



## Poor inside the 'golden cage'

**Theme** Poverty

**Age group** 15 +

**Group size** 9 - 30

**Time** 90 minutes

### Overview

Poverty does not only exist in developing countries and does not only mean that people do not have enough to eat or have to live on the street. In this activity the participants will become aware of the 'invisible poverty' of children in Europe and will explore the consequences of being poor in a developed country.

## Objectives

- To raise the participants' awareness about poverty in developed countries
- To explore how relative poverty leads to chronic disadvantage and social exclusion

## Material and room

- Role cards
- Price lists
- Markers
- Flip chart papers
- Envelopes (one for each pair)

## Preparation

- Copy the role cards: 2 people should be one character together. You should be able to form small groups of 6 or 7 with each having the 3 different roles in it.
- Copy the price list for each pair, cut out the different items and put them in envelopes.
- Copy the task sheet for each pair.

## Instructions

1. Form pairs (and one small group of 3 if there is an uneven number of participants).
2. Explain to the pairs that they are one person. They should read their role card and take some minutes to think about their character – what they like, how they look etc. (5 minutes)
3. Hand out the task sheet and the envelope with the prices in them. Explain that they have to plan this month's budget with the money they received from their parents. They should choose which things or activities they need or want and which ones they can afford. Everything available they will find in the envelope. Ask them to read the task sheet carefully before making the budget. (15 minutes)



4. Now the participants should meet with the other two characters. Explain that they are friends from school. They should compare what they are planning to do in this month. Do they think someone is poor in their group? (15 minutes)
5. Discuss with the group (20 minutes)
  - How did you feel being poor?
  - How did you feel if you were not poor hearing about the poor person?
  - What does it mean to be poor for this person?
6. Ask the participants to go back into their small groups.
7. They should write on a big poster all the things the poor person in their group could or could not afford this month, such as: "cannot take private lessons"; "cheap sandals", "does not go to the opera".
8. Then ask them to make a 'mind-map'. Next to each item, they should write the consequences of this decision (e.g. the music teacher is not happy with your decision to not go to the opera). Then ask them to write the consequences of the consequences (e.g. worse grades in music because the teacher doesn't like you very much anymore). (25 minutes)

## Debriefing (10 minutes)

- What does the mind map show you?
- Can you generalise the consequences of being poor?
- What can you do to get out of poverty?

Mention that the budget could look more complicated, including additional health care expenses, private schools, savings for a good university, having a daily newspaper at home etc.

## Task sheet

Your task is to draw up a budget for one month. Your parents pay for rent, food at home, health insurance and so on. They give you money to pay for everything which concerns only you: school materials, trips, leisure time activities, clothes and so on. There are some special things going on in this month which you have to be aware of:

- One long weekend, during which your youth group plans to go to the countryside.
- Yearly class trip. There is a possibility to ask the school board to subsidise the trip for some students, if they write a letter asking for support.
- In your Spanish class you will read your first Spanish novel. Your class decided to read a book not available in the school library. Your teacher recommends buying the edition with added vocabulary lists.
- An opera night with the whole class is planned by the music teacher (to watch the opera your class is talking about in music lessons at the moment).
- You have to buy some new clothes. You need new jeans and shoes. Your shoes already have holes and your parents are complaining a lot about them.



## Role cards

### Character 1

You are 15 years old and you live with your parents in small apartment in the city. Your father works every night from 5pm to 1am in the kitchen of a small restaurant. Your mother cleans offices in the evenings. You are part of a youth group that meets every week and goes on camps and hikes several times a year. You love listening to music and you like meeting your friends.

You receive 120 Euro a month from your parents and you have to pay everything from it – clothes, school material, school meals, trips and of course leisure time activities.

### Character 2

You are 15 years old and you live with your parents in an apartment in the city. Your mother is a kindergarten teacher, your father works for the city administration.

You are part of a youth group that meets every week and goes on camps and hikes several times a year. You love listening to music and you like meeting your friends.

You receive 300 Euro a month from your parents and you have to pay for everything from it – clothes, school material, school meals, trips and of course leisure time activities.

### Character 3

You are 15 years old and you live with your parents in a house in the city. Your mother used to work as a teacher, but she doesn't work anymore to have more time for her child. Your father is a managing director in a company.

You are part of a youth group that meets every week and goes on camps and hikes several times a year. You love listening to music and you like meeting your friends.

You receive 600 Euro a month from your parents and you have to pay for everything from it – clothes, school material, school meals, trips and of course leisure time activities.



## Price list

Levi's jeans	90 Euro
No-name jeans	20 Euro
Sandals you have seen in the ads on TV	70 Euro
No-name sandals	10 Euro
Pack of 5 T-Shirts, different colours	10 Euro
T-shirt of your favourite band	20 Euro
T-shirt from second hand shop (with old band on it)	5 Euro
Spanish book with vocabulary	20 Euro
Spanish book normal edition	7 Euro
Notebooks and pens for this month	4 Euro
School trip (with the possibility to ask the school board to pay half for you)	100 Euro
Weekend trip with your youth group over the long weekend	50 Euro
Private lessons to get better at Spanish	15 Euro a week = 60 Euro a month
School meals for 15 days	2 Euro per day = 30 Euro
Football or volleyball team	20 Euro per month
Piano lessons	100 Euro per month
Candy bar	50 Cent
Cinema ticket	8 Euro
Opera ticket	25 Euro
Having a coffee from the cafeteria in the breaks	50 Cent per coffee
Buying a weekly teen magazine	1.50 Euro per week