

# A Chair for Everyone?

## **Objective:**

This activity helps to define the material disparity in the world among our human family and the unequal distribution of the earth's resources. Our world's resources are not distributed fairly. Some people lack enough to survive, while others have vastly more than they need. This activity raises the question: How do we build a world where there is enough for all to live a full and secure life?

## **Set Up and Material:**

- Ten volunteers
- Ten chairs; place them in a circle facing outward
- Portable CD player, music CDs from various cultures

## **Activity Instructions:**

Invite each of the ten participants to sit in a chair. They represent the population of the earth. The chairs represent the earth's resources. If those resources are equally distributed, there is an adequate amount for all. Play the music once, have everyone take a seat. Everyone should have a seat.

Play the music and have everyone move around the chairs. All ten chairs remain; however, this time **two participants** must sit on the floor.

- They represent the poorest fifth of the human family, about 1.3 billion people – and yet they collectively earn only 2% of the world's income – about a dollar a day.

Play the music again, but this time, ask **six participants** to share three-and-a-half chairs.

- They represent the world's middle class – about 3.5 billion people, with enough to get by. They earn about 33% of the world's income.

Play the music, but this time ask **two participants** to spread out over six-and-a-half chairs.

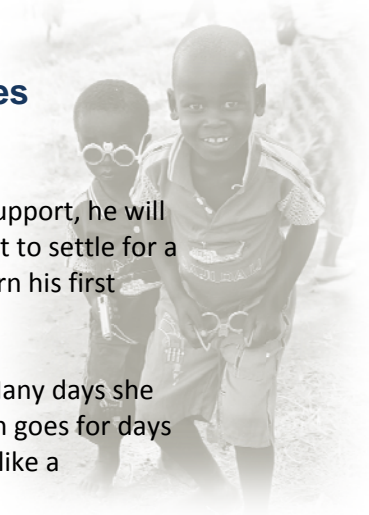
- They represent the richest one-fifth of the human family – 1.2 billion people, earning 65% of the world's income. They have more than enough, enjoying many personal conveniences.

## **Discussion:**

As you are processing with the group, consider asking this question: **Where would the following people be seated?**

- She works 9-10 hours each day in rural Zambia, seven days a week, creating charcoal for cooking. She sells it at the local market, but makes only fifty cents a day. She considers herself lucky, because at least her meager income provides enough for her family to eat.

## Activities



- He attends the university of his choice. Based on his family's sizable wealth and support, he will stay in college and gain a graduate degree. Upon graduation, he is determined not to settle for a job that pays less than \$75,000 per year with numerous benefits. His goal is to earn his first million by the time he is thirty.
- She lives on the streets of a major city. Her only income is acquired by begging. Many days she receives nothing – some days, she is lucky and gets two or three dollars. She often goes for days at a time with little or nothing to eat. She considers herself blessed to find things like a discarded bakery box along the street with a half-eaten pastry inside.
- He works in a factory welding steel frames for large construction. It's a hot, dirty job, but it pays well. He belongs to a union that provides some job security. His family has a decent home and two cars. His wife works, too. Together, their incomes allow them to own a ski boat and a small camping trailer for weekend excursions to the lake.
- He never studied hard in school, mostly gaining C's and D's on his report card. But his basketball skills have always been exceptional, gaining him a scholarship to a major college. Still not motivated to study, he's looking forward to joining the ranks of the NBA at the end of his junior year. An agent says he is almost certainly guaranteed a contract offer of \$7 million. There are also those athletic shoe endorsements to consider, if he proves himself on the NBA basketball court. That could more than triple his income.
- She lives with her grandparents in a rural village in Nicaragua. At sixteen, she cannot attend school because of the cost of tuition. In fact she has not attended school since she was ten years old. Cost of tuition is \$4.00 per month, more than her grandfather can afford. It is the difference, he says, between her schooling and the three of them having food to eat.

### *Discussion:*

- "Where would your family be seated?"
- "How can we begin to build a world that works for all people?"
- "How can the work of Outreach International help people less fortunate throughout the world?"