

## The Race to the Bottom - Activity

### Aims

- To explore the human rights issues that arise in the context of Foreign Direct Investment.
- To consider the power and role of governments and Transitional Corporations have in determining the rights of people

### Scenario:

A transnational corporation (TNC) is considering setting up a factory in the Global South (developing country). It is looking for the best way to maximise profits. A meeting has been arranged with representatives of a number of countries where they are considering locating their factory. Your country desperately needs jobs and investment in the economy. **But how far are you prepared to go to win them over?**

### Your Role:

You are the facilitator of the game and the Transnational Corporation (TNC). Try and be in character during the game! More details in steps below.

### Rounds:

There will be as many rounds as the time allows. It will be announced when it is the final round and following this you will move onto the debrief.

### Steps:

1. Split the table into 3 groups. The facilitator represents the TNC. All the other teams represent a country (A, B or C).
2. Give each country team a set of Rights Cards and explain that these represent the rights that all the people in their country are entitled to.
3. Read out the scenario and explain that each country is given a few minutes to discuss and decide which of the **rights they would be prepared to do without** in order to get the corporation to build its factory there and which **rights they are not prepared to give up**.
4. Each team must then make a bid for the factory by silently offering up one of their rights cards to the TNC representatives. It's important that each team/country does not see what the other country/team is offering
5. **The Corporation (you) must then look at the rights offered and decide which bid is the most attractive** (i.e. you chose the one that would benefit a company most). In the event of a tie (two which offer the same 'right' card) you can pick the winner randomly. The winning bid is then announced – saying why you picked it.
6. In follow up rounds, it is up to the other teams to convince the corporation to change its mind. To explain why the right they have offered is of value to the corporation.
7. Between each bidding round, allow time for each team to discuss strategy. Finally, the TNC announces which country has been awarded the factory.

8. **Open up a debrief discussion.** Ask them to shake off their roles (*literally ask them to shake out their shoulders and bodies!! People can get very into role-plays and can become very stressed!*)

- What happened during the game?
- How did you feel when you lost or won a round?
- Were you okay with the result of the game?
- How did the winning team feel they did in protecting their rights? Was it worth it for the winning country?
- Where in real life is this scenario being played out? In Ireland/ The Global South?
- What can we do as citizens and consumers to learn more about this and take action?

Explain that the game is now over. In plenary, read out the Transnational Corporations' fact sheet (or parts of) and discuss what is positive / negative about TNCs for people in the Global North and South (developing / developed) countries?

#### RIGHTS CARDS

FORM UNIONS	CHILDCARE FACILITIES
MINIMUM WAGE	SAFE WORKING CONDITIONS
SICK PAY	PAID HOLIDAYS
FREE TRANSPORT TO WORK	CONTRACT TO PREVENT UNFAIR DISMISSAL
NORMAL WORKING HOURS	TOILET BREAKS

TAXES PAID BY THE CORPORATION TO PAY FOR THE COUNTRY'S PUBLIC SERVICES (education, hospitals, roads etc.)	TAXES PAID BY THE CORPORATION TO PAY FOR SOCIAL BENEFITS FOR WORKERS (pensions, maternity etc.)
CORPORATION HAS TO FOLLOW STRICT ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS	PAID OVERTIME
CORPORATION'S WATER CHARGES	