

Involving the community through events

Organising a School Hunger Banquet

Introduction

The Hunger Banquet is a most effective activity for engaging participants in a dramatisation of the unequal distribution of resources and wealth in the world. Each guest pays for a meal and then draws a ticket which randomly assigns them to the high, middle or low income tier and is served a corresponding meal.

The 15% in the high-income tier are served a sumptuous gourmet meal. The 30% in the middle-income section eat a simple meal of rice and beans. The majority 55% in the low-income tier waits for small portions of rice and water.

The Hunger Banquet is a powerful tool that brings to life the inequalities in our world and challenges us, as the more economically fortunate, to realize how our decisions affect others in the world. Few leave a Hunger Banquet with full stomachs, but all leave filled with a greater understanding of the problems of global hunger and poverty and hopefully the motivation to do something about it.

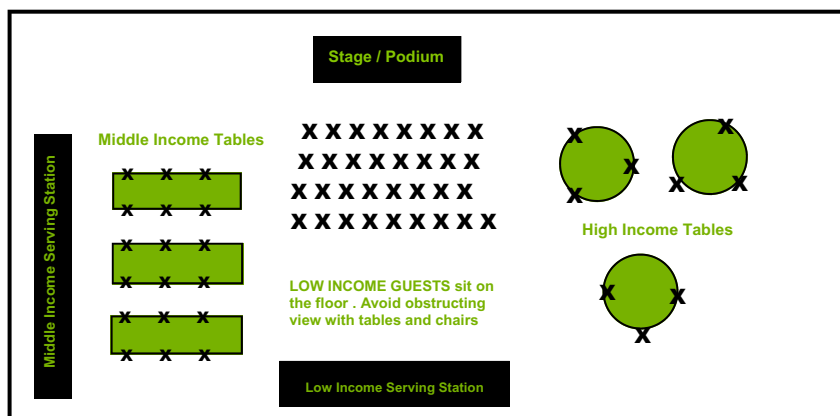
Planning the Hunger Banquet

Students set up an organising committee—you may want to involve school staff, parents, the School Representative Council and other school community members in this committee.

This student-led committee needs to consider the program, food, publicity, invitations, venue, MC, decorations, tickets, guest speakers and associated fund raising ideas. They may need to ask an Oxfam Community Aid Abroad person to briefly introduce the organisation and its work.

Setting up the Hunger Banquet

For a group of 60 there are 9 at the High Income Table; 18 at the Middle Income table and 33 low-income guests seated on the floor



Sample Program

- 5.00 pm : Volunteers arrive and set up and decorate the room.
- 6.00 pm : Greet guests and have them draw tickets: direct guests to their income groups.
- 6.15 pm : Welcome address by organising committee chairperson.
- 6.20 pm : MC reads Hunger Banquet Script describing the three income groups, move up /move down scenarios. (See Appendix 1)
- 6.30 pm : Meal is eaten. In the background music is played and images shown.
- 7.00 pm : MC asks for a moment of silence to reflect on their experience and feelings about the Hunger Banquet. Sharing period: MC walks amongst audience and asks participants to talk about their reflections and feelings.
- 7.15 pm : Introduce guest speaker or show Oxfam Community Aid Abroad video.
- 7.30 pm : Conclusion: Information on how participants can help support the work of Oxfam Community Aid Abroad.

Adapted from: <http://www.hungerbanquet.org/>