

# International Human Solidarity Day

NEW  
BUILDING  
BRIDGES

5-6

New  
Building  
Bridges

7-8

## Introduction

The UN General Assembly identified **solidarity** as **one of the fundamental and universal values of international relations between peoples** in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. On December 22, 2005, by resolution 60/209, it proclaimed the International Human Solidarity Day to be observed every **20 December**.

The main idea is that those who either suffer or benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most. Solidarity promotes the spirit of sharing, fighting poverty, hunger, inequality etc.

Furthermore, this day should celebrate unity in our diversity.

To help you mark this day in your ELT class, we have prepared 5 activities which you can do all together or just pick one or two activities and do them at the beginning of a lesson.

## Activity 1a (warmer)

For this activity, you need chocolate pieces or candies for students in your class. If you have 20 students, you need 30 pieces.

Randomly give half the class two pieces of chocolate or 2 candies (if you have 20 students, 10 of them get 2 pieces). Half of the students get nothing. Tell the students that chocolates represent things like money, food, health insurance, education that half the world has and the other half hasn't.

Ask Ss to eat their chocolates and ask the less fortunate ones how they felt.

*e.g. Did you feel disappointed / angry / confused / like you didn't care?*

Ask Ss who got two pieces of chocolate about their feelings. Possible answers: privileged, guilty, pleased, sorry for the other students, embarrassed, etc.

Explain Ss that 3 billion people (or half of the world's population) live with very little or no money and that they are considered poor.

While distributing chocolate to Ss who did not get any at the beginning of the activity, discuss the following questions with your Ss:

- 1 Did you feel like sharing your candies with Ss who were less lucky than you?
- 2 Did anybody give one of the two candies to a classmate?
- 3 Should things like food, money, education, health care be available to everybody, only to people who live in wealthy countries or only to those who can pay for them?
- 4 Should governments deal with this problem or should we also take some responsibility and help each other more?

## Activity 1b (warmer)

Play the following game to teach your Ss about privilege/deprivation.

- 1 Ss receive a piece of paper and you ask them to crumple it into a ball.
- 2 Move a recycling bin/waste paper basket to the front of your classroom, in front of the board.
- 3 Tell Ss that they represent their country's population. Everybody has a chance to become rich and move into the upper class.
- 4 To do this, all you have to do is throw your crumpled paper into the bin. You must sit in your seat.
- 5 Ss throw the crumpled papers. Obviously, those sitting in the back will start complaining that it is not fair and that their classmates sitting in the front have a much better chance. Most Ss from the front rows will successfully throw their papers in the bin, and only a few from the back of the classroom will be able to do the same.

Conclude the activity: The closer you are to the bin, the better your odds. This is what privilege is. Discuss this with your Ss. How do they react? Does anyone complain about fairness? Who is happy about their position?

We should be aware of our privilege – e.g. the right to free education – and use it to achieve great things, but also to help those sitting *in the back rows* in real life. Those not being able to get educated, the hungry, the homeless.

## Activity 2

Start off with the picture of fish in the ocean and ask Ss to describe it.



Graphic by MatzeK: Solidarity (2010)

Elicit from Ss words they associate with **solidarity**. Write them on the board. Depending on the age/level of your Ss, you can expect the following vocabulary:

together, togetherness, caring, sharing, helping others, not being alone, agreeing, getting on well, mutual goal, sympathy, empathy, being unselfish, generous, sense of community, joint effort, stronger together, no man is an island

Ask your Ss to make full sentences with the words on the board. Talk about the idea of solidarity among students in their school, family members at home, people in their neighbourhood, city, country and among people in general. Solidarity is one of the ways in which we erase borders and try to influence unequal conditions among the nations of the world.

Use this picture to underline the message.



**I DON'T SEE ANY BORDERS. DO YOU?**

## Activity 3

Now that you have defined solidarity as a joint effort to make a better world for everybody, ask Ss if there is anything only one person can do to make the world a better place or is it politicians' and governments' task.

Give out the handouts with two stories (find cut-outs on the next two pages of this material) and tell Ss to retell their respective texts to their partners.



## Activity 4

Tell Ss to draw a picture of their hand on a piece of paper and write in it some things they can do to help a classmate, a neighbour or somebody else. Also, encourage them to write about things that could make their class a better place when it comes to collaboration, respect, mutual support etc. They can cut out their pictures and stick them on a class poster.





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A terrible fire had broken out in the forest. All the animals were running away, including the lion, the king of the forest. Suddenly, the lion saw a tiny bird rushing towards the fire. He asked the bird: *What are you doing?*

To the lion's surprise, the bird replied: *I am on my way to extinguish the fire.*

The lion laughed and said: *How can you kill the fire with just one drop of water in your beak?*

The bird was stubborn and said: *I am doing my bit.*

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**UBUNTU** in the Xhosa culture means: ***I am because we are.***

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## Activity 5 (optional)

Watch a short movie called *I, Pencil* (duration 6:32). It tells a story about cooperation, one of the many facets of solidarity. We cannot create in isolation, alone. Most good things are created through joint efforts of many people involved in the process.

*I, Pencil* is a short film based on an essay by Leonard Read published in 1958. In this video the pencil explains the complexity of its own creation, listing the components (cedar wood, lacquer, graphite, wax, glue...) and the numerous people involved; from the sweeper in the factory to the lighthouse keeper helping the shipment safely reach its port.

The pencil, like most modern products, is the end product of a complicated chain of human activity that connects everybody across the globe. One person alone could not possibly make a pencil, not even the CEO of a pencil company could tell you exactly how to make one. It takes little bits of know-how of thousands of individuals – loggers in California, factory workers in China, miners in Sri Lanka and everyone in between – to bring an ordinary wooden pencil into life. People who are strangers to each other cooperate every day to produce things the others want. Without the constant cooperation, the modern world would not exist.

You will find the film [here](#).

