

The Consensus Activity

Purpose: Students will use the information gathered from the conversations they had with each other during the previous activity to come to a consensus to rank the issues of child poverty.

Goals:

- To give students an opportunity to express their views/concerns about child poverty and to share their work on this issue with other students and with politicians
- To give students an understanding of decision-making processes, particularly the difference between **consensus** and **voting**
- To provide an opportunity for students to voice their views about the 25-year-old commitment to end child poverty by the year 2000
- To give participants new skills in advancing social change

Format:

Introduction: review the definitions of consensus and voting.

- A) In the original research groups, students will rank each of the issues they discussed. Each group member will record their group's rankings on paper, and in point form, state why? What can we do as a community and as a country? What questions do we have for our federal leaders? For our local leaders? (10 – 15 minutes)
- B) Move students into their jigsaw groups and have these groups share the preliminary consensus of their research group. The new group is to discuss and rank the issues and record their consensus on ranking the issues on chart paper, and in point form, state why. Share and come to consensus about the questions or comments for local, provincial or federal politicians and record these. (10 – 15 minutes)
- C) Class consensus: Have a spokesperson from each group summarize their ideas. As a large group, come to **consensus** or **vote** on the issues and their rankings. Record the groups' ideas. (10 – 15 minutes). Highlight the difference between coming to consensus and voting.
- D) Determine an action plan:
The information recorded and discussed during this activity will be the basis for a culminating activity that might include:
- writing a letter to a local, regional or federal politician,
 - organizing a video conference with a local, provincial or federal politician,
 - preparing a presentation and/or a media product to share with a politician invited to the class, or with others in the school or community.

Materials Needed: Paper, pencils, markers, Chart paper, masking tape