



A DAY IN THE LIFE

Lesson 3

Objective

For participants to become aware of some of the differences between their daily lives in the U.S. and the lives of youth in Burundi.

4-H Age

Junior, Intermediate, Senior

Time

20-30 minutes

Materials

Narrative titled "Imagine!"

Group Size

5-30

Background

This lesson looks at “a day in the life” of a student at one of the Burundi 4-H Sister Schools and includes a basic imagining exercise followed by discussion. By comparing their own lives to the lives of Burundian youth, participants begin to understand how vital the 4-H school gardening project is to youth in Burundi.



Vocabulary

Burundi - A land locked country in the Great Lakes Region of East Africa

Kirundi - The official language of Burundi

Transported - Taken or carried from one place to another

Flat Bread - A bread made with flour, water and salt, and then rolled into flattened dough

Latrine - A pit in the earth used as a toilet (like an outhouse).

Nile River - A 4,258 mile long river which flows north. The headwaters are in the mountains of Burundi.

Cow Manure - Waste product from a cow used to fertilize the land

Rainy Season - The time of year when most of the annual rainfall happens



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Steps

Step 1

Invite participants to get comfortable and to relax. They can sit or lay on the floor if they want. Tell them you are going to read something to them that will require them to use their imagination. Remind them to pay attention because you're going to discuss it as a group after it's read.

Step 2

After everyone is settled and comfortable, invite the participants to close their eyes and allow themselves to listen carefully to the passage.

Step 3

Read the narrative "Imagine!"

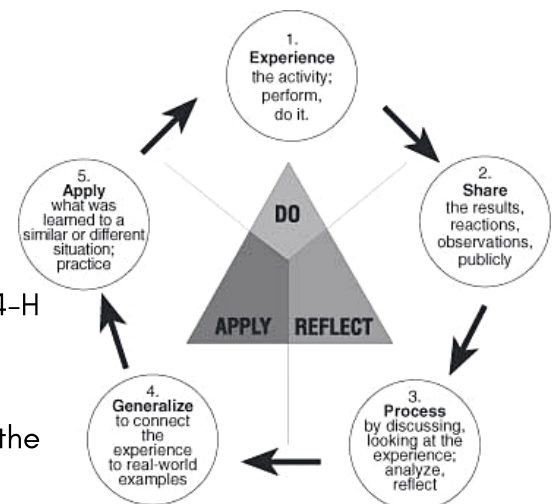
Step 4

After reading the narrative, invite participants to open their eyes again.

Group Reflection

Use the following questions to help debrief the activity:

1. What was going on in this passage?
2. You were in the story. How did you fit into the narrative?
3. What did you find out?
4. Why do you think Washington 4-H is working with the schools in Burundi?
5. What can we do here, to help the schools in Burundi?
6. What can we do to spread the word about the school gardens?





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Extensions and variations

For younger children or children who have difficulty sitting still, provide them with a quiet activity (paper and crayons, play dough, marbles, etc.) that they can fiddle with while they listen to the passage being read.

Acknowledgements

Written by: Janet Stutzman, Lauren Scanga, and Mary Katherine Deen

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Teen Leaders of Tomorrow, King County





IMAGINE!

Lesson 3 Handout

You wake up in an unfamiliar place. Somehow you have been transported to a place far, far away. You open your eyes. You hear birds, you see light and you look around at the small hut that you are in. You look at the walls. They are made of red cement type stuff. You smell a little bit of smoke. You hear your 4-H Leader outside, talking to some kids. The voice is familiar but you can't understand what is being said. She is speaking Kirundi. And after a few minutes, you begin to miraculously understand Kirundi yourself.

You turn over to stand up from your bed and you realize that you are sleeping on a mat on the dirt floor of this little red hut. Nearby are a couple of younger children sleeping together on their mat. You see some sandals, so you put them on, and you go outside. You are greeted by a few chickens, the sound of drumming in the distance, and your smiling 4-H Leader. She is stirring a pot on a fire and tells you that your piece of flat bread and banana are ready. But you just want to know where you are and where the bathroom is. She points to the latrine "over there" and tells you to wash your hands in the water bucket on your way back for breakfast. She also tells you to hurry because the other kids will be coming in about 8 minutes to walk to school with you. OH! And by the way, you're in Burundi. A lush green country near the equator in East Africa.

After washing in a dirty bucket you join your 4-H Leader and quickly eat a little bit of an over ripe banana. You go back into the hut to get ready for school. You look for your book bag, your cell phone and your water bottle. Apparently they don't seem to be there and you find out that nobody has those things here. You just go to school empty handed. No lunch. No book bag. No nothing.

You head out with the 6 other kids toward school. You walk up the dirt road where you pass some guys burning old tires, some women carrying water containers on their heads, an old man making red cement blocks, and a group of people sitting in front of a house.

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IMAGINE

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Soon you turn off of the road onto a dirt path. There are few trees because they have been cut down for firewood. But the grass is high. You see birds, bugs and a beautiful blue sky. You pass by more women with water on their heads and you see a cow. The kids you are with begin singing a song about how good life is. It's a happy song and they seem to be excited to be on their way to school with you.

When you reach the school you are amazed at how many kids are there. All different ages. You are immediately surrounded and invited to play soccer. Sweet! You love soccer! Where's the big green soccer field? A school mate grabs your hand. Another one puts their arm over your shoulder. And another one chatters on about how the ball this time is awesome! Off you go! You arrive at a flat spot where you see some kids running after a thing on the dirt field. After further investigation you figure out that the kids MADE their soccer ball using a small rock, some rags and some rope to hold it all together. You realize that you have 2 perfect soccer balls at home in the U.S. Plus, one that's flat in the garage. Nevertheless, you play. But these guys just play to play. Yes, they strive to make a goal but they also root for the other team to make their goal as well. You realize that this is fun even though the raggedy ball is hard to control.

All of the sudden the game stops and the kids run toward the building. The school is made of the same blocks type of stuff as the hut, but instead of a grass roof the school has a tin roof. There are holes for windows but no glass. The floor is dirt. There is no whiteboard. There is no sink. There is nothing on the walls. When you enter your classroom you see desks. Rows and rows of desks. Probably 60 kids in your class with one teacher. You sit at your desk that you share with two other students. And the teacher begins to teach. And teach. You kind of figure out that the people in Burundi learn a lot from just listening.

You look around. Where are the pencils and pens? Where are the newsprint and markers? Where do I keep my notes?

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The desks seem rickety and the chairs are wobbly but the other kids don't seem to notice. And where is the clock? After a while of listening to the teacher talk about how we live in the highlands where the Nile river begins, the subject changes to science.

The teacher leads everyone outside to a site where we begin mixing cow manure with soil to get the site ready for a vegetable garden. You have to share a hoe with 12 other students because there aren't enough to go around. Also, you like to use gloves but there aren't any. The teacher sings and tells stories while you mix the soil to help the time go faster. You work out there for about an hour. Then it's break time. You ask where the lunch room is. You are looked at kind of funny, and realize that we don't have any food for lunch so why do we need a lunch room?

After school you walk back to the hut where you find your 4-H Leader stirring that pot on the fire. You tell her that you're dying of hunger because you didn't get any lunch! She patiently stirs the boiling pot of rice and beans. She tells you that the garden site you were working so hard on today is part of the Burundi 4-H Program. The reason you were preparing the soil was so the kids can learn how to plant and care for a garden. This way they can grow food to eat during the school day.

After you eat a bit of rice and beans and another over ripe banana you go for a walk to think about what happened today. You learned so much! Burundi is a far cry from your neighborhood. The people are poor. The country is worn down. The school is very bare. But the students and teachers are so excited about learning how to grow a garden. The problem that you see is that they don't have the money to buy the tools and seeds that they need. And water? You don't even know how they would be able to get the resources they need to build a watering system. One kid told you today that they have 2 rainy seasons in Burundi.



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But sometimes the rains don't come like they should. Another kid told you that sometimes she has to help carry water from a stream to her house. And another kid told you that he wants to plant a garden at his house so he can teach his family how to grow beans.

All of this information makes you sleepy so you go into the little red hut and lay down on the mat that you woke up on this morning. The day was full. Your tummy is near empty. And you drift off to sleep thinking about ways that you might be able to help 4-H kids in Burundi.



For questions contact:

Mary Katherine Deen at mdeen@wsu.edu

Kevin Wright at wrightkc@wsu.edu

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