

IMAGINING THE FUTURE



AIM

to explore the impact of the Separation Wall and Peace Walls for young people in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Israel and Palestine and who has the power to create lasting peace.

AGE

12 years and over

TIME

45 minutes

MATERIALS

large sheets of paper, markers or art materials, fact sheet on the wall

For further information, visit

www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland

<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/images/photos/belfast/peaceline>

WHAT TO DO

Ask the group to suggest words linked to peace. Write all the ideas up.

Form small groups and give each group a sheet of paper and markers or art materials. Explain that the groups are to draw a large V on their sheet. At the top left of the V write 'Probable' and to the top right write 'Possible'. Give each group a copy of the fact sheet and allow them a few minutes to read it.

Ask participants to imagine what impact the walls will have for young people in the next five years if their construction continues and to write or draw the impacts to the left of the V. Allow 10 minutes for this.

Now ask them to imagine what future they would like to see for young people on either side of the wall. To the right of the V, they write or draw their ideas. Again allow 10 minutes for this.

Finally, ask the groups to discuss what needs to happen in order to move from the probable to the possible future. Give a further 10 minutes for this.

Each group should give a short presentation of their work. In the large group, ask if there was agreement among the groups on what needs to change? What suggestions were common to the different groups? Who has the power to change the situation? What can we do?

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland has a population of 1.6 million. Its largest city is Belfast.

Between 1969 and 1999, a total of 3636 people were killed in violent conflict between republicans who wanted to be part of a 32 county republic and loyalists who wanted to remain a part of the UK.

In 1994, Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries called a cease-fire which lasted for two years. The Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998 which led to the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The first 'peace walls' were put up by the British Army in 1969 and were intended as temporary barriers to separate rioting loyalists and republicans. Peace walls now zigzag for miles across Belfast.

Nine new peace walls have been built and 11 strengthened since the 1994 ceasefires. The newest proposed peace wall is in the grounds of Belfast's only integrated primary school.

Source: Glenree Centre for Reconciliation (1998). *A Place Apart?* The Guardian (4 July 2007). *Another Brick on the Wall.*

IMAGINING THE FUTURE

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Israel is roughly one third the size of the Republic of Ireland and has a population of 6.4 million people. It claims its capital as Jerusalem.

The Occupied Palestinian Territories, consisting of West Bank and the Gaza Strip, is about half the size of Northern Ireland and has a population of 3.5 million people. Its main city is Gaza.

Israel and Palestine both claim the same piece of land. They both claim to be descendants of Semitic people who settled in the region about 4,000 years ago. Both also claim Jerusalem as their holy capital.

Jewish migration to Palestine began in 1880. Following the Second World War, and the persecution of Jews in the Holocaust, there was a new influx of Jewish refugees to Palestine.

On the 15th May 1948, the State of Israel was declared. Over the next two decades there were a number of Arab –Israeli wars, including the Six Day War in 1967, that saw Israel increase its territory.

Occupying the West Bank in 1967 was an important strategic gain in Israeli eyes, and successive governments have ignored the Green Line and built numerous Jewish settlements on the territory.

There are now more than 430,000 settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. A further 20,000 settlers live in the Golan Heights. Settlements and the area they take up cover 40% of the West Bank. In addition, there are about 100 settlements not authorised by the Israeli government in the West Bank.

The settlements are illegal under international law, but Israel disputes this and has pressed ahead with its activity despite signing agreements to limit settlement growth.



An Intifada, or uprising, began in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in 1987. Young people played a large part, throwing stones at the Israeli forces. The army responded with force and imposed curfews.

A second Palestinian Intifada began in 2000. The following years saw suicide bombings by Palestinians, mostly young men, against civilians and Israeli military retaliations. In 2002, Israel began construction of a separation wall to enclose the West Bank.

Source: Oxfam (1997). Making Peace.

BBC website: BBC News/Middle East