



Scorched Earth

Aim:

to examine the impact conflict has on the environment

Age:

12 years and older

Time:

45 minutes

Materials:

set of environmental impact cards for each group, art materials, flipchart and markers.

What to do:

Begin with a brainstorm on what effect conflict has on the environment around us. Ask if anyone knows any examples of conflicts that have damaged the environment. How?

Break into six groups. Give a set of environmental impact cards to each group. Ask the groups to rank the cards according to what they think is the most pressing environmental problem in the aftermath of the conflict. Can the groups agree as to the most pressing problem?

Explain that there is to be a summit at which solutions to the island's environmental problems will be discussed. Divide up the cards, so that each group has a different one. If there are a small number of people, break into three groups and give each group two cards. The groups have to consider possible ways of dealing with the particular problem identified. They have 20 minutes to prepare their presentation, which can be either a drawing or a short drama (2-3 minutes).

Environmental Impact Cards

Water Pollution

Deforestation

Air Pollution

Land Areas Lost to Landmines

Soil Contamination

Loss of Endangered Species

Vietnam

The US war in Vietnam from 1962 to 1975 destroyed 1% and damaged 40% of the country's forests. The demilitarised zone between the North and the South is still unusable due to the presence of landmines. Chemical agents used in the war such as Agent Orange have contaminated the soil and polluted the water.

Source: Eco-Unesco (2003). The Environmental Impacts of War.

Scenario

On your island, there has been a conflict for 100 years. Finally a peace agreement has been signed. Only now have the effects on the environment become apparent. Once upon a time the island was forested, but now most of the trees have been cut down or destroyed by chemicals. A number of plant and animal species have been wiped out and more are on the brink of extinction. People are getting very sick from breathing in the contaminated air or eating food grown on the island or fish caught in the rivers and in the sea. The very young and very old are most vulnerable. One part of the island has had to be abandoned because it contains unexploded landmines.

