

LIFE STORIES

EXPLORING IDENTITY
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



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YARD

Youth Action against Racism and Discrimination (YARD) is a programme within the National Youth Council of Ireland. It works to address racism and discrimination through the provision of anti-racist, anti-discrimination and intercultural development education training to youth leaders. YARD also provides programme support to youth organisations, promotes the inclusion of young people from minority groups in youth work and organises youth centred awareness raising events to mark International Day Against Racism (March 21st).



Contents

	INTRODUCTION	2
SECTION ONE	WHAT IS IDENTITY?	5
	Activity One: Identity Balloons	5
	Activity Two: Debating Identity	6
	Activity Three: Identi-kit	7
	Activity Four: Guess my Identity	8
	Activity Five: Identity is a Write	9
	Activity Six: Life Lines	11
	Chiquinga and Rudolone	12
	Lynette	13
	Mary	14
SECTION TWO	UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY	15
	Activity Seven: First Impressions	15
	Activity Eight: Identity Force Field	16
	Activity Nine: Dealing with Identity	18
	Activity Ten: What About Me?	20
	Activity Eleven: Discrimination and Young People	24
	Activity Twelve: True or False	26
	Simon	29
	Timmy	30
	Bloom	31
SECTION THREE	EXAMINING LIFE STORIES	32
	Activity Thirteen: Picture It	32
	Activity Fourteen: The Right Move	34
	Activity Fifteen: Life Stories Time Line	37
	Activity Sixteen: Life's an Act!	38
	Activity Seventeen: Celebrating Diversity	39
	Di Sien	40
	Caitriona, Emma and Nan	42
	Alice	44
SECTION FOUR	TAKING IDENTITY FURTHER	45
	Facilitator Evaluation	45
	Guidelines	46
	Taking Action	50
	Awards Scheme	50
	Sources of Information	51



INTRODUCTION

Life Stories is a new educational activity pack that gives a voice to young people from a diverse range of minority groups in Ireland. The young people's stories form the backbone of the pack. These stories are supported by group work, simulation games, drama and art activities, which enable young people to explore identity in Ireland and around the world.

Identity is explored in the context of the individual characteristics, beliefs and interests of young people and in terms of the groups to which they belong. The participant storytellers were chosen based on their minority identities in order to highlight the diversity of young people in Ireland and to illustrate the particular issues faced by young people belonging to minority groups. However, we also recognise that the storytellers are individuals and the stories examine the relative importance that the young people give to their minority identity compared to other identities they hold.

Identity is not neutral. The concept can be interpreted differently and has both positive and negative dimensions. In Ireland and throughout the world we have seen how group identity can create a welcome sense of belonging or solidarity. However, divisions based on group identity have also led to polarisation, stigmatisation and the abuse of human rights. The stories and activities in this pack highlight that identity is not fixed and that people's identities may change according to their needs at a particular moment.

A reading of the stories highlights as much about what the young people have in common as what differentiates them. Among the themes that emerge are attitudes to being young, the importance of religion, experiences of school and community life, leisure activities, consideration of the wider world and aspirations for the future. The reader is also struck by the underlying positive tone of the stories, which may oblige us to reinterpret/challenge our perceptions of the needs of young people from minority groups in light of this.

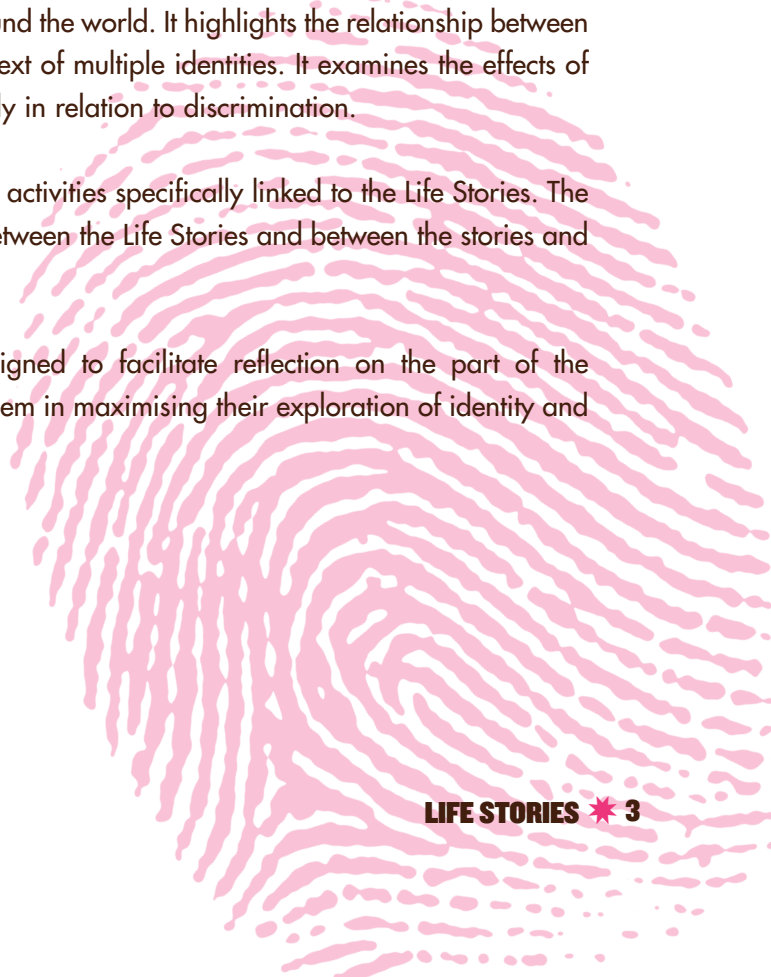
What young people have in common is as important as what differentiates them.



A fundamental guiding principle for YARD is that young people can and should take action to challenge injustice/discrimination at a local and global level. A number of actions are suggested for young people to raise awareness - among their peers, families, organisations, the wider public and key decision makers - of the important role that perceptions of identity can play in limiting or enhancing the choices of young people in Ireland and globally. Guidelines are suggested for youth work practitioners to support them working with young people from minority groups, either within existing youth work provision or as part of a dedicated programme.

The pack is divided into four sections. The first three sections contain young people's stories and activities for exploring identity and minority issues with young people, while the fourth section seeks to support the practitioner. Did You Know? boxes in the first three sections focus on global aspects of minority identity.

- **Section One, *What is Identity?***, examines the diverse understanding that young people have of identity and encourages them to explore their own identities.
- **Section Two, *Understanding Identity***, investigates positive and negative impacts of identity in relation to particular groups in Ireland and around the world. It highlights the relationship between individual and group identities, within the context of multiple identities. It examines the effects of stereotyping individuals and groups, particularly in relation to discrimination.
- **Section Three, *Examining Life Stories***, contains activities specifically linked to the Life Stories. The activities draw out the common themes, both between the Life Stories and between the stories and the group using the pack.
- **Section Four, *Taking Identity Further***, is designed to facilitate reflection on the part of the practitioner and identify resources to support them in maximising their exploration of identity and minority issues.





TIPS FOR USING THE PACK

- Know your group! It may sound obvious, but difficulties may arise where the group is insufficiently prepared for using activities from the pack.
- Has your group had contact with intercultural issues? If not, you should begin with a session around what is culture and what cultures are there in Ireland or elsewhere.
- In advance of using the pack, set ground rules with the group. Include values such as respect, trust and confidentiality.
- You could start with activity one and work your way through the pack. Alternatively, and perhaps more realistically, you could choose activities from each of the different sections that are appropriate to the group you work with and the context in which you work.
- Each activity has a specified level, which indicates approximately the degree of difficulty.
 - Level 1 is easiest and no previous knowledge of the subject matter or work with the group is required.
 - For Level 2 it is recommended that the group has had at least some introduction to intercultural or identity issues.
 - Level 3 indicates that the activity would suit groups wishing to explore more challenging/complex themes.

In all cases, the levels are just indicators and you should read through the activity to see if it would be suitable to your group.
- Many of the activities require that you form small groups. Essentially, the smaller the group you give a task to, the more trust you are putting in that group to achieve a result. In some cases the number is specified. Usually a small group contains three or four people.
- Similarly, if you have a large group discussion, young people may not open up. The use of 'large group' in the pack means 'in plenary'.
- In all cases, use your discretion on whether to discuss particular issues in small or large groups.
- Section Three, 'Examining Life Stories', specifically focuses on the young people's stories. However, you should encourage the group to read the stories when using activities from sections one and two.
- Action by young people, to promote greater understanding of identity issues and greater inclusion of young people from minority groups, is encouraged. A range of actions is suggested in section four.
- Read the guidelines for working with young people from minority groups that are in section four.

Some of the activities in this pack need advanced preparation. Check before use!



SECTION 1 WHAT IS IDENTITY?

ACTIVITY 1 IDENTITY BALLOONS

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
that participants begin to explore their individual and group identities	1	30 minutes	balloons, post-its, pens

WHAT TO DO

Hand out a balloon and some post-its to each participant. The participants write their names on the balloon. They then write up to five things that describe them on the post-its and stick them on the balloon. If necessary, explain that they could choose individual characteristics, groups they belong to, interests or beliefs. Allow five minutes for this. Explain that these are all aspects of the person's identity.

NOTE FOR LEADER

A person's identity is who a person is and what makes them who they are. A person has their individual identity and identity based on the groups they belong to. Some parts of a person's identity are fixed and they choose others.

The participants move around the room looking at what others have written on their balloons. They form groups with other people that they have something in common with. In the new groups, they decide which aspects of their identity fit with the group and which don't. Participants remove post-its they don't share with at least one other person in the group.

Ask for volunteers to describe the new groups to which they belong.

- What aspects of your identity did you focus on?
- Was it difficult to find others with similar identities?
- What aspects of your identity did you have to give up in order to fit into the new group?
- Which aspects of identity are people born with and which ones do we choose?

Write down all the comments.



SECTION 1 WHAT IS IDENTITY?

ACTIVITY 2 DEBATING IDENTITY

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
that participants explore what identity means to them.	1 – 2	30 minutes	Set of statements for each group.

WHAT TO DO

Before the activity, select and/or modify ten of the statements appropriate to the group you are working with. Make copies of the statements.

Begin with a brainstorm on what is identity. Note down the suggestions without comment. Break the participants into groups of four. Give each group a set of statements. Explain that they should discuss all their statements and rank the statements from those they strongly agree with to those they strongly disagree with. They may rank two or more statements equally.

Ask each group to feed back, one statement at a time. Begin with the statements that they most strongly agreed with, followed by the ones they strongly disagreed with. Ask if everyone agrees with the ranking. Why?

Alternatively, you could use the statements in a moving debate.

NOTE FOR LEADER

Identity can be defined as the characteristics, traditions and beliefs used by an individual or group to define themselves as being the same as or different from other individuals or groups.

Identity Statements

Identity is how other people view me	My identity is how I see myself	Identity is permanent, you are born with it	Identity is just about what I look like
What unites me with other people is more important than what makes me different	I'd give up parts of my identity in order to get a job	Identity is only an issue to me when I feel it's under threat	Identity is just a way of labelling people
Characteristics and beliefs I don't have are important to my identity	Individual identity isn't as important as belonging to a group	Depending on who I'm with, I have different identities	It is my right to choose whatever identity I want for myself
I feel good when I identify with a particular group	Identity is about belonging to a certain group	To belong to some groups, I have to hide parts of my identity	Emphasising group identity causes conflict



SECTION 1 WHAT IS IDENTITY?

ACTIVITY 3 IDENTI-KIT

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
that participants understand that some aspects of identity are obvious, while others are hidden.	1 – 2	30 minutes	sheets of flipchart paper, old newspapers or magazines, scissors, glue, markers, sellotape

WHAT TO DO

In small groups, brainstorm on ‘what makes up our identity?’ They choose a young person, imagined or based on a real person. Give each group flipchart sheets. They tape the sheets and then draw around the outline of one member of the group. Using the art materials, they illustrate the young person’s identity. Each group presents their ‘young person’ to the others who have to determine their identity.

In the large group, ask:

- What difficulties did you have illustrating the person’s identity?
- Are all the aspects of a person’s identity obvious to others?
- Which aspects of a person’s identity are difficult to illustrate?
- How might this affect the way we perceive other people?

DID YOU KNOW?

- A refugee is someone who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country.
- An asylum seeker is someone who applies for refugee status.
- The Dalai Lama, Jesus, St. Patrick and Albert Einstein were all refugees.
- **In 2001 there were an estimated:**
 - ★ 16 million refugees, of whom almost 25% are Palestinians
 - ★ 8 million people who fled persecution but have not crossed an international border
 - ★ 1 million people who have applied for asylum and are awaiting a decision
 - ★ 800,000 people who return home in the course of the year
- **Of the refugees worldwide:**
 - ★ 45% are in Asia
 - ★ 30% are in Africa
 - ★ 19% are in Europe
 - ★ 5% are in North America



SECTION 1 WHAT IS IDENTITY?

ACTIVITY 4 GUESS MY IDENTITY

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to explore how we perceive our own and other people's identities	1	20 minutes	Slips of paper, pens/pencils

WHAT TO DO

Begin the session by brainstorming on what is identity. Alternatively, do this activity after activity one or two.

Each participant gets a slip of paper. They have to write down three aspects of their personal identity. They fold up their slip of paper and put it in a hat. The papers are shuffled and each person draws out a piece. If they get their own slip of paper, they put it back and choose another.

One person starts and reads out the identifying words/statements. They then have to guess who wrote it. If they guess incorrectly, throw it open to the rest of the group. Keep going until everyone has had a go. Make a list of the words and phrases the participants use.

- Was it easy to identify the people from what they'd written?
- Why (not)?
- Are you surprised by the choices that people made?
- Do you have a different view of the people?
- What did people think was important for their identity?
- Can the identity characteristics be divided into different categories? e.g. personal, physical, cultural, social.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In 2000, sexual minority people from 37 different countries had been granted asylum in 18 countries, but applications are usually refused.
- South Africa and Ecuador were the first two countries in the world to have sexual orientation discrimination outlawed in the constitution.
- Patria Jimenez was Latin America's first openly gay MP, winning a seat in Mexico's parliament in 1997.
- Dana International won the 1997 Eurovision Song Contest for Israel. She was born Yaron Cohen, but underwent a sex-change operation in 1993.
- Omar Nahas is a gay Muslim from Syria. Because homosexuality is a sensitive subject among Muslims, he works patiently and with respect to promote debate within Muslim communities on homosexuality.
- China prosecutes gays and lesbians under 'hooliganism' laws.



SECTION 1 WHAT IS IDENTITY?

ACTIVITY 5 IDENTITY IS A WRITE?

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to explore identity through creative writing	2	50 minutes – 1 hour	pens, paper, identity sheets, copies of poem/short story

WHAT TO DO

In the large group, list stories, poems or songs the group knows that focus on identity. Choose one or two pieces from the list that they are most familiar with and discuss what aspects of identity are included e.g. individual or group identity, physical characteristics, beliefs and so on.

NOTE FOR LEADER

Examples of songs or stories that examine identity:

- Family Portrait*/Pink
- Beautiful*/Christina Aguilera
- The Power of Equality*/Red Hot Chili Peppers
- Losing My Religion*/REM
- Lose Yourself*/Eminem
- I'm a Survivor*/Destiny's Child
- The Hobbit*/JRR Tolkien

Break into two groups. Give one group the poem *Terrible Grandmother/My Sweet Grandmother* by Annick from DRC (in *Summer Voices*) and give the other group *Fire* by Sam Fleming. Ask for a volunteer in each group to read out the poem. Discuss how the piece of writing shows the person's identity. Allow 15 minutes for this. Each group gives brief feedback to the large group.

Now form pairs. Give each pair pens, paper and a copy of the identity sheet. The pairs choose a story, poem or song from the earlier list, or they can base it on themselves if they wish, to discuss. Explain that the questions on the identity sheet are just suggestions. Ask them to write a short story, poem or song about the person. Ask for volunteers to share their pieces. Allow 30 minutes for this.

Identity Sheet

- What is the name of your character?
- Who do they live with?
- What kind of person are they?
- What hobbies or interests do they have?
- How do they feel?
- What groups do they belong to?
- Why?
- What positive or negative experiences have they had?
- Where do they live?



SECTION 1 WHAT IS IDENTITY?

ACTIVITY 5

TERRIBLE GRANDMOTHER/ MY SWEET GRANDMOTHER

I memorable woman in my life
I'm not joke or laugh to tell you
But when I was 8 old
She take care of me
She is a lovely woman.

Every night she told us a funny story
About her teenage period in her village.
It terrible to see women who
Are 60 take care of children.

She always give me advice.
I believe she is the secret centre of my life
Because she gave me all the things I want and
need.

She's very kind with us.
Finally she is my terrible grandmother.

Who is this woman
Who has a scarf on her head
Who has white hair
Who laughs every time
Because she is a woman.
Terrible woman
That's my grandmother.

By Annick from DR Congo. From: CDVEC (2002). Summer Voices.

FIRE

Life is full of dogs and cats
They were my friends
The walls were holding me back from meows and woofs
Boring is a stench smell
I hear people say, "How is he?"
But not at me
A year afterwards
Exhaust fumes have moved on...
Looking up at people and they see me
My wheels are turning slowly

Sam Fleming (2004). The author acquired a brain injury before he turned 21.
He is confined to a wheelchair.



SECTION 1 WHAT IS IDENTITY?

ACTIVITY 6 LIFE LINES

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to illustrate the aspects of participant's lives that they feel contribute to their identity	2	45 minutes	large sheets of paper or wallpaper, old newspapers/ magazines, markers, glue and scissors

WHAT TO DO

Depending on numbers, do this activity individually or in small groups. Hand out the materials and explain that the participants are to draw a line across the sheet. At the left edge they write 'birth' and two thirds of the way down the line they write 'today'. At the right hand edge, they mark '+ 5 years'. They think about important events or times in their lives so far and mark them at the appropriate point on the line. Encourage participants to use pictures and/or headlines from the newspapers/magazines to illustrate their life lines.

Examples could include joining a particular group, meeting people or completing a stage in their education. To the right of 'today' they note down what they would like to, or expect to, do in the next five years. Allow 20 minutes for this.

NOTE FOR LEADER

This activity asks participants to reveal personal information about themselves. It is very important to set some ground rules before the session (see *Tips for Facilitators* in the introduction). Ask for volunteers to share their life lines.

In order to get them thinking, ask them to consider the following:

- What is your earliest memory?
- Where were you born? (in a city, small town or in the countryside)
- Were there times when you were dependent on other people?
- At what times in your life were you happy or unhappy, or doing something you enjoyed?
- Was there a stage in your life when you felt what you had to say was valued or respected or when you were listened to by those around you?

Alternatively, ask the participants to mark positive events or times above the line and negative events or times below the line.

Ask for volunteers to share their life lines. In the large group, ask:

- What is common for all the life lines?
- Which events or experiences stood out as being unusual or surprising?
- Which events or experiences have had the biggest influence on people's identity?

LIFE STORY CHIQUINGA & RUDOLONE

Chiqinga and Rudolone are both 17 years old. They come from Angola in Southern Africa. Chiquinga came to Ireland 14 months ago, Rudolone about 8 months ago. Both attend a programme for separated children - young asylum seekers and refugees that arrive in Ireland without the support of a parent or guardian. In the project Rudolone does art and drama, gym, dance and swimming, computers and English. Chiquinga enjoys English and computers.

Both Rudolone and Chiquinga speak Portuguese. Another language, Fiota, is spoken in Angola, but Rudolone says that young people there are not interested in the mother language. Anyway, Fiota is not taught in school.

Neither knew very much about Ireland before they arrived. Rudolone had seen Titanic and wanted to see the place the ship was made. He also saw Irish dancing in the film and had the opportunity to see a display and learn some steps, arising from his involvement in the Special Olympics. He got the opportunity when an application form was sent to the hostel he is living in. He was based in the National College of Ireland and helped people from different countries, for example, Cuba, Burkina Faso and the Bahamas. He speaks Spanish as well as Portuguese, so he acted as an interpreter.

Both Chiquinga and Rudolone agree that Ireland is a better place to live than Angola. Everyone has the chance to go to school and there is enough food for everyone. There's no war going on and you are free to say what you want. In Angola, it is very difficult to go to school. While it is officially free, parents are told there are no places available but if they pay then a

place will be found. The teachers ask the children for money when they go to school.

It's not totally positive in Ireland though. The Irish weather is terrible. Some people are friendly but many are not. On the street, Chiquinga says she regularly receives racist abuse. "Look at you, black. Go back to Africa". She feels it's worse here than in other countries from what her friends say. "I didn't understand the word 'nigger' before I came to Ireland and it made me sad"

Both Rudolone and Chiquinga think the people who say these things are ignorant, but ignore the comments in case the people would hit them. They say they learned bad words very quickly because of this abuse.

Chiquinga and Rudolone have made friends since they came to Ireland - in the hostel where they live, at school and on the street. Both are Jehovah's Witnesses and this has helped them make friends too. But making friends has also been difficult because to make friends you need some place to meet and this is not always available. The pub is not a great place to make friends. Through the Special Olympics, Rudolone made friends with Finnish, Latvian and US people.

Chiquinga likes acting and has done drama in summer school programmes. If not acting, she'd like to be an accountant. She isn't into music much. She prefers clothes and keeping up with fashion. She describes herself as proud. Rudolone wants a job to bring in money. Before, he wanted to be a pilot, but now he'd like to be a building construction engineer. He'd stay in Ireland if he could get work. He likes football, but he can't find a club and thinks Irish people don't want to invest in football. "They're more interested in Gaelic football". Back in Angola, football is very big. He is into music, particularly R'n B, Soul and Westlife.

**Young people
[in Angola] are not
interested in the
mother language...
Fiota is not taught
in school.**

Lynette is 18 years old. She came out a year ago and is part of a youth group for young gay people. She found out about the group from her brother who is involved in youth work. There are mainly young men in the group and only one other girl. In the group they sit and talk about things like coming out, stereotypes of gay people and discrimination that they face. They are all from 14 to 23. It's relaxed because people know what you're going through. The group meets each week. The people in the group are good friends and meet up on Friday evenings.

Most of her friends are straight. When she came out to them, one or two were shocked. Her best friend wouldn't go out to gay pubs. One friend did, but freaked. Mostly though her friends have been very supportive. She came out to her best friend first.

It was a big deal coming out to her family. Her two brothers are okay with it. They just slag her about it. Her brother asked her straight out. Her sister is supportive but still a little uncomfortable with it. Before she came out, her Dad used to make comments about gay people portrayed on TV. That made her afraid to come out. When she did, he was okay about it but doesn't want to talk about it and thinks it's a phase she's going through. Her Mum accepted it straight away but that is probably to avoid arguments and to have a bit of peace.

Lynette knew she was gay from the age of 13 or 14. At school there was a lot of pressure to talk about boys. If a girl didn't have a boyfriend, she must be gay. Lynette used to stand up for other girls who were being slagged, though she kept her situation to herself

and had no one to talk to about it.

Despite all this, she had plenty of friends and played basketball for the school team. She has played basketball from an early age. She started learning the guitar, but gave up. She likes all kinds of music.

Being gay is not a huge part of her identity. If it arises in normal conversation she's open about it. But she's Lynette first, "Take me as I am". Lynette says she doesn't particularly face discrimination. People are fine about it where she works and most of the girls from school accept it. She thinks it's harder for blokes to come out than girls because they face a lot of 'male role' stuff.

She enjoys her job where she has a very supportive manager. She'd like to go to college to study computers.

Lynette believes there should be more support for young people in school. "Who can you talk to? I certainly couldn't talk to the career guidance teacher.

There should be more publicity in school, for example on notice boards where people could just take down numbers to contact. Young people in school are afraid to come out."

If she's walking down the street holding another girl's hand, blokes will ask if they can watch. She thinks it's disgusting that it excites them in this way. Lynette believes there is more discussion and representation of gay relationships on television now. She has seen more examples of gay story lines. Even then, you get complaints on 'Points of View' about such scenes as unnatural and not appropriate. She thinks that the characters should always have been gay rather than suddenly changed as this reflects reality more. Gay love scenes should be viewed in the same way as heterosexual love scenes.

There should be more support for young people [to come out]. Young people in school are afraid to come out.

Mary is fifteen years old. She is from Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. When she was 12 years old, she came to Ireland. Most people in Ireland haven't heard of Tbilisi. She is adamant though, she's "not a culchie".

Growing up in Georgia was different to Ireland. For a start all the schools are mixed and there are no uniforms. In Ireland, the only topic of conversation in school is boys. In Georgia, there are lots of different activities for girls to do.

In Tbilisi, Mary and her family lived in a big apartment. With people living above and below them, it was easier to make friends. Here in Ireland there's less of a sense of community. People don't know their neighbours. Mary found it hard to make friends at first. Other girls didn't want to have anything to do with her. It took time to get used to each other.

Mary would describe herself to a stranger as Georgian, loud (but in a nice way), friendly and orthodox Christian. She speaks five languages - Georgian, Russian, English, French and Spanish. She also sees herself as a young woman. She doesn't care what people think of her. "People think I'm from America before I open my mouth. When I say I'm from Georgia, they're curious".

She likes living here. Her Mum has been sick, which has extended their stay here, and the nurses and physiotherapists have been great. One in particular still comes to visit as a friend. She was surprised by a radio show which said that 60% of Irish people were racist. But she believes it because the people ringing in held really racist views.

People think I'm from America before I open my mouth. When I say I'm from Georgia, they're curious.

She likes rap and hip hop music. She plays on the school basketball team. She loves basketball and feels there isn't enough of it on TV. Her hobbies in Georgia were pretty similar and she enjoys going to the cinema and hanging out. There's not enough sport done by young people here in Ireland and there's a lack of facilities, for example swimming pools.

She feels she's not treated differently here to Georgia. Young people in Ireland are spoiled. You see 14 year olds drunk on the streets. Teenagers in Ireland have more freedom. But they drink too much and there's too much teenage pregnancy. Their parents should pay more attention to the situation.

Everyone told Mary she should do medicine, but that's not for her. She wants to return to Georgia within the next 2 years and when she grows up she wants to be a basketball player.



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

ACTIVITY 7 FIRST IMPRESSIONS

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to explore personal identity and how we make assumptions about people's identity on the basis of very little real information.	1 – 2	30 minutes	selection of newspapers/magazines (preparation required beforehand), pens and paper

WHAT TO DO

Before the activity, select and cut out photos from newspapers or magazines of people from different minority/majority groups around the world. Attach each photo to the top of a blank page and give one to each participant. Explain that they are to write their first impression of the person in the photo at the bottom of the page and then to fold over what's written and to pass it on. Ask them not to look at what other people have written. They repeat the exercise with each sheet. Keep going until everyone has seen all the sheets. Ask for volunteers to read out the statements.

We make assumptions about people's identity based on very little real information.

In the large group discuss the following:

- Did participants agree in their impressions of the various people?
- Where and why did the biggest differences occur?
- What factors led to participants singling out particular features of the other person's identity?
- Do you think that's how the people see themselves?
- How do other people's impressions of identity affect a person's choices?
- Is this fair?

Time permitting, you could choose one or two of the young people's stories from the pack. Read out selected paragraphs and ask participants to write down their impression of the person, based on what they have heard. Ask for volunteers to read out what they've written. In the large group, ask what was similar or different about people's impressions. Why?

Adapted from All Different All Equal Education Pack, Council of Europe (1995)



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

ACTIVITY 8 IDENTITY FORCE FIELD

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to explore the positive and negative aspects of identity	1 - 2	40 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers

WHAT TO DO

Warm-Up Charge

Line the group along one side of the room. Ask for a volunteer who stands in the centre of the room. Number the people 'one-two, one-two' etc. and explain that the 'ones' are positively charged and the 'twos' are negatively charged. The object of the game is for positive and negative pairs to form. If necessary, explain that positive and negative charges attract. Everyone begins by walking (or running) around the room and calling out their charge (positive or negative). The volunteer in the centre calls 'charge' and forms a pair with one of the participants. The remainder have to pair off, positive with negative. Whoever is left without a partner takes over in the centre. You need an odd number of participants. You should join in or not in order to ensure an odd number playing.

Brainstorm on the word identity and note the responses without comment. Break into groups of four or five and give each group a sheet of flipchart paper and marker. They have to draw a line down the centre of the page placing a positive symbol on one side and a negative symbol on the other. In their groups they list aspects of identity that are positive and aspects that are negative. The groups feed back.

Now distribute copies of the fact sheets about Rwanda and Northern Ireland. The groups discuss how identity is sometimes used to create divisions and what can be done to bring different groups closer together?

In the large group, ask the following:

- Which aspects of identity are particularly positive or negative?
- How has identity been used to create divisions in Northern Ireland?
- How has it been used in Rwanda?
- What identities have been ignored or sidelined in these societies?
- Are there examples locally of where identity is deliberately used to keep different groups apart?
- Is it fair?
- What can be done about it?



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

IDENTITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

- People talk about two identities (and two communities) in Northern Ireland - British and Irish, unionist and nationalist, loyalist and republican, Protestant and Catholic.
- Unionists believe in the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and are opposed to a united Ireland.
- Nationalists believe in the creation of a united Ireland and that the British Government should have no power over any part of Ireland.
- Loyalists are loyal to the Queen and the Crown. Some Loyalists are prepared to use paramilitary force or violence to maintain the union with Britain.
- Republicans believe in a united Ireland, where people hold the power directly. Some are prepared to use paramilitary force or violence to achieve a united Ireland.
- Within Northern Ireland there are many identities, ranging from the personal (male, female, young person etc.) to the cultural (Catholic, Muslim, Protestant, black etc.) to the regional or national (Ulster, British, Irish etc.) to the international (European, Chinese, global citizen etc.).

Source: Glencree Centre for Reconciliation and 80:20 (2000). Northern Ireland: A Place Apart?

IDENTITY IN RWANDA

- The population of Rwanda is 8.3 million people.
- The main religions are Christianity and indigenous beliefs.
- Hutus are the majority ethnic group and Tutsis are the minority ethnic group. A third ethnic group, the Batwa, make up less than 1% of the population.
- The ethnic groups are very similar. They speak the same language, inhabit the same areas and follow the same traditions.
- In 1916 Belgium colonised Rwanda. They saw the Hutus and Tutsis as two distinct entities and even produced identity cards according to ethnicity.
- The Belgians favoured the Tutsis, leading to resentment by Hutus and eventually violence.
- In 1994, more than 800,000 people were killed in 3 months when Hutu extremists attacked Tutsis and Hutu moderates following the assassination of the Hutu president of Rwanda.
- The Tutsis then forced the Hutu leaders to leave and over 2 million Hutus fled the country in just a few days.
- Following the genocide, in many families the eldest child became the head of household.
- In 2003, Rwandan voters backed a draft constitution in which incitement of ethnic hatred is banned.

Source: BBC Online (2003).



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

ACTIVITY 9 DEALING WITH IDENTITY

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
that participants understand how some aspects of identity change, while others are non-negotiable and remain fixed.	2	40 minutes	Four sets of identity cards, bag or hat

WHAT TO DO

Begin by asking the large group, what is identity? Ask for different examples of identity. Can they be grouped? Break into four or five groups. Each group brainstorms within their group on which identities the group has in common and which are individually held.

Place four sets of identity cards in a bag/hat and ask each group to pick out five cards. They have five minutes to decide which ones are most important to them.

Now explain that the groups have to negotiate with one another to establish their identity by swapping cards. Groups can choose to accept or reject offers from other groups. Give fifteen minutes for this.

In the large group discuss the identities that the groups finished with. Ask the following questions:

- Were you happy with the identity cards you ended with?
- Were some identities harder to give up than others?
- Did you negotiate based on group needs or on individual needs within your group?
- How difficult was it to agree the important aspects of identity within your group?

Alternatively, divide into six groups as in activity ten and give each person in the group one of the role cards from that activity. Then continue as above.

NOTE FOR LEADER

People begin negotiating identity from an early age - at school, in the youth club or at home. People may be willing to lose particular aspects of their identity such as sports, hobbies or even religion, but others may be non-negotiable such as ethnicity or gender.

EXAMPLES OF IDENTITY

- Age/generation – child, youth, adult...
- Religion – Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Non-believer...
- Ethnic group – Vietnamese, Black, Traveller...
- Gender – male or female
- Sexual orientation – heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender
- Leisure and hobbies – sports, music...
- Location - urban or rural, home, school, youth club or community
- Language – Irish, English, Yoruba, Sign...



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

IDENTITY CARDS

Age/generation

Leisure and hobbies

Gender

Sexual orientation

Ethnic group

Language

Religion

Location

Ability/Disability

DID YOU KNOW?

- The United Nations recognises disability as a human rights issue.
- It is estimated that 10% of the world's population has a disability.
- Approximately 75% of people with disability live in developing countries (approximately 450 million people).
- 98% of people with disability in developing countries have no access to rehabilitation services.
- In Canada and Australia, 41% of people with disability receive only primary education.
- In the UK and the US, 67% of people with disability aged 15-64 are unemployed.
- Tom Cruise (Dyslexia), Leonardo da Vinci (Dyslexia) and Albert Einstein (Dyslexia) all have, or have had, learning disabilities.
- Stevie Wonder (Blind), Pope John Paul II (Parkinson's Disease) and Muhammad Ali (Parkinson's Disease) all have physical disabilities.
- Mozart (Tourettes Syndrome), Rita Hayworth (Dementia) and Tim Howard (Tourettes Syndrome) all have, or have had, mental disabilities.
- In your own area, there are people with disabilities. Do you know them?



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

ACTIVITY 10 WHAT ABOUT ME?

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to explore how our perceptions of minority groups affects our behaviour towards them and to examine how it impacts on young people's individual identities.	2 - 3	50 minutes	Set of role cards for each group.

WHAT TO DO

Break into six groups. Each group gets a set of role cards - disability, asylum seekers/refugees, gay, travellers, ethnic minorities and majority group - one for each person in the group.

Each group has five minutes to get into role and explain their cards to others in their group. They are then told they are going to visit and be visited by another group. They have a further five minutes to prepare as a group for the visit.

The first visits are for five minutes. After the first set of visits, the groups take ten minutes to discuss how they got on. Discussion suggestions:

- What happened?
- How did they respond to your treatment of them?
- How did they treat you?
- How did it make you feel?

The visit is now reversed and the other group is welcomed for five minutes. Allow five minutes at the end for each group to reflect on what happened and how they felt about it.

Bring all the groups together and in the large group, discuss:

- How were the groups treated during the two visits?
- What change if any was there between the first and second visit?
- What did it feel like?
- Were you surprised by the diversity within the different groups?
- Why were you treated/did you treat others like this?

Explain that the role-play is over. Mix the groups by playing a short game. Now ask:

- Does this happen in real life?
- How are our actions affected by these attitudes?
- Is it particular to Ireland or does it happen elsewhere in the world?
- What effect does it have on people?
- Where do we learn these attitudes?



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

VISIT CARD

- Who will meet the group?
- Where will the meeting take place?
- Is access an issue?
- Are there issues that you should or should not raise at the meeting?
- Does the group you are meeting have special needs?
- Is language, or particular words, a consideration?

ROLE CARDS

GLB GROUP

YOUNG LESBIAN

I am 20 years old. I love music and have won some singing competitions. I recently came out to my best friend but haven't told my parents yet. I get uncomfortable when sexual orientation comes up in conversation. At school and college, I hear other students make openly homophobic comments. It makes me sad.

GAY WHEELCHAIR USER

I'm gay but I'm not out about it. I've used a wheelchair since I was ten. I don't know whether insults towards gay people or patronising attitudes to people with disability are worse.

BISEXUAL YOUNG MAN

I am proud of who I am. I have loads of gay and straight friends. I want to be a doctor when I leave school. My parents have been really supportive to me.

TRAVELLERS

YOUNG TRAVELLER

I currently live on a halting site in Cork. I left school at thirteen. I look after my younger brothers and sisters when my Mum and Dad aren't there. I don't have any friends who aren't Travellers. People who live in houses call us 'knackers' but I don't remember any of them coming down here to talk to us.

TRAVELLER STUDYING FOR LEAVING CERT.

I'm seventeen and live on a halting site. I'm studying for my Leaving Certificate at the moment and if I get my exams I'd like to study further. I volunteer as a leader with a youth group. I really enjoy it.

SETTLED TRAVELLER

I live on an estate in west Dublin. Our house is like all the hundred's of other. It's brutal being young here. There's nothing to do. I think I'd prefer to still be travelling. At least you'd see new places all the time.



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

ACTIVITY 10

GROUP WITH DISABILITY

DEAF PERSON

I am fifteen and have been deaf since birth. I am fluent in sign language. I am active in my local youth club and enjoy reading and watching videos.

WHEELCHAIR USER

I am eighteen and have just completed the Leaving Cert. I have cerebral palsy and have difficulty controlling my limbs. In school I got special support from a teacher. I used to play a lot of sports and I still swim. I have a motorised wheelchair.

PERSON WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

I have acute schizophrenia. Before I started taking medicine, I used to hear voices in my head telling me people want to hurt me. But I'm much better now. I get extra help from the teachers at school to ensure I don't fall behind. My friends have been really supportive. I really like films, but I don't like the way people with mental illnesses are portrayed. I'd like to be a director one day.

ASYLUM SEEKER/REFUGEE GROUP

SEPARATED CHILD FROM DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

I am from Kinshasa in DRC. That's in central Africa. I came to Ireland on my own two years ago after my parents were killed. I joined a soccer club near the hostel where I live and I've made lots of friends there. You meet idiots all the time who say nasty things, but I've learned to look the other way. It's not always easy though. I miss having my family there to help me through the tough times.

REFUGEE FROM AFGHANISTAN

I am from Kabul in Afghanistan. I came to Ireland in 2001 to flee from life under the Taliban. I had a long journey to get here. First my family had to leave everything behind and flee to a refugee camp in Pakistan. Then we were part of a group that came to Ireland. It's nice that I can go to school here but I miss my friends and want to go home.

YOUNG ROMANIAN WOMAN

I came to Ireland four years ago. I'd like to make friends my own age, but Irish people aren't very friendly. At home we speak Romanian. I don't see myself staying in Ireland for too long.



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

ETHNIC MINORITY GROUP

BLACK IRISH PERSON

I was born in Galway and I'm in fourth year. I want to be an engineer. I like all outdoor pursuits, particularly water sports. In my youth group we go on hikes and do canoeing. I'm black.

VIETNAMESE PERSON

I have lived in Dublin all my life. I'm 15 years old. My parents came to Ireland in the 1970s to build a new life for themselves. Later my grandmother joined us. I have Irish friends and English is my first language but my parents speak Vietnamese. I enjoy listening to my grandmother talking about Vietnam. I've never been but someday I'll visit.

YOUNG MUSLIM MIDDLE EASTERN WOMAN

I'm nineteen and come from Saudi Arabia. I'm a student here in Ireland. I get some funny looks because I wear a hijab or headscarf. I've Muslim friends who don't wear it. It's just my choice. I have given a few talks about my life and where I'm from. I really enjoy that.

MAJORITY ETHNIC GROUP

YOUNG PERSON IN RURAL AREA

I am fourteen. My school has lots of after-school activities but as I live 20 miles away, I don't get to participate. My friends and I have formed a band but there's nowhere locally to play gigs.

YOUNG PERSON IN CITY

I live with my Mum in a small flat in Waterford. I like school but I sometimes feel bad when others talk about their holidays or their new Nikes. I can't afford to wear labels and have to work part time to help Mum pay for essentials. I'd like to join a youth club, but I don't have much spare time.

YOUNG PERSON

I was brought up in a Catholic family. In school I began to question religion and by the time I started college, I was a confirmed non-believer. It amuses me that religion is mixed up with so many conflicts around the world, some closer than others. I get annoyed when people assume that I'm a Catholic.

NOTE FOR LEADER

If there's not enough time, cut out the second visit. This will increase the sense of injustice felt by the groups.



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

ACTIVITY 11 Discrimination and Young People

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
that participants explore how people are discriminated against based on their identities, their responses to discrimination and the excuses they use for their discriminatory behaviour towards others	2	40 minutes	Set of discrimination situation cards

WHAT TO DO

Begin with a discussion about the importance of identity and the different identity groups that people belong to. How do people justify their perceptions of other people? How do people respond when others discriminate against them? Suggest examples of cushions and justifications from the lists provided.

Form two teams. Explain that you are going to read out a series of situations in which discrimination occurs. For each scenario, one team justifies the discrimination, the other responds to the discrimination. At the start of each round, appoint one of the teams to justify and the other to cushion. Volunteer(s) from each team role-play each situation. They are allowed three minutes in their teams beforehand to prepare their role. The teams have to use a different response or justification each time. The role-plays should only last a minute or two. Try to ensure that all the participants are involved.

Ask if any of the group has used these responses or justifications in real life. In what situations? Are the responses always good or bad? Where do we learn them? What about justifications?

Examples of responses to discrimination

- I hide my annoyance
- I get angry
- I fight back
- I find my own group who understand me
- I avoid the issue/ignore the situation
- I pretend it doesn't affect me
- There's no point in complaining so I just shrug and carry on
- I only hang around with members of my own family
- I act the clown to hide the fact that I'm hurt
- I turn to alcohol for comfort
- I hide my identity
- I make a complaint
- I write to my local politician
- I start a support group for people in a similar situation
- I join a campaigning group
- I take a legal case against the other party



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

Discrimination Situations

Mrs. Kelly visits the school Principal to complain that they have let a group of Traveller children into the school. He has invited some of the parents to the meeting.

Tom is black and Irish. He is walking down the street. The Gardaí stop him and ask for ID. He doesn't have any on him so they take him to the station.

Peter, Mary and Jane are all 14 years old. They meet in the park. Peter is a wheelchair user. Jane asks Mary how Peter is getting on. She doesn't look directly at Peter.

John's religion is Church of Ireland. He's at an Ireland game with a pal when a group wearing Celtic shirts start booing and shouting 'Proddie bastard' whenever one of the other team, who plays club football for Glasgow Rangers gets the ball.

Brian is gay. He has come out to his parents and to some close friends but people at school don't know. He plays for the school soccer team. In the bus on the way to a game, some of the guys start telling jokes about 'fags'.

Alison has dyslexia. She recently moved and the new school doesn't have a support teacher. Now she's falling behind in class. The others call her 'thick'.

Robert is from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He lives in Kildare. He did really well in the Leaving Cert and would like to pursue a FÁS training course. Because his application for asylum hasn't been processed yet, he's not entitled to work and has been turned down for the FÁS course. Now he's at a loss what to do.

Maria is a young Angolan girl living in Sligo. She heard about the activities of a local youth club and is interested in joining. However when she rang the club, they spoke too fast for her to understand. She asked them to send her a map to help her find the club, but they said they didn't have time.

Examples of justifications for discrimination

- I'm not racist, but...
- I'd like to go over there but I might be bullied too
- People aren't interested in learning about 'minority issues'
- Irish culture needs to be protected
- We don't have time to make special arrangements for anyone
- We don't have the money to make our building more accessible
- Immigrants and Travellers don't need our support, they look after their own
- I never got special treatment from anyone
- It's the policy of my organisation to treat everyone the same
- I'm too busy to make any special arrangements for people
- If we let 'everyone' in, we'd lose our regular 'customers'
- I met someone from that group once and she was really rude
- It's too hard to understand what they're saying
- Their English/Irish isn't good enough
- I've never met anyone from that group, I wouldn't know what to do



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

ACTIVITY 12 TRUE OR FALSE

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to explore participants attitudes towards minority groups in Ireland	2	30 minutes	True and false sheets for each team, set of questions, Did You Know? boxes.

WHAT TO DO

Break into teams of three or four called A, B, C and so on. Give each team a sheet marked 'True' and a sheet marked 'False'. Explain that you are going to call out a statement. The groups have 30 seconds to decide whether it is true or false. You then ask each team to hold up the appropriate sheet at the same time. For each question, mark up who got it right and who go it wrong. Read out the correct answer, and if there is one, explanation after each question. At the end, announce which team has the most correct answers. In the large group, ask what statements surprised them and why.

Read out some facts from the did you know? boxes that are scattered throughout the pack. If you have time, you could design your own true/false questions from the Did You Know? boxes.

DID YOU KNOW?

- A separated child is a young person under eighteen years of age who is outside their country of origin and separated from their parents or guardians.
- Some separated children belong to persecuted political or minority groups in their home countries.
- Others have lost their parents in armed conflict or have become separated from them in the upheaval of war.
- In some cases, children have been sent from their home countries by their parents to protect them from forced recruitment into armies or guerrilla groups.
- Other separated children have been victims of child trafficking or have travelled to Europe to escape poverty and deprivation.



SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

TRUE AND FALSE STATEMENTS

People from towns are smarter than people from rural areas

FALSE

The official language in Ireland is English

FALSE

Three quarters of all people with disability live in the Third World

TRUE

Identity is based on the groups to which we belong

FALSE

Irish is the official language of Ireland

That's 450 million people

People have individual identities as well as group identities

Three million people outside Ireland hold Irish passports

TRUE

All asylum seekers in Ireland are Nigerian

FALSE

In 2003, Ireland had the highest youth population in the European Union

TRUE

Globally, one in a hundred people has a disability

FALSE

In 2003, asylum seekers in Ireland were from Nigeria, Romania, Moldova, DR Congo and the Czech Republic.

Ireland had a youth population (under 25 years) of 38% in 2003. The European average was 25%.

One in ten people around the world has a disability

Three quarters of all refugees are in Europe

FALSE

Less than one in five refugees are in Europe. Three quarters are in Asia and Africa





SECTION 2 UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY

TRUE AND FALSE STATEMENTS

Travellers are a recognised ethnic minority

TRUE

Travellers have their own language

TRUE

The Traveller language is Cant or Gammon

Waterford was the first Irish town to elect a Traveller Mayor

FALSE

Tuam in Co. Galway was the first town to elect a Traveller Mayor in 2003

Less than one in five Roma come from Romania

TRUE

Only 1-2 million of the estimated 12 million Roma come from Romania. They live throughout Europe and central Asia

Ireland was the first country to pass legislation protecting sexual minorities

FALSE

South Africa and Ecuador were the first two countries in the world to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation

China prosecutes gays and lesbians under 'hooliganism' laws

TRUE

Most people who come to live in Ireland are seeking asylum here

FALSE

Between 1995 and 2000, of all the immigrants to Ireland: 50% were returning Irish migrants

38% were EU/US nationals
12% were from the rest of the world



Simon is 16 years old and is from Donaghmede in Dublin. He has a brother and a sister, both older than him. Simon has muscular dystrophy and uses a wheelchair.

He goes to Grange Community College and will be sitting the Junior Cert next year. It's his first year in the school. His brother, who is also a wheelchair user, went to the school. The school itself is fairly accessible with ramps and wide doors. At school, the teachers were initially afraid to let Simon participate in sports. He had to push for it but now takes part in PE.

He moved recently from a special needs school into mainstream education. He thinks the education is much better where he is now. His old school was for people with a learning disability.

He had been diagnosed as borderline dyslexic when he was younger but it no longer limits him. He acknowledges though that the special needs school was of some help to him.

He sees himself as a 16 year old wheelchair user who's into music. He thinks others probably see him the same way. He sings and is learning the drums. With some friends he is starting a band. They have a vocalist, a bass player and a drummer, but need another guitarist. The bands Simon likes include Lincoln Park and Limp Biskit. He's also into computer games.

As a wheelchair user, Simon acknowledges that he is probably treated differently. At school, in particular, some people make comments behind his back that can be hurtful.

Simon is particularly proud of conquering his fear of

heights. He was on a family holiday in Florida and rode a rollercoaster that was 108 feet high. The operators were nervous to let him on but he was able to reassure them. Still he wasn't let up the front of the roller coaster even though this is the best experience.

He enjoys going to concerts such as Sum 41 and Nickelback and there are sometimes areas reserved for wheelchair users, but generally the facilities are disgraceful - you can get put into areas that don't even have a view of the stage.

He has been involved with the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) for three years and goes to discos and on holidays to places like Roscommon with them.

Simon is also a member of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland where he does a lot of activities. They have a Foróige youth club and go bowling, to the pictures and to McDonalds. He is on the committee for the club and acts as chairperson. He attended a conference in the Mansion House, Dublin on behalf of the club. The committee makes decisions for the club, such as where to go on trips.

He believes there should be more options in school for people in wheelchairs. In general, buildings should have greater accessibility and fewer stairs with more ramps. Simon finds stairs very annoying and suggest to wheelchair users that they are not welcome. Recently he was turned away from playing Quasar because staff where he played were told they weren't insured to bring him up or down the stairs. He thinks that the people who run Quasar don't take disability into account.

Simon would like to go to college in America. He'd like to study technical graphics and mechanical drawing. He wants to design roller coasters.

I see myself as a 16 year old wheelchair user who's into music. I think others see me the same way

Timmy was born in Lagos, the capital of Nigeria. He has a younger brother and sister. His father's job as a pilot meant that Timmy got the chance to travel and by the time he was 10, he had already visited the UK and the USA. When he was eight years old he began learning the piano, but gave up because he hated it. He loves soccer, is a huge Manchester United fan and thinks Ruud van Nistleroy is a great player. When he was 12, he won his first cup for soccer. He also likes basketball and rap music.

In 2002, Timmy and his family came to Ireland. They live in Co. Kildare. When he first arrived, Timmy was worried what people would think of him. One day when both his parents were out, Timmy was minding his younger brother and sister.

The curtains were open and some children were playing outside.

The children came to the window and gestured to them. Timmy was worried and didn't want his brother or sister to go but his sister opened the window and they invited her out to play. Timmy's younger brother went too. They stayed out playing all evening. Timmy didn't go with them as there wasn't anyone his own age.

Where he lives, there aren't many other black young people. He plays soccer and he's the only black player in the club, but he doesn't think it is a problem and you should be yourself.

At school, Timmy used to get upset about comments people made about him, that a few don't like black

people. Now though he feels sorry for them, because he has friends and they usually don't. "They're the 'out' people, they're suffering." He thinks that for people coming to Ireland for the first time, they shouldn't be afraid to make friends. Otherwise people will think they are being distant and will resent them.

Timmy thinks school was harder in Nigeria than it is in Ireland. Over there they do more in school and the teachers are stricter. He thinks it's important to have a full education.

If he had the chance, he would vote. He is concerned that there is peer pressure on young people to drink and take drugs. He feels that the messages against drugs don't work.

What he misses most about Nigeria is his friends, his house and the weather. The food hasn't changed much. There are lots of shops specialising in food from different parts of the world. The only difference is that here it is so expensive. Also he feels there is more freedom here and his parents trust him more here.

Back in Nigeria Timmy spoke English and Yoruba. Sometimes if his Dad is annoyed, he will start talking in Yoruba. Also, he speaks it to his employees.

Timmy believes he will stay in Ireland for about 10 years but then he'll move on.

For people coming to Ireland for the first time, they shouldn't be afraid to make friends.

Bloom is 9 years old and comes from Nigeria. He has one brother and three lovely sisters. He likes to eat chips and play computer games. He believes in God.

He visited Spain in 1998 with his family. This was before his father's problem with the Nigerian Authorities. His family escaped from Nigeria and moved to Ireland. That year he remembers his birthday was sad because he didn't have friends and relations around him and lots of presents like before while in Nigeria. Everybody he knew was so far away.

Bloom loves Ireland because many Irish people are friendly and nice. He says he has never seen Gaelic Football in any other country; and if other countries played Gaelic, he'd be more interested in playing for Ireland. He likes going to the GAA pitch, but his Dad doesn't want him playing Gaelic because it's not played elsewhere.

Bloom says he didn't like Nigeria because you can't get the computer games you want. You can in Ireland and that makes him very happy. Bloom

says he has to do Irish in school because he's in Ireland.

"I would like to remain living in Ireland and become an Irish national. As an Irish citizen, I will be able to travel freely with my school mates". I hope to play soccer some day for Ireland in the World Cup! Many black people want to be Irish citizens as they came here as refugees and don't want to be refugees any more. As a citizen, they also let you stay where you want. Other people from different countries need passports too.

Making new friends has made me happy here but sometimes I miss my old friends in Nigeria.

"I've made loads of friends. I thought Ireland might be boring before I came over. The only serious thing that makes me sad is that I'm not a citizen and as such I don't have a passport to enable me to travel with my school friends.

Something that annoys me is that some people don't know God and some smoke. I don't like smoking. The most important thing for me is that I go to heaven.

"Making new friends has made me happy here but sometimes I miss my old friends in Nigeria. I would like to be a pilot in the future. It's fun being young in Ireland".



SECTION 3 EXAMINING LIFE STORIES

ACTIVITY 13 PICTURE IT

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to highlight how belonging to a minority group is only part of young people's identity and that people have multiple identities	2	45 minutes	Copies of the stories, paper, markers, glue, scissors, old newspapers/magazines

WHAT TO DO

Form pairs and give them paper and art materials. Ask the pairs to identify groups they belong to. The groups could be based on physical characteristics, interests, habits, beliefs or whatever. Each person then has to draw a picture that illustrates in some way the other person based on the groups discussed. Allow 10 minutes for this.

Now form groups of four. Give each group one of the life stories. In each group, ask a volunteer to read the story to the rest of the group. Alternatively, give each person a copy of the story and ask them to read it. The group imagines the life of the person. Ask them to draw images that illustrate the young person's identity. They have 15 minutes for this. Suggest the following discussion points:

- What is the person's experience of family or friends?
- What is their experience of education?
- What are their interests and hobbies?
- How do they get on in the community?
- How does being from a minority group contribute to their identity?

Ask for volunteers to show their drawings and to interpret them. What similarities or differences are there between how they imagined the identities of the young people from the story and themselves?

In the large group, discuss the following:

- Were the aspects of their identity represented similar to the aspects they would have chosen?
- What aspects of the life stories identity did they choose?
- Is this what the young people in the stories would have chosen?

People have multiple identities. Belonging to a minority group is only part of young people's identity.



SECTION 3 EXAMINING LIFE STORIES

DID YOU KNOW?

- Nomads are found throughout the world - Travellers in Ireland, Roma in Europe and Central Asia, Dalits in India and Kazakhs in China.
- Traditionally nomadic groups have been pastoral, involved in the care of sheep, cattle and horses, or commercial, particularly involved in recycling and repair of metal.
- Travellers in Ireland share a distinctive cultural identity related to a commercial nomadic way of life.
- They have a common history and experience, an oral tradition, their own language and value system.
- There has been a strong reluctance in Ireland to acknowledge Travellers as having a separate ethnic identity.
- The Kazakhs of north-west China earn their living caring for horses, sheep and cattle.
- There are an estimated 500,000 Kazakhs in China.
- Most Kazakhs are Muslims.
- The Chinese government has tried to force them to settle in villages.
- Roma are Europe's largest minority ethnic group. They live in nearly all of the countries in Europe and Central Asia and, throughout their history, have been nomads.
- Europe's Roma population is approximately 9 million, between 1 and 2 million of whom live in Romania. Globally, there are an estimated 12 million Roma.
- Roma are often deprived of the resources necessary for adequate living conditions, but also lack access to education, the labour markets, social and health services, and channels for participation in society.
- Roma life expectancy is, on average, 10 years less than that of the majority population in Central and Eastern Europe.
- The repression of the Roma language in Spain and Portugal has led to it practically disappearing there, but for the Roma in other countries, it remains a unifying cultural factor.

Sources: World Bank, Compass, Travellers Youth Service



SECTION 3 EXAMINING LIFE STORIES

ACTIVITY 14 THE RIGHT MOVE

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to explore how identity and culture influence young people's choices in life.	1 - 2	30 minutes	A role card for each participant, a set of statements

WHAT TO DO

Hand out a role card to each participant; the same role cards can be used more than once. Allow a couple of minutes for reading the cards.

Everyone sits down. Explain that you are going to read out a series of statements. If the participants feel that the statement applies to their character, they stand up. The people who stand up read out their card and the others decide who is most likely to be affected. Ask if anyone else had the same role card. If they have not stood up, ask why.

If the group is large, ask everyone with the same role card to group together. Hand out a copy of the relevant young people's stories to each group. The groups discuss the story and choices that the young person could or couldn't make. For a smaller group, choose one or two stories for discussion in the full group.

In the large group, discuss the following:

- Are you surprised by the choices the young person had?
- How did the choices they made contribute to their identity?

Identity and culture influence young people's choices in life.

STATEMENTS

- I can continue in education after the Leaving Certificate
- I can travel home or abroad when I want to
- I have a great social life, doing lots of different things*
- Others listen to me and respect me
- I have lots of opportunities to make friends
- I don't think the guards would stop me on the street and question me for no obvious reason*
- I have opportunities to get involved in community life
- I can visit friends and relations whenever I want*
- I don't face bullying or harassment
- I will get a good job
- I am treated well when I go into shops*

*From: Gannon, M. (2002). Changing Perspectives. CDVEC



SECTION 3 EXAMINING LIFE STORIES

ROLE CARDS

SIMON

I'm sixteen and am studying for the Junior Cert. I use a wheelchair. I want to study engineering. My ambition is to design rollercoasters. I am active in youth work through Foróige. I've set up a band with some friends.

BLOOM

I'm 9 years old. I'm from Nigeria. I like to eat chips and play computer games. Ireland is fun. I want to get a red passport so I can stay here with my family. I believe in God and the most important thing for me is that I go to heaven. I miss my Nigerian friends but it's fun being young in Ireland.

MARY

I'm fifteen and I come from Tbilisi in Georgia. I'm orthodox Christian and I speak Georgian, Russian, English French and Spanish. I love basketball, but there are not enough sports for young people here. I miss living in an apartment, with people above and below me.

DI SIEN

I'm 16 years old and I live in Waterford, though I was born in Limerick. I've won medals for reading Irish poetry. People think it's weird that a Chinese girl can speak Irish. I like dancing and music. I don't drink or take drugs. I'm involved with my local Foróige club where we discuss issues like racism, war and religion. I marched against war in Iraq.

TIMMY

My name is Timmy, I'm 15 and I'm from Lagos in Nigeria. I love soccer and I think Man United are great. At school some people call me names because I look different. It used to bother me but now I just feel sorry for them. I miss my friends and my house in Nigeria. I also miss the weather. I speak English but my dad speaks Yoruba, particularly when he's angry.

ALICE

I'm 16 and come from Dublin. My father is from Sierra Leone in West Africa. I'm proud of my heritage. I've got pale skin but my brother is black. It bothers me when I see racism directed at him. I like all kinds of music and I sing jazz. I love African and Syrian cooking. I really admire my grandmother, who had to leave Sierra Leone because of the civil war there. I enjoy listening to her stories.



SECTION 3 EXAMINING LIFE STORIES

ACTIVITY 14

ROLE CARDS

CAITRÍONA

I'm 13 years old and live on a halting site in Clondalkin. I really like sport and music. I'm involved in Clondalkin Development Group where I'm doing the Gaisce award. I'm proud to be a Traveller. In school they didn't know I was a Traveller until we did a school project on Travellers. It annoys me in shops when they follow you around just because you're a Traveller.

EMMA

I live in Clondalkin. I love singing, dancing and acting. I'm in stage school and I've been chosen to represent Ireland in international competitions. I play basketball on the school team. I'm in a group in Travellers Youth Service. We go on trips and there's a summer programme where we do outdoor activities. You can't tell I'm a Traveller by the way I look. A guy in school used to call me 'knacker' but you don't get that as much any more.

NAN

I live in Cabinteely. I'm 15 years old. I like watching TV and listening to music. Westlife are great. I play basketball for the school team. People recognise me as a Traveller from the way I look and talk. I have good friends in school who wouldn't care if I lived in a cardboard box. As a Traveller I take relationships seriously. Girls in school seem to have lots of boyfriends and this can cause pressure at school.

LYNETTE

I'm 18 years old. I played basketball in school and like all types of music. I'm working at the moment but I'd like to go to college to study computers. I'm gay and it was a big deal coming out to my family, first to my brother and then my parents. My manager is supportive in work. I'm involved in a youth group for gay people, where we talk about things like coming out and discrimination. I believe schools should do more to support gay students.

CHIQUINGA

I'm 17 years old. I'm from Angola in Southern Africa. In Angola we speak Portuguese. I didn't know anything about Ireland before I came here. I regularly get racist abuse on the streets here. You pick up the bad language first. I live in a hostel and I'm a Jehovah's Witness. I've made lots of friends through that. I like acting and have taken part in drama summer schools. I'd like to be an accountant.

RUDOLONE

I'm 17 and come from Angola. Fiota is what the old people speak but young people want to speak Portuguese. I heard about Ireland when I saw the film Titanic. I wanted to see where it was made. I was a volunteer for the Special Olympics, where I got to take part in Irish dancing. I've made friends through that and through the Jehovah's Witnesses. I prefer living in Ireland than Angola because there's enough to eat and you can go to school. There's also not a war going on.



SECTION 3 EXAMINING LIFE STORIES

ACTIVITY 15 LIFE STORIES TIME LINE

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
to highlight similarities and differences between young people's lives and ambitions	2 - 3	1 hour	large sheet of paper or wallpaper, old newspapers/ magazines, markers, glue, scissors

WHAT TO DO

If possible, participants should complete their own time lines (see activity six) prior to this activity.

Break into small groups. Give each group a copy of one of the life stories. Each group reads the story and discusses the key aspects in the young person's life. Give each group a sheet of paper or wallpaper, markers, old magazines/newspapers, scissors and glue. Explain that the participants are to draw a line across the sheet. At the left edge they write 'birth' and at the far edge they write 'today'. Allow 30 minutes for them to illustrate the time line. Each group displays their time line.

As an alternative, two thirds of the way across the sheet mark 'present' and at the right edge mark '+ 5 (or 10) years'. Run the activity as before, but ask the participants to imagine where they think the young person will be, what they'll be doing, how they'll be treated in the future.

In the large group, discuss the following:

- What aspects of the person's life did you focus on?
- What similarities does the person have to your time line?
- What are the main differences?
- What surprised you?
- How would you describe the person's identity?
- What questions would you ask them if you had the chance?
- How similar or different are their life plans or ambitions from yours?



SECTION 3 EXAMINING LIFE STORIES

ACTIVITY 16 LIFE'S AN ACT!

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
that participants engage with the characters presented in life stories through drama	2 - 3	45 minutes	Copies of young people's stories, materials for props (optional)

WHAT TO DO

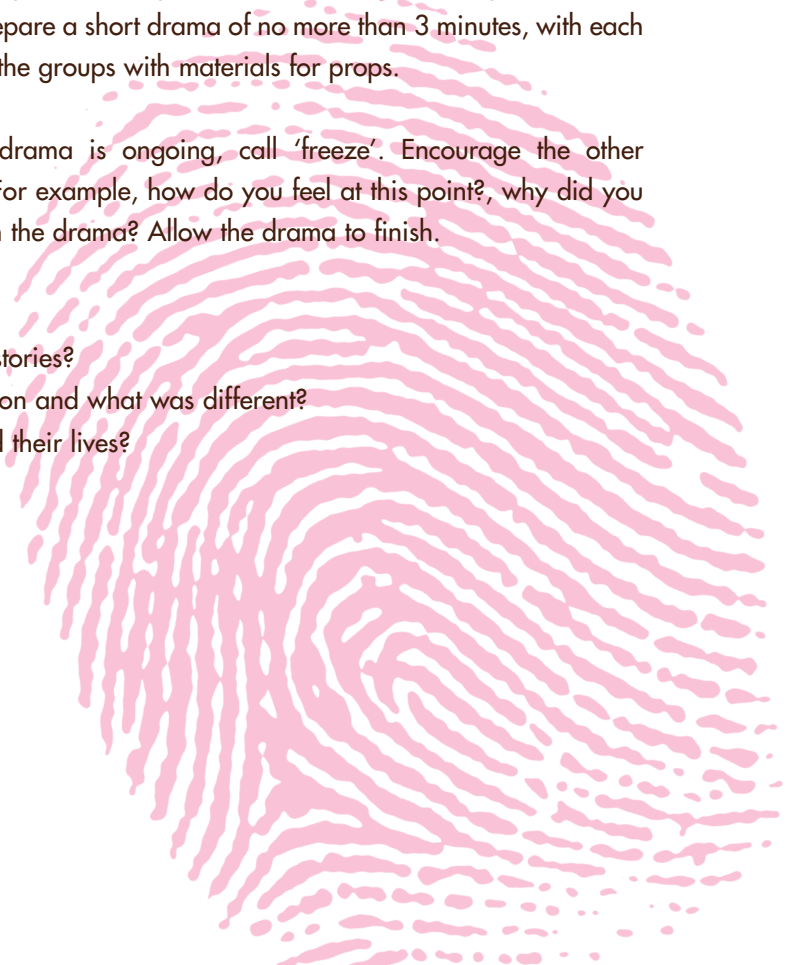
Begin with a warm up to introduce participants to drama. Everyone starts by walking slowly around the room. Call 'freeze' and everyone has to stay in position without moving. Explain that you are going to call out a style and they have to move 'as if' they were that person or doing that action. For example, you could say, move 'as if you were swimming'. Call 'freeze' again and ask for volunteers to suggest movements. Keep it up for a few minutes.

Break into three or four groups (depending on available time). Give each group one (or two?) of the life stories. Explain that the groups should choose a particular aspect of the life story that they believe has contributed to the person's identity. The groups prepare a short drama of no more than 3 minutes, with each participant taking a role. If appropriate, provide the groups with materials for props.

Each group presents their drama. While the drama is ongoing, call 'freeze'. Encourage the other participants to ask questions to the 'characters'. For example, how do you feel at this point?, why did you act that way?, how has this affected the people in the drama? Allow the drama to finish.

In the large group, discuss:

- What aspects of identity emerged from the stories?
- What did the different stories have in common and what was different?
- How have the particular identities influenced their lives?





SECTION 3 EXAMINING LIFE STORIES

ACTIVITY 17 CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

AIM	LEVEL	TIME	MATERIALS
that participants imagine a future in which diversity is respected and develop guidelines for ensuring that diversity of identity is welcomed at all levels, local, national and global.	2	40 minutes	Flipchart paper, A4 sheets, markers

WHAT TO DO

Break into five groups. Ask each group to make a list of individual and group identities with which they are familiar e.g. child, adult, Catholic, Muslim, soccer player... The groups can use the A4 sheets and allow five minutes for this.

Explain that the groups are going to design a charter that provides a set of rules to promote inclusion of all identities at a local, national and global level. Assign each group one of the following levels – personal/family, club/school, community, national, international. Give each group a sheet of flipchart paper and markers. They list up to five rules that will promote the accommodation of different identities at that particular level.

Get feedback from each group, one rule at a time per group. Encourage the groups to identify new rules rather than repeating existing rules. Agree with the groups when you have enough rules for the charter.

In the large group, ask:

- Who should implement the charter at the different levels?
- What resources are needed to implement the charter?
- When should the charter be implemented by?
- What other charters or set of rules exist that promote accommodation of identity either specifically or within them? e.g. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ...

Di-Sien is Chinese. She is seventeen years old and was born in Limerick. She is the eldest in her family. Her mother, Mei is from Hong Kong, whereas her father, Danny is from Malaysia. She has a younger sister, Di-Yuang, and a younger brother, Di-Leong. Her best friend is Emma.

She has lived in Waterford for the last nine years, before that in England, Longford and Clare. Di-Sien says "I have a fantastic relationship with my family, which has helped me through everything! They are extremely understanding and patient and I can confide in them with anything."

Di-Sien was the only Chinese girl in her kindergarten and says she was doted on but also bullied. She says, "I can't recall the first incidence of being bullied, since it was a fairly regular occurrence. Bullying is something I've become used to, which I think is terrible since it's not something anyone should have to live with. When I was younger, I was always able to defend myself. I don't recall ever physically harming anyone; it's something I reckon I'm incapable of." She won an Irish poetry reading competition which some people

thought was weird, a little Chinese girl speaking Irish. Di-Sien says there have been a number of incidents where groups of people would verbally abuse her from a distance, while she was alone. If she ever tried to close the gap, they'd turn and run. That really annoys her. She says it continues even when she's at work. "My family owns a take away where I help out. Some customers pass racist comments in front of others as they leave! Racism and

discrimination has always been a serious issue in my life and it's something I'll always have to deal with."

In Waterford, Di-Sien attended a convent school, which she found very strange since she was unaware single sex schools still existed. She says, "I'd no problem fitting in, but I felt a bit lost because I was a tom-boy at heart! I

found that girls in Waterford had a very different attitude towards boys than the girls in Clare had. I also found that people took friendship for granted and fought an awful lot over nothing. Some people think that single sex schools expand your attention span, but I totally disagree! I think it causes social difficulties later on in life.

"When my half-Nigerian cousin came to visit when I was about eight or nine, I was very surprised by his apprehension to pass a group of teenagers in my area.

Racism and discrimination has always been a serious issue in my life and it's something I'll always have to deal with.

He was scared of being racially abused. Up until then, I thought Chinese people were the only victims of racial abuse!”

Di-Sien says she joined a local Foróige club at about the age of thirteen, where she has participated in interclub events and has met many people. “Being in Foróige has given me self confidence and has opened up many opportunities! Through this, it has given me a great sense of importance, which I think is vital for teenagers! Not only have I met great members, but leaders have also been great friends also. Their enthusiasm, dedication and generosity sets a great example to the members!”

She is currently studying for the Leaving Certificate and, afterwards, hopes to do a science course in either Trinity College or University College Dublin. She says her school demands a lot of work, which gets tiring. “It really wears me down, but I find relaxation in music, art, writing and spending time with my friends. I’ve always had a great interest in music. Among my favourite bands are Machine Head, Mudvayne, Kittie, Metallica and Slipknot. I don’t have the patience for music, but I sing. I love dancing and have experience in Irish dancing, line, tap, jazz, ballet, hip-hop, salsa and modern. Since I was young, I’ve been entered into competitions, making a number of performances.”

Di-Sien says she’s met many fantastic people who have made a huge impact on her life. Some of those friends didn’t stick around for so long, since they eventually found new interests...alcohol and drug abuse. She says, “I have no interest what-so-ever in drinking or taking drugs and I don’t smoke either! I was only made aware of the effects of alcohol when I moved to Waterford, where some of my friends would have to go looking for their parents in the local pub!” She says it really upsets her to see her friends falling into bad habits like that. “I’ve always opposed it and have always tried to help.”

She thinks that a lot of the time people are very surprised that she has no interest in alcohol or drugs and that many respect her for it. But there are the occasional ignorant people who insult her intelligence for opposing it. “Most of my friends indulge themselves each weekend or whenever possible, but I don’t mind - it’s their choice! I just hate having to see the transition from one state to the other. Even the thought scares me that something so small can alter your state of mind and make you do things you later regret.

“Through everything I’ve experienced, I’ve learned the importance of family, for there is only one thing in this world I know is unconditional...and that is their love and support.”

LIFE STORY CAITRÍONA, NAN AND EMMA

Caitriona is 13 years old and Emma is 14. They live in Clondalkin. Nan is 15 and lives in Cabinteely. Caitriona lived in Ballymun as a baby, before moving to Clondalkin. Emma lived in London until she was 7 years old, before moving to Ireland. Nan has 10 brothers and 4 sisters.

Nan enjoys watching TV and listening to music. Her favourite band is Westlife and she likes Mickey Joe Harte. She plays basketball for her school team, St. Laurences. Emma is big into singing, dancing

and acting. She plays recorder and tin whistle. She goes to stage school and participates in music/dance

extravaganzas. She has been chosen in the past to represent Ireland at international singing/dancing events. She plays basketball for her school, Coláiste Bríd.

Caitriona really likes sport.

She plays baseball and football. She also loves music. She listens to anything - J Lo, Shania Twain, R 'n B and Reggae such as UB40. She also goes to Coláiste Bríd. They all listen to 98FM and the pirate music stations like 99.1 VIBE FM.

They've been involved with Travellers Youth Service for between 3 and 6 years. They go away on trips and have a Summer Camp programme in places like Clara Lara in Wicklow. Emma and Caitriona are also involved in Clondalkin Travellers Development Group where they are doing the Gaisce award. This involves

outdoor activities such as canoeing. Nan does afternoon study, gymnastics and hip hop.

Caitriona describes herself as happy, nice, interesting and pretty. The important aspects of her identity to her are name, age, Traveller status and family. Emma describes herself as outgoing, happy and active. She would tell people about her name, age, background, family and her interests/hobbies. Nan would tell people about her background, her name and family.

They wouldn't tell a stranger they were a Traveller unless directly asked.

For Emma and Caitriona, nobody knows they are Travellers unless they say it.

Nan says that because of the way she looks and the way she speaks, people recognise her as a Traveller. School is not a problem for any of them. They have friends from the settled

community and meet up with them regularly. Nan says her friends wouldn't

care if you lived in a cardboard box. Where they live does not cause their friends problems. In some cases they live in bigger places than their settled friends.

One thing that's very annoying is that whenever they go into shops or shopping centres, they get followed around as if they were thieves. Even when settled people are robbing, it's them who get blamed or followed. In one incident, Emma and her friends were asked to leave a big shopping centre in Dublin because they were Travellers.

Even when settled people are robbing, it's [Travellers] who get blamed or followed.

Getting refused from pubs, bars, hotels etc. is a big problem for Travellers. They often have to send someone in in a suit to make a booking. Places often make excuses that it's for the Travellers' own safety that they are being refused. A cousin of Caitríona who doesn't drink tried to get into a disco but was refused. When he asked why, he was told he was too drunk to get in.

One young guy her age used to call Emma a 'knacker'. They don't get called that much now. Caitríona says her schoolmates weren't aware she was a Traveller until she did a project on Travellers for 6th class. Only then did they ask her if she was a Traveller. Telling them didn't cause any problems.

The three highlight an aspect of Traveller culture at odds with others at school with them. Other girls only want to talk about boys, often lose their

virginity at 14 or 15 and seem to have a different boyfriend every week. For Travellers, relationships are a very serious issue and girls only go out with boys if they are in love with them. Girls often have only 3 or 4 relationships before they get married. There is a lot of pressure at school where not having lots of boyfriends is seen as a problem.

Travellers are also quite religious with the big majority being Catholic. All three said that what they liked most about being Travellers is the importance of family. They know not only their direct aunts, uncles and cousins, but also second cousins and even further back. Big occasions such as weddings will often have 300 guests and everyone knows everyone else. Perhaps like in the settled community, apart from the big occasions, the only time the whole family sits together for dinner is Christmas dinner.

Alice is 16 and is from Dublin. Her father came to Ireland from Sierra Leone when he was 9 years old. Her grandfather was Syrian, though he was born in Manchester, and his work in the diamond and cloth trade brought him to Sierra Leone. He met Alice's grandmother there.

When Alice's father arrived in Ireland, he was advised to change his name from a Muslim to a Christian one. In Ireland he was forced to give up his own Muslim culture, including changing his name, and to learn English. Later he found it difficult to get work because of his dark skin.

Alice is proud of her own heritage. When she was younger she tried to fit in. As a young child she first realised her background was different when she went to a friend's house and saw that her friend's dad wasn't black. She just

assumed all dads were black. Another time she had a friend over and her grandmother spoke to her in Creole - a language from Sierra Leone, but the friend didn't have a clue what the grandmother said and had to ask Alice.

Her grandmother, or *Tata*, is now living in Ireland because of the civil war in Sierra Leone. She speaks Creole, Timni and some English. Alice is really interested in her grandmother's stories. They are passed down from one generation to another in an oral rather than a written form. Alice really admires her grandmother, who by virtue of being the oldest woman left in her tribe is a tribal leader and greatly revered by the women when she visits. She likes the fact that her grandmother has not changed too much since she came to Ireland.

Alice enjoys a diverse range of music - African, pop and rock. She sings jazz and really likes making music. She also loves African and Syrian food, particularly buying all the ingredients and cooking them. Sometimes she goes to the Mosque with her grandmother, though Alice isn't Muslim.

Alice is pale skinned but her brother is black. When they are together, people have asked if he is adopted. She thinks children can be racist and will exclude people from games because of their skin colour. She

says it's nice to see more people from ethnic minorities in Ireland who know what it's like

to be different. Because of her appearance, people assume Alice is just white Irish. But she has seen racism towards her brother. Once, on the bus, the driver tried to overcharge him because he thought he wouldn't know the difference. Alice challenged him, but her brother is less likely to stand up for himself because he stands out.

It's nice to see more people from ethnic minorities in Ireland who know what it's like to be different.

Alice goes to Coláiste Íosagáin in Stillorgan, Co. Dublin and is bilingual in Irish and English. She also speaks French and understands Creole and Timni. When she was in primary school, others thought her surname was strange but otherwise she got on fine. She got involved in youth work through a placement in an environmental youth organisation.

She says she's outgoing, not shy but does feel insecure sometimes. She considers herself African Irish, though sometimes more African in that she feels she understands that culture and feels uncomfortable when people are giving out about Africa. She also thinks her body language is influenced by her African roots.

Alice thinks she will move away from Ireland in the future.



SECTION 4 TAKING IDENTITY FURTHER

FACILITATOR EVALUATION

AIM

This exercise gives you the opportunity to reflect on your own perceptions and practice in relation to working with young people around identity and minority issues.

- **I should try to understand all aspects of the identity of the young people I work with**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **I understand how my own identity affects my work and how I relate to others**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **I am conscious of the stereotypes and prejudices that young people may encounter because they belong to a minority group**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **If I actively counter stereotypes and prejudices of young people towards minority groups, I will end up stigmatising them**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **I should ensure that young people from minority groups are integrated successfully into the majority culture**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **I should treat all young people as individuals and avoid considering them as minority or majority groups**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **Youth work with minority groups creates conflict**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **To include minority groups in youth work, I don't have to change the way I work**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **It would require me to take on extra work and it's too much hassle**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **I am aware of the potential for discrimination in the way that I allocate time and resources to the group**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **I must actively work to highlight the similarities and differences between minority groups and other young people**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally
- **I have to accept everything about minority groups is positive**
Disagree totally 1 2 3 4 5 Agree totally

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. At a later stage you may wish to repeat the evaluation and compare your response.



SECTION 4 TAKING IDENTITY FURTHER

Guidelines for Working with Young People from Minority Groups

The guidelines are intended as suggestions to support youth leaders in the development of more inclusive youth work practice and are not necessarily hard and fast rules. The list of guidelines is not exhaustive and more detailed information on particular guidelines may be obtained from the organisations or websites listed on the *sources of information* page. They are drawn from existing guidelines that have been developed in Ireland and elsewhere for working with young people from minority groups. Due to the considerable overlap between guidelines for working with different minority groups, a set of general guidelines is presented first that are commonly applicable. Guidelines that are specific to particular minority groups are then presented.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Young people from minority groups have individual as well as group identities. Respect the diversity within minority groups.
- In particular, don't assume that because two or more people share a common minority identity, they will get on.
- Emphasise the common identities and interests of young people, while recognising that young people are individuals.
- Young people hold multiple identities that are given varying importance depending on the person and the circumstances. For example, a young person could also be a woman, a sister, a Radiohead fan and a Northsider. Avoid focusing on just one aspect of their identity that the young person might not consider important.
- Be careful not to stigmatise young people through the use of labels.
- Consult with all young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of activities or programmes in which they are involved.
- When working with a minority group, respect their group identity. Use appropriate methodologies that take account of the differing needs of young people within your group (e.g. different beliefs, cultural attitudes to privacy, levels of ability or language competence). Try to find out in advance of working with the groups and in all cases ask the individuals.
- Work in partnership with organisations representing or supporting minority groups.



SECTION 4 TAKING IDENTITY FURTHER

- Recognise that the experiences and needs of women and men may be different.
- Allocate adequate time and space to positive aspects of the minority identity.
- Make links between the experiences and treatment of minority groups in other countries and similar processes and prejudices in Ireland. The Did You Know? boxes in the pack and the websites listed on the sources of information page are a good place to start.
- Try not to be patronising or be afraid to say you don't know. Don't pretend to understand if you don't.
 - Avoid presenting young people from minority groups as exotic or the majority group as 'normal'.

Make links between the experiences and treatment of minority groups in other countries as well as Ireland.

- The use of language in relation to particular minority groups is constantly changing. Contact relevant support groups to find the most appropriate language to use.
 - Recognise the positive contribution that young people from minority groups can make to Irish youth work and society generally.
 - Agree some ground rules with the group, such as on the use of appropriate language, respecting diverse opinions and not telling offensive jokes.
- Provide intercultural and development education for all young people participating in your programmes, both in preparation for the participation of young people from minority groups and on an ongoing basis.
- Challenge stereotypes and counter prejudices towards minority groups among the young people with whom you work.
- Consider designating a member of staff/volunteer to support inclusion of young people in minority groups.
- Engage in outreach work to raise the profile of your organisation/group among minority groups, who may not be aware of youth work opportunities.



SECTION 4 TAKING IDENTITY FURTHER

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG TRAVELLERS

- Respect Travellers' right to a nomadic lifestyle.
- Present Travellers as a people today, while also placing them in their historical context.
- Do not identify Travellers as a problem. Highlight that the problem is the way they are perceived by the majority population.
- Travellers should not be presented as exotic, primitive or uncivilised.
- Develop activities or programmes in partnership with organisations that represent or support Travellers.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Don't shout at people who are blind or deaf. Don't patronise people with disabilities.
- Talk directly to the person and use language appropriate to their age.
- Ensure the building and facilities are accessible for wheelchairs. Provide colour contrast signage for the visually impaired.
- When working with a person in a wheelchair or with mobility impairment, try sitting to be at the same eye level as them.
- Where a person has a learning disability, they may need to have things read out to them or help with filling out forms. Ask first.
- Give clear, simple directions.
- If you don't understand a person with a speech disability, ask them to repeat what they have said. Don't finish people's sentences for them.
- Don't assume. Consult!

**Don't
assume.
Consult!**



SECTION 4 TAKING IDENTITY FURTHER

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH YOUNG ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES, SEPARATED CHILDREN AND IMMIGRANTS

- Familiarise yourself with the refugee determination process and its implications for young people.
- Recognise the particular needs of separated children, those young people who arrive here seeking asylum without the care of a parent or guardian. They are forced to take on many adult responsibilities and may require additional support or guidance from youth workers.
- Encourage young asylum seekers, refugees, separated children and immigrants to participate with other young people where possible, rather than just providing targeted programmes for them.
- Be mindful that young asylum seekers, refugees, separated children and immigrants may have difficulty with the language or particular accents of the majority group. Where possible, use methodologies suitable for non-English speakers such as drama, visual material and art work.
- Recognise that young asylum seekers, refugees, separated children and immigrants may have different cultural or religious needs and plan to accommodate these where possible.
- Find out about events happening in the home countries of the young asylum seekers, refugees and separated children. Be sensitive about exploring these with the group.
- Avoid placing pressure on young asylum seekers and refugees to make unpleasant disclosures regarding their background or reasons for leaving their country of origin.
- Development education should be done with all the young people to highlight positive things about the young people's countries of origin and to emphasise the common identities of all the young people.
- Recognise that it may take time to develop trust with young asylum seekers, refugees, separated children and immigrants.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL YOUNG PEOPLE

- Don't pressure the young people to make disclosures they are uncomfortable with.
- Respect young people's right to keep their lesbian, gay or bisexual identity to themselves.
- Create an environment where young people will feel comfortable to come out. Provide information on support services for young people. These should be available to all the young people on an ongoing basis.
- Challenge language, stereotypes or attitudes that portrays heterosexuality as normal and homosexuality as exotic or a problem.



SECTION 4 TAKING IDENTITY FURTHER

ACTION CORNER

- Conduct a survey of young people's attitudes to a range of minority groups in Ireland. Try to get the views of people from minority groups in the survey.
- Using the contact list at the end of the resource, identify and contact representatives of minority groups to visit your organisation and give a talk to the young people about their experiences.
- Compile a list of the resources available in relation to minority groups. Use the contact list at the end of the resource.
- Starting with the Did You Know? boxes in the education pack, carry out an Internet or library project to find out about minority groups in Third World countries. Display the results in your youth club, school or other public area.
- Find out what policies or rules there are in your own area (youth club, school, local authority...), nationally, regionally (EU) or internationally to promote inclusion of minority groups.
- Track media coverage of issues relating to minority groups in Ireland and around the world. You could choose one particular media and examine how much importance is given to the minority identity.
- Organise an activity or event on:
 - International Women's Day (March 8th)
 - International Day against Racism (March 21st)
 - World Roma Day (April 8th)
 - World Refugee Day (June 20th)
 - World Mental Health Day (October 10th)
 - International Day of Disabled Persons (December 3rd)

Write to local politicians or other community leaders, inviting them to the event. Send out a press release to local newspapers and radio to get coverage of your actions.

AWARD SCHEME

Do you want your group to get recognition for using this pack? Would you like to be able to use the YARD label on relevant materials that your group produces?

Participating youth groups should provide documented evidence of completing at least two activities between sections one and two and two activities from section three. Groups can document their work using photographs, journals, artwork, videos or other means.

The groups have to provide evidence of having undertaken at least one of the actions listed in the action corner.

Once you have completed the elements of the award, send your documented evidence to YARD. You will receive a certificate and the right to use the YARD logo on relevant materials.



SECTION 4 TAKING IDENTITY FURTHER

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

WEBSITES

www.irishhaven.org

- list of refugee and asylum seeker support services

www.undp.org

- United Nations Development Programme
- information about minority groups at a global level

www.coe.int

- website of the Council of Europe
- information and downloadable resources
- focus on Europe and global

www.developmenteducation.ie

- broad development education website
- facts and statistics about asylum seekers and refugees
- information and links on global equality issues

BOOKS AND RESOURCE PACKS

80:20 (2003). *80:20. Development in an Unequal World.*

Council of Europe (2002). *Compass. A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People.*

ECO UNESCO (2003). *Embracing Diversity. Youth Activities on Multiculturalism and the Environment.*

CDVEC (2002). *Summer Voices: A Collection of Writings by Students from the CDVEC Summer School 2002.*

Pavee Publications (2001). *The Pavee Pack. Ireland: Cultural Diversity and Travellers*

Glenree Centre for Reconciliation and 80:20 (2000). *Northern Ireland: A Place Apart? Exploring Conflict, Peace and Reconciliation in these Islands.*



SECTION 4 TAKING IDENTITY FURTHER

ORGANISATIONS

Youth Action against Racism and Discrimination (YARD)

3 Montague Street, Dublin 2
Tel: + 353 1 4784122 Fax: + 353 1 4783974
Email: yard@nyci.ie Web: www.youth.ie

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI)

20 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2
Tel: + 353 1 4785777 Fax: + 353 1 4785778
Email: nccri@eircom.net Web: www.nccri.com

Equality Authority

2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2
Tel: + 353 1 4173333 or LoCall: 1890 245245
Fax: + 353 1 4173366
Email: info@equality.ie Web: www.equality.ie

Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA)

Áras Chúchulainn, Blackheath Drive, Clontarf, Dublin 3
Tel: + 353 1 8186400 Fax: + 353 1 8333873
Email: info@iwa.ie Web: www.iwa.ie

People with Disability in Ireland (PwDI)

Richmond Square, Morning Star Avenue, Dublin 7
Tel: + 353 1 8721744 Fax: + 353 1 8721771
Email: info@pwdi.ie Web: www.pwdi.ie

National Disability Authority

25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4
Tel: + 353 1 6080400 Fax: + 353 1 6609935
Web: www.nda.ie

National Council for the Blind in Ireland (NCBI)

Whitworth Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
Tel: + 353 1 8307033 or LoCall: 1850 334353
Web: www.ncbi.ie

Traveller Youth Service

42 James Street, Dublin 8
Tel: + 353 1 4546488 Fax: + 353 1 4546575
Email: youth@exchangehouse.ie
Web: www.exchangehouse.ie

City of Dublin VEC Separated Children's Project

Parnell Adult Learning Centre, 1 Parnell Square, Dublin 1
Tel: + 353 1 8786662 Fax: + 353 1 8741414
Email: jessica.wanzenbock@parnell.cdvec.ie

Irish Refugee Council

88 Capel Street, Dublin 1
Tel: + 353 1 8730042
Email: refugee@iol.ie
1 Bank Place, Ennis, Co. Clare
Tel: + 353 65 6822026
Email: irc.ennis@eircom.net

Pavee Point Travellers Centre

46 North Great Charles Street, Dublin 1
Tel: + 353 1 8780255
Email: pavee@iol.ie Web: www.paveepoint.ie

African Cultural Project

Ulster Bank Chambers, 4 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1
Tel: + 353 1 8780613
Email: acp@indigo.ie

Akidwa – African Women's Support Group

19 Belvedere Place, Dublin 1
Tel: + 353 1 8552143
Email: akidwa@eircom.net

Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland (ARASI)

213 North Circular Road, Dublin 7
Tel: + 353 1 8381142
Email: arasi@indigo.ie

Comhlámh

10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2
Tel: + 353 1 4783490
Email: info@comhlamh.org Web: www.comhlamh.org
55 Grand Parade, Cork
Tel: + 353 21 4275881
Email: comhcork@iol.ie

Immigrant Council of Ireland

42 Dorset Street, Dublin 1
Tel: + 353 1 8656525
Email: info@immigrantcouncil.ie

OUThouse

105 Capel Street, Dublin 1
Tel: + 353 1 8734932 Fax: + 353 1 8734933
Web: www.outhouse.ie

Belong To (Lesbian and Gay Youth Group)

OUThouse, 105 Capel Street, Dublin 1
Tel: + 353 1 8734184
Email: belongto@eircom.net Web: www.belongto.ie

Amnesty International LGBT Group

48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2
Tel: + 353 1 6776361
Email: jloughra@amnesty.ie

Gay Switchboard

Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7
Tel: + 353 1 8721055
Email: director@gayswitchboard.ie
Web: www.gayswitchboard.ie

- Youth Action against Racism and Discrimination (YARD)
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- 3 Montague St
- Dublin 2
- 01 4784122 ■ yard@nyci.ie ■ www.youth.ie

