

# THE INTERCONNECTIONS GAME



**Learning Intention:** To make connections between students' own lives and other people's experiences of poverty. This activity highlights the way in which everyday actions and circumstances have connections and impacts beyond what we can immediately see.



## Materials:

- Sticky notes – enough for each student to have two sticky notes in different colours
- Set of cards printed and cut up (See next page for cards)
- Pen/pencil for each student
- Poster/board/wall for students to place their sticky notes on

**Initial Discussion:** Ask students to think about the question: “What does poverty have to do with me?” Give students a sticky note on which to write their ideas, and then collect them on a large poster or the board at the front of the classroom. If students seem to need some further clarification, you could ask them to think about how they may be connected to people or countries who they think are living in poverty, or whether they themselves are affected by poverty in any way.

## Game Instructions:

- For the card game component of this activity you will need some open space where the whole class can move around freely – in the classroom or outside.
- Explain to students that each of them will be given a card that has something on it, such as a word, phrase, statistic, country or person. Explain that they are to move around the room and see what is on other people's cards and then try to form groups of four so that they will be able to tell a feasible story about how their four cards are connected.
- As students begin to move around the room there is likely to be a great deal of initial confusion as they try to make connections between different ideas. It is best to let students try to make connections for themselves, even if, at first, this seems unlikely. Any clues or ideas from the teacher should be very vague. There are many possible connections between the ideas written on the cards, so it is not necessarily better for students to form the groups indicated in the 'suggested connections' listed on page 3, as there are many additional connections that can be made.
- Getting it 'right' isn't the intention of the exercise. Rather, it is to demonstrate interconnectedness of our global family and find out some new stories and facts. It is also a great starting point for further investigation about many of the issues raised. Consequently, if students end up forming slightly smaller or larger groups (or a couple of children don't end up in a group), the activity can still work well.
- Once students have had a chance to discuss and form groups (give them at least 10 minutes), ask each group to tell their story to the whole class. Explain that while there are intended connections, there are a multitude of possibilities and this activity is about exploring what those possibilities are and being creative.
- After everyone has told their stories, shuffle people around into groups reflecting the suggested connections (explained on page 3) and explain those interconnections. The content for the cards on the following page is set out in groups of four and the activity works best if there is a complete set for each interconnected story. Depending on the numbers of participants, take out a set of four if needed and, if the group is not a multiple of four, put some people into pairs.

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Cut out the below cards and hand one to each student.

<b>BREAD</b>	<b>FOOD PRICES</b>	<b>\$1000</b>	<b>WASTE</b>
<b>FOOTBALLS AND NETBALLS</b>	<b>CHILD SLAVERY</b>	<b>STITCHED BY HAND</b>	<b>A FAMILY DESPERATE FOR MONEY</b>
<b>HOMELESSNESS</b>	<b>116,000 PEOPLE</b>	<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>LACK OF AFFORDABLE AND ADEQUATE HOUSING</b>
<b>PAIR OF JEANS</b>	<b>WORKERS EARNING LOW WAGES</b>	<b>FASHION</b>	<b>FACTORY</b>
<b>SOLOMON ISLANDS</b>	<b>CLIMATE CHANGE</b>	<b>RISING GLOBAL TEMPERATURES</b>	<b>LOSS OF AGRICULTURE AND INCOME</b>
<b>PROJECT COMPASSION</b>	<b>CARITAS AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>NOT-FOR-PROFIT AGENCY WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY</b>	<b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS</b>
<b>“CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD” (for example, the right to education)</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>ANATERCIA FROM MOZAMBIQUE</b>	<b>TAWONGA FROM MALAWI</b>

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These are suggested connections that can be made. Students might also find their own connections with a different grouping of cards.

BREAD	FOOD PRICES	\$1000	WASTE
<p>Buying more food than we need and throwing out food that is edible is a common practice in Australian homes and restaurants. This food wastage can increase demand for agricultural commodities like wheat and other staples, raising food prices globally and making it more difficult for people living in poverty to buy enough to eat. Money spent by consumers on products that aren't then used is also wasted. It is estimated that the average Australian household spends over \$1000 a year on such wasted products.*</p> <p><i>*Rabobank Food and Farming Report</i></p>			

FOOTBALLS AND NETBALLS	CHILD SLAVERY	STITCHED BY HAND	A FAMILY DESPERATE FOR MONEY
<p>Many footballs, netballs and soccer balls that are used in schools are imported from places where children are employed to hand-stitch balls in very poor working conditions. Many children working in these conditions are doing so because of ongoing poverty in their families and communities, and to pay off debts owed by their families.</p>			

HOMELESSNESS	116,000 PEOPLE	AUSTRALIA	LACK OF AFFORDABLE AND ADEQUATE HOUSING
<p>Research released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare showed that there are currently at least 116, 000 people who are homeless in Australia.* It's important to realise that poverty doesn't just happen 'somewhere else', and that there are many instances and indications of poverty and inequality within Australia. One of these factors include the lack of affordable and adequate housing.</p> <p><i>*Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – Australia's welfare 2021</i></p>			

PAIR OF JEANS	WORKERS EARNING LOW WAGES	FASHION	FACTORY
<p>A great deal of clothing, including jeans and a lot of sportswear, is made in factories where workers endure poor working conditions, long hours, low wages and other violations of their rights. Fairer working conditions would make a big difference in the lives of the people living and working in these situations.</p>			

SOLOMON ISLANDS	CLIMATE CHANGE	RISING GLOBAL TEMPERATURES	LOSS OF AGRICULTURE AND INCOME
<p>For many global communities living in poverty, farming is an important and sometimes the sole form of income. Climate change, rising global temperatures and extreme weather events have threatened agriculture production. In the Solomon Islands, rising sea levels has resulted in coastline erosion and loss of crops and livestock that many people rely on for food and income.</p>			

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PROJECT COMPASSION	CARITAS AUSTRALIA	NOT-FOR-PROFIT AGENCY WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO ALLEVIATE POVERTY	EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS
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Caritas Australia, the Catholic agency for international aid and development, works hand-in-hand with the most marginalised communities in Australia and overseas, to confront the challenges of poverty. Through locally-led programs, Caritas Australia provides resources as well as education and training programs that help individuals develop skills to improve their lives. Caritas Australia's annual Lenten fundraising campaign, Project Compassion, raises crucial funds that allow Caritas Australia to continue this important work.

"CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD" (or example, the right to education)	ME	ANATERCIA FROM MOZAMBIQUE	14 YEAR OLD GIRL FROM MALAWI
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The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an internationally recognised treaty that sets out the rights of children and draws attention to the duties of governments, families, communities and individuals to respect those rights and support the special care and protection of people under the age of 18. A child-friendly version of the convention is available from the UNICEF website.

This interconnection emphasises the way in which these rights belong to all children everywhere – the students in Australian classrooms (the 'me' in this activity) and children such as those described on the other two cards.

**Ending discussion:** Finish the activity by revisiting the question: "What does poverty have to do with me?" Give students a second sticky note (of a different colour than the first) and again, ask them to record their ideas and stick them on the board along with their earlier responses.

Use the discussion to highlight the ways in which The Interconnections Game has shown the multiple ways students' own lives are connected to circumstances and stories of poverty. This is also a good opportunity to discuss the ways in which everyday actions can have a positive impact on alleviating poverty – such as participating in the fair trade movement, being more aware about how tourism affects others and addressing poverty within Australia.

*This activity has been adapted from 'The Interconnections Game' from the Global Education resource titled 'What matters most?'*