

# SECTION 1



## Young People's Realities

### Title: Same old story?

**Aim:** To explore the different aspects of young people's lives in Ireland and in the Global South

**Age:** 10+

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Material:** Large sheets of paper (for body maps), pens/markers, copies of the case studies and facts, magazines and other materials for collage including glue, scissors and blu-tac



### WHAT TO DO

**Part 1:** In small groups, ask participants to make a list of what is good and what is not so good about being a young person in Ireland today. Each group can then share their ideas with the larger group.

Ask if anyone is surprised by the statements? Were any of the statements mentioned more than once? Why? Were the statements unique to Ireland, or would young people in other countries experience them too? What other issues might young people in different countries face?

**Part 2:** In groups, ask the young people to create an outline of a body on large sheets of paper, leaving room for the group to write inside and outside the body. Give each group one of the case studies plus the list of facts about young people's lives today. Outside the body they should create a collage of the reality – good and bad - of that person's life. Inside the body they should create a collage of all of the positive things that they imagine in that person's life. What helps them through difficulties? They can use newspapers, magazines, headlines, images, sketches, etc. Make sure it is possible to see the difference between inside and outside the body by using different colours, art work etc.

Display the body maps. What do they have in common? What is different? Why?

**Part 3:** Finally, in the large group, jointly come up with the factors that contribute positively to young people's lives, and help them to develop 'resilience', no matter which country they might live in. Represent your findings visually either in a large body map, or as a flower. The bud of the flower could be all of the internal things that help young people to be strong, happy and healthy. The petals could represent the external factors in their lives and communities.



**Ceire's story:** I am 17 and live in Dublin. I'm in 6<sup>th</sup> year which makes me nervous, due to the pressure that goes with the Leaving Cert. However I also feel motivated to make the most of it for my future as I would like to study politics and international relations, travel abroad and work in an international organisation. I've been a member of my youth group for 3 years. It has opened so many new doors for me, and gives me the tools and guidance to take action and make changes in my community, as well as gaining new friends. My favourite thing about Dublin is the cultural diversity – there are always different things to do, so there is never any real reason for me to be bored as a teenager here (Source: Ceire's own words. Ceire is a member of ECO-UNESCO and NYCI's development education Youth Advisory Group (YAG))



**Noeleen's Story:** At the age of 20 I set up a hair salon in Waterford. This was a challenge as I was one of the first women to buy a private house which I turned into the salon. As I am self-employed I have the opportunity to travel to America, Canada and have even lived in Spain. When I first started in hairdressing I sometimes fainted from the smell of ammonia from the lotion. I often copy hairstyles from films and celebrities. All my friends have their hair done regularly for going out. I meet some wonderful people when hairdressing (Noeleen, teenager in the 1960's. *Adapted from Waterford Life Now and Then*)



**Phillip's Story:** Phillip is gay and lives in the UK. His experience of school was difficult, from first being bullied at nursery school right up to secondary school, where he was teased as 'queer' and a 'girl', and even physically attacked. His mother threatened to go the police, but the school still did not do anything. By age 15 he had formed some good friendships, giving him much-needed support. One of his friends was also gay. Once boys teasing him shouted: "Are you queer?" Phillip replied "YES!" They were shocked and said "really?" and "well, you're alright, really". Bullies finally left him alone. However, since leaving school and becoming a young adult, Phillip has suffered three assaults, each time by gangs out 'gay-bashing' (*Adapted from Plan International Because I am a Girl Report 2011 'So, what about boys?'*)



**Chit's Story:** Chit Mya Noe is 16 and was born in a small village in a country called Myanmar in Asia. When Chit was only one year old, there was fighting in her village. They took children and trained them to become soldiers. The fighting became so bad that Chit and her family left their home. They spent 10 years living in a refugee camp on the border with Thailand. Chit lived in a small house made of bamboo which had no access to running water. Her parents had to find fruit in the jungle to feed the family. In December 2007, Chit and her family moved to Ireland. Now, they live in Ballina Co. Mayo. Chit loves going to school. She hopes to work in an office when she's older. When Chit thinks about the refugee camp, she misses her friends and relatives (*Source: Trócaire*)



**Jonathan's story:** Jonathan Pasos lives with his parents in Pisco, Peru. In 2007, there was an earthquake which measured 8.0 on the Richter Scale. Buildings collapsed. 500 people were killed and over 1,600 people were injured. Thousands of people, including Jonathan and his family, had their homes destroyed. Jonathan's father was seriously injured during the earthquake and had to travel to Lima, the capital city, for medical care. In the weeks that followed, Jonathan and his mother Maria were given food, clean water and materials for building temporary shelters. Then Maria was given a small grant from an aid agency to set up a small shop. This has allowed her to help her family by selling snacks and drinks (*Source: Trócaire*)



*'Having forgotten how to live in the moment, it would appear we are being forced to live in the instant'*

Dinyar Godrej

What does this mean? What is 'instant' about life today? What effect does that have on the quality of our lives?



**DID YOU KNOW?** 2012 is the 'European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations'. Noeleen's story is taken from a book developed during a project between transition year students and older people living in Waterford City. To find out further information about setting up a 'Solidarity Between Generations' project, contact Age Action or go to: [http://www.icsg.ie/intergenerational\\_mapping\\_exercise](http://www.icsg.ie/intergenerational_mapping_exercise)