

## Activity 15

Age: 13 yrs +

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Flipchart paper, markers,  
case study for each group

# You have the Right to Remain Silent

**AIM:** To highlight the right of young people to have their voice listened to

## What to do:

**Part One** - Form a number of approximately equal sized groups and give each group a sheet of flipchart paper and a marker. Give them the task of creating a set of rules for reaching decisions in the club. They can be as imaginative as they like. Tell them they have 15 minutes to make the list. After one minute, inform them there is to be no more talking but that they have to continue making their rules. When the 15 minutes are up, choose one of the groups and read out their rules. Tell the group that you have decided this will be the way decisions are made from now on. Ignore the rules of the other group. Now explain that participants can talk again. Ask what happened during the game. How were decisions reached? How did participants feel when their views were taken or not taken into account?

**Get everyone to stand up and sit somewhere else. Facilitate a discussion with the group using the following questions**

- Are young people listened to generally?
- Who is best at listening and taking young people's views into account?
- Why is it important to listen to children and young people? How does it make them feel?
- What opportunities are there for young people in Ireland to give their opinions?
- Whose responsibility is it to make sure that this happens?
- What should young people themselves do to ensure that their right to be listened to is honoured?

Record the points made on a flipchart.

**Part Two** - Form three groups. Give each group one of the case studies, a sheet of flipchart paper and markers. Explain that they have to create a poster that promotes participation among young people in the particular parliament structure outlined in their case study.

**In designing the poster, they should consider the following questions:**

- Who is the audience for the poster?
- Who is the parliament trying to influence?
- What effect will participation in the parliament have?

Allow the groups 20 minutes to design the posters. Display the posters and ask each group to briefly present theirs.

## Debrief Questions:

- \* Have you ever been involved in a forum or parliament before? If not, why?
- \* If yes, what effects did it have on you and your community or the country?
- \* Can they think of any other opportunities for young people in Ireland to give their opinion on the issues that matter to them?

**Action:** Dáil na nÓg means “youth parliament” and is a chance for the children and young people of Ireland to represent the views of all Irish children at national level. It meets once a year in Dublin. The representative for Dáil na nÓg come from the Comhairlí (youth councils) and are organised by the City/County Development Boards in each local area. Their objective is to give children and young people a voice at a community level. There are a total of 34 City/County Development Boards in the 26 counties, and each of these runs their local Comhairle na nÓg. Why don't you find out more information about joining your local Comhairlí by going to [www.dailnanog.ie](http://www.dailnanog.ie)

## Case-Studies

My name is Fatoumata and I am the president of the Parliament of the Children of Mali. The Parliament of the children was set-up to look at the rights of children. Violence against children in Africa is common, including child labour, begging and early marriage. I am fully dedicated to this cause and see it as a challenge for the Parliament of the children to address. We will continue to fight violence against children starting with child labour. Child labour includes any economic activity carried out by a child. The child work thus gathers together activities which deprives them of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and harms their physical and mental development. Unfortunately this exists everywhere in Mali. The rights of the child are largely ignored and often rejected since there are very few legal texts to stop people. We want to see basic quality education for all children, the acceptance of the rights of the child and for there to be stricter laws for people who don't protect children's rights.

Source: Plan Ireland

My name is Jake Walsh and I am from Tipperary South. I first heard about Dáil na nÓg when a person who had been involved came in to our school to talk about it. I decided that I would join my local Comhairle to see what it was about and I really enjoy it. During Comhairle meetings, we talked about youth issues, such as youth facilities in our area and different services available to young people in South Tipperary. Another thing I particularly liked was how democracy is practiced at Dáil na nÓg. For example everyone who was a member of my Comhairle got a vote when an election was held to arrange delegates to represent Tipperary South at Dáil na nÓg. Luckily I was elected and I am proud to be representing my Comhairle. Overall Dáil na nÓg is the perfect way for young people to air their views and more importantly, it gives young people a say.

Source: Dáil na nÓg Delegate Report 2008

I am Damba Jerome Claver, I am 16 years old and a junior parliamentarian in Cameroon. Through my involvement in the parliament I have learnt a lot about the rights of the child and since then I have not been able to stay silent. I have decided to promote the rights of children and I am doing this with some of the local authorities in my area. I have organised round table conferences, through which I made the local population aware of the rights of the child and on measures taken by the government of Cameroon. For example there is a law here to protect children against trafficking and slavery. Since more people know about this law now, this has had a positive influence on the children's lives within my locality, such that some parents who in the past used to make their children work for hours on end, who refused to send their children to school to have them work in farms, finally understood and began sending their children to school to demonstrate their change of behaviour and acceptance of children's rights.

Source: Plan Cameroon