.2 billion people live without access to safe drinking water.

- 110 million landmines lie un detonated in 68 countries.

- The net wealth of the 10 richest billionaires is \$133 billion , more than 1.5 times the total national income of the least developed countries.

- The cost of eradicating poverty is 1% of global income.

- Effective debt relief to the 20 poorest countries would cost \$ 5.5 billion - equivalent to the cost of building Euro Disney.

- Providing universal access to basic social services and transfers to alleviate income poverty would cost \$80 billion, less than the net worth of the seven richest men in the world.

- Six countries can spend \$700 million in nine days on dog and cat food.

- Today's world spend \$92 billion on junk food, \$66 billion on cosmetics and nearly \$800 billion in 1995 for defence expenditure.

## **THERE IS HOPE**

- The proportion of human kind living in poverty has fallen faster in the past 50 years than in the previous 500 years.

- Since 1960 child death rates in developing countries have more than halved, malnutrition rates have declined by almost a third, the proportion of children out of primary school has fallen from more than half to less than a quarter.

- Over the past three decades the population in developing countries with access to safe water almost doubled - from 36% to nearly 70%.

- The extension of basic immunisation over the past two decades has saved the lives of three million children.

- In 1960-93 average life expectancy increased by more than a third in developing countries.