

ACTIVITY: Voices of the Poor

We have talked about what you think poverty is and had a small glimpse of what it can be like practically for families who live in poverty. But what does poverty feel like?

During the 1990's, the World Bank asked more than 60,000 poor people from more than 60 countries the question, 'What is poverty?' Their answers have been put into a three-volume book called *Voices of the Poor*. We have printed out some of the answers that were given by those considered poor. They are spread out in the room.

Walk round and read the answers that were given. Spend time thinking about these. Stand by the one that most resonates with you.

Points to help discussion:

- Why did you stand by this one?
- What particularly stood out to you and why?
- Did anything surprise you?
- How is this answer different from the answer you gave to 'What is poverty?'

'Poverty is lack of freedom, enslaved by crushing daily burden, by depression and fear of what the future will bring.'- Georgia

'Lack of work worries me. My children were hungry and I told them the rice is cooking, until they fell asleep from hunger.' – an older man from Bedsa, Egypt

'When one is poor, she has no say in public, she feels inferior. She has no food, so there is famine in her house; no clothing and no progress in her family.' – a woman from Uganda

'For a poor person everything is terrible – illness, humiliation, shame. We are cripples; we are afraid of everything; we depend on everyone. No one needs us. We are like garbage that everyone wants to get rid of.' – a blind woman from Tiraspol, Moldova

'Every day I am afraid of the next.' – Russia

'Rather than suffering from poverty, we should better go sweep up the garbage in other people's houses.' – a woman in Moldova

'Problems have affected our relationship. The day my husband brings in money we are all right together. The day he stays at home (out of work) we are fighting constantly.' – a woman from El Gawaber, Egypt

'Nobody is able to communicate our problems. Who represents us? Nobody.' – Egypt

'People place their hopes in God, since the government is no longer involved in such matters.' – Armenia



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