

## No Way Out

### Aim:

**Bonded labour, or debt bondage, is the most common form of slavery in the world today. This activity looks at how someone can be tricked into a situation of slavery through debt.**

### What you will need:

A bag of sweets (enough for everyone in the class) A photocopy of the role play cards

### Stage one: questions and answers

- @ Start the lesson by saying that you're going to do an exercise with the class and if they do it well they'll receive a reward.
- @ Go through the questions and answers. Then explain that they've completed the exercise but that you're not going to give them their reward. Go through the discussion points, drawing out the feelings of the group

### Question and answers

**Q1: what are human rights?  
Give examples of your rights**

A1: write answers on the board, they may include: freedom of movement, food, healthcare, education, marriage, shelter, protection from torture/violence, having one's own beliefs.

**Q2: what are the basic rights needed for survival?**

A2: write answers on the board, they may include food, clothes, house/shelter, healthcare. There are no definitive answers, so allow pupils to make suggestions and encourage them to discuss their opinions

**Q3: why might you be denied these basic rights?**

A3: answer looking for: poverty

### The good news and the bad news...

Now tell the class that they've done the work, but that you're not going to give them the reward. Let them respond, and encourage discussion

### Discussion points:

- ? Why did they trust you, they didn't see the reward?
- ? Didn't they want to do the work anyway?
- ? Try telling them it's their fault for believing you without any proof.
- ? So how do they feel about being cheated?
- ? Is there anyone they can turn to who might help them to rectify the situation?
- ? What can they do to bring about justice? Would anyone take them seriously?

***Explain that the purpose of the exercise was to show them how easy it is to be fooled into believing someone if you trust them, or if you want to believe them. This is how many people are tricked into slavery. Now give out the reward, and move onto the role play.***

## Stage two: role play

1. Ask 5 people to volunteer to take part in a quick role play. While you're explaining the role play, ask the rest of the class to think of reasons why people would be desperate for money, and where they might go to get the money they need.
2. Read out the role play summary to the five volunteers. Give them each a role card and make sure that they understand the role they are playing.
3. Take some of the ideas from the class about the reasons why people might be desperate for money. Then act out the role play, asking the class to give ideas about how Ravi might feel after each encounter.
4. Ask the class to give suggestions as to what happened next. Discuss what the relationship between Ravi and the landlord might be.
5. Finally read out the case study and ask the class for their reactions. Why did Ravi trust the Landowner? How does the landlord keep Ravi a slave? Remember the previous activity.

6. What human rights are being violated in this situation?

## role play summary

One person plays Ravi, a poor father whose baby is sick. Ravi needs money for medicine or the baby will die. But Ravi doesn't have enough money to pay for the medicine...

1. Ravi goes to a friend - the friend would like to help, but is too poor. **The teacher asks the audience how Ravi feels - disappointed, embarrassed for having to ask for help..?**
2. He goes to her/his current employer - but they can only afford to pay the workers' wages, they can't give a loan. Also the employer knows that Ravi doesn't get paid enough to pay back the loan. **The teacher asks the audience how Ravi feels - angry, desperate, depressed...?**
3. He goes to the bank - he is asked to fill in forms, but cannot read or write. The bank worker asks difficult questions about credit and bank accounts. **The teacher asks the audience how Ravi feels - depressed, stupid, angry, worried...?**
4. He goes to a local landlord (farmer) who he knows employs many labourers. The landowner says 'yes', and Ravi agrees to work for the landowner, to pay back the loan. **The teacher asks the audience how Ravi feels - relieved, pleased, grateful...?**

When Ravi took out the loan he agreed to work for the landlord until the loan was repaid. Twelve years on Ravi is still working for the landlord. The landlord has never paid Ravi his wages, instead he gives him a small amount of food each day, just enough to keep him and his family alive.

Ravi became sick from lack of food and exhaustion, and stayed at home to rest. The landlord came to his home, but instead of bringing medicine, he bought a stick which he used to beat Ravi as a punishment for missing work. Ravi has tried to find out how much he owes the landlord, but the landlord never gives an answer, instead he says he will kill Ravi if the debt is not repaid.

Now the landlord has told Ravi that he is not working hard enough, and has demanded that Ravi's wife and two sons work as well, in order to pay off the loan. Ravi is worried that this is another trick, but he cannot see a way out. He wants to run away, but the landlord has said he will kill him if he ever tries to escape, and anyway, where would he run to?

? Why was the landlord able to keep Ravi as his slave? He had Ravi's trust. The violence and threat of death scared Ravi into submission. Ravi has no alternatives.



bonded labourers, India. Credit: Jon Spaul

# Activity

## cards for Activity

### Ravi

You are very poor. Your child is sick and you are desperate to borrow money to buy the necessary medicine. If she doesn't take medicine she will die. You cannot read or write. You work hard but you have barely enough money to survive. You have no savings, and no means of earning more money.

### 1. Ravi's Friend

You are very poor, you have just enough money to feed yourself and your family. You would like to help your friend, but you don't want your family to go hungry. You have no savings so you cannot lend your friend any money.

### 2. Ravi's employer

You're pleased to see Ravi, he has worked for you for four years, and you like him. He is a good worker. You'd like to be able to help, but you only have a small amount of money in your savings.

### 3. Bank manager

You're surprised to see such a poor looking person in your bank. You ask what he wants. You ask hard questions of the customer, such as: **Do you have a bank account? How do you plan to pay back the loan?** You give him a long complicated form to fill in, even though you know he cannot read or write.

### 4. Local Landlord

You are wealthy and so you are able to lend money to people. You have a big farm, so you always need workers. You are happy to lend money to this person, as long as they work for you until the loan is paid back.