

Overview:

This activity, created by Dr. Robert Cox, uses the four levels of income from Hans Rosling, et al. (2018) (see citation below) to enable participants to empathize with individuals who live in environments different from their own. The facilitator will read four passages that describe life at four different income levels. Then, participants will reflect on how they feel after hearing these experiences—and on the choices that they would make if they were living at that level.

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Reflect on how they would navigate life with varying levels of income.
2. Empathize with the experiences of people who live at income levels different from their own.

Time:

1 hour

Group Size:

Small group

Materials:

Levels PowerPoint (in [Downloads](#))

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Denial
- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Cultural Self-Awareness:

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Empathy:

- To interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview.
- To demonstrate ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.

Other Skills:

Teamwork; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This activity was created by Dr. Robert Cox based on information in the following book:

Rosling, H., Rosling Rönnlund, A.R., & Rosling, O. (2018). *Factfulness: Ten reasons we're wrong about the world—and why things are better than you think*. Flatiron Books.

Activity Instructions:

1. Before beginning this activity, the familiarize yourself with the four levels of income that Hans Rosling, et al. (2018) propose.
 2. Use the Levels PowerPoint in Downloads to guide participants through the activity. First, ask participants to sit quietly with their eyes closed and listen carefully while you read each Level passage. After the passage has read aloud, they will get one minute to reflect on what they just heard.
 3. After each passage, ask them to discuss a set of questions. For Level 1, the questions are the following:
 - How did this make you feel?
 - What emotions could you identify?
 - If you were living at Level 1, what would be your priorities?....motivations?
 - How would you try to double your income and move to Level 2?
 - What technology would you desire to obtain?
 4. For Level 2, the questions are the following:
 - How did this make you feel?
 - What emotions could you identify?
 - If you were living at Level 2, what would be your priorities?....motivations?
 - How would you try to double your income and move to Level 3?
 - What technology would you desire to obtain?
 5. For Level 3, the questions are the following:
 - How did this make you feel?
 - What emotions could you identify?
 - If you were living at Level 3, what would be your priorities?....motivations?
 - How would you try to double your income and move to Level 4?
 - What technology would you desire to obtain?
 6. For Level 4, the questions are the following:
 - How did this make you feel?
 - What emotions could you identify?
 - YOU ARE living at Level 4, what are your priorities? ...motivations?
 - How can you help those at Levels 1 & 2?
- Note: Facilitators should be sensitive to the fact that students may come from backgrounds that are not at Level 4, or they may have friends or family members who live within Levels 1-3.
7. At the end of the activity, you might also add additional debriefing questions that ask participants to critique these four levels. For example:
 - Do you believe that these levels accurately depict how people actually live across the world? Why or why not?
 - Is there anything beyond Level 4? If so, what does it look like?

Related Tools:

Similar tools:

- [Dollar Street](#)
- [Migration: An Empathy Exercise](#)
- [Scenery, Machinery, People](#)
- [What It Means to be a Global Citizen](#)

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