

Activity: Giant steps (Developed originally by Trocaire and adapted for this seminar)

What You Need To Do

Brainstorm on what are the rights we need in order to develop but maintain a sustainable balance - i.e. the right to food; the right to education; the right to shelter, the right to resources etc.

Photocopy the role cards and give each person one to read. Ask them to make a label showing their name and country of origin and to attach it to themselves. (Depending on the size of your group more than one person may have the same role).

Ask them to think about who they are, where they live, how many are in their family, etc. Now ask them to stand in character at one end of the room. Ask the groups to stand with their backs against the wall and use the full length of the room.

Explain that you are going to call out statements. After each statement is read they must take a giant step, a baby step, or stay where they are depending on what the statement means to them; Take a giant step if you can do it quite easily; Take a baby step if you can only do it with difficulty. Don't move if you can't do it at all.

Emphasise that the aim of the exercise is to try to experience what life is for their character-it is not about reaching the end first.

Now call out the first statement. Once everybody has responded, ask them to explain what they did and why. Choose more statements from the list, read them out, and allow participants to make their move. When all the statements have been read begin the debriefing.

Debrief

Who got furthest along? Why?

How did you feel when you took a giant step /couldn't move? Were you happy /angry?

Why?

How did you feel when others were moving at a faster/slower pace than you?

What are the basic human rights/needs we all share?

What are the main obstacles to development that people face in their lives?

Why do you think such differences exist in some countries and not in others?

Choose one character e.g. Paulo from Brazil. Discuss what could be done so that he could fully enjoy his rights.

Statements

I have been to Primary school.

I can afford to buy expensive consumer goods and drive cars with large engines.

I have easy access to products that harm the environment.

I live in a country that over consumes natural resources

I could go to university.

I can choose what subjects to study.

I can wear whatever clothes or jewellery I like.

I can play games or sports or rest every day.

I can live with my parents.

I can meet my friends.

I have access to imported products

I can criticise the government if I like.

I can challenge government decisions and use my legal rights to block these decisions

I have enough to eat and drink.

I am paid the same wage as anyone doing the same job.

I can practise my religion.

I can travel freely in my own country or elsewhere.

I can speak my own language at school.

I can speak out and protest about things that affect me.

I can access information which I need through freedom of information rights or the internet.

When I am sick I can go to a doctor.

I can afford special medical benefits

When I am old enough I can marry who ever I like.

When I am older I will get a good job

I can join any group or organisation I like.

I have a rich culture and heritage.

I live in a clean environment.

Role Cards

RASHID: You are a refugee from Syria. Your parents have been killed and your uncle has brought you to Ireland with his family. You are all waiting to be told by the Irish Government whether you can stay. You cannot work and receive a very small welfare payment from the state. You are afraid that if you protest you will be sent back to Syria. You are Muslim.

ANNA: You live with your mother and sister in Ireland. Your favourite subjects are Physics and Chemistry. You would like to do these subjects for your final school exams to go to university but the subjects are not taught in the Girls Secondary School you attend.

PAVEL: You live on a Gypsy/Traveller site with your family in a caravan in Eastern Europe. You have been to four primary schools, each in a different town. Now that you are twelve you don't go to school any more. Travellers/Gypsies have their own unique language. You have little money and no skills to earn more. You experience discrimination because of your background all the time and getting work is very difficult.

MARIA: You had polio as a baby and now need a wheelchair to get about in your small town in Slovenia. You like reading but the local library has steps so you cannot go in without help. You miss school a lot due to your disability and you are losing interest in education. Your parents were poor and can barely read and write. However recently they won €1 million in your National Lottery.

LIN: You live in Hong Kong where your mother has many business interests. She believes that the handing back of Hong Kong to China has made life a bit more difficult, although you know you are much better off than many people in China.

PAULO: You are 8 years old and live in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. Everyday you work by selling peanuts on the street. You live in a small house with your family. But sometimes because of rows at home you sleep the night on the Cathedral steps.

HANNAH: You live with your parents, your brother and sister in Poland. Your house is big and you all have your own bedrooms which you think is great because you have lots of study to do for your exams. You are planning to go to university next year where you would like to study Computer Science. Each of you have all the latest technology at home (Computers, Mobiles and iPads). You are very happy that Poland is part of the EU because now you have greater freedom and access to more goods and consumer services.

Role Cards

KANDESHIE: You live in Namibia and have just moved into a new modern house in the capital city Windhoek. Your father has been promoted and now has a good job with the government. He is even talking about sending you to a new school in South Africa where you will get a much better education.

MAYA; You are a fifteen year old living in the Bronx area of New York. Your Mom is a single parent and tries to make ends meet by cleaning houses and living on welfare. Your neighbourhood is pretty dangerous and you don't feel safe at night. You try to work hard at school but it is hard when the school is run-down and overcrowded. You often experience racism (as your family are originally from Mexico) but the authorities don't take this very seriously.

ANGUS: You live on a farm with your family in the Scottish Highlands. The weather is harsh and the farm work is difficult but you really like it. . Your grandparents live with you and you enjoy listening to your grandfather's stories about Scotland. Times are hard and your parents always seem to be worried about money and basic resources. There is even talk of the family leaving the farm and moving to the city so your parents can find work. There is no broadband or internet access in this remote part of the country.