

The Corporation in The Grade 8 Classroom

The Corporation in the Grade 8 Classroom short film was made possible by funding from the Atkinson Foundation, Big Picture Media Corporation and Hello Cool World.

[Go to Youtube](#) and spread the link to the film!

FORUM ARCHIVE FROM ESSEX GRADE 8s

One day a whole lot of comments on the film The Corporation appeared in our online forum. It turned out they were from Mr. Urban's Grade 8 class. Mr. Urban first saw the film while channel flicking on TV Ontario. "Urbs," as he is known, thought he would bring it to his class and he worked it into his curriculum all year. His own excitement about the film is hard to resist. He teaches at the Holy Name School in Essex, Ontario, Canada. We were so inspired by the Grade 8s we made a trip to Essex to film his class in action. Check out the short film we made, and read the students' comments below along with Mark Achbar's replies. (Since that old forum was taken over by spam bots we removed it and built a new one. But you can also [go to our new forum](#) to see what else the next year's students had to say.)

TOPIC: Just saw the movie

SUBJECT: Future Concerns

Posted By: Urbs

Hello everybody!!!!!! I am a grade 8 teacher from Essex Ontario and have just recently viewed the movie with my grade 8 history classes. I must admit the students were overwhelmed as I knew they would be. I myself had viewed the movie at least a dozen times in the summer of 2005 before bringing this to their attention. I am currently trying to have my students go on line to the "CORPORATION WEB SIGHT" to explore it and possibly become active on the sight, but must first get consent from the higher ups. We are currently looking at the debate process of (Regulate, Restructure, Rewrite) and think it a great idea to have our future generations reply and give their input. If anyone has any other suggestions to how to involve our youth in this web sight it would be greatly appreciated. thanks URBS!!!!!!

SUBJECT: Involving students in the debate

Posted By: mowich

Hello Urbs, I am following this topic and just got notification of your message. Involving students in this debate is very important. I applaud you for your efforts. I too found the documentary overwhelming as I first watched the entire program. Since then I have been able to watch it again on SCN where it is being shown in three parts. The final portion is to be shown on March 23, 2006. Friends of mine are taping it so we can watch it again and again. The documentary is so intense and moves at such a quick pace it is hard to concentrate on one portion without missing the next important point. I would like to see the producers do a follow-up on what has happened to the corporations they mention, since the documentary first aired. Again, good luck to you. Mowich

SUBJECT: MONEY OVER A HUMAN LIFE?

Posted By: walcalm

Hello. We are two grade 8 students from Holy Name School in Essex, Ontario. Recently, we have viewed the corporation DVD during our history classes. We have come to realize what a corporation is capable of and what impact they have on our economy today. Personally, we are both edgy on what our futures are going to be like. Will these corporations get more power on the world, or will we take control? We have been hearing things from the corporation book (from our history teacher, Mr. Urban, known as Urbs on this site.) such as Patricia Anderson and what happened to her family. It sickens us to know that someone would risk the human life over money. Our concern is that problems will get bigger and bigger until someone decides to take a stand. (That is if anyone decides to...) So, it would be great if follow-up movie was made to make people more aware of crazy things going on in the world today due to corporations. COMMENT BACK - walcalm P.S. They are thinking about privatizing Canada's health care system...any thoughts?

RE: MONEY OVER A HUMAN LIFE?

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear Walcalm, You have every right to be concerned about the future. Fortunately, you have what sounds like a pretty amazing teacher - Mr. Urbs - to help guide you toward making sure it's a positive one. There aren't many grade 8 classes that get to see a film like The Corporation. I was a little surprised to hear that a class of students that young would have watched the film, but as I read all your comments, and those of your fellow students, I have come to the realization that grade 8 is not too young for people to be watching the film. You're old enough and smart enough to understand the issues and to care about them and to do something about them. The story of Patricia Anderson is truly horrifying. I think sometimes people get so wrapped up in their work for big corporations, they become so obsessed with making profit for their shareholders (because if they don't, they might lose their job) that they become isolated from the real world. And what you end up with is a report by someone like Edward C. Ivey that is just devoid of concern for human life. It's significant that you're watching this film in a history class, because what you're learning about, and become part of, is a social movement. When you learn about the history of social movements, what you see is generation after generation of people struggling against concentrated power, gradually realizing what the problems are, seeing the injustices and cruelties for what they are, and organizing to do something about them. There are usually leaders, who are the ones written about in the history books, but they often emerge only after there's been a groundswell of desire for change in the general population. The victims of injustice and cruelty don't need a leader to tell them what's wrong with the world. They already know from their own experience. They sometimes become leaders themselves. Gradually, the world makes progress. Movements form to right the wrongs. Slavery is eventually outlawed. Women get to vote. Black people win their rights. People start to realize that we are harming the environment. And on and on. So too will it be with the power of corporations. Your concern, and the actions you will take will help shape the movement to take power away from corporations and give it back to the people. That movement is alive and growing. Sometimes it takes a long time to build a movement, and sometimes a big change seems to happen all at once. It's hard to predict. But one thing's for sure: if we don't work for change, there won't be any.

Posted By: ihaveglasses

Hello we are Mr. URBS grade 8 students from Holy Name school. In history class we have watched the movie many times. Each time we watched the movie we learned something new because it is really hard to take in all of the information that is in the movie. My partner and I were extremely surprised when we heard how much the corporation's were fined and were still able to be in buisness

(there are many bad apples out there Enron, Exxon, GE, GM, ect). We were shocked how far corporations would go just to get more profits. Example: Patrica Anderson case. The company risked innocent peoples lives because it would cost more to fix the problem. This movie made us realize what was happening behind our backs. Any thoughts or comments please respond. What is your opinion in privatizing health care in Canada.

Posted By: chay-bay4321

Hey, We are two thirteen year olds in eighth grade at Holy Name school in Essex, Ontario. We have just recently watched the Corporation DVD several times in our history class. We are both disgusted at how the corporations are taking over everything in our world today [environment, job distribution etc.] The Patrisha Anderson story is one that touched our hearts the most. We think that it is ridiculous that this lady and her children have to suffer over a simple accident that they could have easily walked away from with a few scrapes and bruises, over their nearly burning to death. Isn't it amazing that a corporation has the power to put money before human life? Any similar thoughts on the video?

Posted By: mary&erica

We are from Holy Name school. We are 14 years old and live in Essex. We are concerned about the bad things on the movie. We are about the people being forced to work in sweat shops. We think that they shouldn't do that. They should fix these kinds of things. Because to think that kids our age are being forced to do a job for only 14 cents is horrible. That's just despicable. HORRIBLE! Do you agree with us?:x From, Air and Mair

Posted By: very cherrie

hello,everyone!!!! we are grade 8 students at Holy Name school in ontario. we have been learning about the corporation in history class with our teacher Urbs. we are very interested in the movie The Corporation. We have learned what corporations are really about and we have the following concerns: 1) That they will privatize health care and water. 2) The whole issue concerning ownership. 3) Our futures, we are scared corporations will be the main power. 4) Concerns that the children in poor countries will be forced to work in sweatshops. 5) We can not believe people would put money before human life!! Those are all of our concerns we have thank you for your time! If you have any comments/responses feel free to reply! Sincerely Very Cherrie :D

Posted By: Pinky and Brain

Hello, we are grade 8 students from Essex, Ontario. In our history class our teacher showed us the video on the corporation. We were appalled about the genome (the patenting of animal genes). Like Jeremy Rifkin said in the video, "That it is frightening to think that in eight to ten years, corporations could own the human and animal genome." We would like to hear the opinions of others on this issue.

Posted By: kitty_monkey101

Hi, we are two grade 8 students from Mr. Urbs' History class in Ontario. We just saw the movie and were very disturbed at what we saw on the DVD. We would like to know what you thought about the movie. We wish to address what happened to Patrica Anderson and her family. Do you think that it is fair that the company only had to pay so much money and Patrica and her family have to live with what happened forever :?: :!: :?: :!: Please write back with what you think :!: :!: Thanks :wink:

:D 8) :lol:

Posted By: DSC

Good Day, Hello we are two fourteen year old grade eight students from Essex ONT. Holy Name Elementary School. We have just finished by watching the movie in our history class. While we were watching the corporation we began to be very concerned when the movie said that the americans were pumping hormones into there milk supply. another important thing that we were concerned about is how they are trying to privatize everything. Even our grade eight teacher Mr Urban is very very concerned. After we saw this video we realized that this is no laughing matter. Also that we are apart of the future, and if we don't do anything about this our lives will be controlled and we will have no freedom.

Posted By: Criza

Hello fellow movie viewers. We are two grade 8 students, currently living in Essex, Ontario. We have recently viewed The Corporation movie courtesy of our history teacher, Urbs. We now look at this movie as a guide to the real world and what it really is. As being young adults we don't realize the affect that corporations have on our lives. Of course one day we are going to be old enough and be able to move out and start on a new adventure. We will have to pay our bills and work, but it is a scary thing knowing what the corporations have done to people. Thinking about how advanced the corporations are today, imagine what it will be like in the future when the teenagers of our generation are in charge. We have concerns such as: Health Care Pensions Job benefits Have any reassuring advice? Let us know. Sincerely, :D

Posted By: CorporationMan92

Hello, we are two grade 8 students from Holy Name elementary school in essex ontario Canada. We are deeply concerned with the power that corporations have, and we were disgusted when we saw the clip in the movie about Monsanto injecting the cows with hormones. We saw the video in calss and therefore cannot watch it over and over to get more in depth. We know that this is going on in the u.s. but we would like to no if this is happening in michigan or ohio. If you no whether or not cows are being injected with these things in michigon or ohio please reply.

SUBJECT: You just can't know for sure.

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear CorporationMan92, Sorry it's taken so long to get back to you. It's hard to keep on top of all the discussions going on in the forum and we don't have the resources to have someone checking in full time. Your questions are important. The problem with trying to find out if artificial hormones are in the milk in Michigan or Ohio, is that the milk producers are not obliged to say one way or the other on their packaging. Steve and Jane, the reporters in the film, told us that 1/4 of all the milk in the USA came from cows injected with rBGH. All you can say about the cows in Michigan and Ohio is that at least some of them probably are injected. The best way to make sure you're not getting milk from cows that have been injected is to buy organic milk.

SUBJECT: The Corporation

Posted By: coffith

Hello, we are two grade 8 students from Holy Name Catholic Elementary school in Essex Ontario. We have seen and now are studying the movie, "The Corporation." We have a concern that we would like to discuss. 1)When the citizens of Bolivia, South America were fighting for their water rights (privitization vs publicly owned). What about privatizing of the commons? Who is actually controlling globalization of corporations and there growth? Who should monitor them, we the people? If anyone wants to discuss about our concerns fell free to reply. :shock: :? :twisted: :roll: :lol: :o :) :evil:

Posted By: rawr

Hello, we are 13 year olds at Holy Name elementary school. In our Grade eight history class Mr. Urban introduced us to the topic of The Corporation. The movie made us more aware of what was going on around us. We were glad Canada hadn't accepted the invitation to use steroids on our cows to enhance productivity of milk because it could increase possibilities of cancer and other deseases. What they were doing to the cows was only one disagreeable thing. There are many more, like privatization. In one part of the movie, a company privatized all of the water in Cochobomba, Bolivia. We feel that something as important as water should never be privatized because there would be more deaths than births due to dehydration, which is unnessesary. The privatization of water was another bad thing. But listen to this sweatshops. CHILD LABOUR. And for what? minimun wage. 3-5 cents per hour. We're sure you're well aware of these issues seeing as you've also seen the movie. Corporations are growing as we speak. How can we stop them?

Posted By: evanerous and jess-Y

:D Hi we are two grade 8 students from Holy Name School Essex, Ontario Canada and we are 14 years old. We are discusted about the effect the corporations are having on our world. We cant believe that people would put money before human life. It makes us sick to ur stomachs :cry: :cry: . We have seen the movie and some parts were shocking like people working in sweatshops for 3-4 cents a hour. We also think by privitizing the commons who is in control, us or corporations. We cant believe people in China are working at my age and are forced to instead of attending school. We think the incident that happened in South America dealing with privitizing of water was wrong. People were taking there water and they ahve to pay for all of it. If they were caught for taking rain water they would get a fine and if it happened again they would gto to jail. They rioted and we would of too. They took a basic need from them and expected them to be fine with it and would die without water. We think this is sick and wrong. Evanerous and jess-Y P.S. please reply and respone with seriousness thank you :lol:

TOPIC: responsibility

Posted By: scema

Hello everyone. We are two grade eight students from Holy Name School in Essex Ontario. We just recently saw the movie "The Corporation" and we were shocked. We learned so much from the film and it really opened our eyes to parts of the world that we don't always see. What we learned was that we are very lucky people to live in a country where we have access to water and land, have the freedom to speak our minds, can go outside without having to worry about pesticides, disease or being harmed. Unfortunately we are stuck in a sticky situation seeing how corporations have more power then our government and can do bad things and get away with it. We have our views on what should be done. What are your opinions?

SUBJECT: What IS to be done?

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear SCCMA, I really enjoyed reading your reactions to the film, and your appreciation for the freedoms we enjoy here in Canada. I'm not so sure I'd stop worrying about pesticides though. The only products you can be sure that aren't affected by pesticides are the ones labelled "organic". Food corporations should have to label everything else they put on the shelves "not organically grown" and see if people still want to buy them. When it comes to the harmful effects of big corporations, my biggest concern was that people really didn't know about them, and that they could benefit from Joel Bakan's analysis of why corporations do the things they do because Joel's analysis is accurate and really clear. What I seem to do best is make documentary films, so when Joel told me he wanted to write a book, I was ready to make a new film, and we decided to work together. I got lots of other people to help us in all kinds of ways. You just have to look at the credits of the film (listed on this website) to appreciate all the different jobs people did to help out. So that's what I do: make films that provoke thought and discussion about society's major institutions. As to what ought to be done in a more general sense, I think that eventually we should scrap the present model of publicly-traded corporations. They're out of control, they're way too powerful, and they are fundamentally undemocratic. I think we are smart enough to come up with alternative economic structures like co-ops and fair-trade organizations, and we're capable of creating and implementing labour and environmental regulations that reduce to a minimum many of the harmful effects that huge corporations create.

TOPIC: Are you FOR or AGAINST Corporations?

Posted By: urbs

Hello everybody I am a grade 8 teacher in Essex Ontario Canada. I have recently shown the DVD on the Corporation to my grade 8 students during History class and they loved it but at the same time they were shocked and over whelmed by all of the things that corporations have power and control over. Here in Canada the Health care system is a very big debate (public vs private). Well in discussion with my students it is of our opinion, that first it seems that the governments are allowing the system to fall so they will be able to implement a possible private one and look like saviors!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Secondly it seems that the world governments truly seem not to have any control what so ever in placing corporations under SOME control in order not to degrade and take advantage of the general public. That to us was very terrifying, to know that the corporate powers are basically above the laws in any country. We are currently becoming interactive on the web sight as a group and each of the students will be given an opportunity to express their opinions on something they read or saw on the DVD. so if you may see one of their responses please drop them a small note knowing that you are concerned and care about what will happen to our future generations. Believe me they are truly afraid, concerned and frustrated about their futures and watching what corporations can do. Thanks for your support and keep writing. Also if anyone is interested the book on the corpotaion was excellent, just ask Patrica Anderson and her family. THANKS URBS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SUBJECT: We're concerned about your concerns!

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Hi Urbs, Really sorry to be so slow to respond to you and your grade 8 students. We just don't have the human power at this point in time to keep on top of all the forum discussions as often as we'd

like to and we only just saw all your amazing letters. It's really important to us that you took the time to watch the film in class and we're totally impressed--and deeply moved--by the thoughtfulness of your Grade 8 students and their ability to articulate their concerns. It looks like a very special class you've got there. Joel Bakan, the writer of the film and book (whose next book is about kids) and Katherine Dodds (our outreach coordinator) and I want to do something significant with you and your students. We'll start by trying to respond to all the letters on the website and take it from there. Best, Mark Achbar Producer, Co-Director The Corporation

Posted By: CJZ

:D We are two 13 year old students currently attending Holy Name school in Essex,ON. We have decided that we are against modern day corporations. Here is an example from the movie that pulls us in the direction of disliking BIG corporations: PRIVATIZATION vs. PUBLICALLY OWNED!!! We think Elaine Bernard off of the movie had quite a few things to say about this topic, and we do also. Corporations are trying to control and take over many elements of our world; such as *land,*air, and *water; which are the control of the commons. Those are things that everyone needs and deserves to have open to them. Land, air, and water are things that shouldn't be owned by a specific person. It is like cutting the air into sections, and trying to own it! UNBELIEVABLE! :shock: Big corporations are too selfish to care about what is good for the public and only care about profit and shareholders. THIS NEEDS TO STOP! This corporation movie taught us a lot about what harsh things the people in the world can do to you, and how much people can take from you. If there are people out there who have the same concerns as us, please be open minded to write back. Sincerely, CJZ

SUBJECT: I couldn't agree more

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear CJZ, I think you really understood the central messages of the film and couldn't agree more wholeheartedly with your concerns. It's hard to know how to feel about the people in corporations who do such harsh things. It's easy to be angry at them, or worse, but they're just people who are doing their best to provide for their families and make a better life for themselves. They may be greedy. They may not feel they have the choice to do otherwise. But they too are victims of a capitalist culture that encourages and rewards so many destructive behaviors. In The Corporation, we tried to emphasize that the institution of the corporation itself was the big problem, not necessarily the people who run them or work for them. Many of those people are decent and caring. And who can blame them for doing well what our society seems to think is the most important thing: making money. One of the reasons The Corporation works as a film is because I was willing to sit down and listen to people whose points of view is the complete opposite of my own. There are many ways to deal with those whose views we oppose. It took me a long time to wake up politically. I'm embarrassed to even think about how long it took. It's an ongoing process. You're lucky you've reached the level of consciousness you have as early as you have.

Posted By: cass&shell

We are two 13 year olds from Holy Name School in Ontario, Canada. You might of read a post from our Teacher already (Urbs). We recently watched the movie The Corporation in history class. The question came up many times if we are for or against corporations. Our answer is we are partlialy against it. But we are against corporations that do no good to the economy and people. We think it is unfair for kids who are 13 or 14 years old (the same age as us) working hard and only making 13 cents a day in sweat shops. For corporations to take advantage of people like that is not fair. And to

chose to move from a country that corporations have to pay bigger amounts of money to the workers. Then to move to a country that they have to pay the workers less than 15 cents. Do you agree that corporations like this are disgraceful and should be stopped? Or do you think corporations make the world a better place? And what do you think we can do about the problem of sweat shops? Thanks! :D

SUBJECT: Sweatshops

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear Cass&Shell, I certainly do agree that corporations that mistreat their workers should be stopped. But I also think some corporations make the world a better place. Like Michael Moore said in the film, "There are companies that do good for the communities. They produce services and goods that are of value to all of us, that make our lives better, and that's a good thing. The problem comes in the profit motivation here, because these people, there's no such thing as enough." And when he says "these people" I think he means these "legal persons" that are corporations. For them, there is no such thing as enough profit. So it's okay to squeeze workers for every last cent, workers who have no right to organize to demand higher wages, but who are desperate enough to take any work they can to feed their families. One thing we can do is make our concern for sweatshop workers known to the companies that employ them. When people take the time to write a letter, companies know that each letter represents the feelings of hundreds of other people who may not have taken the time to write, but who feel the same way, and they know they better do something about it or people will stop buying clothes and shoes from them. You can also try to find responsible companies to buy your clothes from, like American Apparel or Blackspot Running Shoes (made by the Adbusters people -- <http://adbusters.org/metac/corpo/blackspotshoes/home.php>) or NO SWEAT www.nosweatapparel.com. While buying from these companies is good for the workers they employ, it doesn't necessarily help the other workers who are stuck in sweatshops. So how to help them? Well, there are organizations in Canada, like the one Charles Kernaghan runs (who you saw in the film - www.nlcnet.org), that work tirelessly to support sweatshop workers' rights. You can help an organization like his by distributing their information pamphlets, or look on their website to see what kind of volunteer work they might need. Try a Google search on "canadian students against sweatshops" and see what comes up. You might also want to write to your member of parliament, or our Minister of Labour. People in government can affect how trade is conducted between countries. It is possible to put pressure on governments of countries that allow sweatshop conditions and make them protect the workers better.

Posted By: blondies101

We are two grade eight students here in Essex, Ontario at Holy Name school. Our history teacher showed us The Corporation movie over a few classes. After viewing the movie, we wonder; are we for or against corporations? :? There are some really bad things that corporations were doing on the video, such as the privatizing of water in Bolivia. That made us mad. :x But would our society last without them? I guess we need them in our economy. But we are probably more against them than with them because they are cheating us of our money, and keep raising costs, and all we can do about it if something goes wrong is sue them...What do you think? :idea:

SUBJECT: Would our society last without corporations?

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear Blondies101, You ask a very important question. There once was a time, not that long ago, when slavery was a normal, and to the people of that time, essential component of the economy. Surely, thinking people wondered: "How would society get along without slaves? Who would do the cooking and cleaning and hard labour? Who would plant the cotton? Who would harvest the crops?" It was inconceivable to them that the world could be any other way. That is the nature of a "dominant institution". Everything revolves around it. But as history has demonstrated time and time again, dominant institutions fall. They are crushed or become obsolete, typically replaced by another dominant institution, which with any luck, is one that has evolved for the better from the previous one. So at the same time as there were slaves, there were also enough concerned, thinking people, who probably even benefited from slavery in one way or another, who knew in their hearts that slavery was fundamentally wrong and unjust. And even though it was the norm all around them, those people fought against the dominant institution of their time. People in England refused to use sugar that was made by slaves. In the United States, people worked to help slaves escape to Canada through the "underground railway". All kinds of people worked in all kinds of ways, to change people's attitudes. Finally, after decades and decades of terrible struggle and bloodshed, the principle of equality of races was finally enshrined in law and slavery was, at least formally, abolished. I say "formally" because there are still an estimated 27,000,000 slaves in the world today. But people know it's wrong and there are laws against it and people caught in the modern slave trade can be punished by law. So gradually things can change if enough concerned people decide to act. The same is happening with corporations. It's not always easy to see it, but things are gradually changing. People's attitudes are changing and laws are changing, a little bit at a time. Big societal changes often happen slowly, and then, all of a sudden, it seems, there's a big shift. A "paradigm shift" in which people finally see the world in a new light and wonder, "how could people have participated in such a terrible system that was so obviously undemocratic and unjust?" At least, I hope that's what's happening. I think our film is part of that emerging consciousness.

Posted By: pickman

Hello, we are two students in grade 8 at Holy Name School. We have seen the movie and we are now commenting on the movie. We have concerns about what corporations do and how they operate. We have concerns about how people are losing jobs and money for their future. If people go to work and get hurt on the job, do they get pensions? Some do and some don't, we're not sure. We also have concerns about the third-world countries corporations go to, like China and Australia. Children and adults work for three cents an hour. Why should kids our age work for three cents an hour when somebody in Canada can make \$40 an hour.

SUBJECT: Why work for three cents an hour?

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear Pickman, Kids work for three cents an hour because they have little or no choice. They have to eat. They have to help their families survive. Their families can't leave their country because their government won't let them leave; other countries won't let them in, and they probably can't afford to travel anywhere anyway. Their government doesn't protect them from business owners who are all too ready to exploit them. And the sweatshop operators are contracted by business people who in many cases are controlled by the dictates of Wal-Mart's purchasing department, who in turn are trying to give you the lowest possible prices for the stuff you want so you'll choose to shop there...

Posted By: pocket

Hello, we are two grade 8 students from Essex, Ontario Canada. We attend Holy Name School. In history class Mr. Urbs showed us the corporation film. After viewing the film we are most

concerned about our health care. (Public VS Private). We are aware that if our health care turns private we may not be able to afford it. We would have to pay for our doctors visits and any perscriptions. Also on the video we have seen that south america had to pay for there water that was privatly owned by corporations. We think that is just wrong. No one person can survive without water, especially south america who doesnt earn as much as we do here in Canada. Therefor WE ARE AGAINST :evil: :evil: CORPORATIONS. :evil: :evil: Feel free to respond back
Sincerly, Pocket

SUBJECT: Evil or Mad? Mad or Evil? Maybe neither.

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear Pocket, I share your concerns about health care and I agree that access to clean, fresh drinking water is a human right, not a consumer luxury. Whether corporations are evil or mad I'm not sure. I think these are human qualities and we have to be careful not to mistake an institution (the corporation), defined by law to have certain characteristics, for an actual person. The behavior of people who work inside big corporations may seem evil and mad because it often has such harmful consequences, but within the legal logic of working for the "best interests" of shareholders, their behavior makes perfect sense, and by many people's yardstick, it is "good and sane". Some people think we have to change the laws that define corporations in the first place. Others think that we have to tighten up the laws which regulate their behavior. www.aurora.ca has put together a really good document to help you think about this, called "The Corporation: Inside & Out". Have a look, and share it with your class.

Posted By: idontlikesocks

Hi. We are two grade eight students from Holy Name School, in Essex Ontario. During our History class, we have been learning about the movie the 'The Corporation.' 8) We are very worried about the Corporations and how there are going to ruin the future for us. They are trying to basically take over the world, by buying as many things as they can and privatizing it. For example; they are thinking about privatizing the health care systems in Canada. This means that we are going to have to pay for every visit, medicine and surgery, many of which most people cannot afford. That also means that the people who can't afford the things they need, will not get the care they need. Causing them to get even more sick and possibly die. Are you willing to let people die over money? Would you want to die over a reason like that? what if the people can't afford to buy food, they will starve! What would you do if you were in that position? Bye, Chow, Ou Rivoir, ANNNDD Aloha :roll:

SUBJECT: Saving Our Public Healthcare System

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear idontlikesocks, I'm also worried about the possibility of our government privatizing our health care system in Canada. Our public health care, with universal access, is one of the things that makes Canada such a great country to live in. And you're absolutely right about people losing all their money to pay for expensive treatment if they get really sick. Sadly, that actually happens in the USA where they don't have a system like ours. It's important to let our Prime Minister and your Member of Parliament know how strongly you feel about preserving our health care system. Urbs can help you find out how to write to them.

Posted By: babyphat

We are two grade 8 students at holy name elementary school in essex on. canada. Its not the corporation it's self that we are against. What we are against is what they do and what they stand for. One thing, for instance, that we are against is the sweatshops in the 3ed world countries. We don't like how kids out age slave away in factories with such little pay. We don't think that thats fair. The corporations to us stand for greed, and poverty in other countries. The people in the sweatshops should get most of the money that we spend on their products. And we wonder if where we live will ever be like that. Will ours kids have to work for very little pay because the corporations being greedy, or will any of us have any jobs at all? I don't understand since they have so much money, they could help all these people! But since they don't we are definatly against what they do and what they stand for.

SUBJECT: We are against what you do, not what you are

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear Babyphat, Thank you for your letter and an interesting analysis of the problem with corporations. You can roughly divide people's approach to corporations in three ways. Some people think the whole idea of corporations should be changed. They want to REWRITE the laws on which corporations are based. The next group think that the corporation itself isn't the problem, but if people who run corporations were more considerate of other people and of the environment, we can REFORM the corporation from the inside. The last group feel that REGULATION is the key to protecting workers rights and the environment, and that by writing better laws and making sure they are enforced, the workers will be treated better and get a fair share of all the money that corporations make, and our air and water will be better taken care of. Hopefully, with enough caring people like you working for change, we'll figure out the most effective way to make sure that corporate greed does not take over our lives in the ways you describe. With enough determination, education and hard work, we can put corporations in their rightful place, which is doing what we tell them to do, and not the other way around.

Posted By: bubbles

:D We are two grade 8 students from Holy Name Catholic elementary school. We are from Essex Ontario, and we have some major concerns about our generation's future. Our biggest worry is that 10 years down the road everything that was publically funded is now all privately owned. An average Canadian family will not be able to aford the insurance premiums :cry:. Corporations are very benefical to making our lives alot easier, but they are not the problem it is the charters that they are under that don't stop how fast and big these corporations get :evil:.

SUBJECT: You are the hope for the future!

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear Bubbles, I'm also concerned about your generation's future, which is why I decided to spend so much time and money--8 years and \$2 million--making and promoting a film like The Corporation. The future doesn't have to be so grim. You saw many people in the film working hard to change the way corporations behave and to reduce their power over us. Judging from your letter, I think you're going to grow up to be like those people, and that gives me hope that things won't be so bad.

Posted By: obliterous

We are two 13 year olds from Holy Name School in Ontario, Canada. You might have read a post from our Teacher already (Urbs). We recently watched the movie The Corporation in history class. We are for corporations, we disagree on stuff they do ex. Sweat shops, privatization of health care, and globalization. How are governments supposed to regulate this? The reason I bring this up is because my class is about to enter the debate on rewrite, regulate, and reform. We have an understanding that we need these Corporations to survive and feed our families. If we didn't have corporations in Canada, what we do and where would we live. Windsor Essex region would be a ghost town. We rely on automotive. That's why we are for corporation. Thanks !:

SUBJECT: Signs of hope

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear obliterous, Thank you for your letter, which demonstrates that you were really paying attention during the movie. What a great class and what a great teacher you have! You've touched on some of the key problems and contradictions of this corporate world we live in. There are all kinds of ways governments can regulate the behavior of corporations. They can punish them with fines when they do bad things, or they can reward them with tax breaks to encourage them to do good things. There are all kinds of "carrots and sticks" government can use. Do we need corporations, as they presently exist, in order to survive and feed our families? Not necessarily. Not all corporations are designed to put profit above all else. Look at a company like Mountain Equipment Co-op. Or Blackspot running shoes. Take a look at how these companies are set up. I think they are a sign of hope.

<http://tinyurl.com/p9kpj> and <http://adbusters.org/metac/corpo/blackspotshoes/home.php> (and look under "Philosophy behind the shoes")

Posted By: abvm

For history our grade 8 class watched the corporation and we were appalled. How is it possible that corporations were able to manipulate the 14th Amendment and make a mockery of our government? In our opinion, it seems like the corporations are running the government, not the government running the corporations. If the corporations get what their way (which they usually do) they will try to privatize everything. What will happen to our country? It will no longer be a democracy. We will have no freedoms and everything will cost more money. Right now our future is heading down this path and we need to put a stop to it... any ideas? _ _ _ ~~~~ a.b. and v.m.~~~~ _ _ _

SUBJECT: Things can change if we decide we want them to

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Dear ABVM, You're absolutely right about corporations making a mockery of the 14th amendment, but I think we didn't make it clear enough in the movie that the 14th amendment is in the United States' constitution, not ours. But we have something similar in our Charter of Rights, and corporations basically work the same way here as they do in the USA. You've described the problem very accurately, and you have asked the hardest question of all: How do we put a stop to all this? As we tried to show in the film, there isn't one simple answer. Lots of people are working in lots of different ways all over the world to change things for the better. Some people, like the anti-sweatshop worker, Charles Kernaghan, and the filmmaker Michael Moore, try to publicly embarrass corporations into behaving better. Some, like Ray Anderson, the CEO of the carpet company, are working for reform—from the top down—inside of big corporations to take better care of the Earth. People like Vandana Shiva, the Indian scientist, organizes lots of groups to work

together to fight legal battles against corporations trying to patent basic things like rice and seeds. Similarly, courageous reporters Jane Akre and Steve Wilson took a huge corporation to court to fight for their right to tell the truth about synthetic hormones in milk. And people like Oscar Olivera, in Bolivia, works with a group that organized huge public protests to make sure that their water system stayed in public hands. What you decide to do depends on what you feel is most important to do something about. Whatever you're concerned about most, you can be sure that other people are concerned too, and they've probably already started up an organization to work for change. Those organizations always need lots of help. And young people like yourself can help out in all sorts of ways. There's never been a perfect society, and people have always had to work hard against concentrated power. It just seems that's the way the world is. If there isn't a group working on the issues you care about, there's nothing stopping you from starting one. People are also creating alternatives to gigantic, publicly traded corporations. In another post I mentioned two businesses, Mountain Equipment Co-op and Blackspot Shoes, that show that things can change if people decide they really want to.

TOPIC: Hello Cruel World

Posted By: CorporationMan92

Hello,I am a grade 8 student, When i wached the movie i thot that every thing wasent true but now when you read the paper or look on the internet you no that it is true. I think that it showed lots of people whats going on in the world. I would like to no what you think so.... Please Put what you think..

Posted By: ihaveglasses

Hello i am also a grade 8 student. When we watched it :wink: i was suprised to find how much these corprations have been fined. But they are still there and yes you do see things like that everywere

TOPIC: Our concerns

Posted By: chevburn

Hello, we are two concerned grade eight students that attend Holy Name Catholic Elementary School in Essex, Ontario, Canada. We have watched the movie in our history class with our teacher Mr. Urban (also known as Urbs.) We are concerned with many things we saw in the movie, most importantly, the future of our health. For example we saw that Monsanto injected growth hormones into cattle so they would produce more milk. Although more milk was being produced, the milk was causing cancer to people and harming the cows. Hats off to Jane Akre and Steve Wilson because they were the people who took Fox 13 and Monsanto to court. This concerns us because we don't know what people are putting in our food. This makes us wonder if we can trust the food products we are consuming? Do you think corporations should still be caled a "legal person"?

Posted By: chevburn

:(reply to our concerns!!!!!! thanks :D

SUBJECT: We're concerned about your concerns!

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Hi, Really sorry to be so slow in responding. We work with a very minimal staff these days and aren't able to check all the dialogue that goes on on the discussion form as often as we'd like. We really appreciate you and the other students from Mr. Urban's class writing to us. It means a lot. You had to be listening carefully to the film at the end of the Steve and Jane story to hear the point that rBGH, the synthetic milk hormone, has been banned in Canada and Europe. Unfortunately, it's still in use in the USA. But you're right to be concerned about what's in your food. A lot of times there's no way of knowing because corporations are not obliged to say what's been genetically modified. They also don't have to say if there's pesticide residue or not. They don't even have to tell you if any of the ingredients are known to be cancer-causing. The safest thing to do is eat organic, if you can afford to. If not, you can do a bit of research to find out which foods are most likely to have harmful chemicals in them, and avoid those. But no matter what, it's a good idea to wash fresh vegetables thoroughly before eating them. As to whether corporations should be called "legal persons", I think that's a good question for Joel Bakan, who wrote the film and who is also a law professor. I'll see what he has to say and post it here.

TOPIC: Water systems

Posted By: E.T

Hello , we are 3 grade 8 students at Holy Name School. We are students of Mr.Urbs grade 8 history class. We are concerned about the pollution in our water system . We are concerned about why the corporations were trying to privatize the water systems in south america.

RE: Water systems & privatization

Posted By: Mark Achbar

Hi E.T., Corporations are not just trying to privatize water systems in South America, they're trying to do it everywhere. All over the world. They even tried it here in Vancouver where I live, and we defeated the idea in a very democratic, peaceful way. We didn't have to fight the government and the army. Whew! Anywhere the public controls natural resources, whether it's water, forests, minerals, or air, corporations will want to privatize them. It's an opportunity to make money, and corporations are designed in such a way that they need to make more and more money. So they will use all their power—which can be considerable—to pressure the government and convince you and me that privatization is a good thing, even if it's not.