



Class

The episodes in this section are the stories of Minnesotans on the negative end of socio-economic disparities. The introduction highlights the Itasca Project and the Brookings Institution's *Mind the Gap* report. The Itasca project is a group of business leaders and policy-makers who are concerned about the future business vitality and competitiveness of the region. According to the report, class is one of the three major sets of disparities in the Twin Cities, the other two being race and place.

Class and race disparities often overlap because income disparities disproportionately affect minorities, but the overall gap between "haves" and "have-nots" is growing, endangering the prosperity and economic competitiveness of the region in the future. As the baby boomers are preparing to retire, the region will need as many or more educated and skilled workers to replace them. Yet, current trends suggest that economic disparities will stand in the way of obtaining quality workforce. Addressing these disparities will require joint efforts on behalf of the government, civic organizations, businesses and community leaders. The Itasca project hopes to engage communities around the region in understanding and eliminating these disparities.

The stories in this section focus on different aspects of class disparities such as welfare support, access to healthcare, housing, etc. Through a look at immigrant labor union members, a welfare mother's efforts to get out of poverty, and a student mother's struggles with balancing work, school, and home commitments while facing homelessness, we see the pervasive challenges of class. The stories also show that the class challenges are not inescapable, and highlight efforts, ideas, organizations and individuals working for a brighter future of Minnesota.

CONTENTS

"Not Those People"

Justice for Janitors

Diversity at Food Shelves

Hope and Homelessness

STORY: "Not Those People"

Julia Dinsmore, a writer, mother, and activist, knows first hand about life below the poverty line in the U.S. Julia describes the struggle to overcome "systemic barriers" and break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and welfare. Despite her circumstances, Julia refuses to be a passive victim in the system that penalizes initiative. Early in her life, she found her voice as a poet and a storyteller, and realized that one person can make a difference. Julia's poem, "My name is "Not Those People," was once read on the Senate floor and epitomizes the struggle of human spirit against despair and economic injustices.

Key Terms

Class
Classism
Economic Justice
Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
International Covenant on Economic,
Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
Minimum Wage
Poverty
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
Welfare
White Privilege
Victim
Survival Skills

True or False

1. In today's economy, education is the key to a good job.

True

False

Answer: True

Only 26% of Twin Cities adults who earn less than \$17,500 a year have a college or higher degree. Ninety-seven percent of Twin Cities adults earning between \$35,000 and \$79,999 have a high school degree, but only 81 percent of low-income adults do.

2. The gap between the rich and poor is growing, making class distinctions ever more visible.

True

False

Answer: True

The gap between high- and low-educated and high- and low-income people is growing. In 1989-1999, the average household income of the wealthiest 20% of Twin Cities households rose 24%. At the same time, the average household income for the poorest 20% rose just 16%. In 1989 the wealthiest households earned 9.8 times as much as the poorest. By 1999 this number had increased to 10.4 times.

3. It is often difficult for low-wage workers to improve their skills and get better paying jobs.

True

False

Answer: True

Low-wage workers are often caught in a vicious cycle. They do not have the necessary skills to secure a better-paying job, which relegates them to jobs that offer little in terms of pay, skills training or advancement. Education and training would be a means to increase wage, but because they have limited means of increasing their skills on the job, they are stuck in low-wage work.

4. Poor households have to pay higher prices for goods and services.

True

False

Answer: True

A rough estimate suggests that there are almost 63,000 low-income unbanked (lacking savings or checking account) households in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. These households are more likely to use alternative financial services which are more expensive. A 2000 U.S. Treasury Department study shows that an unbanked worker earning \$12,000 spends \$250 just cashing paychecks.

5. In the U.S. wealth is highly concentrated.

True

False

Answer: True

A large portion of total wealth in the U.S. economy is concentrated in the richest fraction of the population: the top 1% holds one third and the richest 5% holds more than half of the country's total wealth. In contrast, a significant fraction of the population holds little or no wealth at all.

This survey is based on the following documents:

- *Mind the Gap: Disparities and Competitiveness in the Twin Cities* developed by the Brookings Institution. Full report is available at http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer.aspx
- "Wealth Inequality: Data and Models" [PDF], Marco Cagetti and Mariacristina De Nardi, 17 Aug 2005.

Before Viewing

What is class? What are the indicators which help determine an individual's class (e.g. clothing, housing, income)?

What do you think are the main causes of poverty in the Twin Cities?

What does "below the poverty line" mean? How would you define poverty?

From where do your ideas about poverty come? What are the sources of your information?

After Viewing

1. What motivated Julia Dinsmore to challenge her situation and become an activist? How did learning about storytelling traditions from different cultures help Julia?
2. How did she challenge her church, and what did she achieve as a result?
3. What systemic barriers does she refer to when she talks about a system that “penalizes initiative and reinforces victim’s behavior”?
4. Who are the people Julia describes in her poem, “My name is “Not Those People”?”
5. What does Julia mean when she speaks of a “community’s self-sufficiency”?
6. What is white privilege? In what way do you think Julia is privileged?
7. What was the role of the church in establishing the Legislative Committee to End Poverty by 2020? Do you know of any other faith-based organizations which are trying to address poverty, homelessness, and other societal issues in their communities?
8. What are the goals of the Legislative Committee to End Poverty by 2020? What recommendations would you make for the committee members?

Suggested Activities

Measuring Poverty

This activity is aimed at providing a better understanding of poverty and its causes. The students will be engaged in examining the realities of poor families by creating a budget for a family just above the poverty line. By developing a budget for a working family of five, the students will be able to challenge possible assumptions about poor people and minimum wage earners, and critically examine the implications of the way poverty is officially measured by the government.

1. Read the following statement, or have students go to the U.S. Census’s Bureau website: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/povdef.html#4>

The U.S. Census Bureau website provides an example of how the poverty line is officially measured. According to the example, a family of 5 (mother, father, two children and aunt) with an annual income of \$25,000 are not **in poverty**, or **not below the poverty line**. The official poverty threshold for such a family is \$24,662, which means this family has an income surplus of \$338.

2. Explain that students will create a monthly budget for this family in small groups. The family includes two adults, two children and an aunt who lives with the family. They will have to consider such monthly expenses as rent, food, healthcare, clothes, transportation, etc.
3. Allow time for research beforehand (e.g., a homework project), so that students have an idea of how much to budget for rent, groceries, etc. Alternatively, have the students do online research, or bring newspaper articles and other publications where this information can be found. Students can also interview their parents and relatives on the relevant costs of living.

An additional resource for this activity is the interactive online calculator at the Service Employee’s International Union (SEIU):

http://www.seiu.org/issues/good_jobs/notebook.cfm

Students can enter their monthly expenses, such as rent, food, etc. to calculate if they could make it on the minimum wage. They can then “Get the Facts” about minimum wage and other statistics at http://www.seiu.org/issues/good_jobs/minwage_factsheet.cfm

Debriefing Questions

What did you learn in this activity? Did this activity change your perspective on people living in poverty? How? Do you know people facing similar challenges? What can you do to help?

Imagine a Country

This activity introduces social and economic rights found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It employs rights-related statistics to promote critical reflection on strengths, weaknesses, and contradictions in the U.S. society. This multidisciplinary approach encourages participants to draw on the arts, social studies, math, and language arts to express their understanding of and feelings about what they encounter.

The activity might move in many different directions, depending on participant interest and strengths. It is essential, however, that participants develop a basic understanding of social and economic rights and the international documents in which these rights are articulated.

1. Distribute Handout 1, *Imagine a Country*, to participants and ask different participants to read each of the discrete statements. **Note:** Do not indicate that each statement is about the United States.
2. After the reading, allow a brief time for free flowing participant reactions prior to focusing their attention on some of the tasks and questions below.

Discussion Questions

- Are you surprised, disturbed, proud, pleased, or _____ (select your own adjective) by any of these statistics in particular?
 - Do you have questions about any of the data presented in the essay?
 - Do you think this statistical evidence is biased and misrepresents your country? Which statistics in particular are you concerned about?
 - How do you explain the apparent contradictions (e.g., richest nation but also high percentage of poverty that exists in the United States)?
3. Introduce the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):
<http://www.umn.edu/humanrts/instate/b1udhr.htm>

See Glossary definition for more details. Have the students match the conditions described in Julia’s poem, or the Imagine a County essay to articles in the UDHR.

Discussion Questions

For which social and economic rights does the U.S. appear to be doing well? For

which social and economic rights there is a need for substantial improvement?

What is the responsibility of the government to ensure that everyone achieves these human rights as fully as possible? Are there some conditions, such as inadequate nutrition of children, which the government should address? Are there other conditions, such as homelessness of adults, which it should not address? What actions should the government take?

Are there some areas in which the USA is doing as well as expected and others in which we should expect better results? Do you think the U.S. can do better? What makes you think the way you do?

Who besides government should assume responsibilities for addressing human rights problems? What can businesses and community organizations do? What can individuals do? What can you personally do?

Handout

Can You Imagine...

1. A country that is the richest in the world with the highest Gross National Product, but where one out of four children is born into "official poverty," where one out of four of these "officially poor" children lives in a family where one or more parents work full time, year round, and where the "official poverty" line is set well below the actual cost of minimally adequate housing, health care, food, and other necessities.
2. A country that builds schools to educate all its children, but only provides resources for its preschool Head Start Program to enable 40% of the most needy 3-4 year olds to be ready to learn when they enter the school at age six. This is a country where children rank 21st among the 26 industrialized nations in eighth grade math scores.
3. A country that protects over 90% of its children from the diseases of measles, polio, and DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus) through immunization, but where almost 70 million people, including 11 million children (through 18 years) have inadequate or no health insurance, and where the infant mortality rate (number of deaths per 1000 prior to 1 year) for black children (15.1) is twice that for whites (7.6).
4. A country that grows enough food to feed all its people and millions more around the world, but where over 30 million (over 10%) are hungry and more than 50% of the food stamp recipients are children. This is a country where the number of people using food banks and emergency food shelves has increased substantially in recent years.
5. A country that is first in the world in defense spending and in military exports, but last among the 26 industrialized nations in protecting its children against violence. Where 1 in 680 is likely to be killed by gunfire before 20 years, a rate twelve times greater than the other industrialized nations, and where over three million children are reported to be abused and neglected yearly.
6. A country that has laws to ensure the right of all workers to organize and join labor unions and strike to achieve their goals, but where workers, such as farm and textile workers,

have often been harassed and intimidated when they try to exercise these rights.

7. A country that claims that "justice is blind" and strives to ensure that everyone is fairly treated in its legal system, but where African-Americans, who comprise 14% of the population, make up 52% of those executed and over 40% of those under death sentence.
8. A country that has passed laws protecting its children from unfair, inhumane labor practices, but whose government has done little to block the importation of merchandise produced by exploited child labor and whose citizens purchase billions of dollars of products from elsewhere in the world that are manufactured in factories where children are abused and exploited.
9. A country that strives to provide social security for its senior citizens and has poverty rates for those over 65 years that are lower than for the population as a whole, but where the poverty for females over 65 years is double that for males over 65 years and where the percentage of African-Americans and Latinos over 65 years in poverty is over 2.5 times that for whites over 65 years.
10. A country that thinks of itself as a "land of opportunity" for all, but where 40% of Hispanic and African-American children and only 16% of white children are "officially poor," where full-time work at minimum wage pays below the official poverty line for a family of two and where two out of three workers who earn the minimum wage are women, where living standards are falling for younger generations despite the fact that many young households have two wage earners, fewer children, and better education than their parents.
11. A country that has a government department charged with the task of developing policies and programs to ensure that all are sheltered, but where approximately 3/4 million are homeless on any given day and between 1.2 and 2 million people during any year and where approximately 20% of those seeking emergency shelter fail to secure it due to lack of resources.

CAN YOU IMAGINE THAT THIS COUNTRY IS THE USA?

Inspired by and based on "Imagine a Country" by Holly Sklar, in Z Magazine (July/August 1997).

Data Sources: Sklar, H. (1997). "Imagine a Country," Z Magazine (July/August); US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States (yearly). World Bank, World Development Report, NY. Oxford University Press, (yearly). Children's Defense Fund, State of America's Children (yearly). UNICEF, The State of the World's Children (yearly). Bread for the World, US Hunger and Poverty Report (1998)

Going Further

A. Human Rights Framework

Continue the discussion about the human rights framework. Introduce the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

<http://www.umn.edu/humanrts/instate/b2esc.htm>

Match the conditions described in Julia's poem, or the Imagine a Country essay to articles in the ICESCR. Identify social and economic rights found in ICESCR but not mentioned in

the essay or the poem.

B. Localizing Statistics

Bring these national statistics home by trying to match the statistics provided in Handout 1, *Imagine A Country*, with local statistics for hunger, homelessness, etc. Useful sites for local statistics:

- Twin Cities Compass - www.tccompass.org
- *Mind the Gap* Report - http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer/20051027_mindthegap.pdf

C. Media Literacy

Look for news stories (TV, magazines, and newspapers) that are about these social and economic rights. Create a bulletin board to post these stories. Keep adding to this bulletin board during the course of your study of social and economic rights.

D. Language and Art

Indicate your understanding of and feelings about what you have learned in one of the following ways:

- Create a poem, drawing, or song.
- Write a letter to a local newspaper .
- Educate your community with posters and drawings.

STORY: Justice for Janitors

This story highlights the struggle and recent victory of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 26, a Union of over 5,000 janitors, security guards, and window cleaners. In 2006 the Union won a historic new contract that includes affordable family health insurance for the first time. Historically, the union movement is the movement of immigrants. Thus, in addition to livable wages and healthcare insurance, the union is advocating for immigration reform. The president of the Union, Javier Morillo-Alicea, is convinced that this victory is important for everyone because reducing disparities and educating new workers is important for the future of a competitive workforce.

Key Terms

Health Insurance
ICCPR
Union
Union Movement
Collective bargaining
Strike
Health Care

True or False

1. Whether or not a person has health insurance is correlated his or her income.

True

False

Answer: True

In 2006, over 75% of people in households with annual incomes of less than \$25,000 had health insurance coverage. Comparatively, over 91.5% of people in households with annual incomes of \$75,000 or more had health insurance.

2. The number of uninsured children is growing.

True

False

Answer: True

The percentage and the number of children under 18 years old without health insurance increased to 11.7 percent and 8.7 million in 2006 (from 10.9 percent and 8.0 million respectively, in 2005).

3. The number of uninsured of Hispanic origin is decreasing.

True

False

Answer: False

The percentage and the number of uninsured Hispanics increased to 34.1% and 15.3 million in 2006.

4. Undocumented immigrants do not contribute to our economy.

True

False

Answer: False

Undocumented workers contribute more than \$300 billion to our economy annually and each new immigrant generates a positive contribution to our economy of roughly \$1800.

5. Undocumented immigrants come to the U.S. to live on welfare.

True

False

Answer: False

Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, and most other public benefits. Most undocumented immigrants come here to work. In fact, in 2003, more than 90 percent of undocumented men worked—a rate higher than that for U.S. citizens and legal immigrants.

6. Undocumented immigrants pay no taxes.

True

False

Answer: False

Undocumented immigrants pay the same property, sales, and other consumption taxes as everyone else—which fund the majority of state and local costs of schooling and other services. Nearly three-fourths of undocumented workers pay payroll taxes—contributing \$6-7 billion in Social Security funds they are unable to claim.

This survey is based on the following documents:

- *Mind the Gap: Disparities and Competitiveness in the Twin Cities* developed by the Brookings Institution. Full report is available at http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer.aspx
- Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006
<http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/p60-233.pdf>

Before Viewing

What is a union? Why do you think unions were created? For what working conditions do unions usually negotiate with employers? What do you think is the role of unions today?

After Viewing

1. For what results were union members fighting? Why?
2. Why is healthcare one of the most important issues?
3. How does income influence one's healthcare insurance? Is it fair?
4. How does the immigrant labor force change labor unions' concerns?
5. When Javier Morillo-Alicea says "it's more than just janitors," what does he mean?
6. How does the situation of immigrant workers affect you today? How will it affect you and your family in the future?

Suggested Activities

Labor Union Meeting

This activity¹ enables participants to learn about labor unions and workers rights. Through participation in a simulation mediation meeting between the employer and the labor union members, students will be able to develop negotiation and participation skills, as well as an understanding about workers' rights and the role of labor unions in securing those rights.

1. Prepare for and hold the meeting

- a) Introduce the activity: This role-play activity is a simulation of a mediation meeting between employers and labor union members. The goal is to reach consensus over terms and condition for a new contract.
- b) Divide the students into two groups: Employers and Labor Union Members. Give each student a copy of the handout explaining the scenario. You may also discuss relevant terminology or refer students to the Glossary.
- c) Explain the process: The chair of the meeting will ask the employers to present their proposal first. Following their presentation, the audience and labor union representative may ask brief clarification questions. Next, the chair will invite the union to present their new proposal, again followed by clarifying questions, if needed. The two parties will then engage in negotiations leading to a new contract between the unions and the employers.
- d) Come up with meeting procedures. If time permits, have students develop the meeting rules. E.g., who speaks, when, for how long, etc.
- e) Instruct students to start working in their groups and select their representatives (both employers and labor union members) and a meeting chair (employers). The groups should then discuss and agree on the terms of the new proposal and negotiating powers of their representatives (in what cases they should consult with the group before making a decision).
- f) Allow 25-45 minutes for group work. Next, invite the chair to welcome both sides and begin the negotiations.

2. Debrief

- a) Ask for participants' immediate reactions to the activity. Did they learn something new? Do they feel like they worked on developing some new skills? Depending on the reactions proceed with some of the questions below:
 - Did you enjoy working with your group? What was most and least enjoyable about your work group?

¹ Adapted from Trade Union meeting activity from "COMPASS" - A manual on human rights education with young people, Council of Europe, May 2002 at http://www.eycb.coe.int/Compass/en/chapter_2/2_44.asp

- How did you feel about revising your claims?
- Did you feel that your representative did a good job of presenting and defending your proposal? Why? Why not?
- Were you satisfied with meeting results? What claims did you have to concede? How did it feel?
- As a group, did you develop a negotiating strategy? Did it work? What would you have done differently?

b) Tell the participants that the numbers in the scenario are based on a real story. Union members from Cincinnati, Ohio presented very similar claims to their employers in July 2007 and won.

c) Have the students read the article²: Janitors' Victory Brings Hope to Cincinnati Families, Creates New Model for Ensuring Good Jobs with Health Care for Region's Low-Wage Workers. http://www.seiu.org/media/pressreleases.cfm?pr_id=1460

Handout 1

JANITORS' VICTORY BRINGS HOPE TO CINCINNATI FAMILIES, CREATES NEW MODEL FOR ENSURING GOOD JOBS WITH HEALTH CARE FOR REGION'S LOW-WAGE WORKERS

Historic city-wide contract will more than double the income of nearly 1,200 janitors throughout Greater Cincinnati

Cincinnati – On the heels of recent high-profile contract victories that made dramatic gains for thousands of working families in Houston and Miami, Cincinnati janitors have won higher wages, more work hours, and health insurance in their first-ever city-wide union contract. The groundbreaking agreement will help lift more than a thousand janitors out of poverty, increasing the income of the majority of workers by an incredible 129 percent over the course of the contract—nearly doubling their income of workers at the lowest end of the spectrum within the first 18 months alone.

“This is a huge victory for our families and for our neighborhoods,” said Cincinnati janitor Lauressie “Dee Dee” Tillman, “I’m proud of what we have accomplished, not just for us and our families, but for all of the workers in this city who are paid so little. We showed what can be done—what must be done—to make Cincinnati a better city to live in.”

The agreement was reached after representatives for 1,200 Cincinnati janitors and the city’s eight largest cleaning companies—ABM, Jancoa, Professional Maintenance of Cincinnati, Aetna Building Maintenance, Scioto Corp, NSG, OneSource, and GSF—returned to the bargaining table to avert a metropolitan-area wide strike. Participants on both sides of the table engaged in constructive, cordial talks which took into account the challenges low-wage janitors face and the impact of a contract on the city’s most impoverished neighborhoods. Recognizing the significance of the improvements established by the contract, both parties also agreed to continue to collaborate and reach out to other corporate leaders to join efforts to raise standards and improve the industry in the future. The agreement is already being hailed as a potential model for raising job and health care standards for low-wage workers throughout the region—including in Columbus and Indianapolis where janitors are currently fighting for improvements in those cities.

The agreement, which will be put before Cincinnati’s janitors for ratification tomorrow, provides the city’s janitors with victories on four key fronts:

- **Higher Wages.** Janitors with current wages at the Ohio state minimum of \$6.85 an hour will receive an immediate increase to \$7.05 on October 1, 2007. Janitors’ pay will increase to \$7.55 an hour on January 1, 2008, \$8.15 an hour on January 1, 2009, and \$8.35 by January 1, 2010, \$8.85 by January 1, 2011, and \$9.80 by January 1, 2012.
- **More Hours.** The new contract will increase work hours for janitors currently provided with only 4 hours of work a night to seven hours a shift in the first two and half years. The additional hours and the wage increase mean that the vast majority of janitors will see their income rise by nearly 129 percent over the course of the five-year contract. Workers who currently make \$6.85 an hour will see their income rise by a remarkable 150 percent overall—and nearly double by the start of 2009.

Reprinted with permission from Lynda Tran and Kevin O’Donnell, SEIU, Washington, DC.

- **Quality, Affordable Health Insurance.** At a time when many employers are shifting health care costs on to workers, Cincinnati janitors won individual health insurance at a cost of only \$20 per month. Family insurance will also be available for a cost of \$198 a month. The health insurance will become available starting January 1, 2010.

- **Paid Holidays and Vacation Time.** The contract will allow workers—many for the first time in their lives—paid time off from work. Janitors will receive six paid holidays per year and be able to accrue paid vacation time beginning the first year of the contract.

The historic union contract includes the largest increases in income ever won through the long-running national Justice for Janitors Campaign and builds on the momentum achieved by janitors' victories in Houston and Miami. In Cincinnati, the victory is being seen as an important step toward uniting a city that has often seen bitter division in the past. In their fight for a contract, Cincinnati janitors drew upon a strong coalition of faith, political and community leaders calling for good jobs with health care in a city that has seen a sharp increase in service-sector employment.

"Cincinnati won big today," said Cincinnati janitor Linda Watson of Price Hill. "They said we couldn't do it but we stood strong with our families, our supporters, and our neighborhoods. I'm proud to say we won a better future for hard-working people in our city."

The increase in wages and health insurance will dramatically improve the lives of 1,200 Cincinnati janitors, many of whom had been earning as little as \$28 a day without benefits. The increase in wages and hours will lift many families out of poverty, and provide janitors and their families with a steppingstone into the middle class while the health insurance will ensure workers have access to affordable health care.

Discuss

- Were you surprised to learn that it was a real story?
- If you reached an agreement in your simulation meeting, how does it compare to what Cincinnati workers actually won?
- Based on what you know now, would you change your position? If so, how and why?

Handout 2

Case Scenario: Employer-Employee Negotiation

You are a part of the meeting between employers and employees who are members of the labor union. The negotiations over better wages and benefits came to a halt.

The union represents over 5,000 janitors, guards and window cleaners. They have to work without holidays and receive no paid time off. There is no paid vacation time.

As one of the fast growing industries, the services sector is not experiencing significant economic difficulties. Profits are on the rise, and the sector as a whole is blossoming. Yet, the workers continue to receive minimum wages of \$6.85 an hour. They also do not get any health insurance benefits, and get only 4 hour shifts per night.

The workers demand a new contract that will provide for the following:

Higher Wages. Janitors with current wages at the state minimum of \$6.85 an hour will receive an immediate increase to \$8.15. Janitors' pay will increase to \$8.35 an hour on January 1, 2009, and \$8.85 by January 1, 2010, \$9.80 by January 1, 2011.

More Hours. The new contract will increase work hours for janitors currently provided with only 4 hours of work a night to eight hours a shift in the first two and half years.

Quality, Affordable Health Insurance. Workers will receive individual health insurance at a cost of only \$20 per month. Family insurance will also be available for a cost of \$198 a month.

Paid Holidays and Vacation Time. The contract will allow workers paid time off from work. Janitors will receive six paid holidays per year and be able to accrue paid vacation time beginning the first year of the contract

Management proposal:

- Wage increase to \$7.05 without any subsequent increases.
- 5 hours of work night as opposed to existing 4 hours.
- No employer-provided health insurance.
- 2 paid holidays per year.

The management proposal was rejected by the general assembly of workers. The negotiations have been going on for several months. Meanwhile, the contract between the employers and the Union expired, and it is in everybody's best interests to come to an agreement and be able to sign a new contract.

This mediation meeting is organized by the employers who try to prevent a general strike. It is this meeting that is the basis of the simulation. The goal is for both sides to reassess their claims, and come up with new proposals with a view of signing a new mutually-beneficial contract.

All union members can attend the meeting, but they should nominate 5 representatives to speak on behalf of the Union. The employer will be represented by three individuals, one of whom they should appoint as chair of the meeting.

Community Research and Action: Economic and Social Rights

This activity enables participants to become knowledgeable about selected local human rights conditions. They research human rights problems in their community, analyze and report on data gathered, and develop an action plan to address problems related to social and economic rights. Although built around the issues of homelessness, hunger, lack of adequate health care, and inadequate employment conditions and wages, this format is adaptable to other human rights concerns.

1. Read/Discuss:

Read the following quotation by Eleanor Roosevelt, Chair of the UN Human Rights Commission which created the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to participants:

Where, after all, do universal rights begin? In places, close to home— so close and so small that cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the 'large world'.

Eleanor Roosevelt, *The Great Question* (NY: United Nations, 1958).

2. Discuss:

Introduce the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and indicate how the activity relates to this document. In particular, call the group's attention to Articles 22-27 in the UDHR. Have them identify those articles that refer to the specific human rights issues. If time permits, have them read the relevant articles aloud. Discuss language that is unclear and identify definitional problems.

3. List:

Identify individuals, organizations, or agencies that address these societal problems and work to support or promote these human rights.

Note: This exercise might be a small group research project. This information will serve as sources for the interviewees and the community research effort. Consider such organizations as food shelves, legal aid agencies, homeless shelters, meals on wheels, labor unions, tenants rights associations, and "free" community health clinics.

4. Prepare for Research:

Divide the participants into research teams to explore one of the identified human rights issues. Each team should: a) identify individuals and groups from Step 3 to interview and set up these meetings, b) plan the interview questions, drawing on those provided below and developing additional questions from group participants, and c) assign responsibilities (e.g., who will conduct interviews and who will gather background information from library and web sources.

5. Conduct Research:

Each team then researches its human rights issue. Some group members will conduct interviews in their community to determine the extent of the problem and what is being done to address it. Others might gather data through library research or on the World Wide Web, thus placing the local situation in a larger societal/global context. A member of each team should visit a site in the community that addresses its human rights issue.

6. Report Research Findings:

Each team submits a written report and develops a presentation highlighting its findings for the rest of the group. The presentation might involve art, video, role-play, music, or any other medium to communicate their findings and indicate what actions need to be taken to address the problem. Teams might write an article for a local or school newspaper or invite “the press” to their presentations.

Common Interview Questions (For All Issues)

Describing the Problem

- What is the problem as you see it?
- How does the problem manifest itself locally? Nationally? Globally?
- Do those members of the community who do not have _____ (insert appropriate theme) tend to come from particular groups (e.g., income, sections of town, age, race/ethnicity, gender, ability/disability, citizenship status, language)? Do they share any other similarities (e.g., attitude, legal status)?
- What is being done locally, nationally, and globally to address this issue?
- What services exist in your community to support people denied this human right? Who provides these services (e.g., public funding, private agencies, individuals)?
- Do the services reach those in need? Have the services been expanded or curtailed in recent years? If so, to what effect?

Uncovering Associated Conditions

- What policies and practices contribute to the violation or denial of this human right?
- How are these four human rights issues (e.g., homelessness, hunger, lack of adequate health care, and inadequate employment conditions and wages) interrelated?
- Do some individuals benefit and others suffer, directly or indirectly, as a result of the situation that presently exists?
- How do people justify or explain that certain people have this basic need met (and much more!) while others do not? Do you find these explanations convincing? Explain.
- Do you consider _____(insert topic) to be a human right to which everyone is entitled?
- Do you think it is appropriate and/or fair that some in the community lack this condition and others have it?

Planning for Change

- Identify policies, practices, and/or attitudes that need to be modified, strengthened, or eliminated and new ones that need to be initiated.
- What might the participants do to help promote these human rights in their community?

Issue-Specific Interview Questions

Homelessness

- Are there homeless people in this community? How many?
- How many are served by shelters? How many are not?
- How accurate are these numbers? How are they determined?
- Have the numbers of homeless been going up or down? Explain
- Are there characteristics that many homeless people have in common? Is there a typical age? Gender? Racial or ethnic group? How do they become homeless?
- Has the composition of the homeless population been changing? Explain.
- What effect have government policies had on creating homelessness?
- What is the likelihood that those who are homeless also share other characteristics (e.g., have been deinstitutionalized, have substance abuse problems, have experienced domestic violence, have a mental or physical disability, are unemployed, and/or are under 18 years of age)?
- What permanent housing is available? What factors help them find housing?
- Is the housing adequate (e.g., number of units, conditions)? Are there people on waiting lists for housing?
- Are conditions in this housing healthy and safe (e.g., free of rats, lead paint, structural damage, environmental pollution, electrical/fire hazards, gang/drug related violence)?
- Are services provided in a respectful way to those in need?

Hunger

- Are people in this community hungry on a regular basis? Who are they?
- How accurate are these numbers? How are they determined?
- Have the number of hungry people been going up or down? Explain.
- Are there characteristics that many hungry people have in common? Is there a typical age? Gender? Racial or ethnic group?
- Has the composition of the hungry population been changing? Explain.
- Are there people who hold full-time employment but whose family are still hungry and malnourished? How is this possible?
- What factors have contributed to their lacking food?
- What services are available to help hungry people in our community?
- Who offers these services? Are they funded by the government or private institutions or agencies?
- Are services provided in a respectful way to those in need?
- Have the numbers needing food assistance increased or decrease recently? Explain.
- Have food assistance programs been expanding or contracting recently? Explain.

Lack of Adequate Health Care

- Are people in this community in need of health care but are unable to get it?
- Are people denied health care or insurance? What do these people do when they are sick or injured?
- Are there people who receive inadequate care?
- How accurate are these numbers? How are they determined?
- Have the numbers of those with inadequate health care been going up or down? Explain.
- Are there characteristics that those lacking adequate health care have in common?

Is there a typical age? Gender? Racial or ethnic group? How do they become lacking in health care?

- Has the composition of the population lacking adequate health care been changing? Explain.
- What services are available for people who cannot afford to pay for health care? Are they funded by the government or private institutions or agencies?
- What pre- and post-natal services are available for low income mothers? Are services provided in a respectful way to those in need?
- Has the number of people lacking health care and insurance increased or decreased recently?

Inadequate Employment Wages and Conditions

- How would you define a living wage?
- Are people employed in this community who do not receive a living wage?
- Are people forced to work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions?
- Are working conditions fair for all (male/female, black/white)?
- Is there equal pay for equal work?
- Are people denied the right to organize at their place of work?
- Are people denied opportunities for advancement and professional development?
- Are people forced to work to obtain public assistance benefits?
- What are the child care concerns of low wage earners? Are they being addressed? If so, how? If not, why?



Going Further

A. Human Rights Framework

Continue the discussion about the human rights framework. Introduce the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Explain briefly how it relates to the UDHR (e.g., the UDHR is a statement of principles while the International Covenant is a binding agreement).

Discuss: For what rights are the workers in the video fighting? (Identify articles in the ICESCR.) How are they protected or not protected in the U.S.? Whose responsibility is it to protect those rights?

Invite a local union member to talk to your class. Have them talk about specific social and economic rights, and what their union has done or is doing to protect those rights.

B. Localizing Statistics

When preparing for interviews, have the teams review local statistics on hunger and homelessness, health and income disparities. Useful sites for local statistics:

- Twin Cities Compass - www.tccompass.org
- *Mind the Gap* Report - http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer/20051027_mindthegap.pdf

C. Developing a Community Action Plan

After discussing their findings and weighing their action options, students may decide on a human rights problem to adopt as a project. Brainstorm ways in which they can become involved and begin to develop a Community Action Plan. This might involve joining with activists already working on the selected problem. December 10th, is a Human Rights Day and might be designated as day when the class decide on their project. Encourage students to use the online Community Action Planning Tool at <http://www.hrusa.org/thisismyhome/project/tools.shtml>

D. Taking Action

The group then carries out its Community Action Plan to address the human rights problem. Activities might include educating school and community members via posters, plays, street theater, school assemblies and community speakers, newspaper articles, and public demonstrations. They can also engage in letter-writing campaigns, organizing public consciousness-raising concerts, lobbying government officials and elected representatives, raising funds to support local and global relief and development agencies, and volunteering services to local or international organizations.

In a school, these activities can easily be connected to the participants' academic work. Participants can accomplish this by conducting research and recording, analyzing, and sharing their experiences through class presentations and written reports. Many opportunities exist for students to express themselves through art, video, music, and drama, and to incorporate mathematics (e.g., percentages, graphs, and proportions) into their work. See www.thisismyhome.org for ideas.

STORY: Diversity at Food Shelves

For over one hundred years, Neighborhood House has served immigrant and working class communities on the West side of St. Paul. As demand for food shelf access increased over the last decade, Neighborhood House has contributed to meeting that demand. Families, like Xai Neng's, visit the food shelf regularly to pick up items to which they otherwise might not have access. One challenge that Neighborhood House has faced has been matching its food stock with the cultural practices of its clients in order to give comfort in the midst of new and often unfamiliar surroundings. In this vein, the Neighborhood House tries to offer ethnically appropriate food as much as possible, because the poundage of food is limited for each family, so that the proportion of food that is used increases. Neighborhood House also offers immigrants assistance in areas of clothing, housing, transportation, employment, and language.

Key Terms

Food Shelves
Food insecurity
Immigration
Survival Skills
Resources
Self-Sufficiency

Agree or Disagree

1. Everyone has a right to food.
2. Many hard-working people do not make enough money to feed their families.
3. I think local government should be more involved in eliminating food insecurities.
4. Poverty is the main cause for food insecurity in Minnesota.
5. Food insecurities can only be eliminated if large socio-economic issues are resolved.
6. Charities and other organizations discourage people from working when they provide food for free.
7. When charities provide food, they should ensure that their food items are in line with cultural practices of their clients.
8. A healthy and prosperous community is the one where everybody gets to eat.
9. I am glad organizations exist to help the new immigrants with food, clothing, language, and jobs.
10. I would like to welcome and help new immigrants in my community.

Before Viewing

What are food insecurities? Do you know of anyone experiencing food insecurities?

After Viewing

1. What is Neighborhood House? What kind of services does it provide?
2. Why do you think the demand for food shelves has increased over the last decade?

- What socio-economic factors contribute to people's use of food shelves?
3. Why do people use food shelves? What kind of circumstances lead to it?
 4. What has been one of Neighborhood House's challenges in providing food to new immigrants? How is it responding?
 5. Why is it important to provide culturally appropriate food?
 6. What connection does this story have to your life? How will improving lives of one segment of society improve all of our lives?

Suggested Activities

Got Food?

This activity will help students to learn about food and hunger issues in their local context. By exploring the data and engaging in a group discussion, the students will develop a better understanding of food insecurities, and empathy for those who experience them.

1. Introduce the activity

Ask students to think about what comes to mind when you say "food insecurities." Write the phrase on the board or flipchart sheet, and ask students to brainstorm ideas. Do not stop to discuss or challenge the ideas; all ideas should be accepted and recorded during brainstorming. When all ideas have been recorded ask students if they want to add, remove or modify anything on the board. Work with students to develop a working definition of food insecurities. When the definition has been created, explain that students will work in groups to learn about food insecurities in Minnesota.

2. Divide students into groups

Divide students into groups of 3-5, depending on class size. Give each student a copy of Handout 1: Food Insecurities in Minnesota.

3. Work in small groups

Ask students to take 1-3 minutes to read the handout individually. Next, ask students to discuss it in small groups. Ask each group to choose one or more spokespersons who will later present to the larger group. Allow 20-25 minutes for the small group discussions. Instruct the spokespersons to record major points and run the summary by the group before presenting.

Possible questions for discussion:

1. List three new things that you did not know about food insecurities in Minnesota which excited, surprised, or upset you.
2. What are positive and negative facts about Minnesota's handling of food insecurities?
3. Who are the people who use food shelves?
4. What are the reasons for using food shelves?
5. Why do you think reliance on food shelves has increased in the past few years?
6. What do food insecurities have to do with housing or minimum wage?

7. Why do you think women, children and people of color are disproportionately affected by food insecurities?
8. Who do you think should address the issue? What factors contribute to a successful solution?
9. How can you be a part of this solution?

4. Discuss and Debrief

Ask the spokesperson/s for each group to present their summaries. Allow a couple of questions after each presentation, but ask participants to hold their comments and discussion until all groups have presented. When all groups have presented discuss in plenary:

- How did you feel about this activity?
- What have you learned from other groups? What do you strongly agree or disagree with?

Handout

FOOD INSECURITIES IN MINNESOTA

Minnesota has been relatively successful in addressing food insecurity, being the 6th least food insecure state in the nation. Mississippi, New Mexico and Texas are the top three states in the nation in prevalence of food insecurities.

However, food shelf use is at a record high for the State of Minnesota. It has grown 52% since 2000 and 90% in 20 years. Minnesota has more than 300 food shelves across the state and, in 2006, clients visited food shelves 1.8 million times and these food shelves distributed more than 42 million pounds of food. Of Minnesota's food shelf users, 47% of adults and 14% of children skip meals to stretch their budgets. Contrary to common stereotypes, most of the Minnesotans who use food shelves and on-site meal programs are employed, disabled, or retired. Unaffordable housing is a major factor in Minnesota hunger.

Poverty is the largest cause of food insecurity in Minnesota and in the nation. According to the last US Census 380,000 people in Minnesota live in poverty. Poverty means that a woman with two children has to earn less than \$15,670. (The cost of her basic needs would be \$33,480 in greater Minnesota and \$40,476 in the metro region.) Earning a minimum wage of \$6.15 an hour, she would actually earn \$12,792 annually. A recent report showed that 2/3 of Minnesota food shelf clients make less than \$1,000 a month and 3/4 live in subsidized housing. Women, children, and people of color are disproportionately among the hungry.

The data is based on the following documents:

1. Chase, R. and Schauben, L. 2006. The state of hunger in Minnesota. Survey of food shelf and on-site meal program recipients in 2005. Saint Paul: Wilder Research. Available at: http://www.wilder.org/reportssummary.0.html?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1890
2. Right to Food Fact Sheet, The Right to Food in Minnesota and the United States. *Advocates for Human Rights*. Available at: <http://discoverhumanrights.org/6d8e33f1-5716-4ead-a96a-d59358bae00b.html?Nodetd=>
3. 2007 Almanac of Hunger and Poverty in America: Children and Elderly Hunger Facts. *America's Second Harvest*. http://www.secondharvest.org/learn_about_hunger/fact_sheet/poverty_stats.html

Going Further

A. Human Rights Framework

- 1) Continue the discussion about food and food insecurities within the human rights framework. Introduce the “right to food” as contained in international human rights documents below.

Discuss: What is the right to food? What does right to food entails (e.g., availability, adequateness, accessibility, etc.)?

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 25: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food...”

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Article 11: “States Parties... recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living... adequate food... States Parties... recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall... improve methods of production... and distribution of food... by... reforming agrarian systems... ensure... equitable distribution of... food supplies.”

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Articles 24 & 27: “States Parties shall... combat disease and malnutrition... through the provision of... nutritious foods... States Parties... shall... in case of need provide... nutrition, clothing and housing.”

- 2) Have the students take a Right to Food Quiz

<http://discoverhumanrights.org/98d2b0ef-8ffa-4a5e-92b1-89978975d232.html?nextId=15ac31f5-6909-4d04-93da-ed22ab98f729>

Discuss: What information surprised you? Do all people in the U.S. have access to food? What government programs attempt to help low-income people? Who else should be involved in solving this problem? How can you help?

B. Localizing Statistics

Students can also review *The State of Hunger in Minnesota. Survey of Food Shelf and On-site Meal Program Recipients in 2005* prepared by Wilder Research to gain more information about food insecurities in the state.

Other useful sites:

- Twin Cities Compass - www.tccompass.org
- *Mind the Gap* Report - http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer/20051027_mindthegap.pdf

STORY: Hope and Homelessness

Rebecca Nathan, a young woman who experienced homelessness during her pregnancy, received help from Hope Community. Rebecca first moved into Hope in 1999 when she came to Minneapolis as a transfer student. Due to a problem with a landlord, Rebecca became homeless, and Hope Community provided her with affordable housing, which allowed her to finish her degree and become an advocate for herself. Rebecca is now involved with Hope Community's outreach efforts.

Key Terms

Affordable housing
Homeless
Predatory lending
Racial steering

True or False

1. The main reason for becoming homeless is inability to afford rent.

True

False

Answer: True

A recent study by Wilder Research found that 39% of homeless survey participants cited an inability to pay rent as one of the main reasons they had to abandon their previous housing. This number has increased from 33% in 2003. Other reasons (in order of importance) include eviction, lost job or cut hours, breakup with spouse or partner, drinking or drug problem, relationship problems, being abused, entering jail or treatment, drinking or drug problem of someone else living there, substandard or unsafe housing, behavioral problems of visitors or guests, and violence in the neighborhood.

2. There are approximately 500-1000 homeless people on any given night in Minnesota.

True

False

Answer: False

Between 9,200 and 9,300 individuals are homeless on any given night in Minnesota.

3. Homelessness disproportionately affects African Americans and American Indians.

True

False

Answer: True

Almost half of all homeless persons in the Twin Cities metro area are African American and nearly one out of five of those in Greater Minnesota are American Indian. These disparities are especially apparent in a state that is more than 80 percent White.

4. Most unemployed men reported criminal history as the main problem they face in trying to get a job.

True

False

Answer: False

A recent study found that 34% of unemployed homeless adults cited lack of transportation as one of the main problems, followed by lack of housing (27%), physical health problems (26%), mental health problems (24%), criminal history (14%), job experience or history (13%), education (11%), and lack of child care (10% of all unemployed homeless adults, and 21% of unemployed women).

5. Domestic violence is one of the reasons women become homeless.

True

False

Answer: True

As in previous years, approximately one of every three homeless women (32%) was homeless at least in part because of domestic abuse. This proportion was higher in Greater Minnesota (35%) than the Twin Cities area (30%).

6. Homelessness mostly affects middle-aged and elderly men and women.

True

False

Answer: False

The average age of homeless adults (18 and older) was 41 for men and 33 for women. Most children, who were homeless and with their parents, were age 12 or younger (84%) and about half (49%) of this 84% group were age 5 or younger.

This survey is based on the following documents:

- National Alliance to End Homelessness. 2001. A Plan Not a Dream,. How to End Homelessness in Ten Years. Accessed August 2007 at <http://www.housingworks.org/aidsissues/pdf/NationalAlliance10yearplan.pdf>
- Wilder Research Center Homelessness Research 2006, <http://www.wilder.org/homelessness.0.html>

Before Viewing

What effects does being homeless have on one's ability to get educated and employed?

After Viewing

1. What does Rebecca mean by a "harder landing"? How did it affect her?
2. What does she mean by "it was bigger than me"? Why does she not consider herself a victim?
3. Rebecca says "poverty is cyclical," do you agree? Discuss.
4. Rebecca says that a lot of "working class families do not have an advantage of being an advocate for themselves." Why do you think that is? Why was Rebecca able to become an advocate and change her situation?
5. What does Hope Community do? How did they change their mission, and how did it

- affect Rebecca and other families?
6. How, if at all, does homelessness affect all of us?
 7. Do you know of any other community organizations which are trying to help homeless individuals?
 8. How can you help?

Suggested Activities

Ending Homelessness Locally and Nationally

This activity aims at familiarizing students with local and national efforts to end homelessness. The students will learn about two organizations, one acting locally and the other nationally. They will be able to examine current social, legislative, and economic issues involved in the homelessness debate, and be inspired to act on behalf of poor and homeless people in their communities.

1. Introduce the activity: Students will research and present homelessness issues locally and nationally. They will work in teams to learn about two organizations:

Minnesota Coalition of the Homeless: www.mnhomeless.org

The Coalition works to “generate policies, community support, and local resources for housing and services to end homelessness in Minnesota.”

The National Coalition of the Homeless: www.nationalhomeless.org

The National Coalition is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to ending homelessness.

2. Divide students into teams of 3-5 people, and assign them to “local” or “national” projects. Depending on the number of people in your classroom, you may have 2-3 teams working on each project.
3. Explain that “local” teams will focus on learning about the Minnesota Coalition of the Homeless, and “national” teams will focus on learning about National Coalition of the Homeless. Have teams come up with one homelessness issue they would like to explore (e.g., causes of homelessness, children and homelessness, domestic abuse and homelessness, affordable housing, etc). A good way to come up with issues may be a quick brainstorming exercise. Local and national teams should work on the same issues.
4. Students will work in teams for 30-45 minutes to examine their issue. They should come up with a 10-15 minute presentation based on their research. Prepare and hand out a list of questions:

What does the organization do to address the issue?

What was the most unsettling or surprising fact you found? Why?

What can you realistically do to address the issue?

Note: This exercise could also be a lab or homework project.

5. Students will present their projects. Alternate local and national teams focusing on the same issue, then allow time for discussion and questions. Key discussion questions can include: How is this issue addressed locally and nationally? Are there any national practices that should be adopted locally, or vice-versa?

Note: You may focus on one issue at a time and have presentations scheduled over a month dedicated to learning about homelessness.

Going Further

A. Human Rights Framework

1. Introduce the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Explain briefly how it relates to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (e.g., the UDHR is a statement of principles while the International Covenant is a binding agreement). Discuss: What is the right to housing? What does affordable housing mean?
2. Have the students take a *Right to Housing in the United States Quiz*:

<http://hrei.urbanplanet.com/94e5b074-e6a7-43da-be29-7166551acc36.html?NodeId=>

Discuss: What information surprised you? Do all people in the U.S. have access to affordable housing? What government programs attempt to help low-income people? What housing rights violations do you know about?

3. Have students work in groups of 5 to review *The Right to Housing in Minnesota Fact Sheet*:

http://hrei.urbanplanet.com/sites/7cc8fb84-899d-457d-a486-70ccb03fb16/uploads/Housing_Fact_Sheet_Minnesota_Nov._1_2007.pdf

Discuss:

- Does U.S. recognize the right to housing?
- Do most Minnesotans benefit from affordable housing?
- What is predatory lending? How does it affect low income people?
- What housing assistance programs exist? Do they work?
- How does homelessness affect one's ability to fully benefit from their human rights?
- What is "racial steering" in housing? How does it contribute to overall racial disparities in Minnesota?

B. Localizing Statistics

Students can also review *Overview of Homelessness in Minnesota 2007* report prepared by Wilder Research to gain more information about homelessness and housing issues in the state.

Other useful sites:

- Twin Cities Compass - www.tccompass.org
- *Mind the Gap* Report - http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2005/10cities_sohmer/20051027_mindthegap.pdf

C. Developing a Community Action Plan and Taking Action

Now that the students have learned about homelessness many will start asking themselves the question, "What can I do?" The following tools can assist students in developing a Community Action Plan to improve their communities.

- Have the students visit the Voices of the Street website (www.voicesofthestreets.org) to hear the stories of homeless people in Minnesota, and learn about the Land of 10,000 Homeless, a local project aimed at ending homelessness. "What can I do" section of the website can be helpful in deciding what project students can design together: <http://www.voicesofthestreets.org/Voices%20of%20the%20Streets/What%20Can%20I%20Do.html>
- The Online Community Action Planning Tool can provide a useful template for student projects: <http://www.hrusa.org/thisismyhome/project/tools.shtml>

