



THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF POVERTY

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| Time | 45–60 minutes |
| Level | upper-intermediate |
| Skills | listening, speaking |
| Knowledge goal | to raise awareness of the existence of slums and of the vicious circle of poverty |
| Materials | Ss' worksheets: p. S1 – Map |

1 Lead-in

- Ask Ss to write down three jobs they would never ever want to do and the explanation why not. Ask them to think of good arguments. Give them an example:

Under no circumstances / On no account / In no way would I be a teacher as this job requires a great deal of patience which I have never had and, in addition to this, I find it...

Tell Ss not to share their ideas between each other yet. Monitor them.

- Then Ss stand up and mingle in the classroom. Their task is to find out from as many students as possible what jobs they would not do and why. After they receive an answer, they should ask the student an additional question – e.g. *Don't you think that being a teacher in a nice and friendly class like this one can be very pleasant and rewarding work?* Tell Ss they should remember as much as possible but cannot take any notes. Set a 5 to 10-minute time limit.
- After the time is up, Ss make groups and while still standing, they discuss their findings and agree on two jobs they would never do. Then discuss these as a class.

Variation for small class: After Ss have written down the jobs and explanations, they make pairs/small groups and describe the jobs to each other without saying what job it is. The other Ss within the group guess the job. After the job is revealed, the student reads his explanation. Then it is other student's turn.

- Ask Ss:

How likely is it that you will have to do one of the mentioned jobs in future?

What do you think might make you do the job? Can you imagine a situation in which you would decide to do this job?

If Ss themselves do not come up with poverty or unemployment as one of the reasons, draw their attention to it:

Supposing you were unemployed and had no financial support from your government or family, would you do the job? If not, what would you do?

2 Main activity

- Distribute the map (p. S1 or downloadable from www.globalissues.eu) to pairs of Ss. Tell them that this is a very unusual map of the world which illustrates "something". Ask the pairs to discuss what it might illustrate.
- Discuss their ideas as a class. If they don't cotton on, tell them: *It illustrates a distribution of something.*

Correct answer: Territory size shows the proportion of all people living on less than or equal to US\$2 a day. If a particular country is larger than another, it means it has a higher proportion of people living on less than US\$2 a day. In 2002, 43 % of the world population lived on this little.

More info on the maps: www.worldmapper.org – "Absolute poverty".

- Tell Ss that poverty is often connected with unemployment and poor choice of jobs. This can be described as a "vicious circle". Can Ss explain what it means?

Vicious circle = a situation in which one problem causes another problem that then causes the first problem again, so that the whole process continues to be repeated.

- If people are unemployed or have a low-paid job, they cannot get out of poverty trap.
- If people are poor, they often have no access to anything more than higher than basic education. This is due to school fees, the need to earn money for the family or take care of them, due to traditional roles of women, lack of schools or qualified teachers etc.
- Tell Ss that they are going to watch a video – a real story of two people who live in the Kibera slum, in Nairobi (Kenya). Make sure Ss know what a slum is and in what conditions the people live there.

INFOBOX – Slums

Slums are poor and overpopulated parts of cities. They usually lack most basic services, infrastructure and access to safe water. The living standard is very low. Slums are often characterized by extreme poverty, bad housing conditions, and social disorganization. They are found mainly in developing countries. The residents of slums are called slumdwellers.

- Tell Ss that the two men will talk about how they earn money in the slum. Ask each student to think of possible ways of earning money in such a place. Ss should note them down.

How do you think the slum dwellers can earn money? And how much money can they earn?

Possible answers: selling things, running bars, building shelters, fixing broken things, robberies and burglaries, going to the rich part of city and offering their help in the household.

- Read to the Ss the following information about Dennis, the first man who appears in the film:

Dennis fell into poverty when his father left his mother for another woman. After finishing school, he moved to Mombasa, the second largest city in Kenya, where he found a job as a DJ. Dennis says that at that time his life was good until the intertribal fighting forced him back to the safety of Nairobi. Life in the slum was very difficult for him because before he was used to having money and a reasonable life style, his own room with a bathroom. In the slum, he joined three young robbers in their criminal activities as the easiest way to get money. He has recently decided to stop doing this and to find a new way of earning money.

- Play the video (26'16–28'05) if you have the whole film or just download the section from www.globalissues.eu (additional materials – “Part 1- Dennis”).
- Then ask Ss:

What is Dennis's new “job”?

Correct answer: cutting wood at night – used for firewood and housebuilding.

How dangerous is it?

Correct answer: it is illegal but he says he would not get such a long jail sentence as he would for robbery.

How much does he earn?

Correct answer: 200 shillings per branch – 400 shillings in four hours. This is much more than on a construction site (150 shillings per day).

- Tell Ss that now you will learn more about Patrick, another young man from the Kibera slum who also works nights in the slum. Give Ss a clue:

Patrick's job is legal. He is self-employed. Can you predict what job it is?

- Before watching the film, dictate to Ss the two following questions. They will find the answers in the video.

1. *What does he do for a living?*

Correct answer: he empties privately-owned toilets in the slum.

2. *Why does he do it?*

Correct answer: It is well-paid and it is his own business. He also does it for his son's sake so that he can go to school and have better job opportunities in the future.

- Play the video (28'05 – 31'55) (till the boy is leaving for school) or download this section from www.globalissues.eu – “Part 2 – Patrick”.

- Check Ss' answers.

- Ss make pairs/small groups. Write the following questions on the board and ask Ss to discuss them:

How do you feel about what you have just seen?

What do you think of Dennis and Patrick's jobs?

3 Follow-up

- Discuss as a class:

What do you remember about life in the Kibera slum (e.g. about toilets, crime)?

What chances do you think the slum dwellers stand of getting out of the vicious circle of poverty?

Considering the fact that more than a billion people today live in extreme poverty, i.e. with less than 1 dollar a day, do you think that we have enough information about these people and the challenges they must face in their everyday lives? If not, how can we access such information? Why do you find it important to know about them?

4 Ideas for Homework

- A. Ss choose one of the following quotes and write a reflection on it:

- “Poverty devastates families, communities and nations. It causes instability and political unrest and fuels conflict.” Kofi Annan

- “The problems we face today, violent conflicts, destruction of nature, poverty, hunger and so on, are human-created problems which can be resolved through human effort, understanding and the development of a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. We need to cultivate a universal responsibility for one another and the planet we share.” 14th Dalai Lama

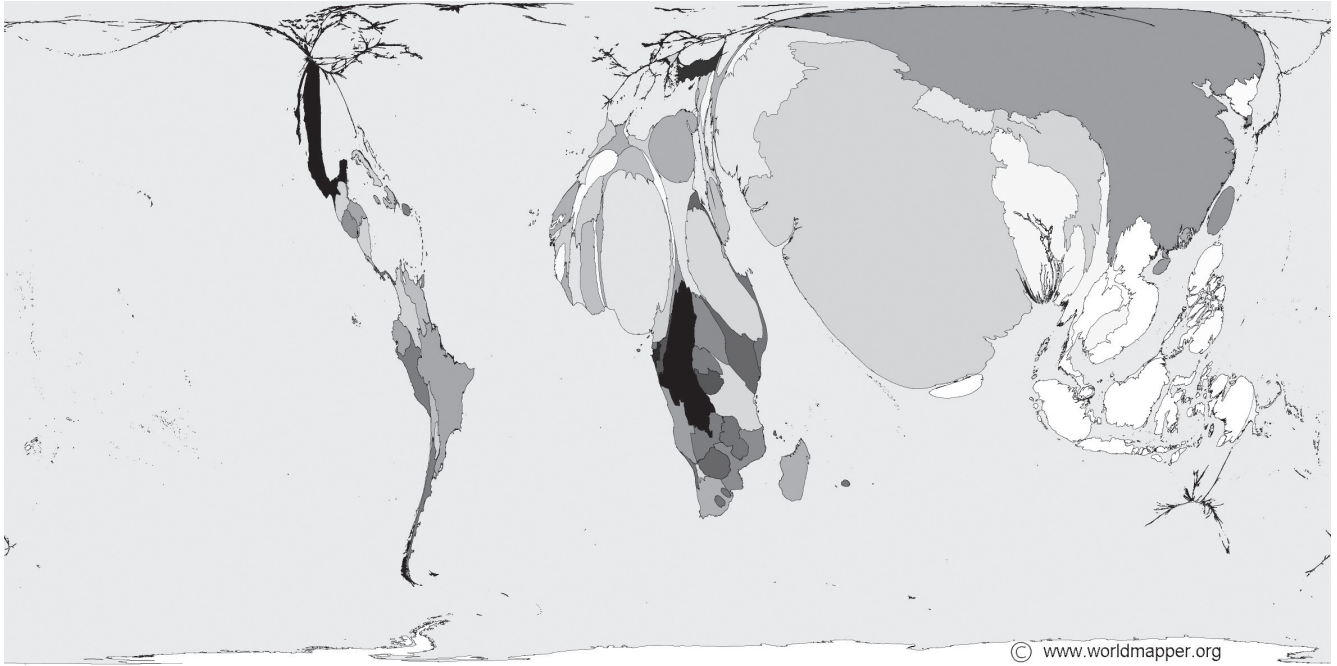
- “The greatest of evils and the worst of crimes is poverty.” George Bernard Shaw

- “The issue of poverty is not a statistical issue. It is a human issue.” James Wolfensohn

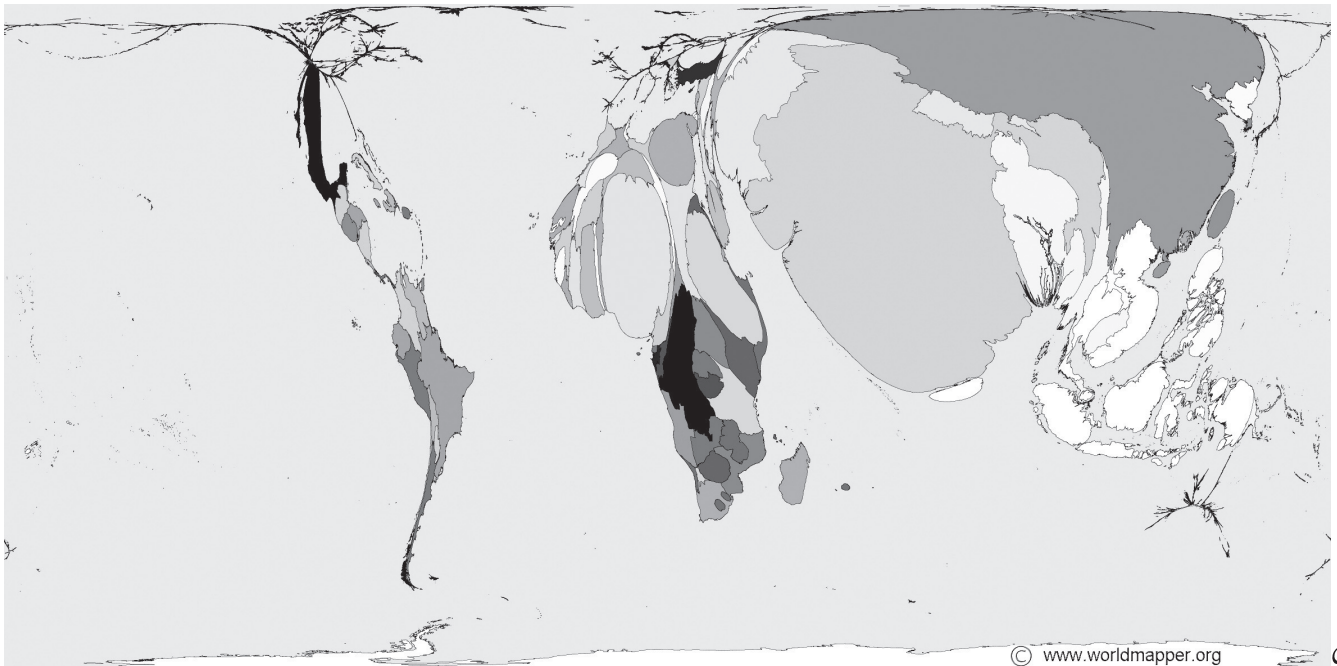
- B. Ss find out more on the campaign Make Poverty History and present their findings the next lesson. What is this campaign about? Who can take action and how? (www.makepovertyhistory.org).

- C. Ss read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and find out whether living in absolute poverty might be considered violation of human rights. If so, Ss make a list of examples and present them in the next lesson.





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