

Connecting Youth for Global Justice



WebSight

WebSight Simulation Games

▶ *Building a Global Community*



WebSight Simulation Game

Building a Global Community

Goal

- To build the best possible community, while experiencing unequal access to resources

Group Size

15 to 20 participants (or more, if you have the space)

2 or 3 facilitators

Time Frame

1 hour 10 minutes (approx.)

(5 minutes of explanation; 45 minutes to build the communities; 20 minutes to look at the various communities and discuss)

Materials Needed

- Boxes of various sizes
- Construction paper
- Tape, scissors, string, markers, staplers
- Play money (use Monopoly money or create paper money)
- Three posters (see Appendices) photocopied for display
- A watch to measure 10-minute intervals
- Table and chairs for the common market and trading area

Synopsis

Each group is assigned an area of floor space, marked off by masking tape. This is "their land." Each group receives materials, such as cardboard boxes, construction paper, tape, scissors, and other supplies, which they will use to "build a community" on their land. They also receive money to exchange for other resources.

- The **Over-consumers** begin with plenty of land, supplies, and money.
- The **Sustainers** begin with less land, fewer supplies, and less money.
- The **Marginals** are allocated the least supplies and money.

The game includes a common market trading area, to which each group can send a team of two people to trade money, supplies, and resources. The facilitator at the common market area decides on the success or disappointments of harvests and the value of the goods produced. Participants are compensated accordingly.

Groups have 45 minutes to create their communities and participate in trading. Imagination and creativity are encouraged. Facilitators remind participants about meeting basic needs and sustainability. At the end of the trading and creating time, the whole group "tours" each of the communities before debriefing the experience.

Preparation and Set-up

Invite the participants to form four groups:

- Over-consumers: 1/5 of the participants
- Sustainers: 1/4 of the participants
- Marginals: all other participants (form two groups)

Tape off areas for the four groups, giving more land to the Over-consumers, less to the Sustainers, and the least to the Marginals.

Tape off the common market and trading area.

Post the three posters (see Appendices) in the common area.

Provide the Over-consumers with:

Lots of supplies (construction paper, boxes, tape, scissors, staplers)
Water, arable land, contaminated water, and smog
Enough money to buy in excess of their needs

Provide the Sustainers with:

Some supplies (limited construction paper, boxes, tape, scissors, stapler)
Water, arable land, contaminated water
Some money for essentials (maybe \$200)

Provide the Marginals with:

A minimum of supplies
Some basic food, contaminated water
Hardly any money (maybe \$50)

Facilitators' Roles

The groups are set up to parallel three classes of an unequal society, though participants should not be told this in advance. Give each group 45 minutes to build their community bearing in mind the following considerations.

- Each community should meet certain needs, such as food, shelter, water, employment, homes, health, schools, transportation (as per Poster No. 1).
- Each group needs to utilize their resources—represented by the materials they have and any additional things that they buy or obtain—to create their community.
- Groups may trade with each other to acquire what they need by sending a team of two from the community to trade in the common market area.
- Each community will need to buy technology for certain goods (i.e. energy, treatment plants) at the common market (as per Poster No. 2).

Don't explain too much. Let the groups work things out.

One facilitator sits at a table in the common market area to coordinate the "selling" of goods (as per Poster 2). If you include the optional challenge (see the agriculture component on page 5), the common market facilitator will determine and announce the returns on the harvest after each 10-minute "year." The other facilitator(s) moves between the groups, encouraging their building and creativity, while reminding them of the basic needs each group has to meet.

In order to promote sustainable communities, groups will need to choose technology and other infrastructure that they can afford. The facilitator must remind them that certain technologies or consumption patterns will bring surprise results (e.g. nuclear power will bring nuclear waste, too many cars will bring smog or medical problems). Facilitators should assess the developments in the communities and bring forward these surprise results as they decide. Aside from this, the rest is up to each group and its collective ingenuity.

Some competitiveness should be encouraged to help participants experience how an unjust world helps those with more bargaining tools create better communities. You might encourage this further by suggesting to them that there will an opportunity for the groups to "show off" their communities. Trading or wacky solutions should be encouraged—anything goes! They might even be encouraged to compose rallying cheers to heighten group loyalty and commitment to being the "best."

When the time comes to tour the communities and to enter into group discussion, remind the participants that this wasn't a contest, but a mirroring of what happens in the real world. You might ask them to re-think their earlier competitiveness and ask them to suggest ways in which this energy could have been directed differently, e.g. encouraging a sharing mentality at the common market area, where those with less "competitive edge" would benefit from a fairer redistribution of the world's resources (see suggested discussion questions on page 6).

Optional (but recommended!) Challenge: Agriculture and Harvests

- Groups should decide how to oversee agricultural production or acquire their food (remembering that other needs must also be met).
- Each 10-minute interval represents one year.
- Every year a community must invest (money) in their arable land by taking cash from their community and turning it over to the facilitator at the common market area.
- At the end of the year (10 minutes), a bell (whistle, hand clap) will ring.
- The common market will decide on the success of the harvest (simulating the uncertainty of harvests). The facilitator assigned to the common market area decides arbitrarily the return on the harvest during each interval.
Note: The facilitator may want to have some "cash" to begin with, but he/she will also have the money that the communities invested in their arable land each "year."
- Each group will be told the yield of their harvest and receive compensation accordingly. They may then measure their yield against the indicators outlined on Poster No. 3 and determine how well their people are being fed.
- Once the determinations are made, groups may trade with each other to share a surplus or address a deficit in their harvest.
- Note: If you choose not to include this option, the game will proceed continuously without the 10-minute intervals.

Suggested Discussion Questions

- What was it like to be part of the Over-consumers? The Sustainers? The Marginals?
- What were some of the ways in which individual participants were behaving? Were any of you modelling your behaviour after known individuals (e.g. heads of state, role models)?
- Did a leader emerge in each of the groups? If so, how did that happen?
- Was there conflict between individuals or groups?
- How was that conflict resolved?
- How do you think this simulation mimics the way in which the world works?
- Are there situations that exist in the world today that you can draw parallels to based on your experiences in this simulation?
- Based on your experiences—the challenges you faced and the solutions you developed—what is your sense of world problems today?
- How can these challenges be overcome?
- What can Canada do as a nation to contribute to a better world? What can we do as a youth group or church? What can you do as an individual?

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.*

Building a Global Community was developed by Joseph M. Lee Son. Adapted with permission, January 2003.

Appendix 1

Poster No. 1



Basic Needs

Sustainability is the underlying requirement

Essential needs include:

**Food
Shelter
Water**

Secondary needs include:

**Transportation
Employment
Energy
Hospitals
Schools
other**

Appendix 2

Poster No. 2



Common Market Goods

- \$10 for scissors, tape, coloured markers, staplers
- \$25 for bicycles
- \$50 for oil/gas for cars (comes with smog)
- \$100 for cars
- \$100 for eco-groovyness
- \$200 for biomass energy (comes with smog)
- \$300 for hydroelectric power
(must give up land to flooding)
- \$500 for nuclear power
(comes with nuclear waste)
- \$700 for wind/solar energy (expensive but clean)



Appendix 3

Poster No. 3



Harvest Success Indicators

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| \$25 or less: | nutritionally inadequate diets;
hunger is a problem |
| \$25 to \$50: | a sustenance diet;
hunger is less of a problem |
| \$50 to \$75: | a healthy diet;
no luxuries, people are not hungry |
| \$75 or more: | everyone is well fed;
luxury foods available |