

Student leaders and SHIC teachers have the option to undergo remote training by our team of experienced educators based in Vancouver. Reach out to helpmeout@highimpactstudents.org for tailored guidance on running a successful SHIC group. SHIC educators are happy to answer your questions and provide immediate one-on-one support.

Overview

In this level we'll start by busting some poverty myths, then traverse the depths of your mind with a provoking thought experiment. After that we'll calculate how rich all of you really are (spoiler alert: you're filthy rich) and look at why we need to set priorities when it comes to improving the world. Finally, we'll throw a short quiz your way so you can guess whether four real social programs had a positive effect on the world.

All instructions and suggestions for the organizer will be written with a grey background. Things that you can say as the organizer will be bolded with italicized black font; however, feel free to change it up however you like — the more genuine you come across, the more interested people will be in what you have to say.

As always with these level guides, take what works for you and leave the rest behind. Feel free to get creative with it. Don't hesitate to ask for advice by emailing helpmeout@highimpactstudents.org.

Goals:

- Update on the state of the world
- Investigate the idea of moral obligation
- Understand how wealthy you are compared to the rest of the world
- Prioritize competing causes

Timeline:

0:00-0:10 Poverty Myths video

•	0:10-0:25	The drowning child scenario
•	0:25-0:40	How rich am I?
•	0:40-0:55	High-Impact Charity — Arctic Expedition
•	0:55-1:00	Effective poverty charities
•	1:00-1:10	Social Programs Quiz
	1.10-1.15	Summary

Materials needed:

- Computer connected to data projector with Level 3 Rethinking Charity PowerPoint slides.
- Internet access to play the embedded videos
- Spare pens/pencils and paper
- "How rich am I?" worksheets
- Participants should bring in phones, tablets or laptops with internet access if possible for the "How rich am I?" activity.

Note on "How rich am I" activity:

- This activity is designed for people in high-income countries, who are
 usually surprised by how much richer they are compared to the average
 people in the world. If your group is not from a high-income country you
 might need to modify or skip this activity.
- There are five slides in the powerpoint corresponding to the 'How rich am I?' section of this level, showing the average income in Canada, UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand. If you delete the slides that are not relevant for you then the slide numbers given in this document will match the slide numbers on the powerpoint.

Poverty Myths Video (10 min)

Show slide #1: Rethinking Charity

Welcome to Level 3 of the Students for High Impact Charity program. Last session we learned about what life in extreme poverty is like. Today we are going to be thinking deeply about what our response to extreme poverty should be. But first, let's watch this short video in which Bill Nye the Science Guy explains what we can decide do about extreme poverty.

Show slide #2: Watch Bill Nye on extreme poverty (2 min 3 sec).

Note: Different countries spend different amounts of their government budget on foreign aid.

Approximate 2017 figures — Percentage of budget spent on foreign aid:

Canada — 1.7%

Australia - 0.9 %UK - 1.7%New Zealand - 0.8%USA - 1.3%

Show slide #3: Poverty Myths

Bill Nye correctly says that child mortality—this is the percentage of children who die before they reach the age of 5—has halved in the last 20 years. This is amazing progress. Aid has been part of this progress, particularly the development and funding of vaccinations, anti-malaria nets, and other healthcare interventions. However, a lot of the improvements are due to economic growth in these countries causing the people living there to be better off.

Discussion questions:

- Which of these myths had you heard before? Was there any that you believed?
- How does Bill Nye's pie chart make you feel about global poverty?

Note: If your group comes up with questions that you (or a quick google search) can't answer, or if you want more information on the topic, feel free to let your group know you will get back to them, and email SHIC at helpmeout@highimpactstudents.org for some ideas.

Child Scenario (15 min)

Enough about the real world, let's head into an imaginary world. We are going to do what philosophers call a "thought experiment." A thought experiment is a way we can use our imaginations to consider ideas, and hopefully come to conclusions about the world, or about ourselves.

Imagine you are walking in the woods with a group of friends, and you pass by a pond.

Show slide #4: Drowning child

And in the pond you notice a small child. It looks like the child is struggling; they are gasping, and you watch in horror as their head goes below the surface. The child is drowning!

You look at your friends. They are just standing there with their mouths open, and not doing anything! The water is muddy, but it looks shallow enough for you to wade in and rescue the child without putting yourself at risk.

What would you do? Wait for someone to suggest that you save them.

But wait! You have your favourite outfit on, with your coolest shoes! You don't have time to take your clothes or shoes off, and you don't even have the time to take your new iPhone X out of your pocket because the kid's head is already underwater! If you wade in and save the child, your clothes will get covered in mud and be ruined forever, your phone will be dead and you will be uncomfortably wet and cold.

Quick questions:

- Should you jump in and save the child even though your possessions will get ruined?
- What would you think of someone who chose NOT to rescue the child?

So most of you think that you would do your best to save the child, despite inconvenience and financial loss due to the ruined phone and clothes. I am sure you are right. You also consider people who don't act to be, well, pretty awful people.

That situation involved a child who was right in front of you—and you chose to save the child. What would be different if the child you could save wasn't right in front of you?

According to the independent charity evaluator GiveWell, you can save a child's life for about 4000 US Dollars or 5000 Canadian Dollars donated to the Against Malaria Foundation, and this is one of the most cost-effective ways of preventing children from dying. While this is probably more expensive than your phone and clothes, many people in developed countries could donate a few thousand dollars over the course of a year or a few years—donating this money would be an inconvenience for sure, but it wouldn't affect their quality of life all that much.

Show slide #5: Drowning child vs Malaria

So let's compare these two scenarios—saving a child from drowning in front of you, and saving a child by donating to charity.

Step slide ahead

In both situations a child can be saved at a cost to ourselves, one cost is ruined possessions, the other cost is \$4000.

Many people feel compelled to wade in and save the drowning child. But those same people don't feel compelled to donate money to save a child from malaria. People generally WANT to help people right in front of them, but don't really want to help people that are far away, that is just how most people's brains work.

But is that MORALLY CORRECT?

Step slide ahead

Discussion question:

 Are the situations morally the same or different? WHICH CHILDREN ARE WE MORALLY OBLIGED TO SAVE? Talk to the people around you.

Common arguments to say the situations are different, with potential responses:

- The drowning child is in front of them.
 Response: Does that make a morally significant difference? You have the capability to save both!
- I can be sure I'm saving the child, but I can't be sure with a charity. Response: That is a factor for sure, but if we choose a charity recommended by charity evaluators like GiveWell we can be pretty confident we are helping a lot. But conversely, you may not actually be sure you are helping the drowning child, as it may be that you left it too late and the kid is already drowned. So in neither situation can we be 100% sure we are saving the life.

Some of you might be thinking "There are lots of other people that can help the child with malaria, I don't have to".

Well, that is true... and there are other people in the world that are helping to save those children—you saw last time that we are making a lot of progress on reducing malaria. But currently there are not enough people helping.

Show slide #6: Number of people dying of malaria

There are still around 1500 people dying of malaria every day—the number of dots on the screen, so at the moment it seems we can't rely on other people to solve the whole problem.

How Rich am I? (15 min)



Some of you might be thinking "There are rich people who could help all those children, they should do it, not me!"

Okay, fair enough, you guys are all students. You won't earn much money to help people living in extreme poverty, at least not for a while, but what kind of dough could you be making in the future when you get a full-time job?

Show slide #7: How rich am I?

For this exercise you will need the internet, and you'll be doing a calculation. Here are some worksheets for the activity—make sure you follow the steps in order.

Hand out sheets, and roam around. You might need to encourage students to try the minimum or average wage if they don't know what to do. Strongly encourage students to write down their answers.

Short link: goo.gl/cdiuxh

Long link: https://www.givingwhatwecan.org/get-involved/how-rich-am-i/

Set up whiteboard with these columns:

JOB/SALARY | GUESS % RICHER | REAL % RICHER | x RICHER THAN AVERAGE

Questions for people who would like to share:

- What job did you select?
- What did you guess for the percentage of people that are richer than you?
- What was the REAL percentage of people richer than you?
- How many times richer are you than the average person?

Whiteboard results as they talk. Ask ~3 students, ideally with a variety of fields. If no-one mentions the minimum and average wages in your country you can write them up.

For minimum wage rates, you can go here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List of minimum wages by country

Quick questions:

- Did anything surprise you about these results? In what way?
- How does that make you feel?

Note: The calculator takes into account the fact that the cost of living is higher in some countries. The idea is that if you are 10x richer than the average person, that means you can buy 10x as much stuff as the average person. The money you put in is supposed to be after tax, so you could take 20 or 30% off to take that into account if you wanted to.

If you didn't know, now you know. Most people in high income countries, perhaps including you, are really rich compared to the rest of the world. More importantly, if those people choose to give away a percentage of their income, that money really can make a difference if given wisely—a small amount of money for you can make a huge difference to someone living on less than \$2.50 per day.

Discussion question:

• How does learning about your potential wealth change how you feel about helping the poorest people in the world? Tell the person next to you.

Note: The calculator has a sliding scale showing what you can do if you give x% of your income to charity. You might like to point it out to fast finishers and get them to have a play.

Show slide #8: World income distribution

NOTE: DELETE THE SLIDES THAT DON'T APPLY TO YOUR COUNTRY

Here is a graph of the world income, from the poorest person to the richest person. You can see that most people are pretty poor, but a small percentage of people are REALLY WEALTHY. In fact, the richest person in the world is actually way off the top of this graph, the line would be punching through the roof of this building.

Step slide forward

And here is where you would be if you lived on the average wage and the minimum wage in this country.

So when you do get a job, you will be in a really good position to help the people down here, who are the worst off on our planet.

Show slide #9: Drowning Child vs Malaria

Some philosophers who have considered just how rich people are in developed countries think these two scenarios are MORALLY the same—if we can save a life at little cost to ourselves we should save that life, whether they are near or far.

Other philosophers think we are NOT morally OBLIGED to help the child far away, but that it would still be really wonderful if we did help them.

Think about it this way. Imagine rescuing that child from drowning—that kid could have a long, healthy life full of rich and diverse experiences ALL BECAUSE OF YOU! That feeling of satisfaction would stay with you for the rest of your life because you would know you really made an impact! You'd be a hero!

Now, we don't all walk by drowning children, but we do have opportunities to be just as heroic by saving children from preventable diseases. The cost of

preventing someone dying from malaria is small enough that many people in developed countries can afford to save a life if they choose to, perhaps even saving a life or two every year! Donating to charity is not nearly as dramatic as saving a child from drowning, but the benefits are just as great. Through the simple act of donating to the most effective charities, you could be a hero too!

High-Impact
Charity —
Arctic
Expedition
(15 min)



Photo by Rear Admiral Harley D. Nygren, NOAA Corps (ret.) — NOAA At The Ends of the Earth CollectionImage ID: corp1014 ([1]), Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=22083

Show slide #10: Arctic scene

What does an arctic expedition have to do with charity? To find out, read the following excerpts from this article.

We are now going to hear from Scott Siskind about efficient charity - not all charities are created equal.

"Imagine you are setting out on a dangerous expedition through the Arctic on a limited budget. The grizzled old prospector at the general store shakes his head sadly: you can't afford everything you need; you'll just have to purchase the bare essentials and hope you get lucky. But what is essential? Should you buy the warmest parka, if it means you can't afford a sleeping bag? Should you bring an extra week's food, just in case, even if it means going without a rifle? Or can you buy the rifle, leave the food, and hunt for your dinner?

"And a digital camera, of course — if you make it back alive, you'll have to put the Arctic expedition pics up on Facebook. And a hand-crafted scarf with authentic Inuit tribal patterns woven from organic fibres! Wicked!

"...but of course buying any of those items would be insane. The problem is what economists call opportunity costs: buying one thing costs money that could be used to buy others. A hand-crafted designer scarf might have some value in the Arctic, but it would cost so much it would prevent you from buying much more important things. And when your life's on the line, things like impressing your friends and buying organic pale in comparison. You have one goal — staying alive — and your only problem is how to distribute your resources to keep your chances as high as possible.

"These sorts of economics concepts are natural enough when faced with a journey through the freezing tundra.

"But they are decidedly not natural when facing a decision about charitable giving. Most donors say they want to "help people". If that's true, they should try to distribute their resources to help people as much as possible. Most people don't."

Discussion question:

 How does the arctic expedition metaphor link to the subject of charitable choices?

Continuing the article by Scott Siskind

"...many charitable choices do have right answers. According to the World Bank's analysis, immunising children for dengue fever saves one child's life for \$25,000, but we know that by donating to malaria prevention we could save about five lives for the same cost. If you want to save children, donating bed nets instead of immunising against dengue fever is the objectively right answer, the same way buying a nice car instead of a broken-down one for the same price is the right answer.

"Say all of the best Arctic explorers agree that the three most important things for surviving in the Arctic are good boots, a good coat, and good food. Perhaps they have run highly unethical studies in which they release thousands of people into the Arctic with different combination of gear, and consistently find that only the ones with good boots, coats, and food survive. Then there is only one best answer to the question "What gear do I buy if I want to survive" — good boots, good food, and a good coat. Your preferences are irrelevant; you may choose to go with alternate gear, but only if you don't mind dying.

"And likewise, there is only one best charity: the one that helps the most people the greatest amount per dollar."

Discussion question:

• Do you agree that cost-effectiveness should be used to decide which charity is the best? Why or why not?

"Deciding which charity is the best is hard. It may be straightforward to say that one form of antimalarial therapy is more effective than another. But how do both compare to financing medical research that might or might not develop a "magic bullet" cure for malaria? Or financing development of a new kind of supercomputer that might speed up all medical research? There is no easy answer, but the question has to be asked.

"It is important to be rational about charity for the same reason it is important to be rational about Arctic exploration: it requires the same awareness of opportunity costs and the same hard-headed commitment to investigating efficient use of resources, and it may well be a matter of life and death."

Discussion questions:

- Is the arctic expedition a good metaphor for thinking about how to spend resources on charity? Why or why not?
- What are some good things about thinking about cost-effectiveness with charity? What are some bad things?

Show slide #11: AMF vs Make a Wish

It turns out that some very popular charities are not particularly effective. One popular charity is Make-a-Wish foundation, which grants the wishes of very sick children in developed countries. For one day, these kids see their dreams come true. One wish costs on average \$10,000 USD (12,000 CAD), which could stop two to three kids from getting deathly sick in the first place.

Discussion questions:

- So if you had \$10,000 USD (12,000 CAD), would you rather grant a child's wish, or prevent a couple of kids from dying?
- Why do you think donating to Make a Wish is so popular?

Poverty Charities (10 min)

So let's say you want to help. What can you do?

Hopefully someone suggests donating to effective charities! Other options: research vaccines or medical treatments, or work for a charity.

You might remember from last time that there are independent charity evaluators that do careful scientific analysis on charities, for example GiveWell and The Life You Can Save.

Show slide #12: Evaluators logo

They measure charities on how many lives can be saved or improved with a donation. They update their recommended charities every year based on new evidence.

Ask students to go on their computers or phones and look at these two charity evaluators' recommendations for five minutes. Ask students to find a charity they think is interesting, or they particularly like, and be prepared to share why. At the end of five minutes ask for students to share their thoughts.

Show slide #13: Recommended charities

Here are a few of GiveWell's top charities. All their recommended charities are based on strong scientific evidence that they are making significant headway in tackling poverty and preventable illnesses. They recommend the charities we learnt about in the giving game, Against Malaria Foundation, Schistosomiasis Control Initiative, and GiveDirectly.

They also recommend charities focussed on preventing blindness. Remember that man in the video from the Philippines, who was blind and couldn't work to support his family? There are about 30 million people who are unnecessarily blind. Helen Keller International works to prevent and treat many causes of preventable blindness across the world, including in the Philippines.

We also have Evidence Action's project "No Lean Season". Remember in the video from Malawi, how Dunstar and Jenet had months with very little food? This is very common for families in developing countries that rely on farming to survive. No Lean Season supports one adult in a family to travel elsewhere to get a temporary job during those months of need.

These charities are very cost-effective—a small donation will go a really long way.

All these charities are focused on helping the poorest people in developing countries because money goes so much further for these people than it does in developed countries.

Social Programs Quiz (10 min) For our final activity today we have a quiz!

In order to improve the world as much as we can, we have to improve our understanding. As we have seen, despite our good intentions, our ideas about helping others doesn't always translate into real help. It's not always obvious

what will work.

We're going to do a quiz to see if we can bring that point back into focus. Here's how this works: I'm going to show you four social programs that have been implemented by various governments and organizations. For each one, you're going to guess whether the program had a positive effect—as in, it made things better—a negative effect—as in, it actually made things worse—or, it had no effect at all.

All these programs have been studied extensively using randomized controlled trials and other types of studies to determine what effects these programs produced. That's where the right answers come from. Think you can guess what works?

Show slide #14: Please stand up

To start, I need everyone to stand up!

This quiz is going to work on a process of elimination—we'll see how you do!

Show slide #15: Electronic Baby Simulators

Okay. First social program: Electronic Baby Simulators.

This program gives electronic dolls to teenage schoolgirls, who then take care of the baby over a weekend, responding to its needs for feeding, burping, and changing. The dolls are programmed to call for attention 24 hours a day, to simulate the demands of caring for a real child.

The idea is to convince girls to use contraception and reduce teen pregnancies.

The question for you is, does it work?

If you think this program has a positive effect, as in it reduces the chance that girls become pregnant, please raise both your hands and keep them up.

If you think this program has a negative effect, as in it actually <u>increases</u> the chance of teen pregnancy, I want you to keep both your hands by your sides.

And if you think it has no measured effect, cross your arms over your chest.

Got it? So, positive effect—hands up. Negative effect—hands down. No effect—arms crossed.

Give students a moment to make their guesses.

Okay? So, the answer is...

Studies have shown that the baby simulators often have the opposite effect to that intended, and actually cause an increase in teenage pregnancies and births. This might be because many participants find the simulated babies fun, they get more attention and help from their friends and family, and feel more confident about becoming parents.

Show slide #16: D.A.R.E

The second social program is D.A.R.E.

This program involves police officers going into schools and teaching about the effects of drug use, and decision-making and peer pressure resistance skills. The aim is to decrease drug use among students who participate.

As before you think this program has a positive effect, please raise both your hands and keep them up.

If you think this program has a negative effect, as in it increases the chance a student will take drugs, I want you to keep both your hands by your sides.

And if you think it has no measured effect, cross your arms over your chest.

Give students a moment to make their guesses before showing the answer.

Two randomized controlled trials have shown that D.A.R.E actually has no effect on the rate of drug use among participants.

Show slide #17: Restorative Justice Conferencing

Okay. The third social program is restorative justice conferencing.

A restorative justice conference brings together offenders, victims and others involved (i.e. families and communities) to discuss the impact of a crime and how the offender should repair the harm done.

If you think the program has a positive effect, as in it <u>reduces</u> the future frequency of crime in offenders, raise both your hands.

If you think this program has a negative effect, and actually <u>increases</u> the frequency of future crimes, I want you to keep both your hands by your sides.

And if you think it has no measured effect, cross your arms over your chest.

Give students a moment to make their guesses.

The answer is that the intervention has a positive effect. 10 randomized controlled trials showed a reduction in future crime and a higher level of satisfaction for victims.

Show slide #18: Scared Straight

The final social program is Scared Straight.

This program involves taking children who have committed crimes, or are considered to be at high risk of committing crimes, into prisons to see presentations by prison inmates about life in prison.

The idea is that children will see what life is like in prison and be less likely to commit crimes in the future.

So, do you think this intervention is effective?

If you think the program has a positive effect, as in it <u>reduces</u> the chances that children who were involved in it committed crimes in the future, please raise both your hands and keep them up.

If you think this program has a negative effect, as in it actually <u>increases</u> the chance of crime, I want you to keep both your hands by your sides.

And if you think it has no measured effect, cross your arms over your chest.

Give students a moment to make their guesses.

The answer is that Scared Straight actually made children more likely to commit crimes in the future. These programs are still being run, despite being harmful, and people continue to believe they are effective.

Alright! So if you had your hands down, stay standing, everyone else please sit!

If some students made it all the way through:

Nice work! You've made it through with all correct answers! Invite a round of applause or give high fives, and tell them they can sit down now.

If no one is standing:

It looks like NO ONE got all four questions right. Oh dear, you guys are terrible at this quiz! Don't feel too bad though, very few people consistently guess the correct result.

Scared Straight is a really bad social program. Those doing the study found that for every \$1 spent on the program, the cost to society due to the extra

crime was \$200. \$200!

This quiz gave us the chance to see that our intuitions are pretty unreliable at working out whether something works or not. This means that we should test out social programs, and look at the evidence for a social program before supporting it, just like we should do with charity.

Summary (5 min)

So that wraps up our session for today.

Quick question:

• What is one thing you learnt today?

If they don't say this already in the answers: So while humanity has made a lot of progress, there are still some people who live in extreme poverty and some people are suffering from easily preventable diseases, hunger, and deprivation.

We have a really huge opportunity to make a massive difference in people's lives. Just by the luck of being an educated person, living here in this great country, you probably have the power to save many lives over the course of your life.

In the next session we will look beyond the problems affecting the human race, and look at the problems affecting the other animals we share this planet with.

Show slide #19: Next level: Morality and Animals

Fighting global poverty is important, but can we think about other cause areas in the same rational terms? What about animal welfare? Next week we'll talk morals, and chat about how we can apply the logical thinking skills we learned today to maximize our impact for the animal kingdom.

When you have used this level with a group, please complete this quick survey to help us track how this level is being used!

Thank you for taking on this lesson and encouraging students to think about effective charities! You may want to try Level 4 next time about Morality and Animals. You can find this level on www.shicschools.org/shic-introductory-program.

If you're interested in learning more, or have any feedback about the lesson, we'd absolutely love to hear from you! Feel free to get in touch anytime at helpmeout@highimpactstudents.org.

Thanks again!

The SHIC Team

Sources

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- Further information about extreme poverty:
- https://www.cgdev.org/blog/really-global-poverty-falling-honest
- https://ourworldindata.org/child-mortality
- https://ourworldindata.org/hunger-and-undernourishment
- Cost to achieved UN SDG Health goals: https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/langlo/PIIS2214-109X(17)30263-2.pdf
- GiveWell cost for life saved by AMF: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11EiUON5Ac78N3zqVe_Y9laSUb5MZCm956T rDb4PXHzM/edit#gid=1364064522 See Nets tab. Cost per death averted (after accounting for leverage and funging). Average across all researchers is \$3291 USD.
- How Rich Am I Calculator: https://www.givingwhatwecan.org/get-involved/how-rich-am-i/
- Minimum wages by country: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List of minimum wages by country
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