



## TEACHER GUIDE

ADMINISTER

# Dollar Street: Living conditions on four Income Levels

(using paper handouts)

This exercise will give students an understanding of how living conditions differ for people across four Income Levels. This knowledge is crucial for helping students understand global issues such as poverty, public health and sustainable development

### Step 1 (5 min)

Show Dollar Street to students and explain the concept.



### Step 2 (20 min)

Students work in groups to learn about families on different Income Levels.



### Step 3 (20 min)

Students show and tell what they learned about life on different Income Levels.



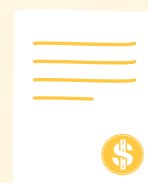
**Ages:** Young to adult learners

**Requirements:** Printed handouts so there is one per group of 5 students

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes (or 5 minutes if familiar with Dollar Street)

**Exercise duration:** Around 45 minutes (depending on the number of groups)

**Subjects:** Geography, sustainability, economics, culture



# About

Imagine all the homes in the world lined up on one long street, sorted by income. The poorest live at the left end of the street and the richest live at the right end. Everybody else? Most people live somewhere in the middle. Your house number on this street represents your income. Your neighbours on Dollar Street are people from all over the world with the same income as you. [www.DollarStreet.org](http://www.DollarStreet.org)

## Goal of the exercise

Provide knowledge of living conditions on the four Income Levels is crucial and help students understand global issues such as poverty, public health and sustainable development.

## Students will learn about:

- Life on the four Income Levels.
- Differences in what life looks like from one Income Level to another.

## Preparation

- Read the background information section at the end of this Teacher Guide.
- Watch Anna Rosling Rönnlund's TED Talk from 2017, "Everyone lives on Dollar Street", where she explains the Dollar Street concept and how people live on the four Income Levels. [www.gapminder.org/videos/everyone-lives-on-dollar-street](http://www.gapminder.org/videos/everyone-lives-on-dollar-street)
- Get familiar with Handout 1. This handout has pictures in three categories - housing, food and water. In each category there are seven pictures. Picture 1 shows life on Income Level 1, pictures 2-4 show life on Level 2, pictures 5 and 6 show life on Level 3 and picture 7 shows life on Level 4.
- Print copies of Handout 1 and cut out the pictures. There should be one complete set for each group of five students.
- Print copies of Handout 2 so there is one for every group. This handout shows the correct order in which to place the pictures from Handout 1.
- Print copies of Handout 3. This handout shows that most people live on Levels 2 and 3, and that not everyone is rich or poor.

# Exercise

## Step 1: Explain the concept of Dollar Street.

### A. Begin with a description of Dollar Street:

Imagine all the homes in the world lined up on one long street, sorted by income. The poorest live at the left end of the street and the richest live at the right end. Everybody else? Most people live somewhere in the middle. Your house number on this street represents your income. Your neighbours on Dollar Street are people from all over the world with the same income as you.

### B. Explain how many people live on the four different Income Levels:

- Level 1: One billion
- Level 2: Three billion
- Level 3: Two billion
- Level 4: One billion

## Step 2: Students work in groups to learn about families on different incomes.

### A. Tell the students they will learn more about people's lives on different Income Levels. Ask them to sit in small groups of around five and give them the batches of Dollar Street pictures (Handout 1). Each group should have 21 pictures showing how people satisfy three basic needs – seven which show housing, seven which show food and seven which show water.

### B. Explain that the task is to sort the pictures, from the poorest to the richest, in order and by each basic need. Each group should have three lines of seven pictures (one for housing, one for food and one for water). Before they start you might need to define the different basic needs and give the students some clues about how to think when sorting the pictures:

- a. Housing: A house protects people against the elements. Clue: Look for the house's stability and how well it might protect inhabitants from wind, water, heat and cold.
- b. Water: To drink, bathe and wash clothes. The water has to be free from bacteria to be clean. Clue: What do the pictures say about people's access to it and how near a secure water source is? (Secure means water has been separated from dirt and human waste).
- c. Food: Meals that provide enough calories and nutrition. Clue: How many ingredients are in the food, and how much protein?

### Step 3: Students show and tell what they learned about life on different incomes.

- A. Give the students Handout 2 and ask them to discuss how accurate their picture order was when compared to the correct order.
- B. Ask the students to sort their pictures in the right order and explain that they correspond to the four Income Levels:
  - a. Picture 1: Example of life at Level 1 – extreme poverty
  - b. Pictures 2, 3 and 4: Examples of life at Level 2 – lower middle income
  - c. Pictures 5 and 6: Examples of life at Level 3 – higher middle income
  - d. Picture 7: Example of life at Level 4 – high income
- C. Ask the students to discuss in their groups the differences in living conditions they noticed. How do living conditions differ between the richest and poorest? Are there any small changes in between? Discuss one basic need at a time. Finish by asking each group to explain their views to the whole class.
- D. Give the students Handout 3 and reflect on why so many people think that the world is divided into the rich and the poor, when actually most people live in the middle.
- E. Ask the students to summarize what they learnt from the exercise.
- F. Invite them to ask questions that might have come up during the exercise.



#### Show Anna Rosling Rönnlund's TED Talk: Everyone lives on Dollar Street

The TED Talk is a good introduction to Dollar Street. It is in English and lasts about 12 minutes. You can show a shorter part by starting on 6:37. From that point onwards, Anna shows how families around the world live depending on their Income Level.



POOR

RICH



## Housing





## Water



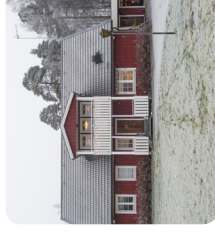
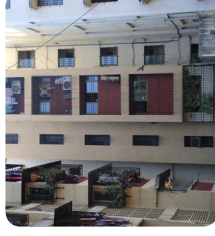


## Food

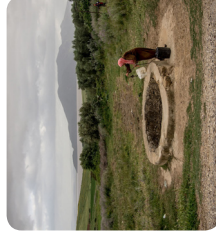




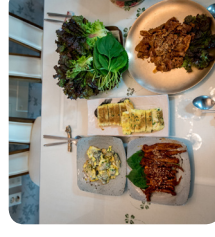
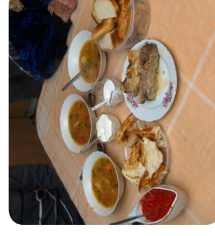
## Housing



## Water



## Food



LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 2

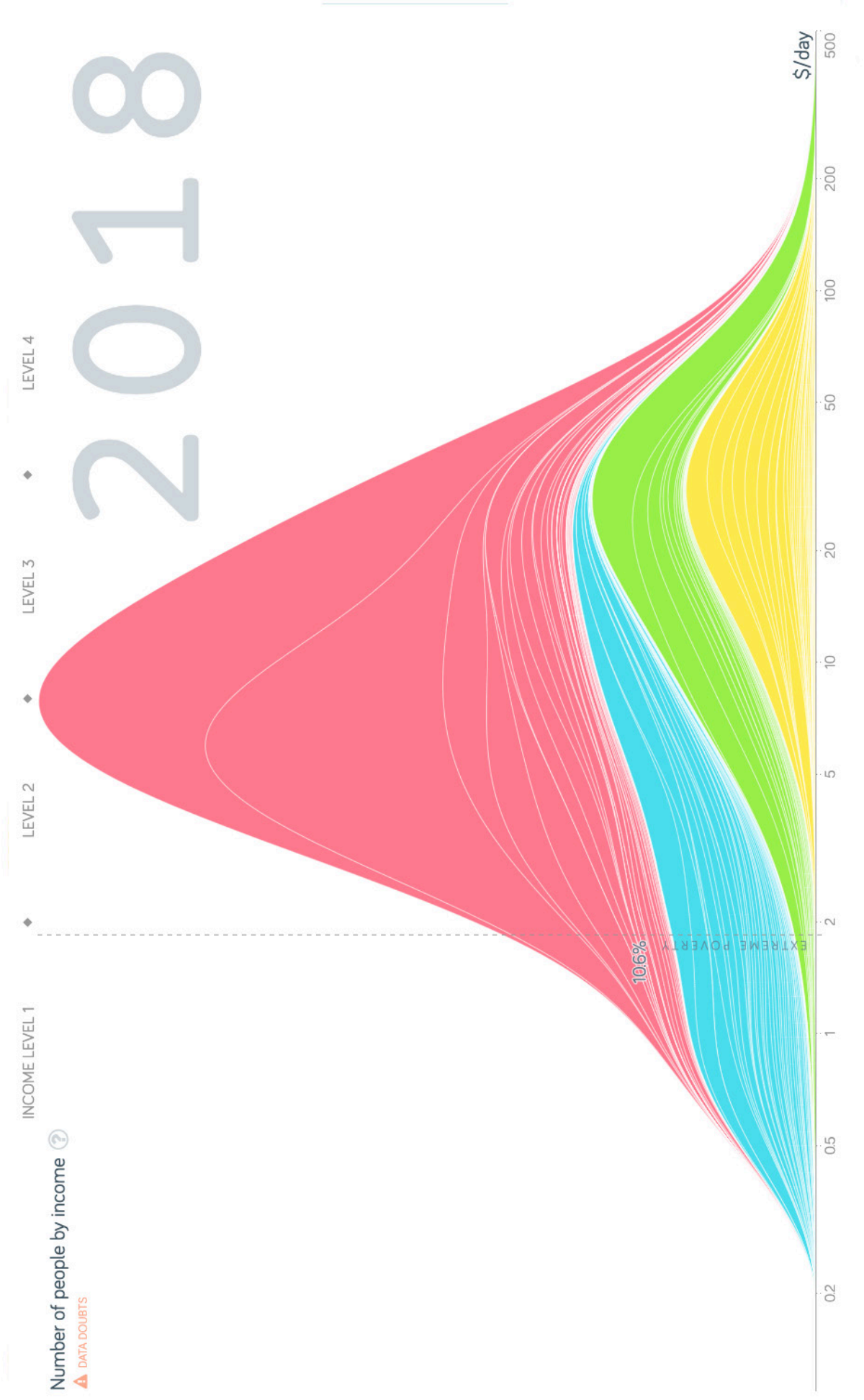
LEVEL 3

LEVEL 3

LEVEL 4







# Background Information

Below is information that teachers who are leading this exercise in class should familiarize themselves with ahead of the lesson.

## How does Dollar Street help combat the misconception of a world divided between rich and poor?

By showing a scale of people all the way from poorest to richest, and making clear that most people are in the middle. You can see huge differences within countries and continents, but also similarities across countries, which helps fight simplistic outlooks such as “us and them” and stereotypes around culture, such as “our culture” and “their culture”.

The pictures are a reflection of the global data which shows that many people have moved out of extreme poverty and that expressions such as “developing countries” and “the West” are outdated when it comes to describing the world.

## How many people in the world live on each Income Level?

- Level 1: 1 billion
- Level 2: 3 billion
- Level 3: 2 billion
- Level 4: 1 billion

All numbers are rounded for simplicity.

## Why is the concept of Income Levels more useful than a divided world when it comes to comparing countries today and in the past?

Simply, the world is not divided. Development has been gradual and will continue to be so, which is why the Income Levels are an effective measure of progress.

When comparing countries today, it gives us a simple framework to compare countries that are similar in economic and social development. It also lets us study the history of the richest countries as they developed over the levels, and compare them with countries that are currently where those rich countries were in the past.

The levels have a consistent value and so countries move over the levels as they develop, making it easier to recognize change and use for comparison.

## What is the typical life of a person on Income Level 1, in terms of food, housing, water, transport, work and risk management?

- Food: Lacks nutrients and variety. Meals are normally the same every day. Food is often grown by subsistence farmers.



- Housing: Built from natural materials such as mud. Often unstable structures with temporary roofs. These homes are vulnerable to extreme weather and hard to keep safe and secure. Normally just one room and no locks on doors. They may not have a light bulb and if they do, it is likely only one.
- Water: Have to travel a long distance to fetch water from a cold water tap or an open source.
- Transport: Walk barefoot.
- Work: Typically a low yield farmer or work as a laborer on a neighbouring farm.
- Risk management: Struggle to get medical care. No savings. If a harvest goes wrong, family will starve. Bad air indoors. Hard to keep family healthy due to an unhygienic environment in the home and what they consume.

### **What is the typical life of a person on Income Level 2, in terms of food, housing, water, transport, work and risk management?**

- Food: Still the same meal every day but now bought from local markets and shops, and cooked at home. Basic but might now include some meat, eggs or vegetables in addition to the staple grains. Can also buy some spices.
- Housing: Made of stronger materials than on Level 1 but still simple and made of a patchwork of materials. Likely to have a lock on the door. People no longer sleep on the floor, they sleep on mattresses. There is more privacy but still many people sharing a small space. Unstable electricity, just a few bulbs.
- Water: A tap closer by that provides cold, safe drinking water.
- Transport: A bicycle.
- Work: Still most likely to be a small-scale farmer or working in jobs that are physically demanding.
- Risk management: Insecure work life. Can afford basic medication but one major illness in the family or damage from an extreme weather event means falling back to Level 1 and extreme poverty.

### **What is the typical life of a person on income Level 3, in terms of food, housing, water, transport, work and risk management?**

- Food: Nutritious. Some variation, such as different meals for breakfast and dinner and can afford more meat. Buys food at the market and can store it in a fridge or freezer and cook using a simple stove.
- Housing: A roof that doesn't leak. Homes are now styled according to the taste of the people who live there. They have strong locks, sealed windows, more than one bedroom and stable electricity.
- Water: Cold water tap in the house or close by.
- Transport: Moped, small motorcycle or crowded public transport.

- Work: Less likely to be a farmer and have a better income. Typically work long hours in jobs such as factory workers, drivers, nurses and hair dressers.
- Risk management: May have a very small amount of savings and possibly some access to microfinance.

### What is the typical life of a person on income Level 4, in terms of food, housing, water, transport, work and risk management?

- Food: In the richest homes, food is often highly nutritious and diverse, rich in protein and vitamins. This income group can buy pre-prepared food to save them the time on cooking and can also afford to eat out at restaurants.
- Housing: More rooms, flushing toilets and baths and showers. Resources to fit rooms with technology, reliable internet, phone, water, gas and electricity connections.
- Water: Hot and cold water indoors.
- Transport: Car
- Work: Jobs that require an advanced Level of education and which pay enough to allow them to buy consumer goods and go on vacation.
- Risk management: Has a bank account, access to credit and valuable property is insured.

### Additional material

If you would like to explore Dollar Street in more detail, please visit the website [www.DollarStreet.org](http://www.DollarStreet.org)

Gapminder has an abundance of resources on its website which can help teachers and students better understand the world, including:

- Interactive tools: [www.gapminder.org/tools](http://www.gapminder.org/tools)
- Videos of our talks, interviews and TV documentaries: [www.gapminder.org/videos](http://www.gapminder.org/videos)
- Hans Rosling's short video explainers: [www.gapminder.org/answers](http://www.gapminder.org/answers)



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