

The Disappeared

12+

AIM

To highlight human rights abuses as an injustice and to get the group thinking about what can be done.

Time

45 Minutes

Material

Copies of “The Disappeared”, flipchart paper, markers and pens.

Method

Part A

Split the group into small teams. Give each team a zone in the room and one of the “The Disappeared” handouts, flipchart paper and markers. Ask a volunteer to read the handout to their team. Ask them to discuss the story and write down any injustices they can find, then write what they think the causes of the injustice were?

Ask one volunteer from each group to remain in place as a “reporter” while the team split up and go to different zones. The “reporter” explains their handout and what the team wrote. Now the new members share & compare what they spoke about at their tables. The task for the new group is to brainstorm what they think should happen in the world to ensure this doesn’t happen again and what role could young people have?

Ask each team to decide on their top three and feed back to the larger group.

Debrief

Were there any similarities between the teams? What was unfair in the stories? Do forced disappearances still take place? Where in the world do they happen? What are the reasons? Are they fair/just? What should be done to prevent this happening again?

Optional Part B

Materials

A digital camera and a lamp.

What to do:

Take each person’s photo in front of a bright lamp so they are completely silhouetted and you can only see a shadow. When the pictures are printed, give each person a post it note, ask them to finish the sentence “If I disappeared I would never....”

Note to Leader

The method in Part A is adapted from the “World Café” approach. For more information on world café, visit www.theworldcafe.com



**fact
BOX**

August 30th each year is International Day of the Disappeared.

Forced disappearances are listed as a “crime against humanity” in the International Criminal Court.

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The Disappeared in Argentina

In 1976 the military took power in Argentina, they started a campaign to wipe out any opponents to their rule. In seven years, between 10,000 and 30,000 people were kidnapped. Some of these people were members of organisations the government didn't like and had probably taken part in a protest. In some cases, they were just friends or family of people who disappeared. People didn't know what happened or wouldn't speak about it, for fear of it happening to them. Mothers who went looking for their sons and daughters also disappeared.

After 1983 when the military left government, a national inquiry found over 340 secret concentration camps where the disappeared were tortured, heavily drugged and murdered. The mothers of many disappeared began to march every Thursday in the main square of the Capital city Buenos Aires wearing white head scarves which they embroidered the names and memories of their loved ones onto. They have since become a powerful organisation fighting for justice on many issues.

The Disappeared in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland during the period known as the Troubles (between the late 1960's and ending in 1998) there was a campaign of violence between groups that believed Northern Ireland was part of either the UK or the Republic of Ireland. These paramilitary groups included the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF). The conflict caused many deaths on both sides, as well as kidnappings, robberies, assaults and disappearances. Most of the "disappeared", were people accused of being informers for the other side, they were murdered and their remains buried in hidden locations. Since the peace process people are trying to find out what happened to the "disappeared" so they can give them a proper funeral. Recently some of the groups who were fighting have worked with the government to recover some of the remains, but still, the remains of many "disappeared" victims are missing and have not been found.

The Disappeared in Australia

In Australia it used to be normal for Aboriginal children to be taken away from their families, especially if they were of "mixed race". This meant if one parent was an Aborigine and one was a white Australian. This practice ended in 1969. There were many reasons given for it, including the need to integrate Aboriginal people into society and for maintaining white "racial purity". The children were often brought up in state or religious institutions where they were punished for speaking their own language or practicing their beliefs. Most were raised to become house servants and farm labourers. In 2008, the Australian Government apologised. The previous government were unwilling to do so because they felt they would get sued for huge amounts of money. The children who disappeared are known as the "stolen generation". Much of the culture of the Aborigines has also disappeared because there was nobody to carry it forward.