

# Rap it up

12+

**AIM** | To creatively explore justice issues and young people's views

**Time** | 1 Hour

**Material** | Flipchart paper and Markers

## What to do

Begin with a brainstorm on the issues people feel are unfair in the world. Remember to include Ireland and the developing countries. Capture all the comments on a flipchart. If you have done this in an earlier activity you can use the same one and add any extras.

Split into groups of about four people. Give each group a copy of Makilawe's or Thandanani's story. Give them five minutes to read it and think about where the story had injustice in it? What was unfair about it? Ask them to think about any injustice they've experienced or that they have heard about e.g. no one listening to them, treating them unfairly, being accused of something just because you're young.

Ask them to create a story of injustice. It can use pieces from Makilawe's or Thandanani's story, the brainstorm or their own lives. Encourage them to try and make it sound like a rap, a rhyme or a poem with a beat. Remind them that they are just trying to tell a story and they should decide what it will be about before trying to add music or make it rhyme.

## Note to leader

If you have musical instruments, you can use them to accompany the groups. You can also make instruments from upturned coffee/paint cans and plastic bottles filled with rice.

### Warm Up

**What's the use:** Ask the group to choose an object in the room, this can be anything they can see. Create groups of about four people, tell them they have 2 minutes to come up with as many uses for that object as they can think of. Award points for the most interesting and bizarre uses.

### fact BOX

Rap has a long history and began in African oral tradition then later became a voice for black activism during the 70's in the US. Rappers used music to explore racism and violence in their own communities. In modern day rap there is a much more political and global justice element with rappers like Mos Def criticising poor governments and Kanye West exploring the topic of "blood diamonds".

### Makilawe's story

Makilawe is from Togo. He was arrested for theft and brought to the police station where he was beaten. He was held there for 11 days before being transferred to the main prison in the capital. He was held for 12 months before he saw a judge. The judge gave him an 8 month sentence but Makilawe had already served a year in prison and had therefore served more time waiting to see a judge than his actual sentence.

The conditions in prison were terrible. It was overcrowded and most of the time people had to sleep on their sides to squeeze in large numbers into their cells. He was given one meal a day and the only communal area outside the cells is a courtyard that is crammed with people and prisoners washing, sleeping and fighting. Makilawe missed two years of school, a situation he is still trying to catch up on.

Source: Y Care International

### Thandanani's story

Thandanani is from South Africa. He was arrested for armed robbery simply because he knew the person who did it. Before he was sent to prison he spent 3 days in a small cell with other people and the police refused to call his family.

In prison the adults abused him and the other young people there. The prison wardens didn't take their complaints seriously and laughed at them. There were 80 people to a cell. When his trial began he had no legal support and didn't get a chance to speak to the judge. He pleaded not guilty. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison. In appeal court he was given a state lawyer who told him to plead guilty to get a smaller sentence. He refused to do this but his lawyer did it anyway. He was then sentenced to 4 years.

Thandanani was sent to an adult prison for 5 months and then a juvenile prison where he tried to get an education but there were no appropriate books. After 2 years and two months in this prison he was released under parole supervision. There were no programmes to help him re-integrate into society and he has found it very hard to get work with a criminal record.

Source: Y Care International

## Action Idea

Hold a performance evening and present your raps/poems/songs to friends and family, or even record a CD with all of the group's work which they can use to promote Justice for young people around the world.