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Finding Solutions Newsletter

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PREPARING STUDENTS TO BE GLOBAL CITIZENS...

By Kelly Kornak

Picture an urban middle school in northern California where the majority of students are recent immigrants from Latin America and East Asia. Each classroom is filled with students of different cultures, experiences, and languages, but they don't know much about each other or how best to interact. The teacher's duty, of course, is to teach traditional skills in reading, writing, math and more, but the diverse needs of these students makes this challenging. How can teachers engage the students in learning and teach them critical thinking, while also acknowledging and highlighting the varied perspectives and world cultures filling the classroom?

One sixth grade teacher started by introducing a picture book called *If the World Were a Village*. This simple book presents global population statistics, and breaks them down into bite-size pieces – imagining that the world is a village of 100 people as a percentage of these 6.7 billion people. In this scenario, 61 people in the global village are from Asia, only 9 speak English, and 10 are children under the age of 5. The students were shocked by these statistics and didn't believe their teacher, so she challenged them to do the calculations themselves and try to prove the author wrong. The students were fascinated by what they learned, were reinforcing math skills, and were eager to learn more about some of the countries and cultures to which this activity introduced them.

Globalization has become a common buzzword over the last few years, and the recent inauguration of Barack Obama as president of the United States underscores how interconnected we are globally. With a Kenyan father and an American mother, and growing up in Hawaii and Indonesia, President Obama's background alone illustrates this new global reality. Clearly not all American youth will share the same formative childhood experiences as President Obama, but even for those youth who live in the same community of their birth, their lives will be impacted by global events, people, and cultures.

The question for schools today is whether they are effectively preparing students for this new global reality. Students must develop a fresh set of skills to contend and interact successfully in this world – skills in critical thinking, research, team-

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About this issue...

Kelly Kornak (pg 1) introduces us to World Savvy an innovative educational program that helps students develop a fresh set of skills to interact successfully in the new global reality.

Cristina Schiavoni (pg 3) returns to our pages to remind us that in addition to a world-wide economic crisis, we must pay attention to the food crisis. She explains that they are "two sides of the same coin." She also demonstrates ways we can become involved in ending the food crisis.

The new KIDS Teacher Guide will be issued later this year. We felt that Bill Ayres' introductory letter in the book is so timely that we chose to publish it in this issue (pg4).

We go north of the border to Canada to experience a program developed by nine Catholic schools to raise awareness of food issues. (pg 5). Gwen Jahelka and Angela Hudson used Finding Solutions To Hunger: Kids Can Make The Difference as the educational arm of this undertaking involving 2,000 students..

How is the best way to teach teachers about poverty and hunger? Ava McCall (pg 6) explores this question and comes up with a detailed plan. She uses what she learned in her class at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh,

(Continued from page 1)

work, communication, and cross-cultural competency among others. "To ensure the competitiveness of our workforce, improve our country's image on the world stage, and build a peaceful and sustainable world, we will need a new generation of leaders who fully understand and can articulate how interconnected – and interdependent – we are globally," explains Dana Curran, Executive Director of World Savvy.

World Savvy is an education non-profit working to help schools and teachers build this new generation of student leaders. The mission of World Savvy is to educate and engage youth in community and world affairs, to prepare

World Savvy's *Global Affairs Monitor*: an online, current events service!

The *Global Affairs Monitor* is a subscription-based, online current events service containing an in-depth examination of one pressing global conflict, issue or region bi-monthly. We consult and summarize over 100 sources to help you digest news from a well-informed place. All content is accessible in an easily navigable web format and may be downloaded and printed as a PDF. We also provide a Classroom Companion and Global Affairs Salon Guide to facilitate discussion in schools, living rooms, and the offices of other globally-minded organizations throughout the community.

Special offer to newsletter subscribers: 20% discount off an individual subscription of the *Global Affairs Monitor*, valid through April 30, 2009. To redeem discount, go to: <http://monitor.worldsavvy.org/> to subscribe and enter code "MJB MOT" during the online checkout process.

them to learn, work and live as responsible citizens in the global community. The organization was founded in San Francisco in 2002, and has since expanded programs to New York City and Minneapolis-St. Paul. In the 2008-09 school year, World Savvy will reach 6000 students and 750 educators. The story above is an example of one of the educators that World Savvy has helped to mainstream global issues into classroom curriculum.

To achieve its mission, World Savvy offers three core programs to middle and high school teachers and students which focus on teacher training and development, and youth engagement. The Global Educators Program (GEP) provides teachers with knowledge, tools, resources and on-going support to bring world affairs into the classroom, and supports schools through partnerships which help to foster school cultures that value global citizenship. The Global Youth Media and Arts Program (MAP) engages students in learning about contemporary global issues and teaches them to use art and media as tools for self-expression, dialogue, and community engagement. The World Affairs Challenge (WAC) is an academic program and competition on international affairs that stresses critical thinking, research, creativity, and collaboration.

The most telling results of these programs come from the students themselves. A participant in the Global Youth Media and Arts Program appreciated the program because it made her feel that "young people are able to make change." A group of Oakland middle school students participating in the World Affairs Challenge presented solutions on global warming, then encouraged their school community to take action around the school campus to reduce their carbon footprint.

A teacher from the Global Educators Program taught about "blood diamonds" as part of her unit on economics, trade, and consumerism. One of her students said, "It was interesting to see what people have to go through every day – working for nothing and not getting respected for it – just to try to support their families. Learning about things like that makes me think about what I'm doing and what I'm buying – I never thought like that before."

To find out more about World Savvy, view the website at www.worldsavvy.org or call the main office at 415-292-7421.

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**KIDS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE® FINDING SOLUTIONS NEWSLETTER
A PROGRAM OF WORLD HUNGER YEAR (WHY)**

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CONFRONTING THE FOOD CRISIS TOGETHER...

by Christina Schiavoni

What do a Mississippi family farmer, a Florida farmworker from Mexico, a young food pantry volunteer, a chef, and a Chicago food justice activist all have in common? Each is witnessing the devastating effects of the most recent food crisis. And all of them are joining together in order to end it. This was the message of *Step up to the Plate: Ending the Food Crisis*, an event sponsored by WHY and its partners on World Food Day, Oct. 16, 2008. The idea behind this event, which drew nearly 500 people to the Great Hall of Cooper Union in New York City, was to bring attention to the real causes and solutions of the food crisis. It was also a launching of a Call to Action to put pressure on political leaders to address the crisis.

This was during the lead-up to the presidential elections, when both candidates had been glaringly silent on the issue. This was also a time when the food crisis had wide media coverage, yet mainly coverage that served the interests of agribusiness far more than the interests of people – promoting such false solutions as more genetically engineered crops, more biofuel crops, and more “free” trade. A few months earlier, progressive groups representing anti-hunger, food, farm, labor, and trade justice movements had come to the realization that the only way to have an impact would be to have a strong, unified response. Hence, the US Working Group on the Food Crisis was born. Initiated by approximately 50 organizations united by the crisis, the Working Group now has an active listserv of over 200 organizations, and over 1500 organizations and individuals have signed the Call to Action to End the Food Crisis.

The elections are now behind us, and we’re facing a moment of both new opportunities and new challenges. In the media, the global food crisis has been eclipsed by the global financial crisis, but as Food First said, they are “two sides of the same coin,” and each crisis is feeding into the other. So what is next in the efforts for a unified response? That’s where *you* come in! The hard work is only just beginning as we work to link up efforts and build a strong, sustained movement to put the food crisis on the political agenda – and keep it there until it’s resolved. This is also a time to put words into action as we foster alternatives – building food systems in our own communities that are truly just and sustainable and that provide good food for all;

and lending our solidarity and support to communities around the world who are striving to do the same.

There are many ways to get involved. A simple step that we encourage everyone to take is to go to www.usfoodcrisisgroup.org and sign the Call to Action. For those of you who are teachers, this is also something you can encourage your students to do. Some student groups have even organized their own teach-ins using the materials provided on the website (which include back-grounders and action tips) and collecting signatures for the Call to Action, either by laptop or by paper.

For those interested in getting more actively involved in the Working Group, the first step is to join the listserv by emailing Christina@whyhunger.org. The Working Group has recently formed four subcommittees which are open to participation. The Policy Subcommittee is exploring strategic inroads within the new administration, for instance, Obama’s commitment to end childhood hunger by 2015, as well as his commitments to addressing healthcare and climate change, both of which inherently involve addressing food system issues. The Media/Messaging Subcommittee is working to take the Call to Action and adapt it for diverse audiences, as well as developing popular education materials. The Outreach Subcommittee is working to build alliances with other movements and to ensure that the Working Group continues to represent diverse voices. The Actions Committee is working on tools for community organizing around the food crisis and is identifying upcoming events and campaigns for the Working Group to plug into and partner with.

Beyond that, all new ideas and fresh energy are more than welcome! This has been a highly organic process shaped by the many groups and individuals involved, and we welcome you to join us, partner with us, and/or to let us know about other efforts that we can learn from.

Together, let’s end the food crisis!

Christina Schiavoni is Co-Director of the Global Movements Program at WHY. She may be reached at christina@whyhunger.org





FINDING ANSWERS
FOR HUNGER
AND POVERTY

Imagine... **By Bill Ayres**

Ed. Note: The following is a letter that appears in the NEW KIDS Teacher Guide to be released shortly. We thought it was appropriate to publish it in this issue of the newsletter.

We are living in exciting times! It is a time of unabashed hope coupled with social and economic challenges we as a nation -- indeed, a global society -- have not had to address for generations.

Imagination is at the root of all progress and so much of our future remains to be imagined. Who better to envision that future but those who will be living it -- our youth! With this book in your hands and your teachers and peers as companions, we invite you to **imagine a world free from the injustice of hunger...**

Imagine a coalition of youth around the country joining our new President in his pledge to end hunger by the year 2015 for the 12.6 million children in the United States that are unsure when they will next eat.

Imagine school lunchrooms serving nutritious and tasty hot meals every day to ALL STUDENTS prepared from fresh ingredients many of which come from local farms.

Imagine a Summer Feeding Program that actually feeds millions of hungry children during the summer when they are not receiving school meals.

Imagine vacant lots and roof tops turned into food-producing gardens in every neighborhood in the country.

Imagine soup kitchens and homeless shelters working hand-in-hand with community non-profits and social service agencies to feed and house people today while helping them prepare for a better future tomorrow.

Imagine our country landscaped in small, diversified family farms helping to revive rural townships and local economies.

Imagine a world where access to healthy, fresh food at all times for all people is considered a basic human right and is guaranteed as such by governments and citizens alike.

Imagine youth from every country building a global movement to end hunger and poverty for the more than 900 million people around the world who suffer from hunger on a daily basis and the 16,000 children who die from hunger-related causes every day.

Imagine kids making a difference! I can.

This curriculum will both stimulate the imaginations of students and teachers but also lead to activities that can reduce hunger. Imagine the possibilities!

Peace,

Bill Ayres

P.S. Be sure and visit our website at www.whyhunger.org, sign up to receive action alerts and newsletters, check out the Food Security Learning Center, and join us on Facebook!

Bill Ayres is Executive Director of WHY. He may be contacted at bill@whyhunger.org

2,000 CANADIAN STUDENTS WALK TO RAISE AWARENESS OF FOOD ISSUES...

By Gwenn Jahelka and Angela Hudson

On October 16, *World Food Day*, over 2,000 elementary school students from across Vancouver Island, British Columbia walked up to 5 km to focus attention on issues of local and world hunger. Collectively over \$39,000 in food donations was taken in to support Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) and local food banks. Nine different schools were involved in this venture.

Teachers, community members and volunteer parents joined the students. Many classroom teachers used lessons from the KIDS Teacher Guide, *Finding Solutions To Hunger: Kids Can Make a Difference* to prepare the students for this event. Students discussed world hunger and poverty issues prior to the walk. Along the walking path were signs with information and statistics that related to food security issues experienced in our world today. The teachers stopped with the students and reinforced the information found on the following awareness signs:

DID YOU KNOW:

- that 1 out of every 6 children do not have food to eat before coming to school? That means every day more than a million of our children get up hungry, go to school hungry, and at night, climb into bed hungry.
- that ending world hunger IS possible?
- that there is enough food in the world today for everyone to have enough food to eat?
- that families who make less than \$28,000 a year are below the poverty line in Canada? That means one out of every eight families live below the poverty line.
- that if you do not have food in your stomach your learning rate goes down by half?
- that buying foods grown locally can help food prices everywhere?



• that children in poor families are twice as likely to drop out of school and twice as likely to have chronic illness?

• that individuals or families considered “working poor” are often worse off than the poor who are not working?

• that for the 5th consecutive year British Columbia has the worst child poverty

rate in Canada?

- that 1 out of every 6 people in the world earns less than \$1.00 per day?

Groups of high school students from St. Andrew’s Regional High School, Victoria, St. Vincent de Paul volunteers, clergy and parents joined the younger students on the walk and handed out a flyer that St. Vincent de Paul produced called “*Keep on Walking*”. This flyer included all the awareness sign information as well as volunteer opportunities for youth within their region and information about St. Vincent de Paul. St. Andrew’s Regional High School also supported the elementary schools with student reinforcement on the day of the walk, hosted a school-wide food drive, and shelved food at the SVdP Social Concern Office at the completion of the walk.

Society of St. Vincent De Paul

Established in 1916, the Society of St Vincent De Paul of Vancouver Island is part of an international Catholic lay organization seeking to alleviate suffering through justice, charity, and person to person involvement. In addition to visiting families in need, the Society operates housing for homeless at risk, a social concern office, food banks, soup kitchens, a day program for people with disabilities and five thrift stores.

Keep on Walking was organised in conjunction with Farm Credit Canada’s national campaign, *Drive Away Hunger*. Across Canada, more than 1,000,000 pounds of food was collected during 2008 campaign. While that sounds like a lot of food, in reality it is just over one pound of food for each of the 720,000 Canadians who are helped by a food bank every month. Farm Credit Canada provided funds to purchase the resource *Finding Solutions to Hunger: Kids Can Make a Difference* for each school. For more information about this campaign, visit www.driveawayhunger.ca

Gwenn Jahelka is the Religious Education Coordinator for Island Catholic Schools, Victoria, BC. She may be contacted at gjahelka@cisdv.bc.ca

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PREPARING PRESERVICE TEACHERS FOR TEACHING ABOUT HUNGER AND POVERTY...

By Ava McCall

Why should teacher educators like me encourage preservice teachers to raise current issues such as poverty and hunger in elementary classrooms? The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) affirms the importance of including social issues and service learning projects in their description of powerful teaching and learning to promote civic competence, the overall goal of social studies education. NCSS encourages teachers to make social studies relevant to students' lives, address controversial issues while promoting concern for the common good and the pursuit of democratic values, and focus on challenging content and activities as part of their description of powerful social studies teaching and learning (NCSS, 2008).

For over 10 years, I have concentrated on the issue of hunger and poverty in the local community in our social studies methods course since five of the seven elementary schools where preservice teachers are placed for their concurrent clinical experience have student poverty rates from 36 percent to 64 percent. Early in the semester, I introduce statistics regarding the percentages of students living in poverty nationally, within the state, and locally to deepen the preservice teachers' understanding of the students they will teach. Preservice teachers must promote their low-income students' academic success as well as include the issue of poverty within the social studies curriculum in order to make it relevant to their students' lives. All preservice teachers develop social studies curriculum units to meet the local school district's curriculum standards within the methods course, which they teach in their clinical placements. Frequently they teach about families, neighborhoods, communities, and state history, and the issue of poverty can be integrated within these topics. Preservice teachers respond enthusiastically to our study of poverty and hunger in our social studies methods class, but they are reluctant to teach about these issues in their clinical placements or in their future classrooms. My goal is to promote preservice teachers' commitment to teaching about these issues.

We begin our study of poverty and hunger by first agreeing on guidelines for addressing controversial issues with elementary students. We read, discuss, and identify the most important guidelines from "Talking with Children About War and Violence in the World" (Berman, Diener, Dieringer & Lantieri, 2003) and "Making a Difference: Integrating Social Problems and Social Action in the Social Studies

Curriculum" (McCall, 1996). After working in small groups, the class agrees on such guidelines as listen to children, provide a safe environment for discussions, become aware of children's backgrounds, keep families involved, ask open-ended questions, allow children to come to their own conclusions, and instill in students a desire to make a difference. These guidelines allow us to be more comfortable addressing controversial issues with children.

Following this discussion, we complete a dramatic role play as a pre-reading strategy before beginning our investigation of who is hungry within the local community, reasons for their hunger, and possible solutions. Half the class role plays a single mother who has two children in school, receives no child support, works two jobs, but barely earns enough income to pay the rent, utilities, and transportation to work. The mother often runs out of money before purchasing food for her family, and her children must go to school without breakfast. The remaining preservice teachers role play the classroom teacher who is concerned about students who come to school hungry, which affects their ability to learn. The teacher's role is to call the parent to explain the concerns about the hungry child while the parent's role is to respond to the teacher's concerns. Each teacher pairs with a single parent and together they dramatize the phone call. These dramatic role plays include dialogue about the parent's concern that the teacher will think less of her because she cannot feed her child as well as solutions to the problem, such as offering school breakfast programs.

Next, we use "Lesson 15: Hunger USA" from *Finding Solutions to Hunger: Kids Can Make a Difference: A Sourcebook for Middle and Upper School Teachers* (Kempf, 2005) to investigate the issue of hunger within the local community. This resource provides background information on different groups of people who are frequently hungry within U.S. communities, including children, elderly, poor working families, families of color, and single mothers. The preservice teachers work in small groups to investigate reasons for each group's hunger and possible solutions and report their findings to the class.

We extend our investigation of hunger and poverty through children's literature. I bring to class a wide variety of realistic and historical fiction picture books as well as informa-

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tion picture books dealing with the issue of poverty and homelessness from which the preservice teachers select a text to focus on in their small groups (see my web site for an annotated bibliography of children's literature dealing with poverty and homelessness <http://www.socialstudies.esmartweb.com/>). Each group chooses a book and summarizes the main ideas from the text for the class. The children's literature makes the issue of poverty more real for the preservice teachers, which adds to our understanding of the reasons for and experiences of poverty or homelessness.

Following this investigation, I want to deepen the preservice teachers' understanding of the extent of poverty in our own community by introducing statistics showing the federal poverty level, which meets only half of the cost of living requirements for our community, the needed living wage versus the minimum wage, the number of students within local school districts who are eligible for free and reduced lunch, and the number of people and households served at community food pantries during the past year. I want the preservice teachers to consider possible root causes for poverty in our own community, including loss of manufacturing jobs with good pay and benefits and increase in retail or service jobs with low pay and few or no benefits. Within our state and nationally, poverty is linked to a minimum wage which does not provide self-sufficiency; a lack of universal health care; an inadequate supply of good, affordable child care; and an absence of public transportation to job centers. The current economic downturn with loss of jobs also contributes to rising rates of poverty.

We close our investigation of the issue of hunger and poverty within our local community by listening to a speaker from one of the local food pantries. The speaker explains reasons for people's use of the food pantry, the number of individuals and families served during the past year, how often they can use the food pantry, the foods they distribute and their sources, and the staff who volunteer their time. As he talks, I project PowerPoint slides and digital photographs of the food pantry, which illustrate the qualifications for using the food pantry, sources of food, and volunteers at work. The preservice teachers seem pleased to learn about resources for community members who are hungry and decide to engage in a social action project to

help the food pantry. We have donated as much as \$500 to as little as \$75 as a class. One semester we challenged other classes to join us in donating funds to the food pantry. Three classes jointly contributed \$500.

This semester I surveyed the preservice teachers after our class session on poverty and hunger and discovered 18 of the 26 class members believe these issues are important to teach and are at least somewhat comfortable to enthusiastic about teaching them. They know these issues are relevant in today's society and of interest to children. The future teachers recognize that their students may not have a chance to discuss poverty and hunger if they are omitted from the curriculum, and they offer children opportunities to think of others and make the world a better place. The preservice teachers want to be cautious in teaching about these issues to avoid making children from poverty uncomfortable. They also intend to allow their students to investigate and come to their own conclusions about the issues. One preservice teacher explains why she is ready to teach about poverty and hunger: "I feel that teaching controversial issues is very important because such issues are very relevant in today's society, especially with the economy as poor as it is right now. Some students might feel their personal issues are theirs alone, when actually it is shared by a number of their peers." Another adds, "It is an opportunity for me to help my students make a difference for those who are in these groups. These are real life problems that exist in most communities throughout the United States."

Resources

- Berman, S., S. Diener, L. Dieringer and L. Lantieri. 2003. *Talking with children about war and violence in the world* <http://www.esrnational.org/otc/dlcontrol.php?action=download&lid=133> accessed November 26, 2003.
- McCall, A. L. 1996. *Making a difference: Integrating social problems and social action in the social studies curriculum. The Social Studies* 87 (5): 203-209. *National Council for the Social Studies. 2008. Curriculum guidelines for social studies teaching and learning: A position statement of National Council for the Social Studies. Social Education* 72 (4) 11-12.

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KIDS TEACHER GUIDE AVAILABLE

Contains Updated Statistics & Resources

Finding Solutions To Hunger: Kids Can Make A Difference by Stephanie Kempf.

Uplifting, engaging, interactive and challenging lessons for middle and high school students on the root causes of and solutions to domestic and international hunger. Examines colonialism, contemporary development projects, the media, famine vs. chronic hunger, the working poor and more, as well as valuable ideas for how kids can make a difference in their community, and in the world around them.

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“If I were a teacher struggling to help students remain human in a sea of cynicism and self-absorption, I would grab onto this book as if it were a life raft and use it to bring my class to shore.”

*Joan Dye Gussow, Professor Emeritus,
Teachers College, Columbia University*



A Program of World Hunger Year

**1 Borodell Avenue
Mystic, CT 06355**

The purpose of **Kids Can Make A Difference®** is to inspire young people to realize that it is within their power to help eliminate hunger and poverty in their communities, their country, and their world.