

Growth quartets

A card game about GDP

Overview

Participants learn about GDP and discuss the pros and cons of GDP as an indicator of prosperity by playing a card game.

Instructions




Preparation

For this activity, the playing cards must be printed and cut out. This is best done on thick paper; alternatively, the pictures can be stuck to the cards of an old game.

Execution

The game can be played with 2–6 participants. For larger groups, participants can play together in pairs. We recommend playing the game with 5 or 6 participants. For seminar groups with more than 12 participants, it is a good idea to conduct 2 or more games in parallel. The game is played in two stages, with an evaluation session in between.

1. The rules of the game are explained. Our experience shows that the following points should be explained in advance: the game is about global GDP. It therefore makes no difference which country the value creation or social benefit occurs in. Value creation (GDP) is understood to occur whenever money officially changes hands.
2. The playing cards are shuffled, and each player is dealt five cards. The players place their cards face down in a pile in front of them. The player to the left of the dealer begins by turning over their top card.

	6-24
	30-60 minutes
	Downloadable materials (www.endlich-wachstum.de): Playing cards
	Participants should already know what GDP is and what it is used for.

3. This player must now read out the event shown on the card and assess whether, and if so in what way or to what extent the event contributes to GDP. The other players can comment on the assessment. The purpose of the activity is not to find the “right” answer (which is why no solution with real figures etc. is given), but to prompt debate and discussion in the group. Nevertheless, the facilitator should, as far as possible, observe how the participants assess the events and ask guiding questions where appropriate.
4. Play continues in a clockwise direction, with each player turning over their top card and giving their assessment, which is then commented on by the other players. At the end of each round, the group must reach a consensus as to which event made the greatest contribution to GDP. This determines which player wins the cards played in that round. The winner of the previous round plays first in the next round. Play continues until one player runs out of cards or a predetermined time has elapsed.

5. In an interim evaluation session, participants report on their findings and ask comprehension questions. Possible evaluation questions include:
- › How did you find the game?
 - › How difficult was it to decide on the winner of each round?
 - › What did you learn about how GDP works?
- This can be followed by a brief presentation on GDP and a discussion of its pros and cons as an indicator of prosperity. Alternatively, this step can take the form of a dialogue with the participants.
6. Now it is time for the second stage, in which the event that wins is not the one which contributes the most to GDP, but the one which is of greatest benefit to society. Play proceeds as in the first stage. As each player turns over their card, they assess the extent to which the event depicted on it is of benefit to society. At the end of the round, the players jointly decide which card best serves the common good; this card wins the round.

Evaluation

The game is followed by an evaluation session, in which the participants report on their findings and ask additional comprehension questions. Possible evaluation questions include:

- › How did you find the second stage?
- › How difficult was it to decide on the winner of each round?
- › What else did you learn about how GDP works?
- › With regard to the examples on the playing cards: in real life, does everyone have the same opportunities to contribute to or profit from GDP? How does this relate to the greater common good?

Variations	If there is enough time, instead of just 5 cards, the entire set can be dealt out to the participants.
Tips for facilitators	<p>Tips for evaluation: domestic work and volunteering are not taken into account by GDP, as no money changes hands.</p> <p>The German Federal Statistics Office estimated the monetary value of unpaid work, mostly by women, at 684 bn Euro in 2001 (measured using the average housekeepers' wage of 7 Euro per hour in 2001). Even though this is a very low wage, the total is significantly greater than the total gross value created by German industry (manufacturing sector, excluding construction) in the same year.</p> <p>The amount of unpaid work performed by women remains 1,5 times that performed by men.</p> <p>(Source: German Federal Office of Statistics, <i>Wo bleibt die Zeit</i> [Where does the time go], 2003)</p>
Suggestions for follow-up	<p>Suitable follow-up activities include methods which critically explore GDP, such as "Both sides of the coin", "Die kleine Welt des Wirtschaftswachstums" ("The small world of economic growth", currently only available in German - see www.endlich-wachstum.de), both in chapter 1, or "Measuring the good life" (chapter 3).</p>