

Connecting Youth for Global Justice



# WebSight

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## WebSight Simulation Games

 *The Bead Game*



# WebSight Simulation Game

## *The Bead Game* \*

### Goals

- To introduce participants to global economic systems and to the groups within them
- To introduce participants to what is required to effect positive global change

### Groups

Each participant is assigned to a group, but they are not told what "R," "U," "M," "P," and "I" stand for:

Group R	(Rich)
Group U	(Upper middle)
Group M	(Middle)
Group P	(Poor)
Group I	(Isolates: people who are mentally or physically disabled, children, elderly, immigrants, and others with little or no power)

Each group is given different numbers of red and yellow "beads" which indicate control over, and inequitable distribution of, resources. Some groups have instructions that are more or less clear and complete, symbolizing their degree of knowledge of how the "system" operates. They will have more "cultural capital" than others.

### *\* The "Beads" and the Sticks*

*This game was originally created as a kit, which could be borrowed from the Education office of CUSO, Ottawa. The original version included a collection of beads and pipe cleaners (for the sticks). It is now out of print and this Web version (created with the permission of CUSO) obviously cannot provide you with the beads and pipe cleaners. You may choose to substitute the beads with pieces of coloured squares or circles and the pipe cleaners with pencils or kebab sticks, and conduct the game just as effectively.*

*We have kept the word "beads" for those of you who want to track down coloured beads at a craft store. (We considered cereal "Os" or candies, but that might cause another set of difficulties for some participants.)*

*It's your call. Be inventive and have fun!*

## ● Space Requirements

One large room. Designate and label a part of the room for each group, except for Group I (Isolates).

## ● Materials Needed

Create one envelope for each participant (you can use freezer bags or similar bags). Players are asked not to open the instructions until they are given the signal to do so. Each package contains the following:

- A copy of the participant instruction sheet (See Appendices 3 to 7 and photocopy the number you need. Everyone in the same group will receive a sheet of instructions designated for their group.)
- A goal card—different for each player (See Appendix 2, photocopy, and cut.)
- The appropriate number of "beads" (See Appendix 1.)
- A pipe-cleaner or stick (Try kebab sticks from the grocery store or skewer pieces of paper if you are using paper instead of beads.)

The facilitator will need a watch with a second hand for accurate timing of rounds, and journals may be provided for the reflection and evaluation period at the end of the game.

## ● Synopsis

This game simulates the subtle rules of our unjust "class" system, which is often not defined publicly. The game highlights the isolation of some people who live within that system. Participants will begin to understand that the system directly opposes the kind of co-operation that enables an equitable society. Some players in the system understand all the rules; others do not have the tools to understand. Some have more resources than others. Some have less power than others until/unless they discover the power of collective action. There is no accountability built into the system until/unless the participants create that. The facilitator of the game symbolizes the strict adherence to the law and order that the system requires.

### More Ideas

*This simulation game is one possible component of an overnight event for youth. See **WebSight: A Facilitator's Guide** for more suggestions for ways to engage youth in economic justice and global partnership—in an overnight event and/or life beyond. To obtain copies of **WebSight**, contact United Church Resource Distribution (UCRD): phone: 1-800-288-7365 or 416-253-5456; fax: 1-888-858-8358 or 416-253-1630; e-mail: [ucrd@united-church.ca](mailto:ucrd@united-church.ca).*



## Guidelines for the Facilitator

1. Describe the game as an introduction to global economic systems. It is better not to explain too much.
2. Assign participants to groups. Explain that the game must be played in **total silence**.
3. Give each player an envelope containing an instruction sheet, a pipe cleaner or stick, the assigned number of "beads" (see Appendix 1), and a goal card. The goal card indicates the number and colour of "beads" which the player is aiming to acquire by the end of the game. Players try to meet their objectives by trading "beads" with other players. The appropriate group letters (R, U, M, P or I) should be printed on the envelopes. **Do not** tell players what these letters represent. It should be made clear to participants that they are not playing roles—they are themselves in a simulated situation.

(Note: Be sensitive as to which participants are assigned to which groups so that the participants' social classes are not mirrored by their group assignments in the simulation game. Be especially careful with the Group I assignments as these are usually the most difficult.)

Envelopes are numbered and should be handed out in order so that if there are 20 players you will use only envelopes 1 to 20; if 25 players, you will use envelopes 1 to 25, and so on. This ensures that the membership in groups remains proportional.

4. Ask participants to gather in the corner of the room designated for their letter and await further instructions. Envelopes should **not** be opened until players are instructed to do so. Ask Group I players to spread out in different parts of the room.
5. Explain that the game is played in rounds. (Each round is 3 minutes and must be carefully timed, but do not inform the participants of this.)
  - A single whistle blow (any clear signal will do: whistle, bell, clap) indicates the start of the next round
  - Two whistle blows signal the end of a round
  - Three whistle blows signal the end of the gameThere are six rounds, but participants will not know this in advance.
6. At the end of each round, the facilitator will collect from each player one red and one yellow "bead" (the collecting should be done quickly). If a player cannot supply these "beads" and if no one offers to help, the player is out of the game and must sit on the sidelines for the duration of the game. These players will be considered "dead."
7. The game must be played in **absolute silence**. Players who make any kind of verbal sound should be penalized (e.g. confiscation of some "beads").
8. Allow 5 minutes, in silence, for players to open their envelopes and read their instructions. Blow the whistle to start the first round. When the round has started and the players are trading beads, **collect everyone's instruction sheet** (they keep their goal cards). Blow the whistle every 3 minutes, until the end of the game.

## *These patterns will probably emerge*

### **Group R (Rich)**

They have an abundance of yellow and red "beads"—more than they need for the six rounds and to meet their goal card's objectives, and enough to trade outside the group. They will need to exchange some yellow and red "beads" with each other. They have less of other colours so they will need to trade with each other and in some cases with other groups. Their instructions are the most complete.

### **Group U (Upper Middle Class)**

They have enough red and yellow "beads" for their rounds and enough to meet the objectives on their goal cards, but they will need to trade with one another in order to meet their objectives completely. They will have an abundance of brown "beads" and an insufficient number of other colours. They will need to trade outside their group. Their instructions are almost complete.

### **Group M (Middle Class)**

Collectively they have enough red and yellow "beads" to meet round needs, but do not meet their individual goal card's objectives. They have an abundance of pink to trade for other colours they need, but not enough brown, green or blue "beads." Their instructions are missing some information.

### **Group P (Poor)**

They have enough red and yellow "beads" to go through one or, at most, two rounds. Some are more desperate than others. They do not have enough brown or orange "beads" to meet their goal card's objectives or to trade for other colours. They have an abundance of blue and green "beads." Their instructions are quite incomplete.

### **Group I (Isolates)**

Depending on the number of participants, there may be isolates from each class. Some isolates may have large numbers of red and yellow "beads," or none at all. Isolates are not typical of any class, representing the marginalized members of society—senior citizens, children, immigrants, and those mentally or physically disabled. Their instructions are jumbled and unintelligible.

## Reflection and Debriefing Suggestions

### Experience

Ask the groups, in the following order – I, P, M, U and R – to share what happened.

- What did you do at the start of the game? How did you feel about that?
- Were you able to achieve your goal?
- Where did you get the "beads" you needed? How?
- How did you feel about the members of your own group? Other groups?
- How did Group I participants feel? What did you think of the Group I participants?
- When did you begin to see a pattern in the game?
- Did you succeed in co-operating with others in the group? In other groups?
- Was there cheating or stealing? Why?
- Did anyone give "beads" away? Why or why not?

### Interpret

- Why was the game played in silence?
- What were some of the unwritten rules that people followed?
- What does this say about the values that were driving the game?
- Were there conflicting sets of values operating?
- Which seemed to predominate: co-operation or competition? Why?
- Which might have been more effective in helping individuals survive?

### Generalize

- At local, national, and international levels, who might each of the groups be?
- Who are the "Isolates"? Who or what does the facilitator represent?
- What do the "beads" represent? (e.g. red and yellow "beads" could represent money with the green and blue representing labour; or the red and yellow "beads" could be necessities for survival, while the other beads represent luxuries)
- What is needed for survival?
- How might groups have used their power differently or more effectively to achieve their goal card's objectives?

### Apply

- Did you learn something about social structures from the game?
- Did you learn something about yourself?
- How might this learning be important in thinking about global economic systems and people within them?
- How can you apply your learning?

### Reflect and Evaluate

- How was this exercise? Collect thoughts in a journal as time or inspiration allows.

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*Source: **The Bead Game** kit was created by the education office of CUSO, 1988. Wording has been adapted for Web publishing purposes. Used with permission.*



# Appendix 1



## Distribution of "Beads"

The facilitator distributes the following number of "beads" into the appropriate envelopes or packages—one package for each player.

Player	Group	Red	Yellow	Brown	Green	Blue	Pink
1	R	9	17	1	2	1	2
2	R	14	10	2	2	2	2
3	U	10	16	5	0	3	1
4	U	8	9	7	2	3	0
5	M	9	4	0	1	1	5
6	M	7	7	1	4	0	8
7	M	4	6	1	0	1	6
8	P	2	0	6	5	1	1
9	P	1	14	8	2	1	1
10	P	1	1	7	6	3	0
11	P	1	1	8	2	1	1
12	I	12	4	0	1	1	5
13	I	3	3	4	5	1	1
<b>Totals</b>		<b>81</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>33</b>

Note: If you have more players, or fewer, distribute group assignments so that there is the same proportion of players in each group as is shown on this chart.

# Appendix 2



## Goal Cards for Individual Players

- Photocopy this sheet.
- Cut out the strips and place these in the appropriate envelopes. These are the "beads" that each player is supposed to collect by the end of the sixth round.

	<b>Group R</b>						
<b>Player 1</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 4	Yellow 5	Brown 3	Green 3	Blue 1	Pink 4
	<b>Group R</b>						
<b>Player 2</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 5	Yellow 4	Brown 1	Green 3	Blue 1	Pink 3
	<b>Group U</b>						
<b>Player 3</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 4	Yellow 2	Brown 3	Green 1	Blue 4	Pink 4
	<b>Group U</b>						
<b>Player 4</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 3	Yellow 3	Brown 2	Green 3	Blue 1	Pink 4
	<b>Group M</b>						
<b>Player 5</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 4	Yellow 1	Brown 1	Green 2	Blue 2	Pink 5
	<b>Group M</b>						
<b>Player 6</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 2	Yellow 3	Brown 2	Green 2	Blue 1	Pink 2
	<b>Group M</b>						
<b>Player 7</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 3	Yellow 3	Brown 2	Green 1	Blue 1	Pink 2
	<b>Group P</b>						
<b>Player 8</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 1	Yellow 2	Brown 3	Green 3	Blue 3	Pink 1
	<b>Group P</b>						
<b>Player 9</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 3	Yellow 1	Brown 2	Green 1	Blue 2	Pink 1
	<b>Group P</b>						
<b>Player 10</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 1	Yellow 2	Brown 3	Green 3	Blue 2	Pink 1
	<b>Group P</b>						
<b>Player 11</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 3	Yellow 1	Brown 2	Green 1	Blue 2	Pink 1
	<b>Group I</b>						
<b>Player 12</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 4	Yellow 1	Brown 1	Green 2	Blue 2	Pink 1
	<b>Group I</b>						
<b>Player 13</b>	<i>Your objective is to have the following number of "beads" by the end of the game.</i>	Red 1	Yellow 2	Brown 3	Green 2	Blue 3	Pink 1



# Appendix 3

## Instruction Sheet for Group R Players



### Materials

In your package, you will find a stick and "beads" of different colours. You will use these "beads" throughout the game to trade. All "beads" that you acquire must be put on your stick at once. If at any point in the game you lose your stick of "beads," you will be considered "dead" and must go to the side of the room and observe for the remainder of the game.

### Goal Card

You will also find a card with a list of different coloured "beads." This card gives you an objective for the game—you must try to have the "beads" listed on your goal card strung on your stick by the end of the game. Everyone has a goal card and will be trying to meet their objectives by trading "beads." If you are in a group, you must try to help others to meet their objectives.

### Whistles

- The game proceeds by rounds. A single whistle blow indicates the start of a round. A round is about 3 minutes. During this time you may move anywhere in the room and trade "beads" with anyone you wish.
- Two whistle blows indicate the end of a round. Stop trading and sit in the nearest chair. At the end of each round, the facilitator will bring around a box.
- You must put one red and one yellow "bead" into the box. If you cannot do this and no one will help you, the facilitator will take your "beads" and stick.
- You must then go to the side of the room for the duration of the game and watch.
- If, when the round ends, you do not have all your "beads" strung on your stick, you may also lose your "beads" and be sent to the side of the room.
- When the whistle blows once, trading may begin again.
- The game ends when you hear three whistle blows.

### Playing

Play will consist of trading and redistributing "beads" as your individual and group objectives require. There are two levels of objectives in the game—individual and group. Your aim should be the reaching of all individual objectives. Not all participants have the same number or colour of "beads," and objectives are different for each player. Some "beads" are in scarce supply and are thus more valuable than others. Red and yellow "beads" are most scarce and are the most valuable since they ensure your survival in the game.



### Remember

The game must be conducted in complete silence.

# Appendix 4

## Instruction Sheet for Group U Players



### Materials

In your package, you will find a stick and "beads" of different colours. You will use these "beads" throughout the game to trade. All "beads" that you acquire must be put on your stick at once. If at any point in the game you lose your stick of "beads," you will be considered "dead" and must go to the side of the room and observe for the remainder of the game.

### Goal Card

You will also find a card with a list of different coloured "beads." This card gives you an objective for the game—you must try to have the "beads" listed on your goal card strung on your stick by the end of the game. Everyone has a goal and will be trying to meet their objectives by trading "beads." If you are in a group, you must try to help others to meet their objectives.

### Whistles

- The game proceeds by rounds. A single whistle blow indicates the start of a round. A round is about 3 minutes. During this time you may move anywhere in the room and trade "beads" with anyone you wish.
- Two whistle blows indicate the end of a round. Stop trading and sit in the nearest chair. At the end of each round, the facilitator will bring around a box.
- You must put one red and one yellow "bead" into the box. If you cannot do this and no one will help you, the facilitator will take your "beads" and stick.
- You must then go to the side of the room for the duration of the game and watch.
- If, when the round ends, you do not have all your "beads" strung on your stick, you may also lose your "beads" and be sent to the side of the room
- The game ends when you hear three whistle blows.

### Playing

Play will consist of trading and redistributing "beads" as your individual and group objectives require. There are two levels of objectives in the game—individual and group. Your aim should be the reaching of all individual objectives. Not all participants have the same number or colour of "beads" as you, and objectives are different for each player.



### Remember

The game must be conducted in complete silence.



# Appendix 5

## Instruction Sheet for Group M Players



### Materials

In your package, you will find a stick and "beads" of different colours. You will use these "beads" throughout the game to trade. If at any point in the game you lose your stick of "beads," you will be considered "dead" and must go to the side of the room and observe for the remainder of the game.

### Goal Card

This card gives you an objective for the game—you must try to have the "beads" listed on your goal card strung on your stick by the end of the game. If you are in a group, you must try to help others to meet their objectives.

### Whistles

- The game proceeds by rounds. A single whistle blow indicates the start of a round. During this time you may move anywhere in the room and trade "beads" with anyone you wish.
- Two whistle blows indicate the end of a round. Stop trading and sit in the nearest chair. At the end of each round, the facilitator will bring around a box.
- You must put one red and one yellow "bead" into the box. If you cannot do this and no one will help you, the facilitator will take your "beads" and stick.
- You must then go to the side of the room for the duration of the game and watch.
- If, when the round ends, you do not have all your "beads" strung on your stick, you may also lose your "beads" and will be sent to the side of the room.
- The game ends when you hear three whistle blows.

### Playing

Play will consist of trading and redistributing "beads" as your individual and group objectives require. There are two levels of objectives in the game—individual and group. Your aim should be the reaching of all individual objectives.



### Remember

The game must be conducted in complete silence.



# Appendix 6

## Instruction Sheet for Group P Players



### Materials

In your package, you will find a stick and "beads" of different colours. All "beads" that you acquire must be put on your stick at once. If at any point in the game you lose your stick of "beads," you will be considered "dead" and must go to the side of the room and observe for the remainder of the game.

### Goal Card

You must try to have the "beads" listed on your goal card strung on your stick by the end of the game. If you are in a group, you must try to help others to meet their objectives.

### Whistles

- The game proceeds by rounds.
- Two whistle blows indicate the end of a round. Stop trading and sit in the nearest chair. At the end of each round, the facilitator will bring around a box.
- You must put one red and one yellow "bead" into the box. If you cannot do this and no one else will help you, the facilitator will take your "beads" and stick.
- You are then "dead."
- If you do not have all your "beads" strung on your stick, you may be sent out of the game.
- The game ends when you hear three whistle blows.



### Remember

The game must be conducted in complete silence.



# Appendix 7



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