DOLLAR STREET PROJECT

Purpose

Income can often tell you more about how people live than location can. Using the website Dollar Street, you are given a way to visualize how other people around the world live. This will help you determine whether the world is flat or spiky. In other words, has globalization leveled the economic playing field, or has it created more inequality? You will consider this question about today's world, using pictures from around the world to help you draw conclusions.

Practices

Comparison

You will compare families around the world today to draw conclusions about economic equality—or inequality.

Process

In this activity, you will use the Dollar Street website to think about the question, "Is the world flat or spiky?"

Dollar Street is a powerful way to visualize how other people live around the world. Dollar Street imagines a world where everyone lives on the same street and the houses are ordered by income: the poorest people live at one end, and the richest live at the other end. Dollar Street really comes alive when you start comparing objects. As Bill Gates says, "I found the photos of toothbrushes to be particularly interesting. The families at the poorest end of the street use their fingers or sticks to clean their teeth. But once you reach a certain income level, everyone starts using a plastic toothbrush with bristles." The more time you spend on Dollar Street, the clearer it becomes that all of us have the same basic wants and needs but our means of addressing these wants and needs is often quite different.

You are going to fill out the Dollar Street Project worksheet using the website. You can pick whichever three families you want, but you should be able to explain your choice. You might choose to look at three families on different continents, or within the same continent; or perhaps, even within the same country.

Once you're done filling out the organizer, use the information you've found to help you answer the following question: Based on the families you learned about, has globalization leveled the economic playing field, or has it created more inequality? You will write a two-paragraph response to this question using evidence from the organizer to support your claims. Be prepared to share your ideas with the class. It's likely that you and your classmates came up with pretty different responses to the final question—why do you think that is?

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Directions: Pick three families using the information provided on the Dollar Street website. After you've filled out the organizer below, individually answer the question at the bottom in at least two paragraphs, using the information in the organizer to help support your claims.

	Family 1	**Family 2**	**Family 3**
Name of family			
Where does the family live?			
Monthly income			
Brief description of the family			

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	Family 1	Family 2	Family 3
How do they make a living?			
What are their challenges?			
What do they dream of?			
Choose three photos of the family home and write a brief commentary for each photo.			

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	Family 1	Family 2	Family 3
Choose two photos that document the family's access to water. Write a brief commentary for each photo.			
Choose a photo that documents what the family eats. Write a brief commentary for the photo.			

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	Family 1	Family 2	Family 3
Choose a photo that documents what the children's toys look like. Write a brief commentary for the photo.			
What is this family's most beloved belonging? If there is no photo documenting this, choose a photo of an item you believe to be of importance to this family. Write a brief commentary for the photo.			