

Activity 5

Debt crises affect people

One step forward



30-45 minutes



15-38 people



easy

Materials:

- one role card per person



You can download the role cards from <http://erlassjahr.de/en/campaigns/educational-material-debt-crises-affect-people/>

What it's about

- Through taking part in a game, the participants witness the fact that a different start in life influences the realisation of life's dreams.
- Engaging in a randomly assigned role allows a change of perspective, and thus a reflection of one's own social status and the associated privileges.
- Participants recognise that inequality exists not only between but also within most societies.
- They learn that debt crises hit poor and marginalised people the hardest.

How to play

A room of sufficient size for all the participants to be able to stand next to each other and walk at least 8 meters forward is required. For very large groups, a large circle with a radius of about 12 metres can also

be used. In this case, the participants move forward towards the middle of the circle. The activity also works very well when performed outdoors.

The participants line up next to each other. Each person now draws a role card. They read the description of the role, but may not talk about it or show it to anyone.

Encourage participants to get into their roles. You can reinforce identification with the roles by asking the following questions, which the participants should answer to themselves without speaking:

- What are the characteristics of the country in which you live?
- In what sort of home do you live?
- With whom do you live?
- What does a typical day look like?

Explain what happens next: you announce that a series of questions will be asked, which each per-

son should answer for themselves with „yes“ or „no“. Each person decides their own answer alone. There are no right or wrong answers. If they say yes, the participants silently take a small step forward; if they say no, they stay where they are. After the last question, everyone should stay in the place where they ended up. Initially, nobody should speak.

Now ask the questions in the box on page 17, one after the other.

Evaluation

1st part:

Ask participants to look around. Where are they standing exactly? Where are the others standing? How does it feel to stand where they're standing? Now question individual participants in different positions:

- How does it feel to be so far in front? How does it feel not to move forward?
- When did you realise that you were leaving the others behind you or that you were hardly making any progress at all?

It can be mentioned here that people who are privileged in real life do not perceive this, while those who are underprivileged are usually well aware of their situation.

You can now ask the whole group:

- Who lives in a rich country, and who lives in a poor one?

It may be surprising that there is inequality both between countries and within countries. One finds very rich people even in countries with very a low gross domestic product - and vice versa.

If the group is not too big, the participants can read out their role cards at the end. If the groups are large, each participant should at least state the country, their gender and the most important characteristic of the role.

2nd part:

The participants cast off their roles by giving themselves a shake and then sitting down in a circle of chairs. The aim of the round of discussions that follows is to evaluate what has been experienced in the game.

Discuss the following questions with the participants:

- Was it difficult for you to get yourself into your role? How can you explain that it was difficult or easy to identify with the role?
- What have you learned about living conditions in the individual countries?
- What was surprising for you about the outcome of the game?
- What are the reasons for making progress or not making progress?
- What could a country's debt have to do with making progress or failing to make progress?
- What has to be done to ensure that everyone in the world has the same chances of having a good life ?

Larger groups can also be split into small groups. The small groups receive the evaluation questions, discuss them and record the results on wall newspapers. These will then be presented in a plenary session.

Questions

- Are you able to go on holiday?
- Do you have a hot meal every day?
- Can you get a bank loan to buy or renovate a home?
- Can you practise your religion openly and without problems?
- Is it possible for every child in your country to attend school free of charge?
- Can you give your children a good education, the opportunity to go to on to further education?
- Can you find the home of your choice?
- Can you afford a car?
- Can you move from one place to another on decent roads?
- Do you get a pension on which you can live when you are old?
- Is there clean water available to you?
- Can you move around the country without fear?
- Are you paid for your work?
- Can you go to the doctor when you are ill?
- Are there democratic elections in your country?
- Do you expect your life to improve in the next five years?
- Can you find everything you need to live, at the market or in shops?
- Can you do things that you enjoy in your free time?