



world's Web



the global education pack for work with young people



HRE/ED/sS/23

Save the Children 



the global education pack for work with young people

Save the Children with financial assistance
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Getting started

Growing up has never been like this before. The world is complex and it is changing. Fast. Young people approach adulthood unsure of their future. The certainties that their parents had about jobs, trade, training, homes, money, health care, even pensions, are there no longer. Young people today cannot draw on the accumulated wisdom of their parents, because what is happening is new to them too.

One of the uncertainties is caused by the emergence of the global village. We are now one community. It is impossible to ignore the complex web of interleaving strands that link our lives. There might have been a time when we could live quietly and mind our own business. Now we cannot. As we move towards the 21st century, we see that trade, communications, finance, advertising, sport and politics transcend national boundaries. They link lives in complex and unavoidable ways.

Our choices, as individuals and as societies, impact on people in virtually every other part of the globe. And their decisions affect us and can change our lives dramatically. The world is small and accessible. We turn on a television set and see a live soccer game from the other side of the planet. We step on a plane and visit places that were once exotic and are now commonplace. If we fancy a US style beefburger, an Indian tandoori dish or a Mexican enchilada, we have a choice of takeaways or supermarkets to get them from. Yet, like the

Yellow Pages, the global village isn't just there for the good things in life, but for the rotten ones too. The fuel that's burnt in the UK creates the acid rain that destroys Scandinavian forests. Imports of frozen beef from the European Union put local African farmers out of business. Choices made by a financial dealer in Tokyo can lead to the closure of a factory in the UK Midlands. Inappropriate use of baby milk promoted by transnational companies causes the death of hundreds of thousands of infants worldwide.

This can be bewildering. Not many young people, or adults for that matter, feel comfortable with it. They do not see the links that bind us as a global community as a source of strength and power. They feel alienated and disempowered by them.

Such alienation can run deep. Some young people sense that the world of politics is too complex. Or that it is nothing to do with them. Or that somehow the root causes of injustice are too deeply embedded to be uncovered. Such feelings can lead to apathy, cynicism, or pursuit of what seems to be self-interest. Young people sometimes reject all players on the scene as corrupt, self-serving, all powerful and indistinguishable from each other. By contrast they themselves are far-seeing, caring and altruistic, but powerless.

World's Web wants to replace that sense of powerlessness with an awareness of the possibilities. That is not a change that will happen overnight – it is part of the



long process of growing from a dependent and ego-centric child to a fully functioning adult operating in a democratic society where there are choices to be made, facts to discover and other perspectives to account for.

Power to the people

Young people often say that they are powerless and the only people who can get anything done are the rich and powerful and that nothing ever changes.

Here are some ideas to challenge this.

- Talk about changes that everyone would agree were significant (whether or not they agree with them): getting votes for women in the UK. Ending the apartheid system in South Africa. How did these things happen? If the rich majority have absolute power, how come minority groups succeed in their aims?
- More difficult, but try to list things that politicians or powerful interest groups have wanted to do but have been unable to. Offer suggestions such as successfully operating a poll tax, introducing ID cards at soccer matches, burying the Brent Spar oil storage platform at the bottom of the ocean, spending overseas aid money on building a dam in exchange for arms deal.

Talk about these things. If the rich and powerful are so influential why do they repeatedly fail?

Build on these ideas of where power lies. Young people might get interested in consumer boycotts, acts of civil disobedience, public demonstrations and petitions, power of the media, the law. What is democracy? Follow up.

There is a strange contradiction in many

young people's attitude to participation in the forces that shape society. Opinion polls tell us that they are uninterested in, even hostile towards, politics and politicians. Yet they have strong and passionate views about subjects that, when it comes down to it, are unmistakably political. *World's Web* hopes to help young people and those who work with them break through that apparent contradiction and make participation in society more meaningful. The best way forward is through ACTION.

Young people do often act in what has come to be called single-issue politics. This is sometimes, and wrongly, derided, as if it were a half-hearted commitment. There is no reason to be sniffy about single-issue politics. A single issue is a good place to start – and it leads to other things. So much so, that some people claim there is no such thing as single-issue politics. Young people might begin by feeling angry about, for example, the export of veal calves in crates. But an interest in that issue leads quickly to countless other questions about animal cruelty, about the dairy industry, about overproduction, about the European Union and its subsidies, about dumping, about trade, about fairness, about price fixing, about the role of police in a democracy, about the rights of people to protest, and the rights of companies to go about their lawful business without interference..... Anger about a particular road building scheme would lead to more general issues of pollution, the environment, the detailed workings of the planning process, the

place of democracy, the influence of lobbyists, transport policies, acid rain...

So where do you start? The image of the web is a useful one – because it tells you immediately that there is no single place to start. You just get going on an idea or issue that interests you, follow strands that seem right at the time, and see where the web takes you. *World's Web* is organised to help that. Turn to any one of the ten topics (it doesn't matter where you start) and begin reading. There you will find facts, information, ideas, resources, case studies, activities, questions, and action plans all designed to encourage further positive exploration of the global scene. The links stress similarities as well as differences. They promote action as well as thought. There is an emphasis on children's rights, because that is one of the single most important and unifying strands linking children and young people worldwide.





Unhidden agenda

Throughout *World's Web* there are mentions of the work of Save the Children. These are not gratuitous plugs for the organisation. They are an important part of the philosophy of encouraging young people to find out where individuals and organisations are 'coming from'. Young people must ask what shapes, influences and determines the actions and beliefs of others. Save the Children publishes *World's Web* and supports the ideas in it. It does so on the firm basis of over 75 years of working for children's rights in the UK and overseas. Its beliefs are rooted in its activities, have grown through its research and are constantly tested in practice. Save the Children is not a neutral player. It has its own place in the web of the world, and its own agenda – the children's agenda. It encourages young people to examine what it does and why, to question and to criticise, to judge and decide. We welcome that debate, will respond to criticism and urge young people to apply the same analysis with other agencies throughout their lives. That is real empowerment.

Before you start, you might like to check your own views. You can sum up in a single word the forces that shape and give direction to society. The word is politics. This pack doesn't use the phrase political education very much, mainly because there are so many unfortunate and negative associations with it. But now, to start with, ask yourself why you think education about politics is important. Try to sum up in a couple of sentences what you think about young people learning about politics, the world and its institutions.

Here, not as a model but as an interesting example, is what one youth worker wrote in response to this. What do you think?

My work with young people is about helping them develop their self-image, helping them believe in themselves and helping them oppose injustice in their own lives and in society, not only in the UK but internationally too.



Gender

Triggers

Which gender? card game

Rights into reality

Overcoming barriers

Written rights

Action now!

More stuff





Here's the £6.8 trillion question. What is the value of the unpaid and underpaid work done by women in the world. Yes, £6,800,000,000,000 is the official estimate of the value to the global economy of women's work.

Triggers

Use these controversial statements as discussion starters. Make it more lively and active by getting the group to design a poster using them. Or devise a role play that incorporates one or more of them.

● **WOMEN DON'T NEED MEN.** If you like, introduce the well-used slogan, A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle. If you have an imaginative group, ask them to create their own saying that sums up the usefulness to women of men.

● **GIRLS ARE NICER PEOPLE BUT BOYS HAVE A BETTER LIFE.** Talk about this as if someone pregnant was asked what sex baby they would prefer. Think about it in the UK. And then ask about other parts of the world. Link in with exploitation of girls – see panel.

● **GIRLS MISS OUT AND BOYS GET MORE THAN THEIR FAIR SHARE.** Explore whether this feels like the experiences of the group. Some studies show that boys and men complain of being shut out and marginalised if they do not get at least 70 per cent share of the action.

Which gender? card game

Women get the worse deal from life. Here's a card game to reveal some comparisons. Copy them onto postcards, shuffle them and get the group to say which sex, women or men, they describe – or whether they apply to both genders equally. The cards are shown under their proper heading below, but obviously you don't include those when you play the game.

The perspective here is mainly global. In the debrief after the exercise, try to relate it to what young people in the UK know about their own society. Explore similarities. If there are differences, say areas where men and women in the UK do seem to have equality, ask about how that happened. What were the influences and forces that brought about equality?



Who is most likely to be under-fed?

Who is most likely to suffer violence?

Who is most likely to die before the age of five?

Who is least likely to be able to read and write?



Who has the most rights under United Nations Conventions



Who is more likely to be an MP or sit in parliament?

Who is more likely to get a good education

Who is most likely to enjoy good health?

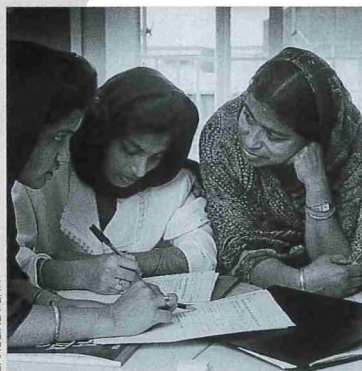
Hard work doesn't make you rich. There are 1.3 billion people worldwide living in poverty. Seven out of ten of them are women.

A definition: Some differences between men and women are physical and fixed (more or less). They are sexual. Other differences between men and women are simply agreed, in a complicated way, within cultures. These are gender differences. These vary between societies, and between generations. It is an unchangeable sexual role for women to give birth to babies. But it is a result of their gender role that women are less healthy, work harder and get less reward than men. This CAN be changed!

Rights into reality

Save the Children believes in striving for equality for women and girls. That means practical action to strengthen girls' rights. And it means targeting services where they can be most effective. Here are some examples of Save the Children's work:

- Civil war in Tajikistan has left some villages virtually without men. Women do everything – caring, coping with the traumatic after-effects of the fighting, and earning a living. Save the Children gives vulnerable families access to items they could not otherwise afford – such as sewing machines, fruit trees and livestock. The families have a choice – and a chance of earning an income. And rebuilding their lives.
- Boosting family incomes in Mali in West Africa is done through money lending credit schemes. Small loans stimulate small scale trading, and improve family life and women's confidence
- In London, Save the Children supports the Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre providing a safe, friendly place for women to meet new friends, a playscheme for their children, and expert advice on housing, employment, racial harassment, or other issues that matter to them. One user said: 'Hopscotch changed my life'.





Written rights

Everyone under 18 has rights set out by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They have been signed by the UK government, and most other countries of the world. There are not just one or two convention articles about gender. They all are! That's because Article 2 states clearly that all rights mentioned in the whole document (and that's a lot) must be supported whatever the sex of the child or young person.

It says governments of countries that have signed the Convention MUST:

respect and ensure the rights set forth to each child without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

That means if you are treated worse, or get something that is less good, because you are a girl you have the authority of the UN Convention to get it changed.

Overcoming barriers

You must have full participation of women and girls in any worthwhile project – whatever it aims to do. But the fact of widespread gender inequality means that's easier to say than achieve.

Women's participation is made easier by working in settings where women feel comfortable and by helping women to define and express their own needs.

In projects over the world, Save the Children has come across the following barriers to women's participation:

- Lack of time – because they work so hard and have so many responsibilities
- Lack of experience and confidence
- Lack of education, training and access to information
- Lack of mobility – they do not always have the freedom or resources to get around
- Difficulty in talking to outsiders
- Unfamiliarity with procedures
- Deference to men
- Fear of retribution
- And there may be specific cultural constraints too.

This list has mostly evolved from Save the Children's work in some of the poorest countries in the world. But its principles hold true for working with young women and girls in a smart, sophisticated setting in the relatively affluent UK too. Use it as a checklist when planning work, to ensure that the young women you work with have a real say in what you do.

Action now!

Look around you and won't be short of examples of unfair treatment to girls and women. Who gets most use of the resources and equipment when boys and girls are together? Groups can challenge male dominance (whatever their sex). In discussion, talk about ways of promoting the rights of women and girls. Write letters to newspapers, protest at offensive use of women in advertising, pornography, or whatever subject makes your group most angry.

More stuff

There are some useful education packs around for exploring gender issues and working with young women. *Focus for Change: class, gender and race inequality & the media in an international context* is an excellent resource. Available from Focus for Change, 103 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4QA. Tel 0118 9586692.

Greater Expectations: a source book for working with girls and young women, published by Learning Development Aids has a wealth of worksheets and exercises.

Contact the National Youth Agency, 17–23 Albion Street, Leicester LE1 6GD Tel: 0116 285 6789 for an extensive reading list

drugs

Triggers

Drug detection

Know the law

Accentuate the boring

Written rights

Complications

Rights into reality

Stereotypes and double-standards

More stuff



Triggers

Here are some questions that you can use as triggers for discussion and further exploration. Pin them up on the wall and see what happens:



Which drug is the biggest killer in the UK – alcohol or heroin?



Why do people take drugs?



Alcohol is a depressant. So why do some people say it makes them happy?

Drug detection

The following drugs are all used by people in the UK. Where do they come from? Who grows or manufactures them? Who profits from them? How do they get here? Select one or two and do a really in depth 'detective trail'. Is there a cycle of exploitation? What part does poverty play? Are there whole communities in Turkey, Thailand, or South America who are exploited by drug criminals? Some of the other ideas on this page might stimulate your choice.

Ecstasy

Tobacco

Amphetamine

Cannabis

LSD

Anabolic steroids

Coffee

Tranquillisers

Cocaine

Alcohol

Using any drug involves risk. Talk about those risks. Damage to health, to finances, to jobs, to personal relationships. Discuss how you can cut down those risks.

Know the law

There's no law against using drugs. That is, the law isn't interested in what people do with them. But simply possessing a small amount of one of the hundreds of drugs listed in the Misuse of Drugs Act could bring a fine or custodial sentence. Anyone caught with larger amounts could face a charge of possession with intent to supply. That could mean several years in prison – even if the person was never a dealer.

Help young people find out about the law. Penalties vary across the country. Try to find out the sentencing pattern in your area. Some people would like to see a relaxation of the criminal law against cannabis. Discuss the pros and cons of this – perhaps write to local politicians, police and public figures. But never forget that possession of cannabis is currently a serious offence, and anyone cultivating or possessing largish amounts risks going to prison.

Accentuate the boring

A lot of attempts to prevent drug problems turn out to be boring, irrelevant, impractical – and ineffective.

Sri Lankan professor Diyanath Samarasinghe explains why: 'Boring approaches are mostly those which set out to warn young people of the alleged dangers, harm or evil of drugs, coupled with recommendations to be good boys and girls. Young people tend to respond much better to approaches that involve them and allow them an active role.'

In Sri Lanka, drugs educators are trying to change the 'beliefs, rituals and habits' that can make drug use appear pleasurable or glamorous. Some communities and young people themselves are working to change the assumptions that make alcohol, tobacco and other drugs seem great and wonderful.

If you wanted to make drugs seem flat, boring and silly, what would you do? Try planning a drugs education programme that isn't based on shock tactics, death threats or moralistic preaching. Draw posters and devise slogans.

Written rights

Everyone under 18 – in Europe or overseas – has the right to protection from drugs. That is, if their government has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (which most countries have). Article 33 of the Convention says that governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and prevent anyone using children in the drug trade.

Think about what this means. Imagine that your youth group was the government. What laws would you pass to protect children and young people against drugs? Is banning certain substances enough? Might education about drugs be more important? Why not draw up a five point plan that calls for action on drugs. And then send a copy to all the politicians, policymakers and people of influence that you know. Ask for their comments.

Are children in the UK and Europe often involved in selling illegal drugs? Do you know people who are? What makes them do it?

Complications

Children are affected by drugs in many ways. They may be users themselves. They may be involved in the drug trade. They may be affected by adults who are users or traders. For example:

I had a friend who took drugs but I can't be friends with him anymore. Not just because drugs ruined his life but also because they killed him.

That was just one comment from one of a number of young people from Belfast who worked together on children's rights. They decided that you don't often realise how other people can be affected by your actions.



Rights into reality

Among its projects in Europe, Save the Children works in areas of high poverty, unemployment and social disadvantage. In one such area, in Manchester, Save the Children commissioned a research study of drug use and its effect on children and young people. This will help the community respond to the problem – both in Manchester and in other areas.

Stereotypes and double-standards

Ask someone to point out an illegal drug user, and many people will go for the wild, long-hair, roughlooking, unconventional look. It ain't necessarily so. There are plenty of wild new age looking people who make a point of looking after their bodies and wouldn't touch drugs. And there are many conventionally-dressed establishment figures who are regular cocaine and cannabis users.

It is common for conventions about gender roles to affect attitudes to drugs. For instance, being riotously drunk may be disapproved of for a young woman, but seen as excusable, even admirably laddish, for a young man. Talk about the different pressures and expectations on young men and young women and how they affect attitudes to drugs. How might they influence drug use?

More stuff

The Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence is a good source for ideas and sound information. *Its High Policy: drugs and youth work pack* is comprehensible and thought-provoking. *Its D-Mag* is a lively magazine for young people. **Contact ISDD, 1 Hatton Place, London EC1N 8ND. Tel: 0171 430 1991**

Manchester Lifeline has a range of comic style drug education materials. Be warned – these are very streetwise and explicit. They can give offence to adults unused to harm reduction approaches. They can also save lives and health by being trustworthy and plain speaking appeals to young people who would turn away from more conventionally-expressed advice from authority. **Contact Lifeline, 101-103 Oldham Street, Manchester M4 1LW. Tel: 0161 839 2054**

health

Whole story

Your starter for health

Quiz

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It ain't sustainable

WHO says

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Whole story

Health is positive. It is not just the absence of illness. It is not something that the lucky few have, and others don't. It can be within the reach of an individual.

But there are many things outside an individual's control that affect it too.

That means there is plenty to explore about health issues. You can look at strategies for young people to develop positive relationships with their minds and bodies. They can also look at the external factors that can prevent people living in good health. They would include poverty, access to clean water and control over their own bodies. Millions of people worldwide and in Europe do not have these.

Your starter for health

Get talking about health by using this list of factors that might affect health. Play it as a dash-around-the-room game, if that suits your group.

Nominate opposite ends of room as 'a lot' and 'not at all'. Ask young people to gather in the middle. Then read out one of the phrases below and ask young people to dash to a point between the two walls that corresponds to their view. Explore differences and have a quick chat about any points raised. Then move on. Keep it pacy, while noting any interesting issues for future work.

How do these affect health – a lot or not at all?

Doctors

Having arguments

How rich you are

Living in a city

Smoking

How healthy your parents are

Traffic fumes

What you eat

What you wear

How you exercise

Government policies on health

What you learn about nutrition at school

Once young people are familiar with the idea that they can have some control over their own health, you might like to explore together some aspects in greater depth. You might also like to look more closely at factors that are barriers to good health. There are many opportunities to become politically active, campaigning for a better deal for those living in poverty, for example.

Quiz

Here's four quick questions that focus on young people's health worldwide. They should give pause for thought – and are obviously intended to question the assumption that many young people have that they are going to live for ever and health worries are only relevant to older people.

1 One group of diseases is more common among young people aged 15 to 25 than in any other age group. Which diseases?

Answer: Sexually transmitted diseases (often just known as STDs). Experts say that up to 60 per cent of all new HIV infections will be in this age group.

2 Some teenagers start doing something that will contribute to the death of half of them. What is it?

Answer: Smoking

3 Health-wise, is it good or bad for women to have babies in their teens?

Answer: Bad. Pregnancy in adolescence carries a high risk of death or long-term complications. Maternal mortality rates at ages 15-19 are double the rates at 20-24. For 10-14 year olds the mortality rates in some countries are five times higher.

4 One cause of death appears to be rising faster among young people than in any other age group. What is it?

Answer: Suicide. And for every death by suicide in the developed world, there are around 40 attempted suicides by teenagers.

Rights into reality

When you start to live independently you really find out what you know and don't know about health. Save the Children found the views of some young people who were living on their own after leaving local authority care. Here are some of the things they said about their health:

- Some said they became happier because they had more choice and control of their lives.
- Some said that they were not eating properly – due to lack of money and not knowing how to budget.
- Some suffered stress and depression.
- Most took some form of drugs. Most common were cigarettes, alcohol and cannabis.
- Some young mothers went without food so they could feed their child.
- Among the things they wanted to know more about were: how to register with a doctor; how to use hospitals; payment for treatment; food and cooking; drugs; sex and contraception; basic health education on how to look after yourself.

Written rights

A basic right for all children is to enjoy the highest possible standard of health, and to facilities for the treatment of illness. Governments of all countries that have signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child have agreed to do all they can:

- To prevent deaths of infants and children.
- To provide necessary health care and medical assistance.
- To combat disease and malnutrition.
- To ensure health care for mothers before and after the birth of their child.
- To ensure that all segments of society, especially children and parents, have access to education about health, nutrition, and preventing accidents.
- To provide education and services for preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning.

Obviously, this list shows that there is a lot that governments can do to improve the health of ordinary people. Save the Children encourages them, and has its own projects, in partnership with others, providing health care, access to safe water, education about keeping healthy and nutrition. And also in relieving the poverty that is often at the root of poor health.



It ain't sustainable

One of the startling facts about the world is the wide discrepancies on spending on health. In the UK we might criticise our health service – but the Government does allocate 14 per cent of its spending to health. In poorer countries, they have much less money overall – and less to spend on health. Levels of government expenditure on health care varies enormously between countries – from \$1,000 or more per person per year in some of the industrialised countries to less than \$5 in the two dozen poorest countries of the world. For example, government health expenditure was only between \$1-1.50 per person in Nepal, Vietnam and Uganda.

In actual cash, that means that if you have more than about £2.70 in your pocket you are carrying more money than some developing countries have to spend per person on health care over an entire year. That level of funding means the health service is not what experts call sustainable – that is, sooner or later, the services will collapse.

WHO says

The World Health Organisation says that some of the main health dangers facing young people are tobacco, alcohol and other drug misuse, and exploitation as cheap labour. It is also concerned about the numbers of street children. 'Recent estimates suggest there may be as many as 100 million street children, at high risk of malnutrition, infectious diseases, STDs including HIV/AIDS, and criminal and sexual exploitation' says WHO. 'The rise in accidents, violence and suicides involving young people in many parts of the world is a cause for deep concern.'

More stuff

A useful package of simple activity ideas for youth groups comes from Youth Clubs UK. There are seven separate Health Education Trigger Packs each costing £7.

Details from Youth Clubs UK,
11 St Bride Street, London EC4A 4AS.
Tel: 0171 353 2366

money

The way of the world

Triggers

Spend fairly

Fair action

The big link

Poverty in the UK

Families – who spends what?

Written rights

More stuff





Triggers

Here are some trigger facts that might help get a discussion warmed up.



Fact

People living on income support today cannot afford the equivalent of the most miserable fare of Victorian Britain – the workhouse diet. Today's IS would buy only three-quarters of the workhouse diet allowance of 1876.

Fact

Some companies such as Nestle with income of \$38 billion have profits greater than the annual income of some African countries

The way of the world

Looking at money is a great way of finding out what kind of world this is. Money dominates. Those who already have plenty of it search for new and better ways of getting more. Their actions shape the world. Meanwhile, every aspect of life is affected for those who have too little.

The unequal distribution of wealth is a source of great sorrow and suffering. And it is, of course, profoundly political. Money is linked to power – some people say money is power.

Money – the waste and extravagance of those who have too much, and the misery of those who have too little – can make young people very angry. This sector is designed to help harness that anger in positive ways. And encourage young people to develop their own personal attitude to money that is healthy and life-enhancing.

Spend fairly

It is estimated that young people today will spend over £1 million in their lifetime – EACH!. That ordinary spending power can be used for political change. Often when you buy something the decision is made on the basis of the price, and the quality of the goods and service. But there are many other reasons too. Talk about the reasons for choosing what to spend. You might come up with:

To show disapproval of a company's action and get them to change. That could be as part of a boycott such as a product boycott

To show disapproval of a government's action

To avoid cruelty (such as vegetarianism or cruelty-free cosmetics)

To support a company whose actions you like

To ensure a fair price to producers and growers

The importance of fair trade and ethical shopping is growing. No-one can now resist it. With big multi-nationals feeling the effects, it is not a cranky minority that can be ignored.

Fair action

Write to local stores asking if they stock fair trade goods. Point out that 60 per cent of shoppers say that they take environmental issues into consideration when deciding what to buy.

Don't assume that shopping is all about getting the most for the least. There are other, better, priorities. Lots of people in the UK buy things because they are a bargain – even if they didn't particularly want them! Individual young people in your group can make their own personal list of shopping guidelines. Be realistic and head this 'Wherever possible I will buy...' They might include such things as organic, locally produced, fairly-traded, cruelty-free -whatever matters to them. If your youth group has a budget itself, try to agree some shopping guidelines.

Ask suppliers what they believe in. Some sports companies, for example, have publicly available policies about their own shopping principles, particularly about treatment of workers in the Third World. Reebok has an official 'Human Rights Philosophy'. Ask for a copy and a statement of how it works in practice.

money

The big link

There is a BIG link between poverty, food and health. Put simply, poor families tend to have worse diets than better-off ones. They eat less fresh fruit and vegetables, less fresh meat or fish, and less fibre. And they have more sugar, more fatty foods, carbohydrates and filler foods. They also get fewer of the essential vitamins and minerals.

Sometimes governments in the UK try to pretend that the poor have worse diets because they are ignorant of basic nutrition or don't know how to shop properly.

This is not true. The poor know what a healthy diet is. They just cannot afford it, or cannot get to it. They need more money and access to good quality fresh food, not advice on how to shop or what to buy.

Poverty in the UK

Unemployment is a major cause of poverty. Levels of benefits are so low that they do not cover the costs of looking after children. Low pay puts many people at risk of poverty too.

In the UK, those most likely to experience food poverty are:

- Children in families with low incomes
- 16 and 17-year-olds with no job, YTP place or benefits
- Women, especially young mothers
- Families with disabled children or adults
- Homeless families in b&b or hostel accommodation

Families – who spends what? (it ain't simple)

If you want children to benefit, just make sure the family gets a higher income. Right?

Wrong. Sadly, life isn't that straightforward. Save the Children has discovered from its projects throughout the world that there can be a serious downside to so-called income generation projects.

Encouraging households to earn cash from small enterprises can bring much-needed financial help to families, give them independence and stimulate the local economy. BUT, it might also mean that the men of the house simply take the money for themselves, or the women have to work even harder, or the children end up missing school.

That is not to say that income generation ideas are wrong. But they need careful examination, taking into account the whole community and its needs.



Written rights

You need money to grow – in all senses. Inadequate income can mean poor diets which can restrict growth and overall physical health. But the chances are you will also be restricted in other aspects of living. Poverty stops people living fully. In the UK, if you cannot buy a newspaper, see a film, entertain friends, buy Christmas presents for children, or travel to see relatives – then you are not taking a full and active part in society. You have been excluded through lack of money. Poverty stops people sending their children to a nursery because they haven't got the money to pay for it or for the transport to get the child there – so the child misses out on essential preparation for school. Poverty stops children taking part in sports because they cannot afford the kit or the busfare to get to the place.

20

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises this.

Article 27 says:

States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

More stuff

For information on fairly traded products look at **Ethical Consumer** magazine in a library (you can subscribe by calling 0161 237 1630).

Or contact **Traidcraft**, for its list of what is available and where: **Traidcraft, Kingsway, Gateshead NE11 0NE. Tel: 0191 491 0591.**

Different aid agencies have different emphases when it comes to alleviating poverty on a global scale. Among those you could contact are

- **Save the Children, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD. Tel: 0171 703 5400** (write to the education unit for the magazine **RightAngle** which regularly looks at money issues).

- **Third World First** campaigns on debt issues and other aspects of poverty. Contact them at 217 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1XG. Tel: 01865 245678.

- **Christian Aid** campaigns forcibly against inequalities of trade too. Ask for details from **Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RL. Tel: 0171 620 4444.**



sex and sexuality

Sensitive zones

I think...

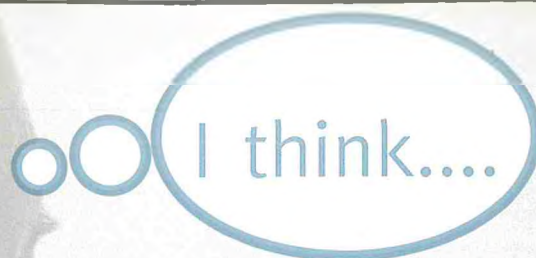
Not on your life

Gay rights

Sexploitation

Written rights

More stuff



Sensitive zones

One popular topic young people are interested in is SEX. However, discussing it can raise strong feelings, especially among parents and other members of the community. So do follow your organisation's policy, good practice, and common-sense, when talking to groups of young people about sex.

This sector is not about sex education as such. Instead it relates issues of sex and sexuality to other sectors in this pack, and tries to take a wider, global perspective on an issue that is often only discussed very close to home.

I think....

Use these questions and ideas to start a discussion.

A 13 year old schoolgirl hit the news when she married a waiter. Is this too young? If so why?

When school-age young women become pregnant they are often encouraged to stop attending school when their pregnancy gets obvious. Is this right?

What is the right age to begin sex education? Who should provide sex education – parents, teachers, or someone else?

In sex education should gay and lesbian sexuality be treated as just as valid as heterosexuality?

Not on your life

Almost all single parents in the UK are women. They do a very hard job. And one that they wouldn't have chosen for themselves. Yet, instead of being valued by society they are condemned as if they were a social problem. Instead of being supported they find themselves coping on a very inadequate income.

Why is this?

Here are some views from young women that will help to start a discussion about sex, parenthood and society. The list comes from a group of young mothers describing assumptions made by neighbours, media and politicians:

A teenager who becomes pregnant is:

- a scrounger (she's doing it to get a house, or higher benefits)
- irresponsible
- unable to cope (she'll be a bad mother)
- a bad example for her children
- a failure – she's ruined her life

These assumptions help determine people's negative attitude to young lone mothers. And they are nonsense. Check through each one to find the truth. Ask would anyone really become pregnant to jump the housing queue (which doesn't happen) or for the totally inadequate benefits paid to single mothers? What happened to the men?

Gay rights

As women we have to stand up for our rights. We must change the history of silence and oppression into strength and solidarity. Women of all colour everywhere must speak out.

So wrote Surina Khan who has had the courage to be a visible lesbian in the face of cultural and family hostility. Here is an extract of her account of attitudes in Pakistan. Use her experiences as a discussion starter, remembering that many women in Pakistan might not agree with her.. But do not let the group be tempted into condemning attitudes in Pakistan without also looking critically at the experiences of women and gay people in the so-called liberal west.

This personal view comes from *Human Rights for All? A global view of lesbian and gay oppression and liberation* which is available from Reading International Support Centre, 103 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4QA. Tel: 01734 586 692

Homosexuality is a crime in Pakistan. For a lesbian the penalty is one hundred lashes in public. This punishment usually results in death. Pakistan is an oppressive society in many respects and oppression against women, let alone lesbians, is tremendous. This is due to economic exploitation which leads to the oppression and suppression of thought and free choice. The right to work is a freedom, and one must be able to produce to derive any benefits from one's work. Many women in Pakistan are denied the right to a full education as they are forced into arranged marriages, often to their first cousins in order to keep the wealth in the family.

Women assume the subservient role which in turn gives them a sense of security, protection, and an extended family, as long as she stays within the boundaries set by the male dominated culture.

Sexploitation

Poverty often means that children and young people get involved in trade. Sometimes they become the commodity that is traded.

This has happened with the growing sexual exploitation of children, and in the international traffic in children for adoption. Impoverished children may be kidnapped, tricked or lured into the sex industry. They may appear to be making a choice of their own, attracted by the seemingly high rewards. Either way, the impact on them is often devastating – physically, emotionally and psychologically, especially for those who become infected with HIV.

Many men target children, thinking that they are more likely to be HIV-free. But children and young women, as a result of their physical immaturity, are more, not less, likely to become infected.

One organisation in Thailand that rescues children from brothels reports that 60 to 80 per cent of the children they help are already infected.

Campaigning can work. One European airline recently withdrew an edition of its in-flight magazine after accusations from a Thai children's rights group that an article in it promoted sex with young girls.



Written rights

All governments of countries that signed the UN Convention have agreed to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

Article 34 says they have agreed to act together to stop:

- a)** The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity
- b)** The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices
- c)** The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Recent attempts have been made to change UK law so that men travelling abroad to commit sexual offences with young people could be charged in the UK. The Government opposed the moves, saying that it would be too difficult to charge people for something that happened elsewhere. But other countries have workable laws that do that. And campaigners believe that the mere existence of the law would discourage some men from the practices.

What does your group think? Should men be answerable in UK courts for offences they commit as 'sex tourists' in poor countries?

More stuff

If you want to start discussions about sex, an excellent way in is the Grapevine Game, available from the National Youth Agency,
17-23 Albion Street, Leicester LE1 6GD
Tel: 0116 285 6789.

An organisation co-ordinating the campaign against sex tourism is the Coalition on Child Prostitution and Tourism, based at Anti-Slavery International, Unit 4, Stableyard, Broomgrove Road, London SW9 9TL.
Tel: 0171 924 9555

employment

Nothing against work

Written rights

Find out more about the law

Stop child labour? No!

Is it fair?

More stuff



Nothing against work

Should children work? Sometimes people get the idea that all work is bad. Is this true? Ask your group to brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of work for children.

Among the benefits might be

- greater self esteem
- increased independence
- income for themselves and family

Save the Children is against EXPLOITATION. Try defining this. When does work become negative and harmful? Try to get your group to explore the ways in which work can become exploitative. Then devise a poster, mural or other craft work to show the two sides of work – life enhancing or life destroying.

Researchers have devised a useful definition of exploitation. Children are being exploited, they say, when:

They are too young to be doing that kind of work

The hours are too long

They are too small for the tasks and tools involved

They are paid too little

The work is too hard for a small growing body

They have too much responsibility

The work is dull and repetitive and doesn't stimulate their development.

The place of work is dangerous

They work under slave-like arrangements

Written rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out what it thinks young people need to be protected from. Those include economic exploitation (getting ripped off), performing any work that might be hazardous, or interfere with education or be harmful to health or to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Article 32 also says that Governments of countries that signed the Convention should be prepared to use the law, and the social system and education system to

Establish a minimum age that you can start work

Have fixed rules about the hours and conditions of employment

Enforce the rules with penalties for those who break them

That is why the Victorians passed laws to make education compulsory and to restrict the hours that children could work.

Recently, the UK government has undone some protection for young workers, such as abolishing minimum wages. It is considering lengthening the hours that school children can work.

Find out about the law

Young people should know the rules about what they can and cannot do. This is especially important as many young people and their employers are breaking the law, perhaps without realising it.

Here are some questions that young people could try to find the answers to:

- Can school-age students get a job in a factory at weekends and evenings?
- What is the maximum number of hours someone can work while still at school?
- At what age can someone at school take on a proper paid part-time job?

Stamp out child labour? – NO!

It can seem surprising, but Save the Children does not work towards the abolition of children's work or, as it is often labelled, child labour.

Work can be both educational and a way of increasing self-worth and participating in society. It helps children and young people to learn useful, productive and social skills.

Throughout the world, most working children are involved in agriculture. And not all get paid. Many are just helping out their parents tending livestock or other jobs on small family farms. For girls, who are likely to do more work in and around the home than boys, this can mean a life of illiteracy and the transmission of poverty from one generation to another.

Some children say they prefer paid employment to working at home. In Nepal for example, girls in one village said they would rather work in the local carpet factory than at home – because it was easier. (The boys of the village said they'd rather be at home though!)

Children's work – paid and unpaid – can be essential to family survival. Attempts to stop it can do more harm than good if it simply drives children into more invisible and possibly dangerous forms of work.

BUT work can mean children miss out on other important things – like education or play. It can be dangerous or exploitative. For instance:

Nepal



In **Nepal**, a study found that girls work more than boys, sometimes more than twice as much. Because of their workload, many girls never enrol in school. Even those who do are forced to drop out before completing primary school.

Haiti

In **Haiti** 130,000 children between the ages of five and 18 are employed as domestic servants in conditions that are like slavery.

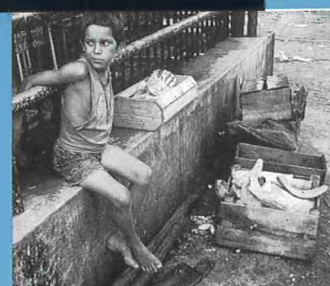
Honduras



In **Honduras**, one third of all school-age children drop out to earn a living. An estimated 570,000 children aged between 10 and 14 are working.

Brazil

In **Brazil**, 26 million children under 17 years of age are living in poverty, and three out of 10 children between the ages of 10 and 17 are working.





Is it fair?

Here's an exercise to help young people explore what it is reasonable and what is harmful, hazardous or exploitative. Prepare cards, writing one of the jobs listed below on each. Have the cards face down, then encourage young people to choose one at a time and say whether it is right or not right that an 11 year old in the UK should be asked to do it at home.

Ask for reasons and encourage discussion. Try to get agreement about each, put it in an appropriate pile, then move on. When you've been through a number of them, vary the situation slightly and see whether young people's opinion changes. What if the child is seven or eight? Or 16? Does being male or female make a difference? What about if the child is disabled? Would certain things be ok if the family was very poor, but not otherwise?

Supermarket shopping

Washing windows

Cleaning the car

Clearing leaves out of the gutter

Babysitting until midnight

Having a day off school to go fruit picking

Laying bricks to build a garage

Serving in the family shop

Stallholding at a car boot sale

Helping disabled mother go to the toilet

Chopping wood

Taking a younger child to the doctors

More stuff

The Low Pay Unit has useful booklets and information sheets that cover all aspects of young workers rights in the UK. It also runs a telephone advice service on employment matters.

Contact the Low Pay Unit,
27-9 Amwell Street, London EC1R 1UN.
Tel: 0171 713 7616.

For information on present day slavery contact Anti-Slavery International, Unit 4, Stableyard, Broomgrove Road, London SW9 9TL. Tel: 0171 924 9555

employment



housing

How did I get here?

Agree-disagree dash

Action now!

Leaving care

Written rights

Rights into reality

More stuff



How did I get here?

Here are some young people explaining why they became homeless or are not living with their parents or family.

Eviction

My children have never been homeless but I have. When I was carrying my first child, the landlord wanted his house back for his family. I was staying anywhere and everywhere until I learnt that the council had an obligation to house me in a hostel until I could be rehoused.

Violence

I have been homeless, but that was because my ex-husband totally smashed up my house which left me and my children homeless for one-and-a-half years. They spent most of that in care.

War

We were playing at about 5 o'clock when these people, the soldiers, came. We just ran. We didn't know where we were going to, we just ran. The soldiers divided into two groups; one for the village, one for our herds of cattle. My brother helped me to run. We didn't know where our mother or father were, we didn't say goodbye. When there is shooting, when you hear BANG! BANG! BANG!, you don't think about your friend or your mother, you just run to save your life.

Poverty

Many a night I sat in a cold, dark living room, simply because I couldn't afford to buy enough electric cards. My inability to budget led me to being evicted and becoming yet another homeless care leaver. I had no-one to turn to.

Use these personal statements to talk about the reality of homelessness. Politicians sometimes talk as if youth homelessness is caused by irresponsible or shiftless young people who get a bit fed up with their parents, walk out and expect the state to look after them. Is this true?

Explore the real causes of homelessness. Look at changes in benefit entitlements, the growth in unemployment, and the decline in cheap rented accommodation.

homeless

Agree–disagree dash

You can do this activity as a quiet discussion. Or make it into a more active and noisy affair. For the latter, nominate one wall in the room as 'agree' and the opposite wall as 'disagree'. Make the central part of the room neutral, and ask young people to gather there. Shout out these sentences, one at a time, and invite young people to dash to the wall that represents their view. If they only partially agree or have reservations, they can move just part way to that wall. Invite comments, explore differences among the group and encourage people to change their position if they want. Then move on to the next sentence.

Travellers should have proper sites to live on

No-one should leave home until they can afford a place of their own.

Young people don't need flats — bedsits or hostels are ok

Young women get pregnant to jump the housing queue

Youth homelessness is only a problem in big cities

The Government should make more property available for rent

These statements include attitudes and knowledge of the housing market. Doing the activity should reveal areas either of apparent interest to young people or where their understanding or appreciation shows that they might benefit from further work. Follow up these areas.

Action now!

Find out about the housing situation locally. Young people are often hazy about what is available in their area, its cost and conditions, and where to go for help and advice. There is often a big gap between aspirations and reality — between what young people say they want and what they are likely to get.

Explore this by a free-ranging discussion of what young people would like. You can begin by asking about abstract qualities — what makes a home? Include things like warmth, comfort, security. Then move onto the actual physical qualities. Who wants to live alone and who wants a shared place? What about a foyer? Or a hostel where some meals are prepared? What part of the town?

Talk about the realities. The hard truths of living independently: cleaning, cooking, shopping, washing. Then move on to hard cash — what does it all cost, and how can you budget.

Next step is to find out about the local situation. Look in the local paper, at estate agents and letting agents, housing advice centres and other useful sources. Let young people discover how you go about getting a place, about deposits and rent in advance as well as prices and locations. This can take a long time, but will be invaluable. It may also make them aware of the extent of homelessness and housing problems. They may then want to take some action to campaign for better housing and help for the homeless.



Leaving care

Every year in the UK around 10,000 young people leave the care of the local authority. Unlike young people who have the safety net of a parental home and family to fall back on when things go wrong, care leavers are on their own. If their early attempts at independent living turn out badly, there is no-one to turn to. They have no-one to borrow from, no-one to provide hand-outs of furniture, clothes, kitchen equipment or other essentials.

Save the Children funded a study of young care leavers, by other young care leavers. It found:

Their money wasn't enough to live on

Many said they had no help in finding a home

Most move around – a lot. Some 16 and 17 year olds had moved as many as six times since leaving care

Many thought their health suffered. Poor diet, stress, emotional problems and depression were common experiences

In general, the young people felt that they were poorly prepared for independent living, and inadequately supported during the transition. Use these experiences to plan positive education on leaving home. See the section More stuff for details of the research study and activity ideas.

Written rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child assumes that children should live with their family. If they cannot, or their own best interests mean that they should be moved, the state should give them special protection and assistance.

That help might be in the form of care – which could include foster placements, adoption or institutional care.

Rights into reality

Save the Children works for proper homes for children around the world. It has a world-wide reputation for its skills in tracing the families of separated and lost children in areas such as war zones or refugee camps.

In the UK it works with Travellers and Gypsies, defending their right to their lifestyle. It supports the rights of care leavers, and works with prisoners' children, supporting their right, under article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to maintain regular personal contact with their imprisoned parent.

More stuff

Housing charity Centrepont publishes a Leaving Home Guide and other useful information. Contact Centrepont, Bewlay House, 2 Swallow Place, London W1R 7AA. Tel: 0171 409 2027.

See also the *Young Person's Guide to Housing* available from the National Youth Agency, 17-23 Albion Street, Leicester LE1 6GD Tel: 0116 285 6789.

The report on young people's experiences of leaving care is *You're on Your Own* available from Save the Children, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD. Tel: 0171 703 5400.

play and leisure

Play is a right

Serious business, play

Brainstorm barriers

We want to be heard!

Written rights

More stuff



Play is a right

It can seem odd to include play as a human right. Play feels like something that just happens naturally. And it feels like a bit of an extra – not quite a necessity, like the right to food, water, shelter.

Certainly play should happen naturally – that's the whole point of it. And certainly food and shelter can be thought of as primary needs. But play is still vital to the health, happiness and development of children and young people. And to their communities. When things go wrong, and children are prevented from playing, they suffer and so does the wider society.

For every £100 spent by the Department of National Heritage, only 3p goes to children's play.

Children in urban areas are restricted in their opportunities to play. Many parents will not let them outside to play unsupervised for fears of their safety.

Play cuts down crime. Young people who joined a holiday playscheme in Sunderland said that it helped them keep out of trouble. Most parents and local groups agreed that it made the estate a better place to live.

Serious business, play

Don't think of play as an extra or luxury. It is vital for health, learning, fitness, and proper growth and development. Think what it was like in the appalling conditions when refugees from the genocide in Rwanda gathered together in camps. What did the children and teenagers want to do? Play of course. Supporting youth work in the refugee camps might have sounded an odd priority to people in the UK. But once Rwandan children were out of immediate danger, that is what they needed. So Save the Children supported community based youth work programmes in five refugee camps in Tanzania, to help relieve the immense boredom. Young people were provided with space of their own, and equipment. Activities included traditional singing and dancing, and sports like football and volleyball.

Likewise, young people in Sarajevo during the war in Bosnia still made sure they had fun. They listened to music, they danced, they played sport - even if it meant taking risks with their lives. 'The swimming pool is closed' explained 13 year old Anela from Sarajevo, 'so today we're swimming in the river. But you have to be careful because of snipers.'

The lives of streetchildren in Latin American cities can seem full of dangers, dominated by drugs, pimps, high-risk casual work, and regular trouble from police or even self-appointed death squads that attack young people. Even so, young people find time to play.

None of this is surprising to Save the Children. In its long history of supporting children's right to play, it was the first to introduce playgroups – in the shelters of bombed-out Britain during the Second World War. Since then it has been a forceful supporter of children's right to play. It has projects providing day care and after-school care, holiday playschemes, and toy libraries.



Brainstorm barrier

Get the group to think, fast and freely, about the barriers to play. Ask what stops someone playing. List their contributions. They might come up with things such as no facilities, having too much work, dangerous places. Try to include some specific things – relevant in the UK and overseas. This would include disability, danger from traffic, minefields, poverty, lack of space....

Once you have a list, start to analyse it. What is the cause of the barrier? Who is responsible for it? How did it come about? How can it be avoided? What can be done now to remove or avoid the barrier? The answers will be different for each one.

If you have a particular problem with play and leisure facilities in the area, your group might like to do something about it. For inspiration, see *We Want to Be Heard!* on this page, which describes how a group of young people in Belfast first analysed, then tackled their problem.

We want to be heard!

When 12 young people aged 10 to 13 from the Markets area of Belfast came together they asked themselves what was unfair, what they wanted to change. They answered:

First, there is nowhere for us to play. Secondly, that the area we live in is not safe, and not very pleasant. We don't think it is fair to live in a place where it is violent and there is fear.

We do not think it is fair not to have somewhere to play. We do not think it is fair that people we don't know make decisions about what the area is going to look like or to have or not have. We don't think it is fair that we do not have a voice that is listened to.

The young people wanted to get something for themselves in the area. And they wanted to know why there wasn't anywhere for them to play. Who could they ask? Who has responsibility?

The group set out their own experience of the issue:

We have got into trouble because we were playing in places we should not have been. We live in a boring place, we get into trouble - why is there nothing to do?

There is violence and danger all around us. We need somewhere safe and free from fear to play.

Some of the group have been hurt because the area is unsafe for us.

Karl fell off a roof, someone else was knocked over by a car. Someone else broke his leg walking across the estate.

We feel good now because someone is listening to us and is helping us.

And they agreed their aims:

We want to get a play park in the Markets.

We want to know why we do not have any facilities.

We want to know who is responsible, who we can talk to.

We want to show that we have a right to have a say in decisions that affect our lives.

We want to show how things are made worse for us because of the situation in Northern Ireland. That we have been affected by the violence.

We want to get the place cleaned up.

We want to be heard.

For a fuller account of what the Markets Action Youth did, see *Play is a child's right: the MAY group report 1995* from publications sales, Save the Children, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD. Tel: 0171 703 5400.




Written rights

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the right of children to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities relevant to their age, and take part freely in cultural life and the arts.

Article 12 gives children the right to express their views in matters that affect them.

That is why play is a right.

More stuff



Save the Children has a useful account of how its Breakout! project in Sunderland was regarded by people and agencies in the area – see *Breakout! holiday activities and their impact on youth crime* price £5.95 from Publications sales, Save the Children, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD.
Tel: 0171 703 5400.

A comprehensive action pack on play and children's rights, Article 31 Action Pack is available from the National Play Information Centre, 359 Euston Road, London NW1 3AL, price £14.95 plus £2 p&p.

image & identity

Wild generalisations

Identity test

Written rights

Stripped of identity

How others see you

Rights into reality

More stuff



image

Wild generalisations

If your dad's in prison you must be....

People with HIV are.....

Single mothers are all.....

Travellers and Gypsies make me....

Have some fun finishing off the sentences above and then talking about what was said. Your group might simply state obvious stereotypes. Or might come up with more thoughtful and accurate views: 'Single mothers are all hardworking', or 'People with HIV are entitled to good health care'. Try to encourage the second type of response. Add some more sentences of your own devising and get young people to design a poster using them. Or they could devise a role-play, rap or song building on their discussion.

Identity test

What kind of a person are you? Ask yourself which of these sounds like the kind of person you would most like to spend a day with. Add up whether you have mostly As or Bs and get your score from the panel below.

1

- A A Nobel prize winner
- B a young peasant woman from Guatemala?

2

- A A skilled surgeon
- B A single parent

3

- A A journalist and sociologist
- B A convicted murderer?

4

- A A ballet dancer
- B An Afro-Caribbean male from Brixton

Answers:

Did you get mostly As or Bs? Doesn't matter. It was a trick. Each sentence can describe the same person – they are not opposites at all. Number 1, for instance, refers to the Guatemalan Rigoberta Menchu who is a Noble prize winner. If you didn't recognise the trick, it just shows how powerful stereotypes are. And how alert we have to be not to prejudge anyone on the basis of a small amount of information.

Written rights

Most people never think about it, but having a name is pretty important. So important that there is a whole article in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child about it. Article 7 says that every child shall :

be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

Why is this important? How does it help your rights to be registered? What would it be like not to have a fixed name? See the section Stripped of Identity for one answer.

identity

Stripped of identity

Slaves know what it is like to have their identity forcibly changed. In the late 16th century British traders started kidnapping and transporting people from West Africa. They were shipped and forced to work the plantations on the British colonies in the Caribbean. Separated from their families, they were prevented from speaking their own language and forbidden to practise their religion. They were also renamed, forced to respond to a non-African name given to them by their new 'owner'.

Many descendants of the millions of enslaved Africans are interested in regaining their identity, their knowledge of their past that was cut off by slavery. One African American civil rights activist changed his name to Malcolm X, the X symbolising his unknown African name. After a trip to Mecca, he changed his name again to El-Hajj Malik Al-Shabazz.

Slavery does still exist in the world today. The **Commission on Human Rights** recently reported its

grave concern that slavery, the slave trade, slavery like practices and even modern manifestations of this phenomenon still exist, representing one of the gravest violations of human rights.

How others see you

Homeless people are not hopeless. Disabled people are not useless. Poor people are not worthless. Hungry people are not pathetic. Terminally ill people are not victims.

Yet anyone who accepted unthinkingly everything presented on television and in magazines could easily end up supposing all these insulting images were true.

Challenge them by turning the tables and getting your youth group to imagine that they were the recipients of charity. What kinds of portrayals would they be happy with.

Here's useful exercise, adapted from Spotlight on Charity Fundraising (see More stuff for details)

Imagine that the UK has been designated poor and run-down. A visiting group of wealthy benefactors from overseas arrive on a visit to help. They produce a list of all the things wrong in your area: the high crime rate, joblessness, vandalism, drug taking, child abuse, poverty, racist attacks, poor public services. And they tell you that they can help.

You cannot deny that these things exist in your area. But by emphasising negatives and ignoring positives you feel they have created an utterly distorted picture of what life is really like for residents. How would you feel to see fundraising publicity focused on deprivation and misery? Try adapting some slogans to see what you think:

£5 will pay for school dinners for a hungry child for a week

£2 will take a disabled pensioner for a walk round the park

£1 will provide the bus fare for an unemployed school-leaver to go for a job interview

Then imagine what you might feel if the wealthy benefactors arrived with truck-loads of randomly assorted food packages, old clothes, toothpaste and tinned baby food. And offered to adopt your granny for a few pounds a month, provided she wrote nice letters back. Would you feel grateful for the generosity of others? Or insulted and patronised?

Ask yourself whether these examples are exaggerated. Do some charities say simplistic and offensive things about people they raise money for? Why is the 'shopping list' of things that can be bought with donations so widely used? What does it say about what motivates donors?

Do some research and questioning of your own. Test out the claims of charities. Is a coach trip to the seaside really 'a holiday of a lifetime for a handicapped child'? In what sense will £1 ensure that a person in Mozambique is fed for six months? Even though it is never actually claimed, do some donors believe that, say, 10p that they send will buy oral rehydration salts that will save a life?



Rights into reality

Wherever Save the Children works it values people for who they are. That is really important in work throughout the world.

So Save the Children will not fundraise, or promote the cause of people it works with, by presenting images of them, in advertising or campaigning, in ways that devalue their basic human dignity.

Sorrowful pictures of starving babies, vulnerable and dependent people reaching out to the affluent West for succour, are demeaning and undignified. They are also fundamentally untrue – because they ignore the inner strength and dignity that most communities, even those facing great adversity, possess.

Here are some extracts from guidelines that Save the Children's staff use when writing about its projects:

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The dignity of the people with whom Save the Children works should be preserved

The images and text used in all communications must be accurate and should avoid stereotypes and cliches

Attempts should be made where possible to identify and quote people being photographed or interviewed. Wherever possible the views and experience of the people involved should be communicated.

More stuff

Excellent ideas for exercises with young people appear in *Focus for Change: class, gender and race inequality and the media in an international context* published by Focus for Change, 103 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4QA. Tel: 01734 594 357.

For a look at charities and the way their fundraising can distort the portrayal of people and communities see *Spotlight on Charity Fundraising*, previously issued separately but now available as part of *The Spotlight Bundle*, price £7.50 from education unit, Save the Children, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD. Tel: 0171 703 5400.

The image guidelines *Focus on Images* are available free from Save the Children, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD. Tel: 0171 703 5400.

discrimination

Triggers

Prejudice – cause and effect

Finding out what others do

Written rights

Rights into reality

Action now!

More stuff



Triggers

These trigger statements should get discussion moving. Develop the ideas that come up by getting young people to design a poster using them. Or they could devise a role-play, a rap or a song that builds on their ideas about one or more of them.

- **PISS ON PITY.** OK, it is shocking. It is meant to be. It has been used as a slogan by the disability rights movement in the UK to show disabled people's contempt for expressions of patronising sympathy. It was particularly focused on large-scale fundraising events like the BBC's Children in Need and the Telethon. If young people do not at first know why disability campaigners feel so strongly about it – they can find out!
- **I'D RATHER MY CHILD HAD ONE HAPPY PARENT THAN TWO UNHAPPY ONES.** So said one young woman who didn't choose to be a single parent but who wanted the best for her child. Talk about the prejudice faced by lone parents in the UK. They do a hard, important and never-ending job - but rather than being valued by society they are abused and condemned. Why?
- **I THINK THAT BLACK PEOPLE ARE.....I THINK THAT OLD PEOPLE ARE.....I THINK THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE.....** Finish the sentences. And discuss.

Prejudice – cause and effect

One of the best ways to explore discrimination is to look at the way stereotyped views develop. The media – television, adverts, newspapers, magazines, charity ads – play a large part in this. A starting point for in-depth work would be to take a closer look at how these images are constructed and maintained.

Collect as many as you can of the different forms of media material listed above (for television, you might be able to video good examples, or just videotape a typical evening's viewing).

Decide which discriminated group you want to focus on: lesbians and gay men, Gypsies and Travellers, women, black and Asian people, disabled people, prisoners families. Then, in small groups, examine each kind of material for portrayals of each. Record each time a discriminated group is mentioned or depicted, along with an analysis.

Talk about the reasons behind this portrayal – and its effect. Some groups might hardly appear, which can lead to a good discussion of the 'invisibility' of discriminated people.

Finding out what others do

Prejudice feeds on ignorance. We tend to sympathise and make allowances for ourselves and people like us. And we condemn and find fault with others.

Finding out what life is like for other people can be very fruitful. Don't do it to marvel at their strange unfamiliar ways. Nor so that you can thank fate that you don't have their problems. Finding out about other people is about eradicating prejudice at its roots – ignorance. And it can lead to practical benefits, as this example shows:

A project team was helping the women of a village in India. Asked what they most needed, the women replied that they worked 18 hours a day and needed pressure cookers and a village corn mill. These would shorten the time-consuming tasks of collecting fuel and grinding corn.

The village men were against it. They felt that food prepared in that way was less tasty and nutritious. They thought the women spent too long chatting. So the project team asked the men to carry out a task analysis of the women's work. When they added up the time for each activity they were amazed at how many hours the women worked every day. So the women got the pressure cookers and mills.

Written rights

Challenging discrimination is so important that it appears as the second article in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (The first article just defines a child as every human being under the age of 18 – unless the country's law says that the age of adult majority is earlier.) Article 2 says that the rights of all children must be respected and ensured by Governments:

without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

Governments agree not to violate any right – and they also promise to take positive action to promote them. This is very important in discrimination, because much discrimination is indirect, not direct. For example, the UK hasn't passed a law banning young care leavers from a place to live. But a whole series of moves and events in society is making them far more likely to become homeless.





Rights into reality

One of the biggest groups of people in the world to experience discrimination are – children and young people. Save the Children's whole philosophy is based on putting children, their needs, interests and perspectives, alongside and equal to those of adults.

Discrimination, maltreatment or suffering of individual children is a moral outrage. Save the Children also believes that society itself is being damaged by the neglect of children. Children are not just a 'special interest' group. What happens to them determines what happens to society. Policies and practices that ignore the needs, rights and interests of children undermine the future, and will lead to interventions that are likely to fail or produce unwanted results.

Of the groups facing discrimination, Save the Children is particularly concerned about girls and young women. It also works closely with Gypsy and Travellers, with ethnic minorities, with prisoners' children, with disability schemes, and with refugees.

Action now!

Work on discrimination starts at home. There is no better beginning than your own attitudes, beliefs and understandings. Find out more about whatever discriminated-against group interests you. Knowledge combats prejudice – so find out more from them. Ask and listen and help by supporting the efforts of campaigners and workers who are themselves from the discriminated-against group.

More stuff

Many Save the Children projects fight discrimination. So their project reports can be a useful read.

For ideas for exercises with groups of young people try the excellent *Focus for Change: class, gender and race inequality and the media in an international context* published by Focus for change, 103 London Street, Reading, Berkshire RG1 4QA. Tel: 01734 594 357

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the global education pack for work with young people

Many young people are appalled at the injustices in the world. They want to take action. Yet they – and adults – can be baffled by the complexities of issues. They need simple, but not simplistic, introductions to the issues confronting today's global citizens.

World's Web provides an excellent start. It aims to replace feelings of powerlessness with an awareness of the possibilities of change. It offers no easy answers or quick fixes – just a myriad of lively opportunities to learn by doing, discussing and thinking.

The pack has ten sectors:

- gender
- drugs
- health
- money
- sex and sexuality
- employment
- housing
- play and leisure
- image and identity
- discrimination

Each sector provides facts, activities, starter exercises, questions and action plans. All encourage exploration of the global scene, based on the most urgent agenda facing the world today – the children's agenda.

Designed for use by adults working with young people, *World's Web* is ideally suited for youth work, personal and social education courses, and citizenship education.

Other publications from Save the Children's youth education programme include *The Spotlight Bundle*, a handy compendium resource of activity ideas on different topics – families, charity fundraising, disability, conflict and citizenship. Price £7.50.

For orders and details of other Save the Children publications please contact the education unit, Save the Children, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD. Tel: 0171 703 5400. Fax: 0171 793 7467.

For the newest and most interactive way to explore global boundaries see *Hot Savvy*, the new children's rights World Wide Web site for young people: <http://www.oneworld.org/scf/youth>

Save the Children works to achieve lasting benefits for children within the communities in which they live by influencing policy and practice based on its experience and study in different parts of the world. In all of its work Save the Children endeavours to make a reality of children's rights.

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Save the Children 

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