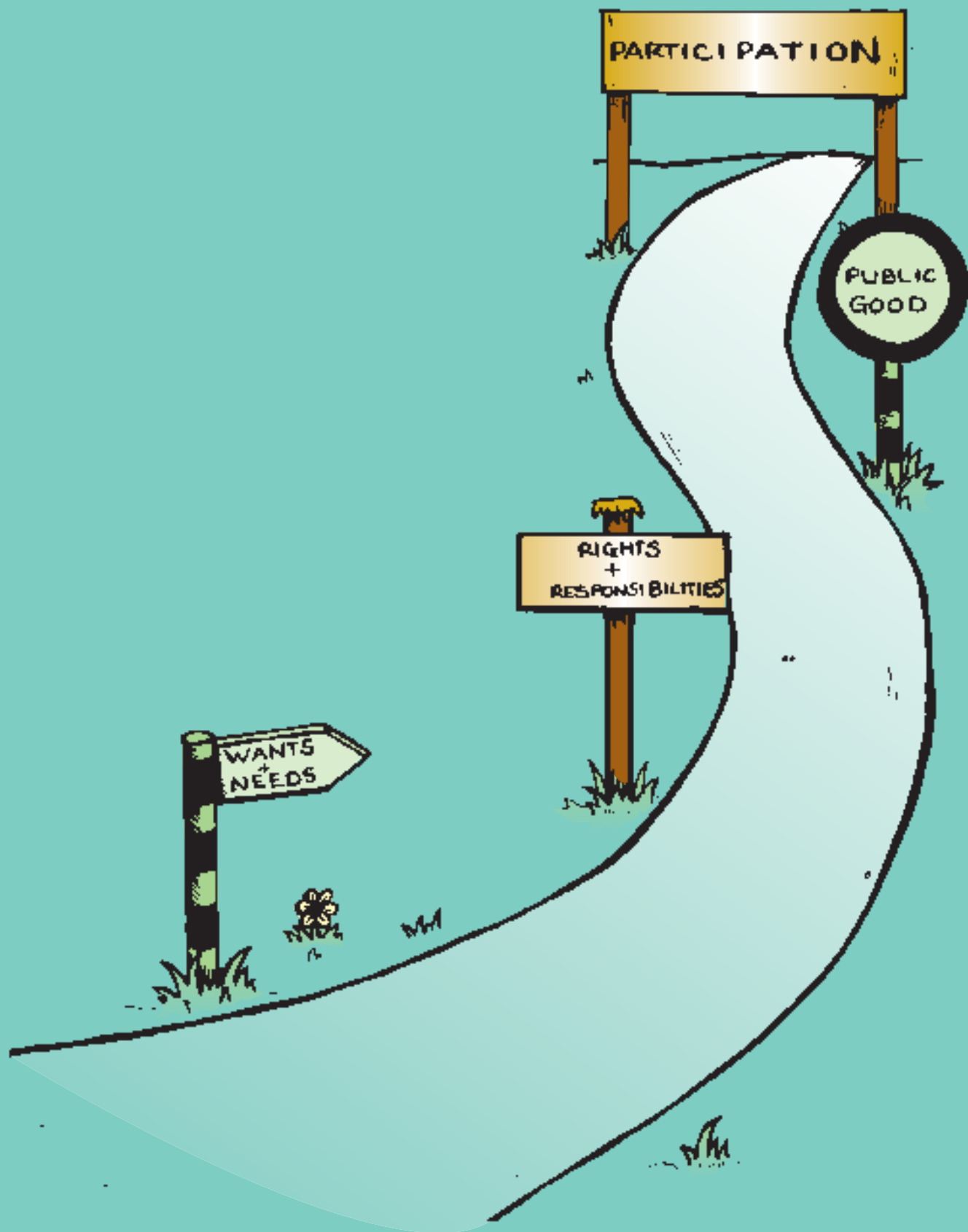


Your Community - Your Role Working for the Public Good



Your Community Your Role Working for the Public Good

Mary Connaire D.C.

This material is a part of a series developed in request for follow-up Units to the original Active Citizenship/Voter Education Programme.

The other Units in the series are:

How We Are Governed - *Margo Delaney C.H.F.*

Working for Policy Change at Local Level - *Bernadette Mac Mahon D.C.*

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Your Community – Your Role

Working for the Public Good

The material consists of 2 Units

***Unit 1* focuses on Human Needs and deals with the following:**

- People Who Have Made a Difference
- Personal and Family Needs
- Community and Local Needs
- Needs at National Level
- Needs at Global Level

***Unit 2* focuses on Rights, Responsibilities, Roles and Participation and deals with:**

- Rights and Responsibilities
- Active Citizens – Roles
- Active Citizens – From Roles To Action in the Local Community
- New Efforts to Participate in the Local Community for the Public Good
- Feedback and Evaluation

Materials: Particulars of the materials required are provided at the end of each Unit

Time: The time specified for each Learning Task is an approximate guide.

Your Community -Your Role Working for the Public Good

Unit 1

- **People who have made a difference**
- **Personal and family needs**
- **Community and local needs**
- **Needs at national level**
- **Global world-wide needs**

Unit 1- Focusing on Human Needs:

Learning Tasks

1. To Identify people who have made a difference
2. To focus on;
 - Personal and family needs,
 - Community and local needs
 - Needs at national level
 - The needs of our world.

Introduction and welcome

The EU declared 2005 as the Year of Active Citizenship. During 2005 many people took part in the Active Citizenship/Voter Education Programme. This new material explores and develops a key idea from that Programme, namely ---“*What It Means to Be an Active Citizen*”. In addition to voting it explores other ways of undertaking an active role in the community in order to make the world a better place for all people.

Learning Tasks

Learning Task 1: To Identify People Who Have Made a Difference

Activity 1

- Ask participants this warm-up question: *Can you think of someone who has made a difference to other people and the situation about them? In what way?* Remind the group that this difference can be big or small. An example is Cathy Sinnott in Cork who fought for the rights of people with a disability. Her own son Jamie suffers from autism.
- Allow 5 mins for sharing. Gather into large group. Hear all voices
- Record on flipchart (approx. time 10 mins)

Learning Task 2: To Focus on Personal and Family Needs

We can see from the stories of those people who made a difference in other people’s lives and situations that they are making the world a better place for all. For a few moments, let us focus on what we need to have a safe and happy life for ourselves and our children.

Activity 1

Let us think for a moment about what we need so that life can be good, happy and fulfilled for us and for our families.

- Distribute worksheets 1 (*pages 4-7*) (*Needs and Wants 20 pictures*) and ask each person to choose eight pictures to answer the question. *What do I and my family need to live a happy, healthy and full life? In other words, what do we need to grow at all the levels --- physically, psychologically, intellectually, spiritually and socially ?*
- Invite participants to choose 8 pictures and then number them in order of importance from 1 to 8 (allow 10 mins).
- Invite participants to gather in groups of three. Share some of the results. (allow 10 mins).
- Gather into large group.
- Record the results on Flip Chart. Listen to the reasons why a particular picture was chosen. Notice any consensus (approx 15 mins).

Activity 2

- Give brief presentation on Maslow's theory
- **Abraham Maslow** was a psychologist who believed that people failed to grow and develop when their needs were not met. He believed that human beings do their best to reach their full potential. In setting out his beliefs in the shape of a pyramid he shows how each person starts at the bottom of the pyramid and when one type of need is met the person is motivated to move to the next highest level. Beginning with biological and physiological needs we progress through safety, belonging, love, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualisation and finally transcendence needs. Transcendence needs means focusing on other people – going beyond ourselves and helping others to achieve their full potential. For example if a child is hungry he/she will not be interested or able to learn in school. If someone is homeless he/she is unlikely to appreciate a beautiful painting.
- Example of unmet needs are - a child who does not have sufficient to eat will not be able to concentrate in school; persons without a home may have low self esteem and therefore not be able to develop their potential.
- Maslow's theory has been (*adapted*) to include a need to help others to grow (*top of the Pyramid*)
- Distribute Worksheet 2 (Maslow's Pyramid – hierarchy of needs) (**page 8**)
- Invite participants to make links between the needs each one chose in the previous activity and the level on Maslow's order
- Share in pairs
- Feedback to large group noticing if any level was omitted. (approx 20 minutes)

Learning Task 3: To Focus on Community and Local Needs

- Human beings have needs as individuals, as members of the local community, as Irish citizens and as world citizens.

Activity 1 The public good as experienced at local level.

- We have looked at our good and the good of the family. We now move to looking at the local community.
- Distribute Worksheet 3 (Streetscape of a village or a community area.) (**page 9**)
- Imagine that this picture represents either your own locality or one you know. In groups of two answer the question; *What is needed at local and community level for people to have happy, healthy and full lives?*
- Depending on the size of the group share first in small group followed by sharing in the large group.
- Having listened to the sharing invite participants to add anything else they may think is missing so that people can be happy living in the local area.
- Facilitator invites participants to share in large group (approx 20 mins)

Learning Task 4: To Focus on Needs at National Level

Activity

We now look at the wider picture – at the needs of our country.

- Distribute Worksheet 4 Map of Ireland (**page 10**). Invite participants, working in groups of 4, to fill in what they think is necessary for Irish people in general to live full lives.
- Question *What is needed at national level for a happy, healthy and full life for Irish citizens?*
- Share first in small groups
- Gather into large group and hear from each small group (approx 20 mins).

Learning Task 5: To look at the needs of our world

- Make a short connecting statement. *“We are part of the world community and our actions affect people in different parts of the world. In our turn we are affected by people’s actions in other parts of the world”* For example the war in Iraq has led to an increase in petrol prices in Ireland.

Activity

- Distribute Worksheet 5A The Global Village – some facts and (*page 11*) and Worksheet 5B Map of the world (*page 12*)
- Invite participants to look at the handout asking for a volunteer to read contents.
- Invite group to look at Worksheet 5B Map of the World (*page 12*).

Invite participants in pairs to consider the following questions and share with partner.

1. *How do I feel about these facts?*
2. *What would my ideal world look like?*
3. *What one step would need to be taken to close the gap between people who are wealthy and those who are poor?*
4. *Who could take that step?*

- Invite participants back to large group. Facilitator records responses and recaps by naming the various elements from the feedback and drawing the connections between them (approx 20 mins)

Concluding Activity

Facilitator asks : *What one insight or fact will you ‘take away’ from Unit I ‘Working for the Common Good’?* Hear all voices and thank participants for their contribution and explain that the next unit deals with Rights, Responsibilities, Roles and Participation (approx 10 mins)

(Note on public good)

What does public good mean?

When we hear the word public we think of it’s opposite which is private or personal. As responsible adults we live out our lives going beyond ourselves sometimes in order to enable others to grow. You are all very familiar with this especially if you are parents. You constantly make choices and commitments for your children.

To-day we are looking at Citizenship, which of course includes working for the common good. The world has got smaller through travel and all kinds of communication networks. As never before we are aware of what is happening in countries throughout the world. We are aware of the gap between different parts of the world – the wealth of the West and the poverty of Africa for example. In Ireland also, the gap is growing between people on a low income and those who are wealthy. People like Bono and Bob Geldof are trying to raise awareness of the great poverty which exists in our world. In 2005 they did so by organising concerts and protests during the G8 Summit in Scotland.

Total Time: 2 hrs and 30 minutes approximately.

Materials required for Unit 1

Flip Chart and Markers

Pictures, Pens, Pencils

Handout on Needs and Wants – Worksheet 1 (*pages 4-7*)

Handout 2 Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs (*page 8*)

Copies of Streetscape for Activity (*page 9*)

Copies of Map of Ireland for Activity 4 (*page 10*)

Copies Global Village -Fact About World Poverty for Activity 5 (*page 11*)

Copies of Map of the World Worksheet 5B (*page 12*)

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Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice Active Citizenship/Voter Education Programme

Worksheet 1

Worksheet 1 continued

Worksheet 1 continued

Worksheet 1 continued

**Maslow's Pyramid of Needs to self-actualise
reaching one's full potential –(adapted)**



Worksheet 3

Worksheet 4

Worksheet 5A

Global Village

In a village of 100 people, with all the existing human race ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following:

80 would live in substandard housing

70 would be unable to read

50 would suffer malnutrition

1 would be near death

1 would be near birth

1 (*yes, only 1*) would have a college education

1 would own a computer.

Earth's Resources are Limited

- World population 5.5 billion in mid 1990s, it will be 11 billion by 2050
- Climate has changed dramatically though human activity
- 10 hottest years on record have been since 1991
- Floods worldwide affected 7 million people in the 1960s but 150 million today
- Since 1970, 40% of the forests on the earth have disappeared
- Availability of water today is 60% of 1970 levels
- 2.6 billion people have no access to sanitation
- 2 billion have no electricity.

Trade

Global trade rules are keeping the poor locked in poverty.

At present unfair trade rules rob poor countries of 1.3 billion Euros a day – 14 times what they get in aid.

Worksheet 5B

Moving from Needs to Rights, Responsibilities and Participation

Unit 2

- **Rights and responsibilities**
- **Active Citizens - Roles**
- **Active Citizens - From roles to action in the local community**
- **Next step – New efforts to participate in the local community for the public good**
- **Feedback and Evaluation**

Unit 2 Moving from Needs to Rights, Responsibilities and Participation

Introduction

In unit 1 we identified needs at individual, local, national and global levels. Now we need to look at how these needs can be met, in others words; “*What rights do we as citizens have?*”

Learning Task 1: To identify basic human rights

Introduction

Sometimes our human needs are referred to as rights. Rights are those things that are fair and just for a person to have or to be able to do. Every culture has rights, which are similar to those in other cultures. These rights are called universal. (*approx 5 mins*).

Activity 1

- Invite participants, working in pairs to make a list of all the rights they believe they have as human beings (*approx 10 mins*)
(Model: I have a right to live in safety and move from place to place in Ireland.)
 - Gather into large group. Hear sample answers. (*approx 5 mins*)
- Distribute Worksheet 6 - Universal Rights (**page 17**)
- Where appropriate invite participants to share, reading aloud the different rights (*approx 5 mins*)
- Ask participants in small groups to compare both lists and to notice any of the universal rights not included in their own list. (*approx 5 mins*)
- Share findings in large group (*approx 15 mins*)
- Invite participants to recall an experience of exercising a right and share in pairs. Hear sample experiences (*approx 10 mins*)
- Affirm work done (*total time approx 50 mins*).

Learning Task 2: To link Rights and Responsibilities

Introduction

There is greater emphasis to-day on rights even though we are also aware of the violation of human rights which still happens in some countries.

Each right carries with it a corresponding responsibility. Can you imagine a home where parents and children only thought about and exercised their rights?

Activity 1

- Ask participants in groups of three to imagine they are put on a planet where all people have rights only and no responsibilities. Invite them to make a list of 10 words to describe life on this planet. For example; “*My word is chaos*” (*approx 10 mins*)
- Gather back into large group. Record key words on Flip Chart – using the heading: **When we only have rights.** (*approx 10 mins*)
- Invite discussion on the level of happiness on this imaginary planet in response to the questions:
 - ❖ Do you think anyone would be happy in this planet?
 - ❖ If yes who? And why?
 - ❖ Does this in any way resemble our world to-day? (*approx 10 min*)
- Record sample answers on Flipchart

Activity 2 –Exploring the meaning of Responsibilities

Introduction

While we are more and more aware of our rights in to-day’s society we know that we also have responsibilities or obligations.(The Government for example has a responsibility towards us to provide education.) So every child in Ireland has a right to education There is a corresponding responsibility on me as a parent to ensure that my child goes to school and does his/her homework. Every individual has obligations attached to his/her rights. For example we have a right to vote and an obligation or responsibility to go out and vote on polling day.

- In groups of 4 invite participants to match each of the rights included in the sheet ‘*Universal Human Rights*’ with the corresponding responsibility (*approx 10 mins*).
- Model first for example “ *I have a right to health care but I also have an obligation to protect my health by not overeating or overdrinking*” Gather into large group. Hear all responses. (*10 mins*)
- Conclude this activity by discussing each right and responsibility emphasising the responsibility linked to each right (*approx 5 mins*)

Activity 3 To recognise that Responsibility can be accepted or ignored

Distribute slips listing specific human rights (**Worksheet 7, page 18**) to each pair of participants, inviting them without naming the right to describe the kind of place it would be when:

- i) responsibility for that right is accepted and
- ii) responsibility regarding the rights has been ignored. (*approx 10 mins*)

Invite group to identify the right each person is describing (*approx 15 mins*)

For example - When I accept my right to a healthy standard of living I do not overeat and I exercise regularly. When I ignore my responsibility for that right I overeat and do not exercise. When a Government respects the right of people to shelter they have the responsibility to build more houses. The tenant also has a responsibility to maintain the house in good condition. (*total time approx 50 mins*)

Learning Task 3: To Identify personal roles and link them with Rights and Responsibilities.

Introduction

So far we have looked at rights and responsibilities and now we take another step to look at roles. We all play many roles in life and every role carries both rights and responsibilities.

Facilitator gives example of roles he/she plays for example.... ,sister, daughter, neighbour, volunteer etc

Activity 1

- Brainstorm on roles played by participants
- Record on Flipchart *approx (approx 5 mins)*
- Invite participants to choose 3 or 4 roles they play and link the corresponding rights and responsibilities to them (*approx 10 mins*)

Example; Gardai have responsibility to keep law and order and a right to expect co-operation from the public

Activity 2 - Recalling Responsible People

Listen to some stories of people who carried out their roles in a responsible way thereby contributing to the public good.

- On a wall display the 5 portraits of citizens who made a difference (*pages 19,20,21,22,23*).
- Ask participants to gather around this picture gallery.
- Distribute the 5 related story cards (*pages 24-28*) and where appropriate invite participants to join in reading the short accounts. When seated again, gather into groups of 3 to discuss the following questions:

Which story appeals to you most?

Why?

Identify the responsibilities mentioned in each story

What made a difference in each story?

What is the message in these stories for us to-day? (approx 20 mins)

(Alternatively each small group could address two of the questions only)

Activity 3 Naming Roles

Let's take a fresh look at the roles exercised by the people in the gallery and the responsibilities associated with them

In picture 1 (*Worksheet 8A*) for example Tom plays the role of *father, husband, coach, neighbour, citizen, volunteer*

How many roles are the others playing? (total time approx 50 mins)

Learning Task 4: To identify a new step that participants in their various roles can take to make the local community a better place to live.

Introduction; participation in the local area is our way of translating into action our rights and responsibilities in order to exercise our roles as citizens.

Activity 1 To arrive at a shared understanding of the local area

Brainstorm on :

- *All that is good about my area..... (approx 10 mins)*
Record on Worksheet 9 (*page 29*)
- *Things I would like to change ----- (approx 10 mins)*
Record on Worksheet 9 (*page 29*)
- *Identify one issue that requires change. (approx 5 minutes)*

For example - There are no parks for children to play safely in even though there are plenty of green spaces.

- In groups of 3 ask participants to identify one or two actions which would help to bring about change in this issue and make the community a better place in which to live. (Model : a positive action would be to discuss the issue with my neighbours with a view to meeting our local councillor. A negative action would be to do nothing) (*approx 5 mins*)
- Record responses and possible action steps on flipchart (*approx 10 mins*)
- Summarise the sharing, making connections between rights, responsibilities and taking an active role by participating in the life of the community (*approx 5 mins*)
- In conclusion: We have identified an issue that needs to change. However change will not happen without hard work and careful planning. For change to happen it is sometimes necessary to change laws, structures or policies. A further unit “Working for Policy Change at Local Level”, - explores a possible way forward for getting policies changed.

Evaluation

Ask: *What one insight or fact ‘will you take away’ from this unit?
What difference, if any has this programme made to you?*

Materials required for Unit 2

Flip Chart and Markers

Pens or Pencils, Copies of Universal Human Rights (*page 17*)

Slips of paper each with separate human right from chart – ‘Universal Human Rights’ (*page 18*)

Portraits of responsible citizens (*pages 19-23*)

Stories of citizens who lived responsible lives and made a contribution to society (*pages 24-28*)

Your Community – Your Role, Worksheet 9 (*page 29*)

Worksheet 6 Universal Human Rights

Here are some of the main rights listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Everyone is equal no matter what age, sex, race, religion or colour of skin
- Everyone has the right to life, freedom and to be secure
- No one can be kept as a slave
- No one should be tortured or treated in a way that is cruel
- The law should treat everybody in exactly the same way
- No one should be arrested sent to prison or sent away from their country without a good reason
- You have the right to a fair and public trial
- In a trial you are innocent until it can be proven that you are guilty

Everyone has the right to:

- Privacy
- Move about from place to place
- A nationality
- Marry and have a family
- Own property
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Have and express an opinion
- Hold peaceful protests and meetings
- Take part in voting in fair elections
- Work and get equal pay for equal work
- Join a trade union
- Rest and leisure
- A healthy standard of living
- Education.

Here are some of the main rights listed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- **Everyone is equal no matter what age, sex, race, religion or colour of skin**
- **Everyone has the right to life, freedom and to be secure**
- **No one can be kept as a slave**
- **No one should be tortured or treated in a way that is cruel**
- **The law should treat everybody in exactly the same way**
- **No one should be arrested sent to prison or sent away from their country without no good reason**
- **You have the right to a fair and public trial**
- **In a trial you are innocent until it can be proven that you are guilty**

Worksheet 8A

Worksheet 8B

Worksheet 8C

Worksheet 8D

Worksheet 8E

Working for the Good of Others

My name is Tom and I live in a new suburb in north Dublin. I am married to Jane and we have three children ranging in age from 6 years to 14 years. Both of us work part-time and share in the rearing of the children. I am very interested in sports and each of the children is involved in sport in school.

I was invited to become involved in a children's summer play scheme five years ago. My initial reaction was to say "*No I have nothing to contribute*". I had no experience of working with others but decided to give it a try. I gave a commitment for one season and found it both rewarding and challenging. That was five years ago.

Responding to that first invitation has opened many new doors for me. I discovered that I had gifts to be shared and I received back more than I could imagine. My involvement in the community has enriched both my own life and that of my family. I welcome the new horizons that open up each day. Yes, there is a cost but it is worth it !

I now realise that all the opportunities given to me would not have been possible without the many volunteers who freely gave of their time and talents when I was young. I enjoy coaching the soccer teams in the community and I am happy to give back my small contribution so that the community and the world is a better place to live in for everyone.

Shirley's Story and Good Neighbours

Shirley Maloney is a lone parent of two children. Her husband left her when the second child was diagnosed as having cystic fibrosis. It took Shirley a long time to come to terms with the illness of her little son and the departure of her husband. With the help of a good neighbour she came to the realisation that she had the inner resources to deal with what had happened. Other neighbours began to help with babysitting and two friends of her own age took her out a night each week.

Shirley began to take adult education classes in the local family resource centre. One of the courses was an Active Citizenship Course. As a result of this course Shirley began to see the value of voting in each election. She now uses her vote as a means of getting a better health service for children with special needs. At election times Shirley and her friends study the election material of candidates and then vote for those who have been most active for change in health services.

Working for Change

In West Tallaght , a small group of women meet on a regular basis. The group is known as the Concerned and Active Citizens Group. In their area a small child was killed and another was badly injured because of the lack of traffic control measures.

They decided to do something about this problem and about the lack of access to footpaths and roads for wheelchair users. With some help they prepared their case, wrote letters and requested meetings with Local Councillors and the County Manager. To cut a long story short meetings took place between the women and local authority officials. Ramps were provided in all the places identified by the women and footpaths were made accessible to allow for wheelchair access. Road safety signs were also placed in prominent places.

Global Fair Trade

Jimmy Murphy was watching television one night with his family. The programme dealt with African coffee farmers.

One of the farmers' wives Salome told her story.

“There was a time when coffee beans were getting 69 US cents for a kilogram. We slept well and we ate well. We could support our families. But now all we get is 29 US cents. We are broke, we can't buy essentials and we can't send the children to school”.

Before the programme ended, two men spoke about fair trade and explained how goods with the Fairtrade mark help farmers in places like Uganda. Fair trade organisations deal directly with the producers of tea, coffee and bananas and guarantee a fair price. At the end of the programme Jimmy and his wife Ann decided to buy only Fairtrade tea, coffee and bananas and to encourage their friends to do the same. So far twenty other families have joined their Fairtrade Club and they are encouraging local supermarkets to stock Bewleys, Robert Roberts and Barry's Fairtrade teas and coffees as well as Fairtrade bananas and fruit juices. As Jimmy says *“These teas and coffees are little more expensive but every time we buy Fairtrade goods we are helping a family in Africa or Asia. Families are the same all the world over. It is good to know that we are helping families when we buy Fairtrade goods. In a small way we are doing our bit for people far away”.*

The Global Environment

Bob and I became very interested and aware of the environment when our children decided to educate us on this important matter. They began to tell us about what they were learning in school about “*Plant A Tree Week*”.

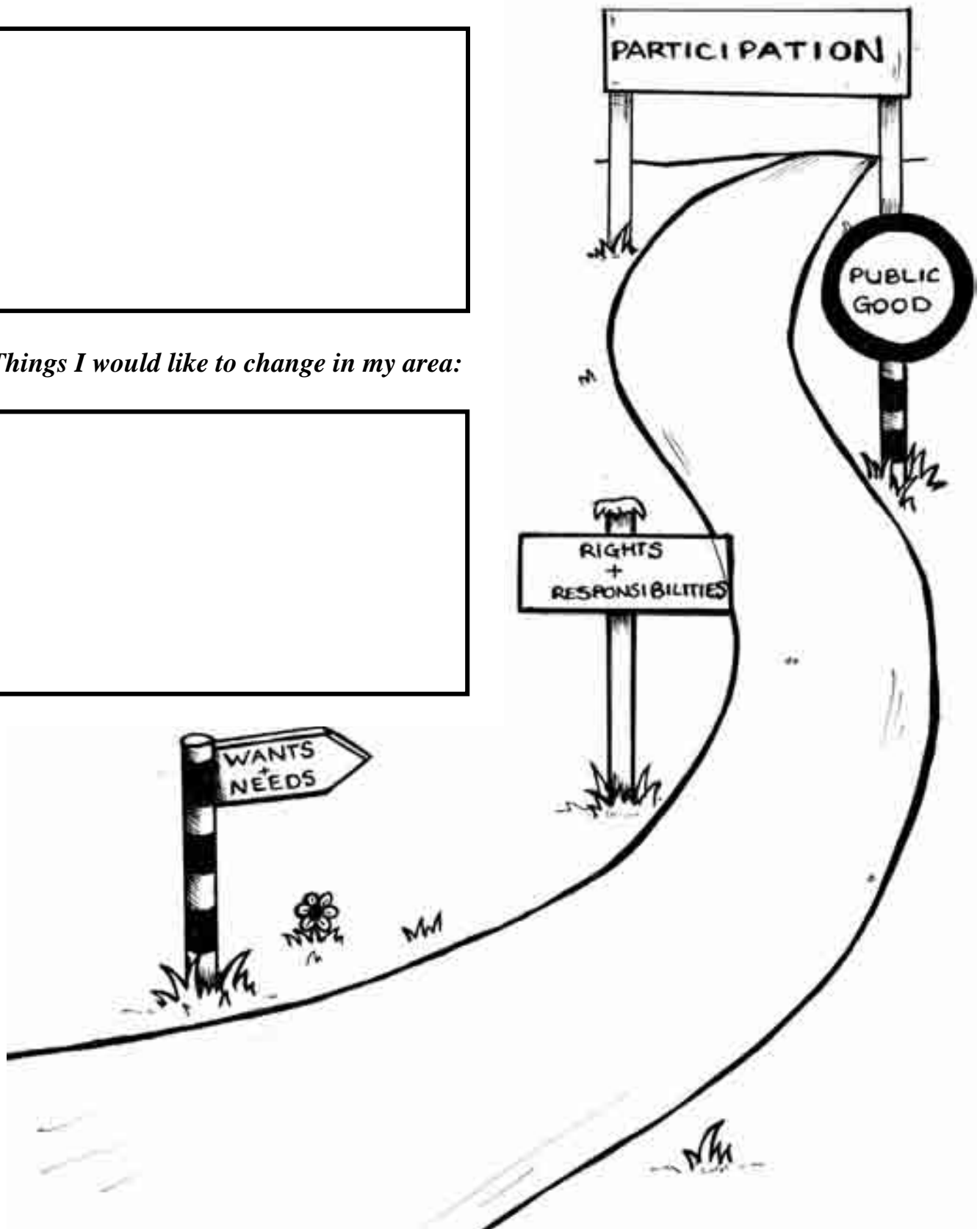
Some of the facts surprised us. We did not know that 15 million acres of forest are being destroyed each year. More importantly we had to learn how this affected climate and wildlife but it seemed so removed from us we wondered what we could do. Discovering that it takes 17 trees to make a ton of paper and that we use and waste so much paper, we realised that we could have an impact. It was not enough to plant new trees, we found opportunities to influence all those in the office not to waste paper but use it sparingly. We made a connection between the destruction of forests and our everyday use of what we take for granted.

Even greater came the surprise that water is a luxury and that one third of the population live with a chronic shortage of water. We looked up some of the facts and decided to take action. We switched from baths to showers, which saved enough water each week to make 1,000 cups of tea. Running water while brushing one’s teeth wastes 5 litres of water. As a family we decided to set up an environmental action group and through education and awareness we believe that we make a difference. We have managed to reduce waste; conserve water, heat and light, avoid using plastics and chemicals; repair and reuse when possible and recycle everything that can no longer be used in its present condition. We learned from that experience that where the world’s environment is concerned, our actions do make a difference.

Your Community Your Role Working for the Public Good

What is good about my area:

Things I would like to change in my area:





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