

Well Wishers

Aim

to explore the impact of participating to tackle poverty

Age

12 years and older

Time

45 minutes

Materials

young people's stories, card cut into circles, markers/crayons

What to do

Form small groups and give each group a young person's story and some pieces of card cut into circles. Ask for a volunteer in each group to read out the story. Explain that the participants are to discuss the following:

- What was life like before?
- How did the person feel about it?
- What action did he or she take?
- What was the effect of taking action?
- How did he or she feel about taking the action?

Allow 10 minutes for this. Get feed back from each group on who their character is, what they did and how they feel about it.

Now ask the participants to imagine that their character wants to share his or her experience with other young people. On the circles of card, each person writes or draws one thing that they would like to share. In the centre of the room or space, place an open container such as a paper

bin or a pot. Ask the young people to imagine that it is a wishing well and their pieces of card are coins that they throw in it. Everyone stands in a circle around the well. One person begins and tries to throw their coin into the well. If they succeed, they make a silent wish. The next person then has a go. Keep going around the circle until everyone has made a wish.

Shake the container and get each person to take a coin out. Ask each person to read or describe what is on their card. Can anyone guess which character it was? Ask whoever wrote or drew the card to confirm who it was. How can young people have an impact on tackling poverty? How do young people benefit from participating? How does the community or others benefit?

Finally, ask if anyone would be willing to share the wish they made with the group.



Well Wishers

Continued

Sadeka

Sadeka is 14 years old and comes from Saidpur in the north of Bangladesh. In her youth club, Sadeka and other children wanted to do something about the lack of basic sanitation in their community, which was leading to high levels of water-borne diseases. They created a map of their village and looked at where taps and toilets were needed. They then worked with experts to provide the facilities. They also created a hygiene campaign with simple messages, making posters and short dramas for the community. Sadeka and her friends monitored the hygiene practices in the community. She says, "We measure the soap, if the soap gets smaller then people are washing their hands. If it stays the same, then they are not and we visit the children and their parents again with our hygiene campaign." *Source:*

Plan www.plan.ie

Yelena

Yelena is 15 years old. She lives beside Lake Izabel in Guatemala, near the border with Belize. Yelena is a part of a group of young people who looked at the issue of over fishing in the lake. They wrote a story to highlight the effects that over fishing has on the lake itself and on the people who depend on fishing for their livelihood. Yelena and her friends presented their story to the community. It had an impact on the local Mayor who attended the presentation. He asked for copies of the CD that they made and shared their presentation with key regional and national decision makers, including the Minister for the Environment. Yelena hopes that their initiative will lead to action in her area. *Adapted from: Plan www.plan.ie*

Role Cards

Benson

Benson lives in Nairobi in Kenya. He is chairperson of a club in his school which was set up to improve the health of young people in his school and community. The club meets once a week. Members discuss the health problems facing young people and come up with ways of addressing these problems. Pupils come to Benson for advice on issues such as drugs, HIV and violence. Benson says: *'My peers know about sex and HIV transmission and that cigarettes and drugs are bad. We also know we must keep our school clean. We know the symptoms of cholera and how to treat people living with AIDS.'* He feels that young people are more likely to turn to other young people for help and advice. The club has also offered their advice to the Kenyan government. *Source: Plan www.plan.ie*

Laxmi

Laxmi is a young girl who lives in India. Since the death of her father, she has had to look after her family. She finds food for them to eat and things to sell. However she dreams of a better future and has lots of ideas about how life could be improved for people like her. Laxmi and her friends learned how to write scripts and use a camera and other recording equipment. She made a cartoon called 'Laxmi's Dream' which tells her story. Some of her friends have made films about their experiences of child prostitution, water pollution and working in rubbish dumps. Laxmi and her friends have all learned new skills and taught other people about the issues affecting them. One of their films called Mrituchakra (Circle of death) led the government to shut down a polluting factory. *Source: Plan www.plan.ie*

Kabba

Kabba is from Sierra Leone. When he was nine years old a civil war broke out in his country and he was taken by the rebel army. At first he was used to carry water and wash uniforms but soon he was training as a soldier. Thousands of children were used as soldiers by both rebel forces and the government during the civil war. With the help of a charity, Kabba left the army and started school. Now Kabba and other former child soldiers make radio programmes which teach children about their rights through stories, quizzes and dramas. Kabba says *'Even in the worst of all things something good must come out. I am a victim of the war. I should be able to challenge those who do this to children. The programme that I run there is called "My Story." I interview children affected by war. Without forgiveness there will be no reconciliation and without reconciliation there is no sustainable peace. Peace should not only be in our mouths but in our hearts.'*

Source: Plan www.plan.ie

Graham, Robert and Daryl

Graham, Robert and Daryl are all from Dublin. They're involved in a youth group run by the local youth service. Their youth leader heard about the One World Week action, Send a Friend to School, organised by the National Youth Council of Ireland. She decided to see if the group would be interested in doing it. She didn't really think that they'd be into it, but wanted to try it because the theme of education was really relevant to what was going on for them. They combined body mapping with collage and poetry to examine who misses out on an education and what getting an education means to young people around the world. She was really surprised how enthusiastic they were about it. It was a chance for them to express how they were feeling. The group and their 'friends' took part in a national event for One World Week and Graham, Robert and Daryl were photographed with the Minister. Afterwards they said that taking part in the action had given them the confidence to challenge attitudes towards their right to be in school. It hadn't occurred to them before that education was a right. For one of the young people the action went further, as he was having difficulties moving from primary to secondary school and obtaining a place, which resulted in him appealing to the Department of Education. Photographs and testimony of his participation in the 'Send a Friend' action contributed to him securing a place within a local school.