

Unfair Games

It can be good to begin a talk on fair trade with a short game/activity which illustrates unfairness.

These are a few suggestions! If you come up with any good ones of your own, please let us know!

The unequal Pasta challenge

Split the group into two teams (if you have more than about 10 people you may need extra groups). Give one a box of cold, cooked spaghetti and a ruler, and the other a box of cold, cooked egg noodles. Tell the teams that they have 3 minutes to produce as many 10cm lengths of pasta as they can! Provide kitchen roll or a tray to lay the lengths out on for easy counting at the end! The team without the ruler will have to guess the length. Half way through, inform the noodle team that the rules have changed for them, and their lengths now have to be 20cm long.

At the end of the game:

-See how each team has done. Measure some of the lengths and comment on how much better the spaghetti team have done!

• Ask whether this was a fair competition. Ask why not.

Points to draw out are:

- The noodles are inferior quality resources
- The spaghetti team had more advanced equipment (a ruler)
- The rules changed half way through and disadvantaged the noodle team.

Explain that this is very like world trade! Those in the rich world have superior resources, advanced technology and communication systems, and rules which often favour them. Those in poorer countries are at a huge disadvantage and are unable to compete.

Don't labour the analogy too much! Once you have drawn the basic parallels, move on from the game!

NB: Having cooked the spaghetti, run cold water through it. Store it in a plastic container so that it doesn't dry out. Pour cooking oil through it and run your fingers through it to ensure the strands are as separated as possible and don't stick to each other. Don't do any of this with the noodles! They should end up drier and stuck to each other!

See next page for some other games/activities to illustrate unfairness



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Unfair Games *continued*

Building a Tower

Give one team at least one newspaper and a roll of sellotape. Give the other team only a pile of straws, 3 small pieces of sellotape and a pair scissors. Ask the teams to construct the highest freestanding tower they can in 5 minutes. Halfway through you could introduce the rule that the straw team may only use straws half the length of the original ones.

Eating Rice

Give one team sets of chopsticks and the other team spoons. They have to eat as much rice as possible in 2 minutes. Halfway through you can introduce the rule that the chopstick team can only take one mouthful every 5 seconds.

Carrying Water

Give one team a cup with a hole in it, and the other team an intact cup. The teams have to carry as much water across the room from one bucket to another within an allotted time span. Halfway through you could introduce the rule that the team with the leaking cup must carry it balanced on the palm of their hand.

All of these games can be used to illustrate general unfairness. Specifically:

- The resources/equipment which the two teams begin with are unequal (Richer countries have better resources and also have access to technology/advanced communication systems which give them an advantage).
- Rules are weighted in favour of the team with the better resources.

(Many existing trade rules benefit richer countries and are disadvantageous to developing or poorer economies).



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