Connecting the dots

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I met Esta deep in the Papua New Guinean highlands after a flight with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency's Flying Clinic into her isolated community. She, and the 100 others she share the valley with, were certainly amongst the country's poorest. But she spoke to me about luck.

She felt lucky that the four year-old son she held wouldn't die from malaria like her daughter had 12 months previous. She felt lucky that she now knew what caused diarrhoea and how to prevent it. She felt lucky to be have access to basic health care, even though her other needs were so massive.

From the youngest grades right through to senior school the increasingly consumer driven society which we inhabit fuels the fight for our students to fulfil both wants and perceived need, contributing to what is often vocalised as a sense of privilege. So maybe you've said it, or maybe you've just wanted to—*You guys have no idea how lucky you are.*

The 'first world problems' meme (the term given a unique form of online virality) is perhaps one of the most prolific to spread across inboxes, Facebook pages and twitter streams in the previous twelve months. Classic examples include; 'Sick of eating at the restaurants close to work', 'Tried to spread cold butter on my toast, and it ripped' and 'Had to park a long way from the door'.

> *The noise and pace of our lives means the developing world has never been so easy to forget, nor seemed so far away*

But amongst the ironic humour is an increasingly worrying realisation that the connection between our world of privilege and the world of the poor is quickly disappearing. While globalisation and technology is bringing the world together, the noise and pace of our lives means developing world has never been so easy to forget, nor seemed so far away.

As a result, the challenge laid out by Bev Christian in this very publication 12 months ago, for schools to help their students 'become informed, responsible and compassionate citizens' is increasingly difficult. But this is not a battle you need to face in isolation.

The Adventist education system has a deep, institutional tie to a widely respected, faith-based non-government organisation—the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). ADRA operates community development and emergency response projects across the globe.

In addition to impacting communities through providing access to health, education, water and income generating opportunities amongst other basic rights, we are passionate about opening young people's minds and hearts to the needs of the world's poor.

We are intentionally investing in opportunities to help you and your students connect the dots; to bring poverty closer to home, to make development and aid understandable and to provide avenues to engage in real, life-changing service.

How we can help you

I'll keep it brief—we want to help. Schools, churches and other organisations across the country have discovered how forming a relationship and utilising the skills and resources of an aid agency like ADRA can have a positive effect on almost all aspects of their operation. In the school context, we have seen how student recruitment, behaviour, learning outcomes and esteem can be improved by intentional partnership, be it through fundraising, service opportunities or the involvement of guest speakers and teachers. Below are just a few examples of how ADRA has helped schools just like yours.

In the classroom

We have a staff more than willing to appear as a special guest in your classroom, chapel or week of spiritual emphasis. From those with decades of experience in the field across the Pacific, Asia and Africa, to those who have been blessed with the gift of reaching people with God's heart for the poor and a biblical basis for justice, we can help bring an extra voice into your plans for broadening your student's horizon and instilling a sense of justice, compassion and service.

In addition, we are currently laying the ground work for the development of a range of curriculum based resources that will help you enrich your classes with current, relevant and engaging activities that bring the reality of injustice into your classroom—be it Geography, Bible, Food Tech or English to name a few. (If you are interested in being part of this journey please contact us).

Significance outside the classroom

The Poverty Challenge is an immersive poverty simulation exercise designed by ADRA Australia to allow groups of young people to come face-to-face with the reality so many face around the world. For home groups, classes or perhaps student leadership the Poverty Challenge is a memorable event that will have students talking and acting.

During the previous 12 months ADRA Australia impacted more than 3 million people through community development and emergency response projects here in Australia and around the world. If you're searching for significance nothing could top being a part of this. So, if you are looking for a way to engage meaningfully with a project in your own community, or one on the other side of the world, talk with us about your interest and passions and we will find something to match.

The trip of a life-time

In the last year 13 groups, ranging in size from 8–22, have taken part in an ADRA Connections trip and gotten their hands dirty helping to bring an ADRA project to life. The cross-cultural, eye-ball to eye-ball with poverty experience, is truly life changing. If you are looking for an event to bring your school together or celebrate a significant event (say the completion of year 12) ADRA Connections is for you.

How you can help us

Raise awareness

If there is one thing students are good at it is being heard. Bringing the issues of poverty and injustice to attention, and calling for action against them, is an important part of any global action. ADRA participates in a range of advocacy campaigns each year, many of which are of global significance. Providing opportunities for your students to take part in campaigns such as the Movement to End Poverty, World Water Day and Anti-Poverty Week is a great way to build in relevance and significance throughout the year. And yes, we have resources to help.

Raise funds

Fete's, walk-a-thons and charity auctions are just some of the creative ways schools have raised funds for ADRA over the years. For many, the fundraising becomes an annual event celebrated by the entire school community. Many schools choose to base their fundraising around items found in our Grant a Wish gift catalogue as it provides tangible examples of what their impact can be (for example, $15 can provide chickens to a Mongolian family to improve their income, nutrition and provide fertiliser for their garden).

Pray for us

How God's heart must break for those who suffer in this broken world. As Christian's we are driven by the responsibility we have to show love and compassion to the world's poor, and are inspired by Christ's model of service. Each and every month hundreds of people, including school home-groups and classes pray for our work as part of ADRA's Prayer Warrior team. We'd love to have your class part of this powerful movement by reading, considering and praying for our monthly prayer emails.

What now?

If you've had enough of hearing your students first world problems, or just really want to provide a way for your students to engage in a life-changing service opportunity, visit ADRA Australia's website for resources, news and opportunities to help connect the dots.

Despite her disadvantage Esta felt lucky. Together, we can help students across the country recognise theirs, connect the dots and act to make the world a better place for all. TEACH

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Resources available

- the poverty challenge
- ADRA connections
- prayer warriors
- gift catalogue
- request a speaker
- latest news

Contact: *www.adra.org.au*

