

Young People & Work

Aim: that the participants explore the positive and negative attributes of children and young people working.

Age: All

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Large sheets of paper, art materials, job cards



What to do

For younger children, write out a series of jobs on cards. Suggestions are given in the box below. Add other jobs as appropriate. Stick up a large sheet of paper divided in two – adults/children. Shuffle the cards and hold them up one at a time. Ask the group if they think this job would be done by an adult or by a young person. The group decides if the card should be placed in the adult or child section. If the groups think the job would be done by both adults and children, the card can be placed between categories. At the end, ask:

- What other jobs do children and adults do?
- Why do children work?
- Is this positive?

For older age groups, break into two groups – A and B. Each group makes a list on all the different jobs that young people do, both in Ireland and in the developing countries. Mark the lists A and B. Now, ask for a volunteer from group A and give them one of the jobs from the list prepared by group B. They have to mime it for the members of their own team, who must guess what the job is. They have one minute to guess correctly. If they guess correctly they get a point. If they guess incorrectly, it is passed over to the other team to have an attempt. Now group B have their turn. Keep going until all the jobs have been mimed. If there is a large group, you could have more than two teams.

Display the two lists of jobs. Still in the two groups, give each group a large sheet of paper and markers or crayons. Ask them to imagine a young person who works. What age is s/he? What job is s/he doing? How does s/he feel about working? They draw the outline of the young person in the middle of the sheet of paper, leaving space outside and in for drawing. Inside the outline, write or draw all the positive benefits to the young person of working. Around it, write or draw all the bad effects work could have on that young person. After 15-20 minutes, display both posters and a volunteer from each group introduces it.

Discussion Suggestions

What are the two most positive and the two most negative things about work for young people?

How does working affect the enjoyment of their rights by young people? In what types of jobs do young people suffer the most?

What about people who are illegally employed both in Ireland and globally? Is there a way that their rights can be protected?

What demands would they make on their governments if they had the chance?

Face the Facts One



Irish and International Legislation on Working Conditions for Children and Young People

Republic of Ireland

Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1996 states:

- No child can be employed under the age of 14.
- A child who is 14 may be employed to do light work during any period outside of the school term.
- A child who is over the age of 15 may be employed to do light work during school term time, provided that the hours of work do not exceed 8 hours in any week.
- A child cannot work more than 7 hours in any day or 35 hours in any week.
- During the period of the summer holidays, a child must not do any work for a period of at least 21 days.
- Work must not be harmful to the safety, health and development of the child.

Source: One World Centre for Northern Ireland (2001). Exploring Our World.

Northern Ireland

Part XII of the Children (NI) Order 1995 states:

- No child under 13 years can be employed at all.
- No child who is at school can work before 7am or after 7pm or more than 2 hours on a school day.
- No child should be employed in street trading or any occupation that is likely to be injurious to his/her health or education.
- If you are over 15 you can work for up to 7 hours on a Saturday.
- If you are between 13 and 15 you can work for up to 5 hours on a Saturday.

Source: One World Centre for Northern Ireland (2001). Exploring Our World.

International

The International Labour Organisation, a UN body which brings together Governments, Employers and Trade Unions, has two main conventions dealing with the issue of child labour.

- **Convention 138** concerns the Minimum Age for Employment.
 - establishes a minimum age for admission to employment or work which is not less than the age of completion of compulsory education;
 - where economic development and educational facilities are not well developed, the minimum age is 14.
- **Convention 182** concerns the Worst Forms of Child Labour.
 - defines a child as being under 18 years of age;
 - defines specific activities – slavery, prostitution, pornography and drug trade – as worst forms of child labour;
 - States must take immediate and effective measures to eliminate these worst forms;
 - States are to provide access to free basic education and training for all children removed from the above activities;
 - consideration must be given to the special situation of girls.

Article 32 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

‘State Parties recognise the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development’.