



Aim

to explore who is missing an education in Ireland and around the world

Age

10 years and over

Time

40 minutes

Materials

Role cards, art materials, old newspapers/magazines, flipchart and markers

Note to leader

If there is an issue around access to education that is not represented in the role cards, add another role card from a particular situation or a mixture of different situations.

Action

Join 'School is the best place to work', a campaign run by the Alliance2015 network which seeks to eliminate all child labour through the provision of full time, quality education. Education is every child's right. Every year that a child attends school reduces the chance that they will end up in work that exploits them. To end child labour worldwide, all children must be guaranteed a full time formal education. Sign the petition to help ensure that every child is in school by 2015 at www.schoolisthebestplacetowork.org.

What to do

Divide participants into groups of three. Hand out a role card to each participant. Make extra copies as necessary. Ensure that all the role cards for at least one group are based in Ireland. Ask the groups to discuss their role cards and choose one to illustrate as a picture.

The groups should discuss:

- How does the character feel about missing school?
- Why are they out of school?
- How will missing school affect them in future?

Provide the groups with markers, crayons, paper, old newspapers and magazines, glue and scissors. Allow 20 minutes for this. The groups present back their pictures.

In the large group, ask who is missing out on an education? What did the people missing out have in common? What differences were there? Hand out copies of the 'Missing an Education' fact box.

Are the reasons people don't have access to education in Ireland similar or different to the reasons in developing countries? What are they?

Missing an Education

- 104 million children around the world do not have the opportunity to go to school, including 60 million girls.
- Another 150 million children will not complete their primary education.
- Right now, 879 million people (15 years or older) across the developing world cannot read or write.
- Among those missing out are:
 - Children and young people living in poverty
 - Girls and young women
 - Children and young people in conflict situations
 - Children and young people with disability
 - Children and young people affected or infected by HIV/AIDS
 - Child labourers and young people in exploitative work

Role Cards

Maurine

I'm 8 years old. I live in Kibera in Kenya with my mother. I attended nursery school when I was younger but I was forced to drop out when my father died. My mother couldn't afford to send me any more. I now work as a house help taking care of other children. I'm not happy with my life. I would love to return to school but I have to work, so this is unlikely. The money I get goes directly to my mother.*

Renu

I'm 11 years old. I come from Madhya Pradesh in India. I had to go out to work to pay off my family's debts. I woke at 7am and took my owner's cattle to the field. When I returned from the fields, I fed the cattle and took them back out at 5pm. After that, I would work in my owner's house. My mother and owner were approached by an organisation working in the area. The debt was paid off and I was able to go to school. I'd like to be a teacher one day.*

John

I'm 11 years old. I come from Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. I live with my family in one of the most deprived areas of the city. I had to drop out of school because my parents could not afford to pay school fees. In 2003, the Kenyan Government abolished school fees allowing an extra 1.3 million children to enrol in school. I was one of them.*

Paddy

I live in Dublin. My parents split up when I was 9. Since then we have not had enough money to get by. I dropped out of school at 12 to try and earn money. I found this impossible and I took to stealing. I recently came out of a correctional youth facility but as soon as I got out, I started stealing again. I know I'm ruining my future but I care more about my younger brothers and sisters who are still in school.**

Phulmani

I'm eight years old and I live in Nepal. There are nine in my family. Around here people like us are known as mushar – the mice eaters. We don't own any land and my parents work as labourers on local farms. We eat the grain that we get as compensation for harvesting it. I started school with the help of a local organisation but had to stop because the books cost too much. My parents would like me to go to school, but they are more determined to give my brother an education. Because he is a boy, they think he will get a better job in the future.

Ama

I'm 10 years old. I live in Mozambique in southern Africa. I stay at home to look after my younger brother and sister while my mother and father work in the fields. I clean the house and start preparing the food. When my parents and my older brother, who is at school, come home in the evenings, I help my mother to get the dinner ready and clean up afterwards.***

Kaliamani

I'm 13 years old. I come from Mumbai in India. I live with my mother and three younger brothers in a slum shack. My mother has AIDS. Two of my three younger brothers are HIV positive. I do the washing, caring and cooking for the family, while my mother works as a rag-picker. The pay isn't much but it helps us to buy food. I don't go to school. I know my mother worries about what will happen to me when she is gone. I will probably pick rags or get married as soon as possible.***

Patrick

I'm 14 years old and live on a halting site in Limerick. I have four brothers and three sisters. Another sister died when she was only a year old. Up to last year I went to school but my family were moved on from our site after local settled people made complaints to the Gardaí. Now I help my father to collect and sell scrap metal. In school I was in a class with younger children, which was horrible. I could just about read and write when I left but I'd like to learn more.*****

Jose

I'm from Angola. I'm 20 years old. I came to Ireland because of the conflict in Angola. Two years later, my application for asylum is still being processed. In the meantime I'm not allowed to work. I enquired about a third level course but was informed that asylum seekers were not eligible. It's very frustrating. All I can do is hang around the hostel or on the street.

Ciara

I'm 15 years old. I live with my mother, two sisters and two brothers in a housing estate in a rural town in Ireland. The nearest school is nearly two miles away. There's no public transport so I have to walk to school. At school, I get a hard time from other students as I can't afford new clothes or presents. Mum struggles to provide us with food, let alone books, exam fees and school trips. I'd like to study further but there's no way we can afford it. As soon as I have my Leaving Cert, I'll get a job so I can help Mum.**

Kevin

I'm 17 years old and live in Cavan. I have cerebral palsy and I'm confined to a wheelchair. I'm sitting the Leaving Certificate this year and want to study Science. I'll have to move away to study, but I need a full time personal assistant (PA). My family applied to the local authority for a grant but we were turned down. My parents can't afford to pay for a PA themselves so I don't know what to do. There are very few employment opportunities around here for people with a disability.

Shane

I'm 16 years old. I live in Cork. I was expelled from school because of behavioural problems, but I've since received psychiatric help. I'm active in youth work as a leader and want to become a youth worker. For this I need the Leaving Cert, but I've been refused a place in school because of my previous behaviour. My youth organisation has been great. They even tried to organise tutors for me, but this didn't work out. I'm determined to have the chance to study youth work.