

Fantastic Four

Aim

to explore ways that young people can participate to tackle global poverty.

Age

10 years and older

Time

45 minutes

Materials

set of role cards, fact boxes for older age groups, art materials, paper, markers, materials for superhero costumes (optional)

Note to Leader

Remind the groups that you don't need to be a superhero to tackle global poverty. Every one of us has the power within us to participate in actions against global poverty.

What to do

Break into four groups. Each group gets one of the stories.

Allow 5 minutes to read and think about the stories. Explain that they should imagine they have a superpower that would contribute to tackling the issue in their story. Each group chooses a superpower and a young superhero to wield it linked to their role. Allow a further 10 minutes for this. If you have time, provide art materials and encourage the groups to paint/draw their superhero or make superhero costumes.

Now explain that they are to form new groups. Each group has representatives from the four groups – to

tackle global poverty. The groups have 10 minutes to discuss how, working together, they can defeat the threat of global poverty. (Global poverty could be portrayed as the villain).

Form the large group again. Ask:

- What ideas for action did you come up with?
- What impact would these actions have?
- Do you need super powers to take these actions?
- What can ordinary young people do?

Take Action!

Join the Make Poverty History campaign – the UK and Irish part of the Global Call for Action on Poverty. There are three key issues being promoted by the campaign: More and Better Aid, Trade Justice and Drop the Debt!

Background information on the issues and ideas for getting involved are available on the campaign website www.makepovertyhistory.ie. You can:

- wear the white wrist band
- hold a white band day in your youth club or school
- decorate your building in white for a day or several days



Fantastic Four

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Role Cards

Trade

My name is Manuel and I live with my family in Nicaragua in Central America. The coffee beans we grow on our farm are exported and end up in supermarkets in rich countries like Ireland. A few years ago the price of coffee fell so we now get less money for our crops. This means that we can't afford to buy enough food. I have had to give up school to work longer hours on the farm.

Aid

I am Elena. I am 12 years old and come from Uganda. During the day I help out on my family farm doing things like collecting water and taking care of the cattle. Even though this is hard work I enjoy it. People in my village would like to set up a night school for children like me so that we could get an education and learn better ways of looking after the farm. But they don't have enough money to do this.

Debt

My name is Daniel and I come from Zambia. Last year I got sick and needed medicine. However, the local health clinic had closed down due to a lack of doctors and medicine. The government wants to build hospitals and health clinics but they have to spend most of their money paying back huge loans to rich countries. We have already paid back more money than we ever borrowed. I wasn't even born when the loans were taken out.

Climate Change

My name is Azra and I come from Bangladesh. Recently the number of storms, floods and typhoons in our country has increased. I've heard that it's because the world is warming up. During the last flood, people were forced to sleep on the roofs to avoid the water. The water was badly polluted and food and medicine were hard to find. There was a big increase in the number of mosquitoes, which carry malaria. Many people got ill and died. The water has gone down now, but I'm worried about the next one.



Fantastic Four

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Did You Know?

Aid

- All the rich countries of the UN agreed to spend 0.7% of their annual income on overseas aid but so far only the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Luxembourg have reached the target.
- Ireland said in 2000 that it would reach the aid target by 2007 but this target will not now be reached.
- Rich countries who give aid often make demands about how the aid is used. For example, they may want markets opened up for their products or the privatisation of services such as electricity, healthcare or even education. This can have devastating results on poor people.

Trade

- The two biggest exports that developing countries have are agriculture and textile products.
- The World Trade Organisation puts pressure on developing countries to open up their markets to foreign companies and to stop making payments to local farmers.
- However, rich countries, such as the USA, EU countries and Japan, have actually increased payments to farmers.
- Rich countries also sell unwanted food in developing countries below the cost of production putting local farmers out of business.

Debt

- There are 42 countries called highly indebted poor countries. This means that they owe huge amounts of money to rich countries from loans that were given 30 years ago.
- These 42 countries have a combined debt of \$218 billion.
- The governments of many of the world's poorest countries spend more money paying back interest on loans from rich countries than on services such as health or education.
- In 2000/2001, Ethiopia's debt payments amounted to \$105m. The country's total debt stands at almost \$6bn, the equivalent of its entire annual income.

Climate Change

- The 10 warmest years ever measured worldwide have all occurred in the last 15 years.
- During the 1960s there were 16 climate-related natural disasters. During the 1990s there were 70.
- In the year 2000, the World Health Organisation estimates that there were 150,000 deaths due to the effects of climate change such as floods and drought.
- Climate change will place an additional 80-120 million people at risk of hunger, three quarters of these in Africa.
- In 2003 the World Bank spent 6 times as much on fossil fuel projects as it did on renewable energy sources in the Majority World.
- Ireland can expect warmer, stormier winters, summer droughts and crops such as potatoes could become increasingly difficult to grow.

