

## Still Pictures

**Aim** - to introduce the technique of using pictures to tell a story and enable the group to work as a team addressing issues relating to global citizenship, fair trade and human rights. Still Pictures are an easy, accessible and relatively fast way of exploring people's lives, feelings, experiences and oppressions. Participants simply suggest titles or themes and mould themselves or others into frozen images. From this starting point action and dialogue can be added.

In small groups people are asked to get up on their feet and create a variety of Still Pictures showing a given idea, moment or theme. These pictures are then developed and analysed to crystallize meaning, open up debate and deepen understanding. 'A picture paints a thousand words'. Words can often muddy or confuse a situation. They can obscure the central issue whereas Still Pictures can get straight to the essence, clarifying ideas and feelings. Pictures work across language and cultural barriers and frequently show unexpected commonalities. They can also be used to get around difficult moments that are not easy to show either logistically or emotionally, such as fights, disasters or sexual scenes.

### Let's get started

1. The facilitator explains how to create a still picture by showing examples themselves. It is as if you have been paused by a TV remote control in the middle of an action, for example, dancing, playing football or digging a field.
2. Split the group into teams of about 4 - 6.
3. All the teams will be given the same theme for each still picture. Each team must involve all of its members in creating one picture. It needs to be clear that everyone in each team is in the same picture, not separate ones.
4. The facilitator counts to 10 very slowly and by the time they reach 10, everyone must have created their picture and be still.

**Themes** - Choose from a selection of the following and add your own ideas:

Supermarkets, eating, one world, bananas, banana plantation, pesticides, trade union, Latin America, tragedy, celebration, solidarity, poverty, wealth.

### Deepen the understanding, accuracy and detail

Discuss which team created the most original, imaginative picture. Also comment on good use of space, team work and accurate still positions. The facilitator will analyse each picture in turn, for example, can we tell what each person in the picture is doing? If not, can the team change anything about how they are holding themselves to make it clearer. Discuss any suggestions for improvements with the whole group. The audience can even get up and show what they might do instead. Can we tell how each person is feeling? Facial expressions are really important. Has the group positioned themselves in relation to each other accurately, for example, would the manager's office be right next to the banana packers?

## Melting Still Pictures

**Aim** - This is an extension of the basic Still Pictures technique and can be used to show the stark contrast between two extremes. Melting Still Pictures can be used to make valuable points and memorable images as people feel the change in emotion during the transitional stage. They can also be used to explore what changes need to be made in order for conditions for workers, farmers and their environment to improve.

**Themes** - child play/child labour, wealth/poverty, high status/low status, Fairtrade/unfair trade, small family owned banana farm/large corporate plantation, organic/intensive pesticide use.

1. Each team works on two still pictures based on the double theme given.
2. Once they have created the two pictures they practice melting from one to the other in slow motion. It is important that each person in the team moves at the same rate as everyone else (the slower the better). They must start and stop the movement together. Ask everyone to notice

at what point their feelings changed as they made the transition from one picture to the other.

3. Each team then shows their work to the rest of the group.

### Deepen the understanding

Discuss the power and contrast of the pictures. How did it feel? What was the significance of the point at which the change in feeling came? What can we learn about what needs to change in order for conditions to improve?

## Thought-tapping still pictures

**Aim** - This is a useful device to humanise a subject. Instead of faceless statistics on a handout we create not only some very powerful visual images but can bring people to life, expressing real thoughts, hopes and fears. Each person in the still picture is invited to say out loud either what they are thinking or what they are saying to someone else in the picture. They are in role and in context of the moment. It can deepen our understanding of a situation and provide information that widens the scope of the picture. We empathise with how people feel as we animate their thoughts about a situation. One idea is linking images to create a whole series of pictures based on a large scale banana plantation in Costa Rica. These pictures can depict both living and working conditions and can explore the relationship between workers and managers.

### Let's get started

1. The whole group need to brainstorm on large sheets of paper the problems that workers can experience on large scale plantations, including child labour, pollution, a lack of respect for workers rights, long working hours, low wages, inadequate protective clothing, poor food and housing.
2. Small teams each pick a problem and create a still picture to illustrate what it is.
3. Set up a whole group performance around the room with all the pictures being created at once. This gets everyone involved quickly and easily and produces a dramatic collection of images.

created by one team is selected to demonstrate how to thought-tap pictures.

The facilitator taps each person in the picture in turn and at that moment the person tapped has to say out loud either what they are thinking at that moment, in role, or what they are saying to someone else in the picture.

### Deepen the understanding, accuracy and detail

Encourage people to deepen their understanding of each picture by providing us with important information when thought-tapped. We may get to know how many hours a day someone works without a break or why someone is feeling ill. The group can be asked what they want to know about a picture so that members of the team can provide that information in their thought-tap.

The picture

## Photo album – “a day in the life”

**Aim** - This exercise gives people a chance to create a whole series of pictures showing different aspects of people's lives. We can enhance our understanding of working and living conditions in other parts of the world, reflect on how this makes people feel and consider what needs to change in order to improve a situation. We can also explore contrasts, such as the difference between working on a small family farm and a plantation owned by a multinational company.

### Let's get started

1. Small groups create a series of still pictures based on a day in the life of a banana worker/farmer and his/her family. Some groups work on images of a small banana farm in the Windward Islands and other groups work on images of a large banana plantation in Costa Rica. Most of the photos are 'natural' as if the subjects are unaware the picture is being taken but other photos can be 'formal', as if the family have posed for the photo.
2. Each group works on a series of captions or headings for each photo. This encourages precision of description and a reflective analysis of the experience in order to identify the essence of each photo.

3. Each team shows their series of photos to the rest of the group. Discuss the similarities and contrasts between each different photo album. Thought-tap the people in the photos to find out what they think and feel about their lives. The audience can also ask questions of the characters in the photos in order to gain further insight into subjects' lives.