

The Path to Development

Throughout history there have been movements of peoples all over Europe with a constant meeting and mixing of different groups, races and cultures. Thus the multi-cultural dimension of our present societies is not a recent phenomenon. However, today we under threat from racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance.

The victims of racism and xenophobia are usually immigrants and refugees and consequently it is often argued that the rise in racism and xenophobia is the result of the global economic crisis and that the problem is therefore an economic one. This may be part of the argument, but it is not the only one. There are clear links between the dominant model of economic development and immigration and refugee movements but ethnocentrism and aggressive nationalism may also be a cause of immigration.

This activity helps players understand how international economic relations between North and South forces people to leave their country of origin and how wealthy European countries contribute to the displacement of people by perpetuating the imbalance of North/South relations.

Issues addressed

- North-South relations and the imbalance governing them.
- The interdependence between people and countries in the North and the South.
- Development models and their consequences.
- Economic relations as one contributory factor in the development of racism and xenophobia.
- Solidarity, equality, world history.

Aims of the activity

- To develop an understanding that the imbalance in North-South relations is one of the factors which forces people to seek better living conditions in other countries.
- To understand the interdependence between countries and peoples.
- To understand racism and xenophobia as part of a global problem.

Time

Two hours in total. 75 minutes for the game and 45 minutes for the debriefing and evaluation.

Group size: Minimum 4 people, maximum 40

Preparation

Equipment needed for each team:

- Game board (a photocopy enlargement will do very well).
- Four round counters (made of cardboard, about 2 cm in diameter), one yellow and the three others of different colours e.g. brown, green and blue.
- One dice.

** This activity has been developed from 'En busca del desarrollo' from Equipo Claves*

- Photocopy and cut up the sheet of action cards. If possible place them in a little box.
- Seventy dried beans, pieces of macaroni or similar to serve as tokens (to represent resources).

Instructions

- Divide the participants into four teams. They can play as individuals, if the group is small.
- To share out the counters between the groups: put the counters in a hat and ask someone from each team to take one. This ensures that it is pure chance which team plays with which colour.
- Share out the beans. Give the team playing yellow seven beans and the teams playing with brown, green and blue tokens 21 beans each (this distribution corresponds roughly to the distribution of natural resources between the countries of the North and South).
- Ask one member of each team in turn to throw the dice to see who starts playing first.
- Read out the rules of the game
- Check that everyone knows what to do, then let the games begin.

Debriefing and evaluation

At the end of the game ask each team to look back at the route they took, the squares they stopped on and what happened there.

If there are any squares that no team landed on read out the action card to see what would have happened.

Follow on with a discussion about how the players felt and what they learnt:

- How did it feel to be ‘yellow’? How did it feel to be “brown”, “green” or “blue”.
- Are there any similarities between this game and reality?
- Where is it exaggerated?
- Do the problems and issues raised occur in reality?
- Who does the “yellow counter represent? And the other ones?
- Can we say that those represented by the yellow counter are only present in the North?
- Are those represented by the other counters found only in the South?
- Who benefits, both in the North and in the South, from the present world system?
- Can we talk of a “dominant development model” which can serve as the best one for all situations, countries and peoples?
- What are the characteristics, according to this game, of the present “dominant development model”? Is this a feasible “model” in the sense that it can suit in practice all men and women, all peoples on this planet? In the future, would a sustainable development model be possible? What might it be like?
- What are the links between this situation and attitudes of racism and discrimination? Is it fair to say, for instance, that immigrants come to our countries to take our money and resources?

Tips for the facilitator

When playing with groups, the game works best if there is a minimum of four people and a maximum of eight per group.

On square 49, the group playing yellow may change the rules in any way they like. It is assumed that they will want to change the rules for their own advantage. They could make the other teams go back to the start, take all their beans, make the other teams miss the next 3 goes. If they decide to change the rules to make things fairer you should point out that politically this is a very difficult thing to do as they will have to convince the electorate. It will be a very unpopular policy and they will have to explain how they intend to implement it while avoiding great social unrest at home.

Suggestions for follow up

Make a list of things you can do to improve the economic situation in the South e.g. buy fair-traded goods, campaign for political change.

Make a list of things you can do to improve the situation at home e.g. participate in the development of local community projects, support small local businesses, boycott firms which behave unethically.

Consider just how much you really know about the issues raised in this game. Do you find that it's hard to obtain accurate, independent information and that news reports often don't tell the whole story? You can explore this further in two activities 'Media biases' (Page 124) and 'Making the news' (Page 120).

Rules of the game

Explain that there are games in which the rules are not the same for everybody. That is what happens in this game too. The advantages and disadvantages on the path to development are different for the different teams. This may seem unfair, but we have not invented the rules of this game, we copied them, as faithfully as possible, from reality. Chance determines who plays with which colour counter. In reality, this is not determined by chance, but by historic, geographic, economic or cultural factors that set the obstacles and the possibilities that each country and people will meet on their way to development.

You play this game like an ordinary board game

- Tell the teams to take turns at throwing the dice and then to move as many squares as the number on the dice.
- If you fall on an action square take the corresponding action card and follow the instructions.
- Explain that the instructions written in normal type font are the instructions for the team playing with yellow tokens and those written in italic are the instructions for the teams playing with the brown, green or blue tokens.
- The first time a team lands on an action square ask them to read out all the instructions on the card. Subsequently, they need only read out the instructions relevant to their team.
- Tell players they must always follow the instructions and move and/or pay up as directed.

- If a team has no beans because they have given away all they have, they must borrow from the team, which has the most, and as soon as possible pay back what they borrowed.
- The rules of the game may not be changed unless it is with the full agreement of all the groups playing or unless there is a special order to do so on one of the action cards.

ACTION CARDS

Square 3: “Colonisers and the colonised”

In the past (and may be still now although in different ways) your country has colonised others from which you got wealth and raw materials. Consequently, you can forward one square and collect a bean from each of the other teams.

In the past (and maybe still now, although in different ways) your country was colonized by others. They took away your wealth and raw materials. Consequently, your team is a bit farther from the goal of development and you must give one bean to the team with the yellow token.

Square 7: “Health for development”

You have reached a level of development that enables you to have a good level of health care, a reduced infant mortality rate, fewer epidemics, prolonged life expectancy, etc. Therefore, you can move forward one square forward.

Your levels of health care are very low or non-existent. Cholera, AIDS and other diseases, together with a high child mortality rate and a low life expectancy, affect a large proportion of your population which sets you back from your development goal. Go back 2 squares

Square 10: “Population explosion”

You have managed to control the birth rate, thus keeping the population growth rates at a stable or even decreasing level. You therefore enjoy a good, general level of standard of living. Move forward two squares.

You have high levels of population growth and low levels of economic growth and therefore face greater problems meeting even the basic needs of so many people. Move two squares back, getting further away from development.

Square 12: “War and violence”

You possess a strong arms industry. Your growing sales of arms to other countries means you are getting richer. The other teams each pay you three beans and you move forward one square.

Internal social tensions and the human rights abuse and repression that goes with it often leads to guerrilla warfare, civil war, war with neighbouring countries, etc. Consequently, large numbers of people have sought refuge elsewhere or have been displaced.

Because of the security situation you have to keep a large army and have a high military budget. Give two beans to the team playing with the yellow counter and miss your next two turns.

Square 16: “The urban revolution”

Your big cities have become financial and industrial centres of major importance with big profits being made in property and financial speculation. Move forward three squares.

The impoverishment of the countryside has forced many farmers to emigrate to the cities thereby creating large areas of misery in the urban shanty towns which add to your difficulties. Lack of opportunities means you lose your best workers and scientists who emigrate to countries where the work, pay and living conditions are better. Move back two squares.

Square 18: “Men, Women and Hunger”

Improvements in food production and storage ensure that there is always plenty. Although the long-term effects of colourants and preservatives used in food production are unknown, the fact is that food is always available. You could therefore move forward one square. However, since you have also to face the problems of large surpluses some of which you have to destroy in order not to ruin the market, you stay where you are.

Drought, desertification, the over use of the soils, the misuse of modern means of cultivating the land and the fact that you have to sell most of what you produce to repay your country's debt, makes the food shortages more acute and famine is on the rise. Miss your next turn.

Square 21: “Informal economy and hidden unemployment”

The automation and restructuring of industry increases the underlying levels of unemployment. You have to devote resources to subsidising the unemployed. For this reason you should go back one square, but because the global benefits of trade are on the rise, you keep where you are.

The absence, aging or destruction of your industrial base and the crisis in your agricultural production, means that the jobless population and the underground economy is growing. Go back two squares.

Square 24: “Education for development”

A large sector of your population has access to secondary and higher education, which favours development. You also benefit by offering places in your Institutions of Higher Education to foreign students from whom you charge pay high fees. They come because of the lack of opportunities at home and then often stay to contribute their skills to your economy. Move forward one square and collect one bean from each of the other teams.

Illiteracy and the lack of secondary education for most of the population means you go back four squares.

Square 27: “A hole in the atmosphere”

Your industries damage the environment for example, by the extraction of raw resources, by the pollution caused during processing and by the disposal of wastes. As a result the ozone layer is depleted, there is climate change and other catastrophes occur as a consequence of development. You wish to protect your local environment and find that the costs of extraction are too high or the processes too polluting. You therefore transfer your more harmful industrial plants to poorer countries and exploit their natural resources. Move forward two squares.

You face natural disasters as a consequence of environmental destruction. The droughts become more common and longer. Polluting industries settle in your countries, your natural resources are exported to other countries. Move one square back in your development.

Square 30: “Technological revolution”

The technological revolution allows you new possibilities for development. Furthermore, the export market for new technology is highly profitable. The other teams each give you two beans and you move forward one square.

The technological revolution is passing you by. Go back three squares or you may buy some new technology from the team playing with the yellow counter. Anything you want to buy will cost you three beans.

Square 34: “The end of ideology”

Congratulations, the Free Market has triumphed over all other ideologies. It is the end of History. There are no more obstacles to your full development. Move forward two squares.

You are left without any alternative. The Free Market imposes its rules and laws on you. Social exclusion and marginalisation lead to the expansion of fundamentalist and radical movements. Social unrest is repressed. Because this frightens foreign investors you will miss your next turn.

Square 37: “At the end there is always the International Monetary Fund”.

The IMF backs up your economic policies and supports your investment policies of buying out public enterprises and services of the poor countries as a contribution to their “development”. These measures provide you with substantial benefits and profits. Each of the other teams gives you two beans as repayments on your investment. You move forward two squares.

The IMF imposes an economic policy of structural adjustment on you. Consequently, you must sell your public services and enterprises. Unemployment increases and large sectors of your population fall below the poverty line. You pay the team with a yellow counter two beans as payment for interest on your foreign debt.. Move back two squares

Square 40: “International development aid”

You must share equally 1% of the beans you now hold amongst all the other teams (if you have to cut some beans, do it). You join with the international development aid organisations to discuss the global situation and move forward one square.

You receive some bean from the team playing with the yellow counter as a low-interest loan for development. However, you have to agree to spend it on “goods and equipment” bought from them. You could now move forward one square, but since you will have to pay two beans as interest on your re-scheduled debt to the team with the yellow counter, you stay where you are. And don't forget to pay the two beans!

Square 42: “A global communication culture”

The communication revolution and the development of the audio-visual entertainment industry allow your social and cultural values to extend throughout the world. Simultaneously your stock market shares rise astronomically. You move forward two squares and receive from each of the other teams one bean to pay for your cultural products and information services.

The communication revolution means that foreign western culture and values become increasingly pervasive. You begin to lose your own cultural identity while models of development and communication, which have nothing to do with your own culture and history, become generally accepted. You stay on your square, sitting in front of the television and miss your next turn.

Square 44: “New migrations, new segregations”

The growing immigration of poor people from countries of the South in search of a better life forces you to allocate extra resources to deal with immigrants who are arriving in your country. If you want to move forward one square, you must give each of the other teams one bean as ‘aid’.

The growing emigration towards the richer Northern countries includes a ‘brain drain’ of those who are better skilled and academically qualified. Go back three squares.

Square 46: “Cutting forests and extinguishing species”

Your high levels of consumption force you to exploit new resources in other regions of the planet. This contributes to the disappearance of large areas of forests and numerous animal and plant species. If you played in the interests of all the teams and not only in your own, you should move back a few squares, share your money to correct previous mistakes, and change the rules of the game. But, since this is not the way to do things in a competitive world, and because you still have time and a chance, move forward one more square.

Your natural resources are being exploited and you don't get any of the profit to enable you to develop. Desertification spreads, the climate changes and famine grows. You try to do what you can to protect your environment but the international institutions criticise your environmental policies. Move back one square and give one bean to the team playing with yellow counter.

Square 49: “A new order . . . for that which you wish to order”

You may now change the rules of the game in whatever way you wish to enable you to get to your goal as quickly as possible. If any other player or team protests or wants to interfere with this ‘new order’ of things, they must give you all their beans. Move forward two squares.

Try to adapt to the new order and don't resist. With a bit of luck the new order being created will not set you back too far on the path to development. As a precaution you miss your next turn.

Square 52: “Death”

The risk of a deep economic recession is a serious threat to your development model. If you don't want to start the game from zero again, the only option left is to squeeze the last drop out of the other teams' players and take two beans from each on account of debt interests. And so no one can say that you get all the advantages, move back one square.

The fall in price of raw materials and the rise in interest rates on your debt provoke a severe economic recession. Move back one decade or, in the terms of this game, start again at the beginning of the path to development.

Square 54: “Development”

You were really lucky to have the yellow counter! You have reached your goal of development. You can be sure that all the other teams will be far away from this goal and that, whatever they do, no one will be able to reach it. It is also certain that you own and control almost all the money and resources and that there is not much left for the others. Life for you is very pleasant. However, there are threats for the future: the natural resources are vanishing or degraded, the air is poisoned, so is the water and the land is becoming a desert. Famine and despair are growing in many parts of the world. Some immigrants try to flee misery to reach your comfortable, developed world. But in spite of all, keep enjoying your development while you can.

If you have any colour token other than yellow, you either have had incredible luck or you must have cheated. Otherwise, it is impossible, for anyone not playing with a yellow counter, to reach this stage of the game because development is reserved for the very privileged few. If many people were to reach this stage, it would be necessary to share the limited resources more widely, and those who now enjoy the benefits would have to give all, or most of them, up. And this would be very unlikely because, it's they, the few, who set the rules of the game.



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DEVELOPMENT

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