

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL LITE BITE ACTIVITY

‘From Coca Leaf to Chocolate Bars’

Resources you will need / preparation: Marker pens and paper.

Time it will take: 1st warm up activity 5 – 10 minutes. 2nd linking activity 20 – 30 minutes

Group size and age: Any size. Age as appropriate to the topic of illegal drugs.

Purpose: First activity to introduce the issue. Second activity to explore the links between the global trade in illegal drugs and our lives.

How it works:

WARM UP

- Ask the group to sit on their chairs in a circle except for one person who is standing in the middle.
- Give each person one of the following place names: Bolivia, Netherlands, Colombia, UK, North Atlantic.
- Ask the person in the middle to shout a place name. Everyone from that place gets up and moves to another seat.
- The person who was in the middle also races for a seat leaving someone else in the middle.
- They shout another place name, and so it continues.
- At the end ask what they think these 5 places may be trading in – the answer is cocaine. One typical journey for cocaine is as follows: grown in Bolivia or Colombia, shipped to an island off the North Atlantic, off-loaded onto smaller ships, shipped to the Netherlands and then from there to the UK.

LINKING ACTIVITY TO EXPLORE THE CAUSES OF THE ILLEGAL DRUGS TRADE

- At two ends of the room display the following signs ‘DEMAND FOR DRUGS’, and ‘SUPPLY OF DRUGS’
- Write the following statements onto separate pieces of paper: ‘farmers can’t survive on growing legal products like cocoa beans and oranges’ / ‘UK shoppers can buy cheap oranges and chocolate’ / ‘Drug trafficking is very profitable’ / ‘peer pressure’ / ‘farmers get a good price for growing coca leaf’ / ‘personal problems’ / ‘farmers are threatened with violence if they don’t grow coca leaf’ / ‘addiction’ / ‘boredom’ / ‘fast pace of life in the UK’ / ‘it is difficult for coca leaf to be grown in Europe’.
- Ask the group to think about the statements and decide whether what is written could increase the demand for drugs, or could increase the supply of drugs. Depending on what they decide they place the statement near one of the two signs ‘DEMAND FOR DRUGS’ or ‘SUPPLY OF DRUGS’
- Follow this with a discussion about the relationship between supply and demand. If products we import like oranges and chocolate weren’t so cheap do the group think that this would mean there was less cocaine on the streets of Europe?!

Adaptations:

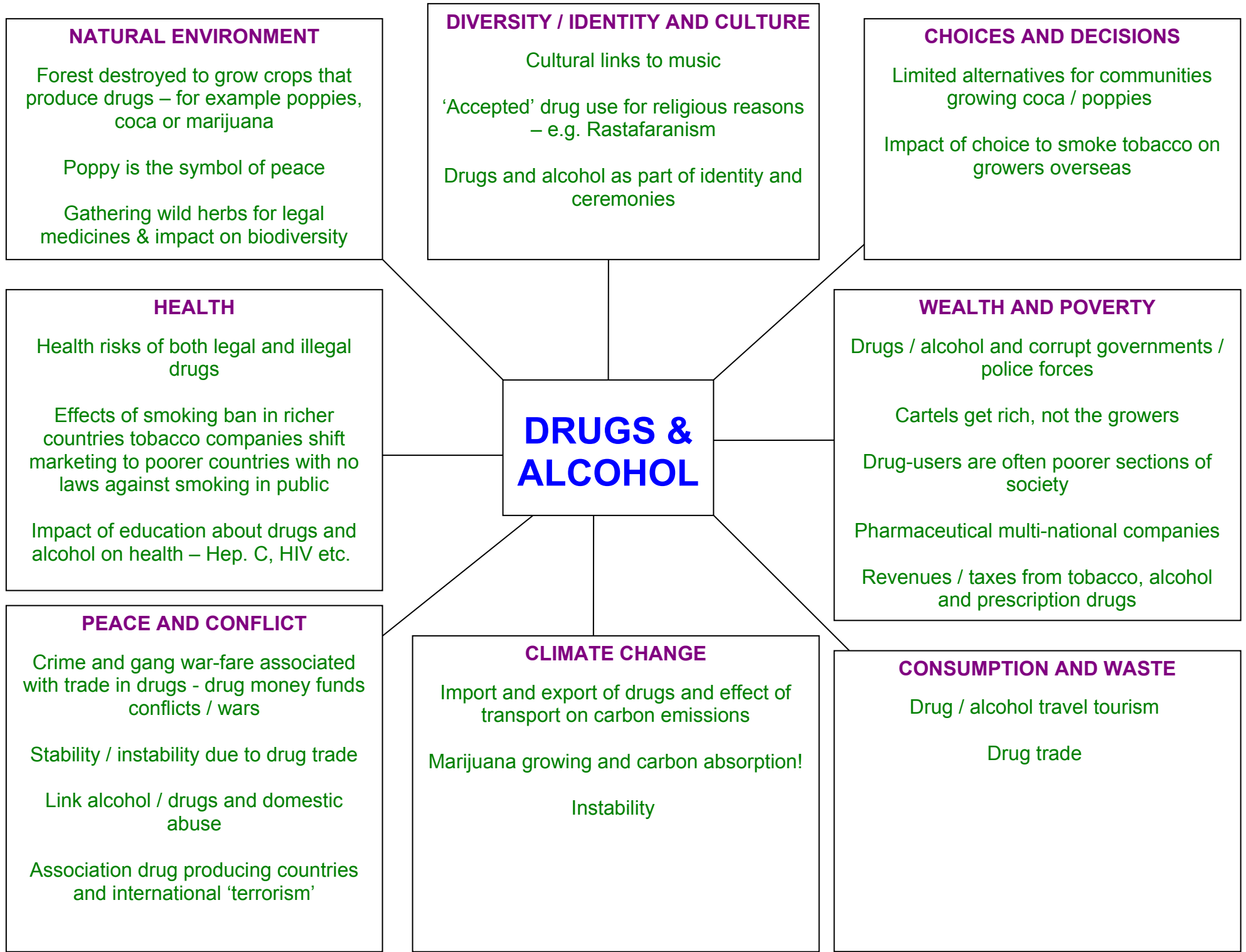
This activity could also be done with legal drugs such as tobacco or alcohol. Just because they are legal and more socially acceptable does that make them less dangerous?

What next:

Further discussion point - Drug abuse kills people every year, many of them are poor. Growing drugs illegally also enables many poor people around the world the chance to make a living in order to survive.

Useful Information:

The drugs trade is estimated to be the third largest industry in the world.



NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Forest destroyed to grow crops that produce drugs – for example poppies, coca or marijuana

Poppy is the symbol of peace

Gathering wild herbs for legal medicines & impact on biodiversity

DIVERSITY / IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Cultural links to music

'Accepted' drug use for religious reasons – e.g. Rastafarianism

Drugs and alcohol as part of identity and ceremonies

CHOICES AND DECISIONS

Limited alternatives for communities growing coca / poppies

Impact of choice to smoke tobacco on growers overseas

HEALTH

Health risks of both legal and illegal drugs

Effects of smoking ban in richer countries tobacco companies shift marketing to poorer countries with no laws against smoking in public

Impact of education about drugs and alcohol on health – Hep. C, HIV etc.

WEALTH AND POVERTY

Drugs / alcohol and corrupt governments / police forces

Cartels get rich, not the growers

Drug-users are often poorer sections of society

Pharmaceutical multi-national companies

Revenues / taxes from tobacco, alcohol and prescription drugs

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

PEACE AND CONFLICT

Crime and gang war-fare associated with trade in drugs - drug money funds conflicts / wars

Stability / instability due to drug trade

Link alcohol / drugs and domestic abuse

Association drug producing countries and international 'terrorism'

CLIMATE CHANGE

Import and export of drugs and effect of transport on carbon emissions

Marijuana growing and carbon absorption!

Instability

CONSUMPTION AND WASTE

Drug / alcohol travel tourism

Drug trade