

The Good, the Bad & the Ugly

Aim: that participants understand what is good and what is bad about children working?

Age: 11 years and over

Time: 25 minutes

Materials: Flipchart paper, markers or crayons, sellotape or blu-tack, set of statements for each group



What to do

Write the following questions on two flipchart sheets and display the sheets on the wall. What is good about children working? What is bad about children working? As the group enters, ask them to write their thoughts about the questions on the sheets. Do not comment on the statements.

Break into groups of four people. Give each group a flipchart sheet and a set of nine of the statements, though not necessarily the same nine to each group. Demonstrate that they should divide the sheet into four equal boxes. Label the boxes – young people Ireland positive; young people developing countries positive; young people Ireland negative; young people developing countries negative. Explain that they have 10 minutes to discuss and decide which box to put each statement in, depending on where they think it is most applicable. Use blu-tack or sellotape to attach the statements. Each group then presents their findings. Ask if there were any statements that could belong in more than one box. Which one(s)?

Now review the initial comments made on the flipchart sheets. Ask if anyone would like to change what they wrote or add something else to it.

Alternatively, for each statement ask people to move around the room towards posters marked Ireland Positive, developing countries Positive, developing countries Negative and Ireland Negative. For each statement, question people as to why they chose to stand in a particular place.

Discussion Suggestions

What did you find different for children working in Ireland and in developing countries?

How are they similar?



Statements

Working as a child provides good work experience and skills for the future.

When a child works, their education can suffer. They may not go to school at all or can be too tired to concentrate when at school.

A child who works can often add to the household income. Sometimes this can mean the difference between surviving and not surviving.

Work that children do can be tiring and can affect their general health. Sometimes children are asked to do dangerous jobs and work in dangerous conditions, which severely affects their health.

Working gives a young person a sense of responsibility. Young people are often very proud of the work they do.

Children are often seen as cheap labour and are therefore underpaid or not paid at all.

Young people who work can help with school fees and books. If a child does not work, then their family may not be able to send her/him to school.



Children can have too much responsibility too soon, especially if the family is depending on the child's income. Sometimes this can make the child feel stressed.

Children can earn money for themselves through work, which they would not have otherwise.

Working can restrict the child from having time to play and socialise with friends.

When a child has to work, sometimes they have to move away from home in order to get a job.

There are laws which protect children in the work place.

Children do not play a role in making the laws that affect their work.

Working as a child can sometimes lead to getting a job as an adult.