

## ***ETHICAL DILEMMAS TEACHER GUIDE***

### **“BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT “**

Open class with poem “Blind Men and the Elephant” (pg 89). Use this as a link to class discussion. Each stakeholder has a different point of view.

### **CLASS DISCUSSION OF THE GLOBAL ISSUE OF IVORY TRADE.**

This portion may have two different formats:

1. Each group of stakeholder presents their policy and defend their point of view.
2. Jigsaw the groups into four groups of eight different stakeholders. Have each group create, as a consensus, a policy on the issue of international ivory trade.

### **HOW ARE DIFFICULT ISSUES DECIDED?**

1. Choose one or more of the dilemmas (see *Ethical Dilemmas* sheet, pg. 93). Read the dilemmas to the class or give them a copy.
2. Construct a list of stakeholders from the *Stakeholders* sheet (pg 91)
3. On the overhead place the outline of the decision-making model rubric (see *Ethics Rubric* sheet, pg 92). Have students copy the rubric into their notebooks.
4. With the class, discuss and fill out the rubric.

*Please note that when you get to the column of what should you do, each student may have a different answer based on their value system.*

### **WOULD THE POLICY BE VIEWED DIFFERENTLY BY THE DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS?**

Given the assumption you have 8 lab groups and you have identified at least 8 stakeholders, assign each group a stakeholder. Have each group work through the decision making model for their stakeholder using the question: “What should the policy be regarding the trade of ivory (to ban or not to ban – that is the question!)”

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

Have students reflect on the following:

1. Should we be working internationally to conserve a species?
2. How can Biotechnology be used to conserve a species?
3. What is your stake in this issue? What can you do?
4. What else do you want or need to know?
5. What burning questions do you still have?

End class with Quotes and Poems “What do I care” (pg 90).

*THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT*  
*BY JOHN GODFREY SAXE*

American poet John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887) based the following poem on a fable which was told in India many years ago.

It was six men of Indostan to learning much inclined,  
who went to see the Elephant (though all of them were blind),  
that each by observation might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant and happening to fall  
against his broad and sturdy side, at once began to bawl:  
"God bless me! but the Elephant is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk, cried, "Ho! what have we here,  
so very round and smooth and sharp? To me 'tis mighty clear,  
This wonder of an Elephant is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal, and happening to take  
the squirming trunk within his hands, thus boldly up and spake:  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out an eager hand, and felt about the knee.  
"What most this wondrous beast is like is mighty plain," quoth he;  
" 'Tis clear enough the Elephant is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear, said: "E'en the blindest man  
can tell what this resembles most; deny the fact who can  
this marvel of an Elephant is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun about the beast to grope,  
than, seizing on the swinging tail that fell within his scope,  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right, and all were in the wrong!

Moral:

So oft in theologic wars, the disputants, I ween,  
rail on in utter ignorance of what each other mean,  
and prate about an Elephant not one of them has seen!

## QUOTES AND POEMS FOR REFLECTION

*“What Do I Care”*

What do I care if an animal is rare and its time on earth is fleeting?  
What do I care if its young in despair echoes the end in its bleating?  
Who cares if a gator or whooper or two, can only be found in a rare species zoo?  
The world might be better for me or for you, but then. . .  
If I’m still around, who cares about you?

- Terry Brandt

*“In the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand.  
We will understand only what we are taught.”*

- Baba Dioum, a conservationist from Senegal









*“Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we ever permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining wild species into zoos or extinction; if we pollute the last clear air and dirty the last clean streams and push out paved roads through the last of the silences.”*

- Wallace Stegner

*“What is the meaning of human life, or of organic life altogether? To answer this question at all implies a religion. Is there any sense then, you ask, in putting it? I answer, the man who regards his own life and that of his fellow-creatures as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life.*

- Albert Einstein, from *The World As I See It*

## STAKEHOLDERS

-  poacher
-  ivory collector or consumers
-  wildlife biologist
-  park ranger/wildlife manager
-  national politician
-  international politicians or groups ( i.e. CITES)
-  indigenous people
-  international conservation groups (i.e. Save the Elephants, International Wildlife Federation, Greenpeace)

**How would the policy be viewed by the different stakeholders?**

<b>THE QUESTION</b>	List all the relevant facts of the case	<b>FACTS</b>	
	Identify the stakeholders (People involved in the issue.)	<b>PEOPLE</b>	
	Identify the values of each stakeholder	<b>VALUES</b>	
	List several possible solutions to resolve the conflict (What could you do?)	<b>COULD DO'S</b>	
	Choose the better solution(s) and justify them (What should you do?)	<b>SHOULD DO'S</b>	

## ETHICAL DILEMMAS

### ETHICAL DILEMMA #1

Yen Lee is a street vendor in Hong Kong who sells a variety of wares, including pieces of ivory. She caters mainly to tourists who seem to really want to buy what she has to offer. She doesn't get ivory pieces very often, but when she does, she sells them quickly for a good price (good for her and her family!). She gets the ivory from her brother (Weeza Lee) who works at the Hong Kong International Airport, in the Baggage Handling Department. She never asks him how he obtains the ivory, but she does pay him a percentage of the profits from their sale. One day two tourists stop by her stand and inquire about a piece of ivory. They ask many specific questions about the ivory. As it turns out, the tourists are part of a scientific team sent out by the United Nations to investigate the trafficking of endangered animals (and their body parts). They have the authority to report any violations of international laws concerning the trafficking of endangered animals to local authorities.

*If you were one of the members of this investigative team, what information should you gather next?*

*What are the possible outcomes for Yen Lee? What about her brother?*

*Is it illegal to sell any ivory on the international market? Is it unethical?*

### ETHICAL DILEMMA #2

Bawt Swana wakes up in the middle of the night and joins his father as they prepare for the hunt. They need to have a successful hunt tonight because his seven brothers and sisters haven't had a decent meal in several days. His responsibility as the oldest brother is to help provide for his siblings. Just a few years ago he and his father could provide food and clothing very easily by growing and selling vegetables from their small parcel of land, but drought had occurred and driven the elephant herd across their land in search of water. This damaged their ability to grow and sell crops, as well as to provide for their family. They turned to the only other skill that they had: hunting. Tonight they would hunt the animal that caused them so much trouble, the elephant. Although it is against the law to hunt elephants, two tusks would give them enough money to provide for their family for several months. They travel several miles and finally spot their quarry. A huge female is walking away from them several meters ahead. Bawt's father raises his rifle and prepares to shoot.....

*What are the issues that Bawt and his father must confront regarding their plan?*

*Should Bawt's father shoot the elephant?*

*What should be done with Bawt and his father if they get caught poaching?*

### **ETHICAL DILEMMA #3**

Jim Sharp loves nature, all parts of the natural world. His love of nature is part of the reason why he became a fly fishing guide in Washington state. He loves to see the look on a person's face when they catch their first trout using a fly rod. The Pend Oreille River is a beautiful place to fish, and take new fly fishermen to, on a bright summer day. Unfortunately it is also becoming a political battleground. There are several groups, including some in the Canadian province of British Columbia who are working hard to reintroduce grizzly bears into Washington, Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia. Their reasoning is very straight-forward: grizzly bears used to be in these areas until humans began hunting them and drove them off, so grizzlies should be reintroduced to their rightful environment. Jim likes the idea of seeing grizzlies back in Washington, but he doesn't like the potential negative effects on his business. He's afraid that many people won't hire him to guide their fishing trips in areas where grizzlies might be.

*What are some points that could be made on each side of this issue?*

*Should grizzlies be reintroduced into Washington and other areas?*

### **ETHICAL DILEMMA #4**

"What am I going to do? How am I going to make a decision that will make both parties happy?" thinks Amy Brown. She is the Commissioner of the Klamath Basin Water Conservation District. Her job is to determine how much water can be allowed to be diverted from the Klamath River for agricultural use each spring and summer, and yet keep enough water flowing in the river so that the endangered salmon runs can survive and reproduce. This is hardly ever a tough decision because there is enough rainfall during the winter to accommodate both uses of the river. However, this year it is not such an easy decision. It has been an extremely dry year; in fact, many people are calling it the worst drought that anyone can remember in the past thirty years. Amy has held several meetings with local farmers who have explained how desperately they need the irrigation water for their fields, and to support their families. She has also held several meetings with local environmental groups and sport fishermen who have explained how important it is for the current river level to be maintained so that the salmon populations can survive.

*If you attended one meeting for each group, what are some arguments that you would probably hear?*

*What should Amy decide to do about the water uses of the Klamath River for this year?*

