Basti Life – A Micah Australia Simulation Game

Developed by Ben Thurley

**Aims**

* to help people understand the pressures of living in an urban slum, including the pressures on children to work
* to understand some of the ways that power and wealth are distributed to benefit some and disadvantage others
* to understand some of the ways that community development can create positive social change
* to relate these issues of poverty and development to the Christian faith

**Players**

This game is primarily aimed at secondary students. The game is best played by 25-35 people but can be modified for more players.

**Time required**

30 minutes, including

* 5 minutes introduction
* 5 minutes first ‘bag-making’ session
* 5 minutes selling bags and tallying money
* 5 minutes second ‘bag-making’ session
* 5 minutes selling bags and tallying money
* 5 minutes debrief

##### Equipment needed

* A room large enough to accommodate the number of groups taking part
* Lots of newspaper
* Family case-study/tally sheet per group (each group will need a pencil)
* Sample paper bags
* Pen for the shopkeeper
* Rice or nuts for shopkeeper to test bags
* Timer/alarm

##### Roles

* Organiser
* Shopkeeper
* Health clinic expert

##### Before the game

* Prepare sample bags so that each group has one to copy.
* Set up 1 ‘shop’ – a desk and chair with goods on display - the shopkeeper will need a black pen so they can write on the family tally sheet the amount paid for the family’s bags.
* Set up the health clinic. The nurse will need a pen to tick off in the appropriate square if the family attends the mother-child health class.
* Mark family homes with masking tape. (4 people per family.)

##### Playing the game

Divide the group into ‘families’ of 4-5 people. Give each family newspaper or A4 paper, depending on which family profile they have.

Brief the families:

Each family lives in one of the bastis (or slums) in India’s largest city, New Delhi. Although life still has its joy and excitement, the family lives in extreme poverty. The houses in the basti are cheap and cramped. Water comes mostly from communal pumps which in the dry season often have limited water - and the water that does come is often contaminated with germs. The houses do not have toilets. Your slum community has had several pit toilets built around the slum but they cost money to use. Many people just use the street or areas of waste ground.

Most people in the slums are very poor and not well educated. Because the family is poor and there is no social security and little chance to receive regular work, the family make paper bags out of scrap paper to sell to local shopkeepers. With many families making paper bags, the competition is fierce.

Bags are made by folding and pasting. (***Demonstrate this***).

Bags may only be sold in batches of ten. Once 10 bags are completed, one member of the family should take them to the shopkeeper who will test that they are able to hold rice or nuts for sale. If any bags are rejected, you will need to return to the family and make more until you have a batch of 10. When all 10 are accepted, the shopkeeper will take the bags and give you whatever price he/she determines.

The game is divided into 2 five-minute sessions. Each session in the game represents 1 week of solid work in real life. At the end of each session, a whistle will be blown and all bag-making must stop. The shops will close at this point and will no longer pay for any bags. Any unsold bags must be held until next session.

At this point, the family will need to buy food and pay rent. Add up the money you have earned from selling bags, then add up the costs you must pay for food and shelter. Subtract the costs from the amount earned, and if you have any left over, you can carry it over into the next week.

Food is an absolute necessity and must always be bought. To keep your family alive, you must purchase the full amount per week. If you cannot even afford to eat, your family will die from malnourishment and you will be out of the game.

At the end of each session, you must also pay your rent. Almost everyone who lives in slums, even if they live in the most run down shack made of scraps of old timber, metal and plastic, pays rent. (***Indicate rent prices***). You must always pay your rent in full, otherwise you will be evicted, and you’ll have nowhere to make paper bags.

Lastly, there is a Christian development agency like ABM that works with the community in this part of the slum to try and improve conditions. The agency will set up a Health and Sanitation project during the first session of the game. You can nominate a person to attend this session, but it means they will not be able to make paper bags, and thus contribute to the household income. This project will go for approximately 2 mins.

Any questions? Once I blow the whistle, you have 5 minutes to make as many bags as possible. When I blow the whistle the second time, it means time is up and you must stop immediately.

##### Organiser’s announcements

***Session 1 announcement (before beginning).***

The Development Agency is setting up a mother-child health clinic. It is working with mothers in the slum to teach the importance of good nutrition, vaccinations and sanitation. If you wish to attend the clinic, one family member will need to go to the Development Agency now because a class will begin in 30 seconds. Once the class has begun, no new members will be allowed in. It is free to attend the clinic, but it means that one family member will not be able to work for 2 minutes.

***Break 1 announcement***:

Any family who did not attend the mother-child health class has contracted diarrhoea. 2 million children die each year from diarrhoea. 2 family members must stop work and stand with their hands on their head for 2 minutes during Session 2 because they are too sick to work.

##### Debrief

The following questions can be used as a guide for the debrief session.

1. What were people’s overall thoughts and feelings about the game?
2. Hear about different families’ experiences – why were they living in the slum?
3. Each 5 minute session represented working 8-10 hours a day for 7 days. How would people feel if that really was what they had to do?
4. Were families able to afford rent and food? What would have happened if you had other expenses, like clothes or transport?
5. How many families got sick with diarrhoea? What effect did that have?

**Mother-child Health class**

***Course material – to be read by Clinic nurse***

Children go through growth and activity spurts that can influence their appetites. Sometimes they will eat a lot, and at other times they may only eat a little. By offering your children a variety of nutritious foods, both at meal times and as snacks, you can help them get enough of the nutrients their bodies need.

Aim for your child’s daily diet to contain a wide variety of foods from the five main food groups:

1. Vegetables - of different types and colours
2. Fruit
3. Grain foods - wholegrain and high - fibre foods such as bread, cereals, rice or pasta
4. Proteins - lean meat, fish, chicken, eggs and legumes (e.g. beans)
5. Dairy - milk, yoghurt or cheese.

Sweets and higher-fat snacks such as potato chips, fried foods, confectionery and chocolate offer little nutritional value. Giving your children small amounts of these high-energy foods infrequently can help teach them the importance of balanced eating habits and of eating ‘everything in moderation’.

Basic sanitation is necessary for children's health, safety and development. Without access to sanitation facilities, including clean water and toilets, and without hygiene practices like hand-washing with soap, children may get sick. Lack of sanitation may even impact their development potential.

Make sure you boil water for 3 minutes before your family drinks it, to ensure the bacteria has been killed. Teach your children how to wash their hands properly with soap, after going to the toilet and before each meal, and practice hand-washing together as a family.

# **Family Profile**

There was civil unrest and violence in the area you came from.

Eventually you decided that if you stayed there, somebody in your family would be killed. You left everything you had and fled. You arrived in this city with nothing, knowing nobody.

You have been here a year, but it is so hard to survive that you still don’t know many people. Maybe one day you will return to your town, but you have heard the fighting has grown worse.

**Family Tally Sheet**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Income** | **Rent** | **Food** |
| **Week 1** | Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total costs: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Income – costs  = | 1000 Rupees | 1000 Rupees |
| **Week 2** | Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total costs: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Income – costs  = | 1000 Rupees | 1000 Rupees |

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Completed Mother-child Health class

\*1 AUD = 47.6808 INR (as of 4th May 2017)

# **Family Profile**

You arrived in the city 2 years ago. You used to live in a rural area, and farmed your landlord’s farm. You got to keep half of whatever food you grew.

But two years ago the government built a dam on top of your home and the land you were renting. All the land owners in the area were paid for their land – but the tenants, like yourselves, were left with no place to live. You had no choice but to come to the city and try to find work.

However, it has been tough. Your family has only ever been farmers, and nobody in your family has ever been to school.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Income** | **Rent** | **Food** |
| **Week 1** | Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total costs: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Income – costs  = | 1000 Rupees | 1000 Rupees |
| **Week 2** | Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total costs: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Income – costs  = | 1000 Rupees | 1000 Rupees |

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# **Family Profile**

You have just arrived in the city. Your family had been trying hard to survive by farming in a rural area, but there have been three years of drought. The long trips to search for water and the struggle digging the hard dirt has been too much when you have not had enough food.

Many people in your area left to go to the city. After your oxen died, you decided to leave as well. At least there are water pumps here. You plan to live in this slum until you manage to get a job and save up to rent a flat, and to send the children to a local school.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Income** | **Rent** | **Food** |
| **Week 1** | Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total costs: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Income – costs  = | 1000 Rupees\* | 1000 Rupees |
| **Week 2** | Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Payment: ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Total costs: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Income – costs  = | 1000 Rupees | 1000 Rupees |

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