

# Interdependence Day!

Teaching the Sustainable Development Goals through Drama for All Ages



Pete Mullineaux

  
Afri

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Goals through Drama for All Ages

*Pete Mullineaux*



# PART OF AFRI'S JUST A SECOND PROJECT

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**“Everything is  
interdependent”**

*The Dalai Lama*

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## FOREWORD

Afri first crossed paths with Pete Mullineaux in 2005 on the eve of our annual Famine Walk in Mayo, when students from local schools presented a drama piece on a related theme which they had devised with him. It was a fortuitous meeting and began a relationship that has since seen Pete become an integral part of our global citizenship education team. We are delighted to publish *Interdependence Day*, following the release of *Exploring Development Education through Drama and Theatre* in 2014.

Pete is without doubt among the leading proponents of theatre and drama as a means of education and awareness-raising on global issues. It is extraordinary to see him walk into a classroom of—sometimes reluctant—TY students and within minutes have them on their feet doing ‘freeze-frames’, ‘spatial triangles’, ‘hot-seating’ or whatever is the chosen methodology for the day! His explanation as to why he uses theatre and drama is insightful and revealing: ‘it is... to “show”—illustrate, reveal, demonstrate, throw a light on a subject in a way that invites/challenges those watching to ‘see things’ in new ways’.

With *Interdependence Day* we get the benefit of Pete’s lifetime of work in this area. The book addresses the Sustainable Development Goals, and is the fourth in a series of educational resources published by Afri under the title ‘*Just a Second*’. These books emerged from an Afri campaign to invite people to stop and think about the devastating impact of the war industry on people and planet. We began this campaign in 1991 when the annual global arms budget was in the region of \$800 billion. We demonstrated what could be achieved with the equivalent of ‘just a second’ of that money, with which we funded 26 anti-poverty projects around the world.

In the meantime, as the planet cries out for action on the climate and biodiversity crisis and the Sustainable Development Goals remain unachieved, the financial cost of the war industry in 2019 exceeded a mind-boggling \$1900 billion! Yet, unbelievably, tackling the war industry is not even included as one of the SDGs. Why? Because the countries making millions from the misery caused by this industry refused to have it included!

Such obscene priorities underline the importance of this publication, the urgent need for awareness-raising and action, such as that inspired by the inimitable Greta Thunberg. Greta's gesture of sitting in front of Parliament with the simple message that 'our house is on fire' has sparked a global wave of youth activism on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

We must build on this and continue to work, to educate and to insist that the tired old politics of exploitation, division and destruction is over and must be replaced, urgently, by one in which care for people and planet is centre-stage.

*Interdependence Day* is a vitally important stepping-stone on the road to a brighter, more sustainable and more humane future.

**– Joe Murray, Afri Coordinator – 2020**

## PREFACE

The old adage, “making a drama out of a crisis”, can be perceived as an exaggerated and possibly self-indulgent response to a challenging event or difficulty. Some of the criticism aimed at Greta Thunberg suggested she was taking the climate change situation far too personally, getting carried away by her emotions and generally being over-dramatic in her response. It’s true she speaks from the heart and when addressing adults says such challenging things as “I don’t want your hope, I want you to panic.” What often gets missed is that she also offers the very calm assertion: “Please, I simply want you to listen to the scientists.” The truth is we need to combine both approaches: yes, let’s panic in the sense of appreciating the urgency, as Greta also says, “the house is on fire.” But we do also need calm, clear thinking and hope. Through her own clear thinking and actions and the sincerity of her heart Greta obviously does offer hope, as well as inspiration, especially to billions of young people. Between panic and hope I actually think it’s both rather than one or the other and I believe that’s what Greta means taken in the round.

In this book we will take the phrase ‘making a drama out of a crisis’ literally in a double-sense: firstly, the crisis will provide the *raw material* out of which we can construct the drama, and then secondly, we will be exploring how *making drama* might help us find a way ‘out’ of the crisis, as we use our imaginations to think outside the box.

And clearly there IS a crisis: endless wars, pandemic diseases, mass poverty, systemic racism, climate change, rampant species destruction and soil depletion, gender discrimination and other gross inequalities... so any ‘drama’ we invent will merely reflect the dramatic situation that already exists. But in exploring the SDGs we will also endeavour to go beyond simply being against these obstacles and try to frame pictures of an alternative and improved reality.

The Coronavirus crisis has been a reminder that we are a global species; how we are deeply interconnected with one another as well as with everything in Nature making up our one and only planet Earth. If we do ever have to face in reality the well-worn science-fiction scenario of an ‘alien invader’ (see Project Eight), it will surely not be the clichéd militaristic response portrayed in films like *Independence Day*, (same old men with guns saving everyone...yawn), that will protect us. As with the

challenge from the virus, it will be a chance to show our togetherness and solidarity, and that we care for one another. It will hopefully reflect how much we have succeeded in creating partnership for our goals, towards making things better in a way that includes everyone: making an entirely different movie altogether, “*Interdependence Day!*”

Note: this teaching resource is part of Afri’s *Just a Second Schools Programme*, supported by Irish Aid through WorldWise Global Schools, and builds on earlier publications relating to this work (see *Appendix* at the end of this book).

## INTRODUCTION

### *Why do drama?*

In a school context, it offers a chance for pupils to get out of their chairs and move around, exercise bodies alongside tongues and imaginations, to create something out of thin air, directly experience empathy and become empowered, articulate a wide range of thoughts and feelings – and have lots of fun while exploring important themes and issues. Or put another way, it's about *play*: young people have an instinctive love of drama because it comes close to how they behave in the playground. The main difference in this instance is the focus on play as a vehicle for targeted learning – exploration of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs). While there are many excellent resources available for examining global issues through discussion, written projects and interactive board games (see reference section), here drama improvisation is the main portal to opening up enquiry, which can then lead into non-drama follow up activities, extending the learning right across all subjects in both primary and secondary curriculums.

It offers a break in the classroom routine and a change of approach for the teacher. Rather than simply passing on knowledge he or she already possesses, the teacher explores the issues alongside the children, perhaps finding out things not known or fully appreciated beforehand. It's also an opportunity to witness the class from a novel angle, offering a contrasting perspective on how they are developing, both individually and as a group.

At the heart of this book is a fusing of development education with developmental learning and a fostering of emotional intelligence in helping the child become more aware of both themselves and the world they live in. "Know thyself" was written on the oracle at Delphi in ancient Greece. Overall, the aim at all times is to facilitate pupil involvement that is empathetic, participatory, inclusive and empowering.

The eight projects are very accessible and mainly use just one drama device – 'freeze-frames' which any teacher and class can quickly become experts in handling, and then apply to exploring each theme or issue. It's important to note too that the teacher is never required to be an 'actor' – and because this is *process drama*, with no built-in expectation of a 'final product', the teacher does not require any particular expertise with regard to formal theatre.

## ***Age range and appropriate content***

Through over thirty years of teaching drama in primary and secondary school classrooms and other contexts such as youth theatres, I've discovered that content is flexible in application and can easily be made suitable to a wide range of age groups. All of these projects have been tried and tested in the classroom many times, with older teenagers enjoying the same material and drama structures as children as young as four. Everyone likes to play: small children, teenagers, even adults! That said, I've indicated within each project where there might be a step-up into further layers of enquiry aimed specifically at older pupils. All eight projects contain extensive follow-up suggestions that connect with both primary and secondary curriculums. However the teacher is asked to bear in mind that exploring global issues is a fluid process in which geography, science & technology, history, maths, economics, languages, creative thinking, politics, personal wellbeing, social ethics and values all constantly interact and overlap and where the dots are continually joining up to form the 'bigger picture'. In line with one of the key educational objectives promoted by Irish Aid and the WorldWide Global Schools scheme, the aim here is to see development education linking across the curriculum and contributing to a whole-school approach, helping to foster a sense of global citizenship.

At primary level in Ireland, the drama content strand is: *“Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.”*

I suggest this approach/philosophy can be carried on into secondary education – and in fact into adult, life-long learning, (which of course includes teachers, who are hopefully always looking to learn from each new venture).

## ***But doesn't this require some expertise in drama?***

I've spent enough time in schools talking to teachers to know that there are mixed feelings around doing drama in the classroom. At primary level in Ireland it is integrated into the 'Arts' programme – and seen as an integral part of English. Some teachers will embrace this and set aside time for drama on a regular basis so that it becomes as natural to both themselves and their class as sitting down at their desks. Others will have reservations, be not so comfortable with this mode of operation, and minimise the amount of drama they do. At post-primary

level there is even less room in the timetable: most of my own work has been with transition years (age 15-16) and a fair amount of 1<sup>st</sup> years, (i.e. those not immediately locked into exam cycles). I'm hoping this book will go some way towards addressing these issues, firstly by removing some of the mystique around doing drama and the idea that it is beyond the reach of a regular teacher and only fit for someone who is a drama specialist. All teachers should feel at ease with what is being presented here. Secondly I want to get away from the idea of drama as some sort of exotic add-on, or brief interruption to 'serious learning': seeing it rather as a readily available means of exploration relevant to all subject areas, manageable within a regular classroom, and simply offering an alternative mode of engagement for both students and teacher.

Seen in the simplest terms, learning in the classroom has to combine four interacting components: *imagination*, *cooperation*, *articulation* and *reflection*. A key distinction when doing drama is how *imagination* becomes the initial main driver, around which the other three then connect and cohere. One might assert that in a regular classroom context it's more often than not the other way around, with imagination coming last: a lesson proceeds with the *teacher articulating* (i.e. using *their* voice to pass on knowledge), requiring the pupils' *cooperation* (staying quiet and listening), with fully active participation kept on hold until *reflection* (linked to *imagination*) is invited in the form of discussion or a written response. A drama-led enquiry will typically invite imaginative participation almost from the start, the teacher effectively saying, "So let's think on our feet." In a geography lesson looking at threatened eco-systems, a suggestion might be: "What if we made ourselves into a forest that is threatened by a logging company?" Having opened up the physical and mental space for imaginative exploration, the pupils will find themselves naturally and organically cooperating, articulating and reflecting as the activity progresses.

### ***But how do I evaluate what is happening?***

Using the four simple basic components outlined above, the teacher can evaluate how a lesson is progressing at any given moment, as well as how a class individually and collectively are developing over a number of weeks and months. Observing them working, one child for instance might be seen to have lots of *imaginative* ideas, feeding this creative energy into the groups they are working with. Another child is good at organising others, getting everyone to *cooperate* and

work together. One child is fairly restrained in terms of *articulating* thoughts and feelings during the improvisations, but then reveals a deeper connection when *reflecting* back during discussion or doing written and visual follow-up work.

During the course of a single lesson, or over a longer time period, the teacher can strengthen any one of these interacting components, such as introduce a new angle to stretch imaginations, incorporate an exercise to develop articulation, underline the need for more cooperation (perhaps they're a bit giddy and not listening to each other), or sense a good moment to introduce a contrasting perspective to deepen reflection.

Note: Throughout the book I will use the title “teacher” but readers may of course describe their role as leader/facilitator/director, depending on the context they are working in.

### ***Interdependence Day! Seeing the SDGs as interconnected***

Regarding the SDGs themselves, it's important to take on board how they constantly overlap and interact when exploring any global theme or issue; so while we can target specific ones, e.g. Life on Land (SDG 15) in Project One, this soon connects with other SDGs such as SDG 13 on climate action. Selecting another single issue, child labour (explored in Projects Five and Six), we find that there is no SDG actually assigned solely to that; rather, it is a sub-section of SDG 8: decent work and economic growth (SDG 8.7). But we can start there, taking in the immediate connections to SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) and SDG 4 (quality education), then bring in SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 3 (good health & wellbeing), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 16 (peace and justice), and finally see it all in terms of SDG 17 (partnership for the goals). So, let's get started!

## THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



### **PROJECT ONE: “Freeze-Trees/Seeds of Hope”**

– exploring life on land, the importance of bio-diversity and our inter-dependence with other species and the whole of Nature; linking to climate action and solidarity with indigenous peoples. (Connecting to multiple SDGs: initially 15 & 13, then 10, 12 & 16)

# **SESSION ONE:**

## **double lesson of 80 minutes approx.**

*Age range: infants and upwards*

This first project begins with the simplest of approaches and has been used many times, even with very young children who have never done drama in the classroom before, so it's a good way in for any class and teacher who want to find their 'drama feet'. At a certain stage the issues explored will become more complex and sophisticated and I will indicate those points where the material might be deemed more appropriate for more mature age groups. Having said that, I strongly advise that even older pupils begin with this opening section as it is fun to do and establishes important foundations both in terms of basic protocol when taking part in drama improvisation and in introducing the specific issues being explored in this project. Bear in mind too that older pupils may not necessarily be that familiar with these drama structures or may benefit from being reminded. Also, as I say in the introduction, everyone likes to play. I have invariably found that older teenagers enjoy this as much as four year olds.

### **STAGE ONE**

#### *Preparation*

If working in the classroom, pull back the tables and chairs to the sides so the pupils have room to move around. Stand in a circle. You might begin with some simple warm-ups: stretches and bends while standing in one spot – some focus on breathing – then moving around exploring spatial awareness. (There are a few suitable exercises described in the *Glossary* at the end of this book.)

## “Freeze”

Now introduce the ‘freeze’ command. Pupils move around the room or jiggle on the spot, like when they play statues. When you say “freeze” they freeze. Take a moment to let them get this right, so that they all become immediately still. This is about establishing a sense of everyone being both an individual and part of the class collective, which will be even more important when moving into the main drama. It puts an immediate onus on *cooperation* accompanying *imagination*, and invites focused *articulation* – you might for instance get one child who is over excited, or wants to show off a bit by standing on their head or tip toes so that when you call “freeze” they will not be able to hold their position. Be patient and gently suggest: “Find something you can hold”.

## “Trees”

After a couple of “freezes” to bed this in, introduce the “trees” command. Tell them that when you say this they have to become a tree – rooted to the spot – but this time they are a physical thing, not just an abstract shape. Do it yourself too so they can see how a tree can move its trunk and branches (arms) and twigs (fingers) – but very important: its roots (feet) are fixed in one place.

Ask them to space out in the room so the trees are not crowded and branches are able to move without touching another tree. Now when they move around again, you can alternate between calling “freeze” and “trees”. This is fun – especially as the sounds are so similar. With the very young it’s great developmentally in terms of mind/body coordination and learning how to respond to rules and structures while playing. Children enjoy getting this simple distinction between “freeze” and “trees” right. So don’t forget to praise them when they ‘get it’.

Standing still as trees, get them to flex their trunks, bend their branches and shake their twigs and leaves. Point out that the room is now a forest or jungle.

## STAGE TWO

Now it's time to fill this environment with animal life. You can say, "Let's see what's happening down there below" – "Oh yes, look the forest is full of...rabbits". Now the children are invited to become rabbits, hopping around – until you call freeze – and then continue by saying, "and snakes" – inviting them to unfreeze and slither around. Then add one more: maybe, "elephants".

Call "trees" and they're back again, looking down at what they've just created in their imaginations. Note the developmental learning here: they have already played a number of characters that take them outside of themselves and now have a moment to *reflect* back on what has happened so far. As trees, they have been invited to think about the animals, opening up empathy channels. Soon they will have a chance to be animals (and human beings), extending that empathy back to the trees.

Repeat the above, adding more animals – including small as well as large: "What's that down there under a leaf...spiders!" This is to establish that all things great and small are part of this rich and wonderful world. This gives an opportunity for them to explore different body shapes and use of space: tall animals that stretch up (giraffes), or that crawl around (beetles). You can also provide a contrast between loud animals (monkeys, lions, gorillas), and quieter creatures (sloth, deer, or mouse). Note how while this activity is high-energy there is also the built-in calming mechanism offered at any time by calling "trees" and holding that for a moment. Developmentally, this is helpful especially for small children learning to move from high-energy to being calm and still.

The teacher will sense a good time to move on. It's always a consideration in drama exploration how to keep a balance between maintaining a flow of energy while allowing moments for pauses that invite reflection (both in and out of role). Here it's best to keep the energy moving forward, leaving deeper contemplation until later.

## STAGE THREE

Tell the class you are going to narrate a simple storyline which you will all follow together. It's important to stress to them that for the moment they should follow only what you say and not run on ahead beyond where the story has got to.

Say "trees" and when they are in position begin your narration: "Together we are a forest or jungle. Our ancestors have been here for millions of years. We are a world of trees and other things around us that are alive and grow, such as plants and animals. There are also inanimate objects – rivers, mountains, the earth – that might not seem alive but over long passages of time do see gradual change. We are aware how much we are a part of the whole of nature."

(Pause to let this sink in)

"One day, the forest was as it always was, with all the usual sights and sounds; perhaps a gentle breeze coming through the branches and leaves, (allow your own tree to gently ripple a little) – but then, very slowly the wind became stronger, (move your own tree), and even stronger – a storm brewing, a storm like no other, until...finally it was too much – the whole forest was flattened!"

Everyone falls to the ground, you can crumple up too.

"Everything was absolutely still..."

While lying down, or if it's more comfortable you can kneel or squat while continuing to narrate: "The once proud and wonderful forest was no more. (Again allow a few seconds for this meaningful moment to sink in.) But already, change is happening, down on the forest floor, beneath some leaves, tiny seeds are stirring, (begin to uncurl yourself) cracking open their skins – and growing, very...very slowly, (don't let them rush ahead of you; allow them to really enjoy this slow uncurling of their bodies), becoming green shoots, young saplings – growing until, (stretch right up), in what might seem a very long time to human beings but a short time to a tree, the forest is back again." Allow them a moment to enjoy the warm feeling of being back together as a community of trees, and a sense of themselves as individuals within the collective. In terms of inclusion these pauses are very important in ensuring everyone is taking part on an equal basis, all using their

imaginings, articulating, cooperating – and now reflecting again on their ‘characters’ (as trees) and what they have just experienced.

## **STAGE FOUR**

### ***Remembering the creatures of the forest/jungle***

Continue: “So the trees are back, but what about the creatures of the forest? What has happened to them? Yes, their descendents are back too, a whole new generation with stories they have heard passed down from their parents and grandparents about the great storm.” Now say: “We are going to gather into our sacred circle and have a meeting of all the animals.” As they sit, add how you are going to take on being one yourself, hosting this conference.

### ***Introduce yourself as their wise Snake Leader***

Demonstrate this by saying a long “Ssssssssss” (meaning “welcome everybody”) and doing a snake motion with your arm, so they know who you are – their wise Snake Leader. Repeat your sound and invite them to respond using *your* voice (so they all say “Sssss”) as if to say, “Yes, we are all here”.

### ***Introduce the ‘translation button’***

Press an imaginary ‘translation’ button in the air (which you can do whenever you or someone else wants to speak in English or Irish) and in your normal teacher’s voice, explain that this is a chance for everyone to tell/share stories about their lives in the forest, introduce themselves to those who perhaps don’t already know them, and talk about what they know about the Great Storm.

### ***Getting to know everyone and the different languages of the forest/jungle***

The idea is for everyone to ‘talk’ from now on using the voice of a chosen animal, starting with saying a simple “Hello” to the circle. Perhaps the first animal to speak is a mouse, “Squeak...” So Snake invites the whole class to repeat this “Hello” back, using that same mouse voice (“squeak!”). This is consolidating a solo voice/chorus pattern that underlines acceptance of all contributions.

Go around the circle until everyone has been introduced. Continue as Snake, saying “Ssssssss” (meaning “well done everybody!”). Now press the translation button again and continue in English. “I, snake, invite you all to tell your stories, one at a time. We want to hear from everyone, big and small, loud and soft voices, all of you are equally important.” With young children they’re usually dying to speak, with their hands up excitedly, so make eye-contact and nod for one of them to begin. If this first child hasn’t quite grasped it yet and starts talking in English, simply put your finger on your lip a moment, press the translation button – they should get it or gently insist, “Please continue to speak using your animal voice.”

### *Options for listening and responding*

Suppose the first child starts speaking in a mouse voice: “Squeak, squeak, squeak...”, the teacher can respond using her Snake voice – “Sssssss?” and an encouraging nod of her head indicating to mouse to continue to tell their story. Snake can also press the translation button at any time and say something like: “Oh, mouse, yes, it’s hard to imagine what it must have like for your ancestors, with trees falling all around.” Mouse might continue in their mouse voice, or they might follow the translation connection and speak in English. You’ll find the group become quickly adept at switching between the two and you can indicate which one you require at any point by pressing the button or using your Snake voice.

Now move onto the next child with their hand up: “Sssss?” you ask. This child might be a lion, and will roar. Snake invites the group to roar back. Again, indicate with a nod of your head for Lion to continue, and use your “Sssssss” voice to draw them out. It can be fun for you to project onto Lion what Snake thinks s/he is saying by pressing the translation button and saying, e.g. “Gosh, that’s quite a loud roar, I hope you’re not cross Lion – and sorry by the way to have dragged you along to this meeting, I suppose you were lazing around in the sunshine as usual?” Lion and the other kids will likely laugh, but if Lion frowns and takes umbrage at being misunderstood, you can always say quickly, “Oh, I’m very sorry, I misunderstood you, it’s been a good while since I spoke ‘Lion’ language.” (This is something that will be developed later – the wonderful notion that each animal can speak all the other languages of the forest, which will link to themes such as multiculturalism and social inclusion.) For now there’s already the amazing idea that Mouse can

speak Lion, Snake, Monkey, Hummingbird and hundreds of different languages.

Continue round the circle allowing everyone to contribute their stories. Snake in questioning can ask them to specifically say what they know about the storm, what they have heard about this piece of their shared history. After the first one or two to establish the idea, keep these contributions fairly brief, so you can be sure to get around the whole circle and include everybody.

Before you end this you can ask them all as a group: what if it happened again, what would they do – would they be brave or frightened – would they crawl, run, fly, climb, swim or dig trying to escape? Would they just look out for themselves or would they try and help others?

## **STAGE FIVE**

### ***out-of-role reflection on the drama exploration***

Snake presses the translation button and respectfully thanks everyone for their wonderful stories and contributions.

Still sitting in the circle, bring them out of role and as *teacher* acknowledge how interesting the whole experience was from your point of view. Now there is an opening for feedback: perhaps they have questions or want to comment on what just happened? This can become a whole class discussion or you might prefer to break them into small groups. (Note: during discussions always stress the importance of them being positive listeners, not to judge or comment negatively on what someone else is saying.)

## **FOLLOW-UP**

Here are a few initial follow-up activities that can add immediate enrichment to what has been discovered, linking into other areas of the curriculum, (both primary & secondary).

### ***Art (all ages)***

Do a 'self-portrait' of your chosen animal, or a picture of the forest/jungle. Or linking to what has happened in the historical record, make a 'cave-painting' that tells a story.

### ***Dance/music (all ages)***

In groups, invent a dance for a chosen animal, and/or a dance that captures elements in nature like the wind (relating back to the story), or rain, or a 'dance of the trees'.

### ***Languages (all ages)***

Develop the notion of a forest or jungle world with multiple languages. Get together in pairs as animals and have conversations. See how much can be communicated through tone of voice, body language and facial gestures. (This will also be developed in *Project Three: A Piece of the Cake*.)

### ***English (journaling) (age 6 upwards)***

As an animal write a diary entry (in the first person) for a typical day. They can change to another animal from the one they played in the drama if they'd prefer. Focus on how this project is about extending empathy for other human beings to other living creatures on the planet. They can choose a well-known animal or perhaps something unusual and exotic.

### ***English (poetry) (age 8 upwards)***

Do a little preparation for this by reminding them of the five senses. Invite them to shut their eyes and imagine being an animal anywhere: it doesn't have to be forest or jungle, it could be desert, mountains, in a lake or ocean, in the sky or deep in the earth. Using their imaginations, what can they see, hear, smell, taste, touch (or what touches them)?

Help them to think and write in phrases. Give them "tree" as an example of something their animal can see: ask them to write down "tree" and add one adjective (e.g. 'old'), then another, and then one more. Now they might have "Old, dead oak tree..." a complete phrase and the language is getting more detailed and richer. Say how this is "painting a picture with words" – like filling in a blank canvas. Move onto the other senses: what does their animal hear? Emphasise the value of the other senses beyond sight and hearing for an animal e.g. smell and touch. Does their particular animal use touch, hearing or smell more than sight? Also comment on how this opening phrase already begins to reveal the terrain the animal lives in: trees, desert, mountain, the air, sea...

Ask them to do this ‘adjectives’ exercise with something else in their landscape, e.g. the sky.

Now, rather than inviting them to write a complete ‘poem’ (which might inhibit some children), continue taking them through it slowly line by line; asking questions one at a time, so they are responding at the same pace as a whole class. You ask a question and each of them writes a line in response. Begin as above with lines that respond to each of the senses: what can their animal see/hear/smell/ taste/touch? By giving them the relatively simple task of answering your questions one at a time, it means everyone can progress together; no one will be left behind.

Note too how they have dived straight into the poem, entering immediately into the animal’s world without having to use prose-like introductions such as “One day...or once upon a time..”

For the next few lines ask them what their animal is *thinking* about right now. What might be on its mind? What is its daily or nightly routine, how does it eat, what does it need to do to find food? Now ask them to write a phrase that involves their animal *moving*: does it run, climb, slither, swim or fly? Ask: is it alone or part of a group? The last couple of lines might now link: e.g. “Climbing through the branches I see my family and friends all around me.” Move on to what are its main preoccupations; its fears? How does it relate to other species of animals? Extend this suspended belief into asking: what does the animal *imagine*, (beyond the five senses, e.g. it hears a noise somewhere in the distance and imagines...?) What does it *dream* about? This line-by-line questioning can go on for as long as you want. Note how this poem is a form of self-portrait. By now there are around a dozen lines to these poems – with perhaps more to come!

Also note how the whole class has shared the same structure, so later when they read them out in class there’s a sense of sharing a common way of experiencing things. But it also leaves room for individuality in each child’s choice of words and their range of imaginative thinking.

## *Languages/Poetry continued*

Invite them to consider how words on the page could be arranged in another way to suit how the animal 'speaks'. You can widen this to point out how a poem about e.g. a river, might flow with long lines running right across the page and on into the next line, and with little punctuation – contrasted with a poem about a pond full of water-lilies, evoking stillness. You can also introduce them to the idea of 'concrete' poems: e.g. a poem about a mountain might be narrow at the top and have longer lines at the bottom. Applied to their animal, Snake might write long, slithering sentences, with running on lines (enjambment); Squirrel might speak in punctuated staccato short phrases – maybe even leave some gaps between words to suggest the animal leaping. Frog's words might jump up in the air and down again. Think again about how the animal moves rhythmically: would the lines run, amble, stroll, rush, dash, flow, dart, leap, climb, swoop, drop etc? Think about the differences in movement and pattern for sloth, shark, kestrel...

To try this out they could take a couple of sentences from the piece they have already written and give it this new dimension.

They can also experiment by mixing up regular words with animal sounds, e.g. "Ssss...sometimes I ssss...noar as I lazzzze in the sss...sun, (snake). Or, "I like to rrrrr...oar as I rrrrr...run!!!" (lion).

# CONNECTING TO THE SDGS

(age 10 upwards)

We can now extend this rich learning experience into making direct links to the SDGs, noting how students have already begun exploring Life on Land (SDG 15). There is an opening now for making a connection with SDG 13 (climate action) by talking about the storm as an ‘extreme weather event’ linked to global warming. Their experience of being in role as trees, seeds and animals can be re-visited in terms of the vulnerability, but also the resilience of eco-systems in responding to such threats as climate change and soil erosion. We can sense how more SDGs are implicitly there in the background: SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG 16 (with its focus on partnership), SDG 10 (reducing inequalities), and others such as SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production).

## **Extending their earlier poems to include environmental issues**

Talk to the class about changes in their animal’s environment that might be due to climate change or human activity. Ask them to add one or two lines to their poems relating to this, as each animal is invited to note changes: the number of storms, fires, lack of water, strange loud buzzing sounds in the distance (chainsaws...?).

Now that the poem is going wider and deeper, ask them to add anything important that they feel can’t be left out. Imagine their animal got to ‘speak’ as a guest at the UN, and they had this one and only chance to remind human beings of their existence – their importance, vulnerability, what they have to offer: give these animals a *voice*.

Note: when these pieces are read out in class they can be very powerful just as they are – they are already ‘poems’. Also, if the animal isn’t named in the title or within the poem, the other children can wait until the poem is finished then try to guess what it is, which adds to the enjoyment.

## *Science & the environment*

Put the focus back on the trees. They may have written about them creatively and imaginatively in their poems, but what is a tree exactly? Here's a chance to learn about its different parts; ask what does it need to grow? Look at different kinds of trees, species that suit particular soils and climate. Check out their history – when did they first appear in the historical record; see how they have come and gone with ice ages etc. Ask, what are they vulnerable to? Talk about Ireland and the bog pine and how ancient trees are preserved in certain soils and conditions. What does a tree 'do', how does it breathe – what does it breathe out? What does this mean for us – look at interdependence and symbiosis – how would we survive in a world without trees? How and why are trees threatened? Link it all to bio-diversity.

## *More English (poetry or journaling)*

On another occasion the class can extend their empathy to include inanimate objects: plants, rocks, rivers – giving these 'things' a voice. Objects like mountains, trees, rivers, may have seen hundreds, thousands, millions of years go by – will have stored up amazing memories, and have profound stories to tell. Give them the ability to sense like a human being: what do they see, hear? (This helps situate an object by identifying the terrain around it.) Does it move, or is it still? Note how all of this overlaps with **science, geography and history** – is anything completely still: think of tectonic plates and long-term movements in the Earth's crust, which might lead into an investigation into the ancient continents of Pangaea and Gondwanaland. Invite them to give their objects thoughts, feelings, imaginations, hopes and dreams, fears for the future. Imagine this river or mountain gets to speak at the UN? Maybe turn this poem into a speech? This might sound a little strange, but only a short while back it seemed crazy that a teenage girl would be invited to speak. In their last poem, they might have invited an orang-utan or another representative of a threatened species to speak. So yes, why not ask a tree? Don't forget this isn't supposed to be 'real': we are working through a fictional lens, the imagination – today's speculation is often tomorrow's truth. Arguably the mess the world is in today results from too much cold pragmatism and a lack of imagination. We have to be able to think outside the box, to come up with new ideas.

## Geography/History/CSPE/SPHE

### *Alternative wisdoms*

Develop this theme of ‘different ways of seeing’ with a project on the wisdom of indigenous peoples, e.g. Native Americans, to whom an eagle or river ‘speaking’ would seem totally natural. How the respect that was then given to Nature tied-in with recognition that human beings lived as part of it not above it. You can also relate this back to cave drawings and how ancient this connection with nature and the world of soul and spirit is. There is a story from a part of Africa that contains the idea that daytime is too bright to really see anything: to have true ‘vision’ you need darkness. (Connect this to *Richard Moore’s story below*, P30.)

### *Introducing historical injustice*

Extend the project into investigating indigenous peoples around the world who live in close interaction with Nature and bring in how over centuries these people were systematically robbed of their lands – which were sometimes ‘exchanged’ for handfuls of beads or shells, and who were then driven off those lands where they’d lived for thousands of years. This injustice was repeated all over the world, in Central & South America, Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, Oceania, the Arctic, Australia and New Zealand. These people had their own ancient cultures, (e.g. look at cave painting in Australia and South Africa). Tasmanians had been living on their island for 30,000 years, but were driven to extinction by European colonialists in less than 100 years. On his first visit to Ireland in 1984, after being invited by Afri, Desmond Tutu said: **“When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said ‘Close your eyes and let us pray.’ When we opened our eyes we had the Bible and they had the land.”** This quote in itself might link to a project on Apartheid in South Africa.

The Choctaw people, like most Native-American tribes had their lands taken by European colonisers and were forced to re-locate hundreds of miles away in terrible weather conditions, so that thousands perished. The “trail of tears” is a phrase used to describe this terrible series of events. (Recommended reading: *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown.) Ireland has a particular connection to this in that during the Great Famine (*An Gorta Mor*) somehow the surviving Choctaw people managed to collect and send money to Ireland to show their solidarity.

Afri has its own relationship through Choctaw Gary Whitedeer, who has led their annual Famine Walk in Louisburgh Co. Mayo. (Another useful reference here would be *Just a Second: Lessons from History* by Danny Cusack; see *Appendix*.) The class might enquire into how power structures linking to war and conquest are the background to so much of the inequality and injustice in the world today, either through outright show of force (weapons) or economic bullying of weaker/poorer countries by powerful/rich countries through unfair trade deals that cause further suffering and exploitation. Haiti is another example: after the local population made up of ex-slaves won independence from their French colonial master, European powers colluded together in granting France the right to demand reparation payments for 'lost revenue'. This amounted to multiple billions in today's money and crippled Haiti's economy for over 100 years into the future, down to this day where it remains one of the poorest countries in the world, finding it almost impossible to respond to disasters like the 2010 earthquake. Within countries too, the gap between rich and poor widens: the top 1% of the population of the USA now owns fifteen times more than the bottom 50%!

### ***Linking geography, history, economics, science & environment, ethics & values***

Continue to link the exploitation of peoples with the exploitation of the environments they live in. We have already touched on how extreme winds can be caused by global warming: think as well about damage caused by fires recently in Australia, California, Alaska, Brazil, Indonesia, across Africa – even as I write these lines, huge swathes of the Siberian tundra, even parts of the Arctic are on fire. Much of this destruction is hardly reported. Consider how these fires and the damage to human and wildlife habitats are often caused or encouraged by reckless human activity – mining and logging companies, palm oil producers: ask what drives this behaviour, is it greed, profit, insecurity, class and wealth divisions? Are there connecting gender issues in terms of 'who' runs the world?

Look at areas of the world where trees are threatened by climate change and human activity such as logging and the clearing of space for farmers to grow cash crops like soya and palm oil. 15 billion trees are cut down every year, that's 476 per second! Trees contribute in

multiple ways to our survival, particularly through soaking up carbon emissions. Connect this to soil depletion, destruction of water systems and how all of this returns full circle to make everything in nature more vulnerable. Examine how over-reliance on fertilisers and pesticides is then destroying the soil further as well as producing cancers and other effects harmful to both wildlife and human beings. Take as an example the catastrophic decline in bee populations linked directly to certain pesticides. Connect this to the way commercial interests of powerful mega-companies continue to overrule safety, good health, and sustainability of food production in the long term.

Reflect back on the in-role exploration of being animals. Extend this discussion to identifying animal species that are threatened, in forests, jungles, lakes. Give example of fires in Brazil or Indonesia caused by deforestation encouraged by governments and the threat to animals like the jaguar and orang-utan. Think about the billions of animals, as well as the plant-life destroyed in the 2020 Australian wildfires. Extend this empathy back again to looking at human groups that are threatened by destruction of their habitats such as in the Amazon or Arctic.

### *Seeds of Hope and Sustainability*

Each of us has the power to intervene in this death-cycle, to contribute something positive to ensuring some kind of sustainable balance between ourselves and nature. Focus on the importance of biodiversity and the inter-dependence of everything: e.g. our reliance on bees and other insects. Think back to the drama experience of being 'seeds'. Look again at the importance of seeds and the soil they grow in. **It is estimated that after billions of years, the planet now has barely 30 years of sustainable soil left, due to our destructive agricultural practices.** Isn't that incredible and terrifying? Do a project just on 'the soil'. Did they know that even a handful of healthy soil contains billions of micro-organisms that are essential for growing plants – our food? Regular over-farming and reliance on mono-cultures along with irresponsible use of pesticides and fertilisers is degrading this natural fertility. We have already mentioned the wilful destruction by individuals, companies and governments of vital supports to maintaining fertile land: clean air and water-systems, trees, plants and fungi, plus the decimation of insect species that help keep the soil alive – then on top of all that, we have climate change caused by a wide range of destructive human activities. And then we add more salt to the wound by throwing away half the food we produce!

## ***From humus to hubris and back again***

Link all of the above to examining the hubris of our species: how what were ‘advanced’ human societies for their time, once great and powerful civilisations, ultimately self-destructed because of endless warfare and abuse of their eco-systems that made them unsustainable. Witness how once thriving cultures have disappeared altogether, their great cities abandoned and (ironically) reclaimed by nature. As examples look at images of great monuments in Cambodia or Mexico now covered in forest and jungle. (Recommended viewing: documentary series *Fall of Civilisations*, available on YouTube.)

## ***Getting out and about***

Try and find ways to get the pupils out of the classroom, actively exploring Nature. It’s a sad truth that our awareness and knowledge of nature has become diminished, reflected even in the words we use. The Oxford Junior English Dictionary created some controversy when choosing to discard words such as acorn, bluebell – saying they were no longer relevant to young people, substituting words like ‘selfie’ and ‘online’.

Make physical contact with the soil: dig a patch in the school grounds to grow fruit, vegetables and other plants. Learn how to grow things organically, utilising rather than eradicating helpful weeds and other plants. Observe the role of bees and other insects in pollination. Look at the soil itself, close up – witness the role played by worms that help feed and irrigate the soil.

Consider how even the smallest piece of land can be turned over to growing food. You might try involving the pupils in some ‘guerrilla gardening’ – reclaiming bits of unused land near the school that are open to common use.

Back in the classroom link this to examining the question of food security and food sovereignty: look at what food is grown and produced in Ireland and what is imported. Consider how transporting food over long distances increases our carbon footprint, as well as reducing the taste and nutritional quality of the food. Note: this focus on ‘growing your own’ and developing some independence regarding food production is not to take away from how there are still many items of food and linked products that we enjoy and in fact rely on which

connect us to our overall inter-dependence theme and appreciation of people globally who share their produce with us. “Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning you’ve depended on more than half the world.” – Martin Luther King.

An excellent reference relating to all of the above is Clare O’Grady Walsh’s pamphlet *Seeds of Hope in a World of Insecurity*, published by Afri. Clare has also expanded her exploration of this issue in her book *Globalisation and Seed Sovereignty in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (see *Appendix* for both).

Here are links to two short films produced by Afri that also relate to this theme: ‘Seeds of Hope’ & ‘Guardians not Gardeners.’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnbgWv8u32Q>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EN5GTaYMW7Q&t=16s>

**There are more useful links to publications and films produced by Afri listed at the end of this book.**

### ***English/poetry***

Link the above discussion to the concept of ‘hubris’ present in the poem ‘Ozymandias’ by Shelley.

### ***Richard Moore’s story***

Thinking back to that African story mentioned earlier about finding a vision in the darkness, closer to home we have Richard Moore’s extraordinary journey after he was blinded by a rubber bullet in Derry at the age of 10. I first heard him speak at an Afri event and there is a powerful documentary made about him, *Blind Vision* which older students might watch. His story is also covered in Afri’s publication *Just a Second: Pathways to Peace*, by Rose Kelly, (see *Appendix*). The documentary follows Richard initially trying to regain his sight via technological means before finally giving up and realising he actually has a truer vision. There is something of a poignant serendipitous full-circle connection in that Richard came upon this vision while taking part in an Afri solidarity event in the US commemorating the Choctaw ‘Trail of Tears’. During the film he talks about putting aside any bitterness around what had happened to him and amongst many things, going

on to rear a family, teach himself guitar, become a director of Derry City Football Club and later on set up the charity 'Children in Crossfire' for children in conflict zones. Many years after the event in which he lost his sight, he managed to make contact with the British soldier who shot him and they became friends. These two then linked up with Tibet's Dalai Lama and the three of them have appeared together at Afri festivals and other events. Richard's personal story can be seen to contain practically everything we have looked at so far in as much as one person's story can relate to the global reach of the SDGs: here we have a portrayal of suffering and hurt due to injustice, but then the capacity to go beyond bitterness towards healing and the development of a positive and empowering response that incorporates a 'vision' for moving forwards.

## **Conclusion**

We have examined human behaviour to some degree in relation to ecological and environmental concerns as well as regarding human rights. But this has mostly been at a societal level, we have barely touched on the huge question of *why* any one individual person would hold so little regard for something as rich and important as trees – which we ultimately rely on – not to mention have such a lack of empathy for fellow human beings and other species on the planet. Why aren't we all like Richard Moore – sharing the same values, level of compassion and depth of vision? Where does our capacity for destruction and self-destruction come from? Why do we so often only pay lip-service to values such as fairness and equality? We can consider motivating factors like greed and the desire for status and power that lead us to prioritise personal wealth and prestige over communal prosperity and wellbeing. But to go deeper into trying to answer such all-embracing philosophical and ethical questions perhaps we need to delve further into what happens *within* each individual person and how this then links back to the inter-personal, the communal and the global.

The question of *why* we human beings behave in the way we do will be explored further in the next project: *Brains, Hearts & Stomachs*.

## **PROJECT TWO: “BRAINS, HEARTS & STOMACHS”**

– connecting the personal to the global – seeking a better understanding of how we individually and collectively “make up our minds” and then come to either good or bad decisions. (*Building around SDG 3: good health & wellbeing – linking to responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), peace and justice (SDG 16), climate action (SDG 13) and more (SDGs). Age 10 upwards*)

**This project will cover three 80 minute sessions, with lots of room for further extension into more classes with non-drama follow-up activities.**

# **SESSION ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Throughout our lives we are called on to make choices and decisions: we “make up our minds” about something. Sometimes this is a thought-out process where we’re aware perhaps of mulling over the options, other times decisions and actions happen so quickly we hardly have time to think things through. Over time these decisions will inform attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that can become hardened and fixed so that we often no longer feel the need to take even a second to think and feel things afresh. This theme is at the heart of Afri’s ongoing *Just a Second Schools Programme* (see *Appendix*) and we will be expanding on that discussion in this project.

Sages, philosophers, scientists have all asked the twin questions: ‘what’ and ‘where’ is the mind? The consensus is that it is not simply *in* or part of the brain – but rather something that is connected to our whole biological/psychic system: our mind is connected to our brains through our thoughts, but also to our hearts through feelings, and to our gut through primal needs and what is called ‘gut instinct’. In fact, scientists have discovered that we actually have a ‘brain’ operating in our gut – intelligent bacteria sending messages back and forth to the brain and other organs, helping to inform our decisions.

Collectively, the human race, through the UN made up its mind to set some goals for achievement around pressing global issues: the 17 SDGs. Following on from that, we have to make up our minds about how to approach achieving these goals.

It's an interesting phrase: "making up *our* mind" when we think of it like that in the singular, but applying to the collective.

So here we'll be focusing on the way we make decisions and how this is informed by what can be termed "emotional intelligence" – which relates to overall awareness (or lack of) what is going on internally: how our thoughts, feelings and gut instincts are constantly interacting together. Project One reminded us of our interconnectedness with other people, as well as with animals, plants and the whole of nature. But we also need to better understand interconnectedness within *ourselves*, and find out what motivates us towards either positive or negative thinking. This interactive process is integral to our state of physical, emotional and mental health, contributing to our overall 'well-being' (SDG 3). Note that we are certainly not seeking to minimise external factors and influences, it's more that we're trying to view things from 'inside-out' as it were, alongside outside-in.

## **GETTING INTO DRAMA MODE**

Standing in a circle, warm up with some simple stretches, focusing, breathing, calming.

Extend the warm-up into spatial exploration: as the class will soon be working in groups of three, you could utilise the "spatial triangles" exercise outlined in the *Glossary*, (Page 145). You might also add a competitive element with another game listed there that uses groups of three: "Piggy through the middle." While competition is not normally a part of drama exploration, here its introduction is appropriate because we will also be moving on to look at how the three voices can often be "competing" for attention.

### ***Introducing the brains, hearts & stomachs***

Pupils get into groups of three to be one of each organ.

## ***Giving each organ a voice***

Ask each child to state (in the first person, using “I”), what organ they are, what they’re made of and something about what they *do*: i.e. their function in the body. For now they can guess or even make it up, e.g. “I’m a big jumble of nerve connections and kind of spongy...and I’m full of thoughts and ideas.”

## ***Making up our Minds***

**Improvisation One: someone shopping, standing at a supermarket counter, trying to decide what to buy. (SDG 12: responsible consumption and production.)**

The three internal voices speak out loud as if they make up one person e.g.

BRAIN: (*thoughts*) Hmm, those Fair Trade bananas look more expensive than the others, I have bills to pay and other expenses to consider.

HEART: (*feelings*) I’m remembering those images I saw earlier on TV of child labourers and others being exploited...I’ll feel bad if I don’t buy them.

STOMACH: (*gut feeling/instinct*) I’m starving, can we get a move on please!

Let this discussion continue, allowing for disagreement between the three organs/personas. It’s important to establish clear guidelines: how they **MUST** listen to each other. Perhaps introduce a rule for each organ, e.g. when responding they must begin with “Yes, and” or “Yes but...” (See the *Glossary* for more on this approach). Remind them that together they are a team and although they might sometimes pull in different directions, they also come to agreements and make up one person. See if this ‘person’ can come to some sort of compromise decision here. Or maybe this proves impossible, with two voices giving way to the third one which is more persuasive?

## ***Sharing in class***

They can share these improvisations in the class. When reflecting back and commenting on what has been shown, remind the class not

to judge or compare the groups – value them all. Remember too that we are working through the imagination: no matter how strange or tangential the dialogue is, think of them all as offering something of value and adding up to a whole class picture of what is being explored. This is about pooling experience and ideas, not judging or comparing one against another.

Reflection: as a class discuss how this links back to Project One with its themes of food security and food sovereignty; fairness and equality; human rights and eco-justice.

## **EXPANDING INTO MORE GLOBAL THEMES & SDGS**

Still in their threes, try playing around with what might at first appear to be a neutral theme: **the weather**. This time let it develop into a more free conversation – it doesn't have to go in a strict 1,2,3 order, e.g. one of the organs might not say anything for a moment, just tuning into what the other two are saying.

BRAIN: What a lovely day, I think I'll go to the beach.

HEART: Oh yes, I can feel that sun on my skin and it'll feel so good to meet up with my friends...

BRAIN: On the other hand, it looks like it might be clouding over...yes, here's the rain.

HEART: Oh that's so disappointing...now I feel really miserable...

STOMACH: OK you two – whatever we do I want an ice cream!  
Now!

This obviously has an amusing side – but again, it invites us to move laterally into more serious areas.

## **LINKING TO CLIMATE ACTION: (SDG 13)**

Think back to Project One: the effect of the storm, freak winds caused by global warming. This might combine with excessive temperatures, the danger of exposing the land to soil erosion and other damage. Also consider: *who* is the person talking? So far we have imagined someone who is perhaps relatively well off in a global context. Try the same

exercise now with someone who has more restricted choices – e.g. living through a drought.

BRAIN: The ground is dry because of climate change caused by carbon emissions from rich countries.

HEART: I hate their selfishness.

STOMACH: I need to eat.

BRAIN: I think the only option for us now is to migrate.

HEART: I will miss my home and land.

BRAIN: But there's no choice.

STOMACH: We have to eat or we'll die.

BRAIN: Yes, we will die.

HEART: I don't want to die...

(Keep this going)

Remember these are just examples. With a reticent or less confident group the teacher has an option with this exercise of giving each child their first lines to get them going and then let them improvise from there.

### **Linking to pandemic disease (SDG 3)**

Bring in Covid 19, adapting the weather conversation again:

BRAIN: Sorry, we can't go to the beach it's against the rules of the lockdown.

HEART: But I want to see my friends! – I feel so sad being stuck in.

STOMACH: OK, I'll binge on crisps and mindless online games instead, that'll show "them" how fed up I am!

Regarding 'emotional intelligence', note how in this scenario the emotions have been spread around – how both heart and gut can have 'feelings'. Question: where does a thought begin and a feeling end or vice-versa?

## EXPLORING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS IN SMALL GROUPS, USING FREEZE-FRAMES

A freeze-frame exercise involves the teacher calling out a dramatic situation and counting down from 10 to zero – saying “freeze”, at which point each group has to form a frozen picture. Here you can practise first with some realistic situations such as the seaside, supermarket, weddings, hospital operations, (see *Glossary* for more). Then move into geometric shapes: triangles, squares, circles and diamonds. Ask them to make the triangle shape three-dimensional.

Now move on to forming group pictures that express emotional states such as *celebration*, *disappointment*, *anticipation*, *fear*, *hope*, *suspicion* and *solidarity*. When sharing these in class, take some time to observe both the similarities and subtle variations between the different depictions of each feeling. Note that the limited time given to framing these pictures is to make them think quickly on their feet so they don't have time to worry about it too much or get into lengthy discussions.

### ***Transformations: moving from one feeling to another***

Now do some *transformations* – start with *fear* and end with *hope*. Do these in slow motion, taking at least 10 seconds to move from one frozen picture to the other. Ask them to repeat this process but this time to try and identify an internal thought that instigates or accompanies the change, e.g. “I'm going to be brave and work towards building something better for this world.” Ask them to say these thoughts aloud as they move. Now try and identify a *feeling* that accompanies each thought, e.g. “Now I feel more confident and empowered.” Again, say these feelings out loud. Finally, try to identify parts of the body these thought-feelings connect most strongly to – neck, stomach, chest, feet, face...?

Reflection exercise: ask the groups to go back and forth a few times between the two feeling states, fear & hope, each individual self-monitoring what is going on inside, both mind and body.

## **CONSOLIDATING THIS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Ask each group to pick two new contrasting emotions, and to practise going from one freeze-frame to another as above. While they are doing this, say to keep it to themselves which two emotions they have chosen.

### **READING EMOTIONS**

Now the whole class can test its emotional intelligence by trying to firstly ‘read’ each group’s initial still picture for what feeling is being projected: then, when each group comes to life and transforms, to identify the second emotion in the same way.

After each group has shared, you can ask the class to respond/feedback. What were the two feelings? What else did they observe happening during the transformations?

## **TIME FOR A FINAL REFLECTION**

As this might now be approaching the end of the first session time-wise, it might be good to consolidate what has been learnt through a short writing task:

Ask them to write down (a) the thoughts that came into their heads and (b) the feelings attached to these thoughts for when they were in the first picture, depicting *fear*. Do the same for when they were responding to the prompt to “change” and then finally in the final picture depicting *hope*. They might also articulate where in the body each thought/feeling was most strongly felt, e.g. “I felt all the bitterness held deep inside me was there in my scrunched-up face.”

### ***Greek Chorus***

If there’s time you might finish with this, or if not leave it until the next session. Taking up the whole class space, become one big ‘Greek Chorus’, representing a whole community moving around sharing these emotions, with each person saying and repeating one of the lines they’ve just written down. Get a sense of being an individual within a crowd, amongst a community of many voices.

# **SESSION TWO:**

## **BRAINS, HEARTS & STOMACHS**

*(80 minutes)*

Warm up with a ‘feelings circle’, (see *Glossary*).

The intention here will be to consolidate the emotional intelligence discovered in the previous session, continuing to focus on Good Health & Wellbeing (SDG 3); then extending from the personal to the global in targeting Zero Hunger, (SDG 2).

This time we’ll begin by working in small groups and as a whole class, before returning to working in groups of three.

Again we will mostly be using freeze-frame.

### **DISCOVERING more about THE BRAIN**

Giving the usual 10-second countdown towards “freeze”, ask each group to organise themselves into becoming ‘a brain’. You might feed in a few suggestions while they’re doing this, e.g. the brain as a machine, processing information, thoughts and sensations. On the command “unfreeze”, bring them to life with movement and sound. They can even add ‘voices’. Ask, what is a brain like? Search for metaphor-type images by asking them to do quickfire switches into depicting the brain as a computer, a telephone exchange, an airport (with arrivals and departures, including voice announcements/thoughts of passengers), then as a fast-food takeaway.

Now ask the brains to be in different frames of mind: e.g. dreaming, highly active, hyper-active, in deep thought, cramming, anxious, imagining.

## ***Whole class activity***

Bring them all into a circle to form one big 'brain'.

Ask the 'brain-cells': what do 'we' want, what are our requirements?

Consider what is good 'food' for the brain? Go round the circle calling out 'good' things: e.g. healthy food, feeling safe, calm, secure surroundings, imaginative stimuli, creative activity and fresh air. Note how some of these inputs are biological (e.g. food), while other things are more mental or emotional – this will be developed further when we link with the other organs.

Now go round inviting in 'bad' inputs: e.g. too much coffee or sugary drinks, too many late nights, violent movies, negative thinking, upsetting conversations. If they find it hard to come up with ideas you can call these out yourself, in-role as 'Brain Cell One' and they can respond as a chorus.

Invite this whole-class brain to be having a pleasant dream (feel the circle relaxing), then becoming agitated by an anxious thought or feeling.

The teacher can extend this leader/chorus idea, e.g. Leader: "What do we want, Brain?" Chorus: "No more stress!" Leader: "How do we get it?" Chorus: "Peace and quiet!"

Devise a signal/mechanism for switching the brain on and off. Add sounds. Allow it (the circle) to expand and contract. What movement and sound does the notion of a 'brain' inspire? For example, everyone shakes, jerks; makes 'electronic' sounds.

Think of how the word "brain" comes into our everyday language: e.g. *brainstorm*, *brainwave*: ask the brain circle to experience each of these brain-states.

## ***Making an organic machine***

Another whole class activity is making an organic 'machine'. Practise by making an old-fashioned industrial wheels and cogs type of machine. Invite one child to begin with a simple repetitive motion, such as moving an arm up and down like a lever. They keep repeating this

as the next child adds another movement, becoming a cog, pulley or whatever – as an imaginary product is being passed along a process line. Once everyone is part of the machine, ask them to make sounds to go with their movement, e.g. the squeak of a cog that needs oiling.

Now do the same with the BRAIN. This time one child might stand in the centre making a movement and sound, or even say words, or bits of words. The next child can stand in relation to the first child, or perhaps walk around them making sounds. Fill the room with sound and movement. Tell them not to worry if this ‘brain’ is a bit weird, confusing, contradictory – aren’t *we* like that some of the time?

Extend this reflection by asking, what is the brain doing right now: thinking, planning, deciding, co-ordinating, wondering? Connect the brain to the five senses: processing information coming in from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin.

### **Overall reflection:**

Take a moment for some out-of-role discussion, asking the group what makes up an individual person. How much is our sense of who or what we are located in our brains/thoughts? Or do we mean ‘minds’ here: perhaps that is something bigger than just one organ? Ask, is the brain the command centre, the highest and most important organ?

## **NOW THE HEART**

Again, in small groups, do 10-second countdowns into freeze-frames, this time as ‘hearts’, then bring them to life with movement and sound. Now ask them to respond to words and phrases that contain “heart”, e.g. heartbeat, heartburn, heartbreak, heartless, heartfelt, hearty and open-hearted.

Think **science/biology** and feed in pieces of information: suggest the groups respond to the heart being a pump, moving blood cells around, carrying oxygen. Ask them to add a pulse and settle on a steady rhythm. Ask them to speed it up as if they are running, then slow it down again.

As with the brain, now consider what inputs may be good or bad for the heart – you can call some out: e.g. for ‘bad’ – too much caffeine or sugar, stress, smoking. Moving into the emotional realm (traditional heart

territory), add negative feelings like “hurt” “rejection” or experiences such as “getting a fright”.

Now they can respond to ‘good’ things: a balanced diet, nourishing food, having a positive attitude, feeling loved, hearing kind words spoken etc.

Give them whole states of mind/heart to respond to: e.g. dreaming, enjoying good company, or feeling loving towards someone or something (perhaps a pet).

Say “red alert” and allow the hearts to come under attack. Call these out one at a time and ask the groups to respond with movement and sound: nerves, palpitations, unkind comments, too much coffee, too many sugary drinks etc.

### ***Whole class activity***

Come into one big circle. Again, go into leader/chorus mode, e.g. Leader: “What do we want, Heart?” Chorus: “Love, kindness.” Try speaking like a gospel preacher, asking: “But what is love, brothers and sisters?” Get them to call out answers like they are a congregation or choir. Hold onto the next person’s wrist and send a pulse signal round the whole circle.

### ***Making organic machines***

As with the brain, one child goes into the middle and begins, perhaps by being a pump, making appropriate sounds. Another child walks around the pump beating their chest saying, “Ba-boom, ba-boom” – another child joins in repeating, “Oh Romeo, Romeo...” Perhaps another child adds a line from a love song, another says, “Be my Valentine”, another becomes Cupid with a bow and arrow. When everyone has joined in, keep it all going and ask them to tune-in to the movement and sound going on around them: together they are one big open heart.

Earlier we asked the brain if it was the most important (commanding) organ. What about the heart? Consider how much it controls our behaviour, feeds into decisions and affects our overall sense of wellbeing.

## THE STOMACH

In groups follow the same process with the stomach. Again, invite the frozen shapes to come to life with movement and sound. What movement and sound would identify it as being different from the heart and brain: does this link to what the stomach is made of, what it does? Rather than making techie sounds like a brain, or pumping sounds like a heart, now it gurgles, churns, contracts and expands, burps. How would a stomach “speak”?

Again, feed in ‘good’ and ‘bad’ inputs and ask them to respond. Note some of these will be the same as for the brain & heart, e.g. good & healthy food, good hydration, calm surroundings, low salt.

Call out phrases and ask them to respond: “Butterflies in your stomach”, “Stomach turning...”

### *Whole class stomach*

As leader, look up as if to an imaginary ‘chute’ that will send something down. Call out: “What do we want?” The stomach answers: “Food!” Go round the circle, each child can ask for something: this could be sensible or silly and over the top – perhaps allow this to be a fun moment; as this is only in their imaginations they can gorge if they want to.

Now hold hands and be one big stomach churning, processing food, breaking it down. Take the phrase “my stomach is in knots” and get all knotted up (the rule is not to let go hands), and then rewind and try to undo the knot. Now say “stomach ache”, or “acid attack!” You might even invite the stomach to be sick!

Broaden out to ask how much the stomach is another ‘command centre’, along with the brain & heart. Bring in science/biology: how the gut is like another brain with the bacteria in it sending ‘intelligence’ to the other organs. There is also the notion of ‘gut-instinct’: explore what that means, does it relate to ‘intuition’, or what we sometimes call a ‘sixth sense’? Think now of how the brain, heart and stomach are in constant communication with one another, how this operates two-way, unless there is a block of some kind: e.g. when the brain (thoughts) is cut off from signals the heart or stomach are sending. Consider how wellbeing embraces all three organs working together in healthy conditions and environments.

## Connecting all of this to Zero Hunger (SDG 2)

Consider how so far this could be a stomach belonging to anyone. It might be a person in either a rich or poor country. Returning to one of the improvisations from Session One, ask: what if it was someone desperately hungry and trying to survive in a drought/famine?

Contrasting the inner/outer

In small groups, ask them to show a group of well-off people gorging on too much food and drink (e.g. like decadent Roman emperors), then freeze. When they unfreeze they do a 'spin' – and now, acting as one, they become the bloated stomach inside just one of those people. Include movement and sound. Using “freeze-unfreeze”, hop back and forth between the inner/outer.

Now take some people who are very hungry, perhaps even close to starvation: once the groups have their frozen outer images, again ask them to 'unfreeze' and spin and become the stomach of just one of those people.

Whole class reflection: out-of-role, take a moment to allow for sensitive feedback to that last improvisation, which clearly has the potential to touch the emotions of the pupils.

In Session Three we will develop this theme further in considering *causes* of poverty and hunger, such as war, exploitation, injustice, greed, ignorance, lack of agri-awareness. We will place a particular focus on climate justice as well as food security and food sovereignty. Afri has published a number of useful references looking at these important issues, including *Just a Second: Lessons from History*, connecting Ireland's Great Famine, *An Gorta Mor* to modern famines, (see *Appendix*).

# SESSION THREE:

## BRAINS HEARTS & STOMACHS

(80 minutes)

**Project Development:** continuing to explore how we make choices and decisions. What key decisions do individuals, communities, governments and world organisations like the UN have to make?

### LOOKING AT CLIMATE ACTION (SDG 13)

Try groups of three playing one person having an internal dialogue over the following challenges:

- 1) What fuel to buy for home heating or whether to choose an electric car?
- 2) Making a list of ways to reduce one's fossil footprint:  
e.g. cutting back on the number of foreign holidays (plane journeys), car miles or eating meat.
- 3) A government leader considering what legislation is needed?

Afterwards give feedback: did all three voices get to speak? Were they all listened to? Was there a dominant voice? Was the person depicted united or ambivalent; with mixed feelings?

### CASE STUDY: contrast Greta Thunberg v Donald Trump

To begin, ask how each acquired their powerful voice? Amazingly, since one is a mere schoolgirl and the other assumed the identity of being the most powerful person in the world, both have spoken from the same platforms (at the UN, at the Davos economic conference), using the same online platforms – internet, social media etc. But crucially they stood in direct opposition and had very different “platforms” in terms of what they were saying.

Let's use our three-way breakdown with regard to Mr Trump 'thinking' about the global issue of climate change. Note this is an imaginative

flight of fancy regarding what was going on ‘inside’ but it is also a reasonable paraphrase summary of something he actually said.

**DONALD TRUMP:** “I don’t like that UN climate accord – yes, I know the whole world – I don’t know how many countries, I didn’t count, agreed to it after years of meetings etc – and they say it’s essential to keep global warming below two degrees or else we’re facing meltdown, and... but I don’t care what anyone else thinks, personally I disagree with 99% of world scientists, I know better, and because I’m the most powerful person in the world, in charge of the richest and GREATEST country ever, I will unilaterally pull the USA out of that agreement, even though if I asked them a lot of our own people (those fake-news Democrats!) wouldn’t agree, and I want to reverse everything anyway the previous president did, I don’t know why, I just do – it’s a “gut feeling” I have...”

You could project the speech onto the board and do this as a whole class, or give them written copies and ask them individually to go through these internal musings and mark when they think the brain, heart or gut is talking at any particular time. Perhaps put a different colour circle around each phrase: blue for brain, red for heart, yellow for gut? Ask, is this person focused or ‘mixed-up’ over this issue?

### ***Improvisation exercise:***

Split Mr Trump into groups of three and have an internal conversation, maybe at the start of a typical day where he is talking to himself as he gets ready for work, eats breakfast, looks in the mirror etc. Now he talks to others. Now he makes plans, decides what he will do about particular issues and challenges, (you can take examples from other SDGs).

This can be done with the three ‘characters’ moving around together, maybe sometimes standing with their backs to one another facing outwards – or split up looking into three adjacent mirrors to show the way ‘he’ is divided in his thoughts. Have him on the phone or watching TV. Remember, they can have a little fun doing this while still taking the exercise seriously.

Afterwards: discuss, reflect.

## **GRETA THUNBERG**

Now we'll do the same with Greta Thunberg. Try and locate when she is speaking from the heart (feelings) or the head (info, facts, clear thinking, planning), or just expressing some kind of 'gut response'.

"I'm frightened of what is happening to my world with global warming. My heart breaks at what we are doing to the planet and ourselves. I feel sick at what is happening. It makes me so mad! I feel no one listens to us young people who will have to inherit the mess that adults are making. No one listens to us. I'm going to do something. I need to make my voice heard. I think I'll go sit on the steps of our government until they take notice of me. I'll ask my friends to come, and I'll feel a bit lonely if they don't, but something tells me I must do this..."

Note again how this is actually *all* thoughts, but then consider, when are the thoughts expressions of feelings? Again, do the exercise of marking each phrase with a different colour to represent thoughts, feelings or gut instinct.

### ***Exercise in groups of three: Greta getting ready for that first day sitting on the steps.***

As with Donald Trump, improvise an internal conversation. What is she thinking, feeling as she gets ready for the day, eats breakfast or looks in the mirror? Maybe she's going through what she'll do if no one else turns up or if people laugh at her, are angry, or worse just ignore her. Maybe her overall 'gut feeling' is to just do it and see what happens.

Now imagine and portray Greta later that night looking out her bedroom window at the night sky: thinking, will I do it again tomorrow?

Move on to explore Greta addressing the UN. They can improvise using the three voices, (and then later perhaps write her speech down as an individual exercise).

They can take on other well-known important and inspirational figures, e.g. Malala Yousafazi or Richard Moore from Project One. These and several other inspiring figures are portrayed in Rose Kelly's teaching resource from Afri: *Just a Second – Pathways of Peace*; (see Appendix).

## ***Put an ordinary person into similar challenging situations re other SDGs***

Think back to the first exercise in Session One where someone was trying to decide whether to buy fair trade or not. Pick some more situations where there are ethical decisions to be made relating to a particular global issue and the SDGs that connect to it.

### ***More group exercises***

Divide the whole class into three. One group is made up entirely of 'brains' having a conversation at "brain level" about e.g. **Climate Justice**.

A second group is made up of heart representatives, coming together to have a conversation at "emotions" level around the same topic.

The third group will be all 'stomach' voices having a conversation at "gut feeling" level.

### ***Final reflection exercise***

All close eyes. Meditate. Be aware of how your thoughts come and go. Stop on one thought and ask yourself – did that 'thought' come from the head, heart or stomach/gut?

## **CROSS-CURRICULAR FOLLOW-UP**

**Music/dance:** (all ages) – In small groups invent/discover a way of moving/dancing that goes with each organ. In music class they could make up music for each one. Combine music with movement.

**Science/biology:** now they have explored these organs extend the enquiry into revisiting their initial opening statements about each organ – ask: so what is it made of; how does it function in the body? Consider various technological developments, e.g. artificial organs. **CSPE/religion:** bring in **ethical** considerations and ask: is this development good or bad? Is it progress? Perhaps link to Artificial Intelligence (AI). Discuss how science-fiction often becomes science fact.

**History/biology:** look at how these organs have been understood throughout history and how concepts and understanding of each has

changed, e.g. in medieval times when the body was divided simply into four 'humours' that created types of personality: melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic or sanguine.

**CSPE and SPHE:** continue to examine what ethical values were identified during the improvisations. Name key words that are central to any enquiry around the SDGs: e.g. empathy, empowerment, participation, inclusion, partnership, equality, justice. Apply all of these to examining the meaning of 'climate justice'.

**English/creative writing** Imagine an old ruined house or cottage in a bare landscape. Describe it with as much detail as possible to bring it to life in the imagination. Now think about it over time, adding memory: what happened to it – how, why, who lived there?

Write down a response in a spontaneous instinctive way and see what comes out. Afterwards, go back through what has been written line by line, asking whether it appeals to thoughts or feelings.

Add three more lines or sentences that are 'thoughts' and then the same for 'feelings', and finally, whatever comes to mind when considering 'gut feeling'.

As a whole class discuss how this could reflect someone experiencing a landscape affected by famine or drought, perhaps a migrating refugee forced to leave their homeland. Now move away from depicting this person as a 'victim' to imagining a picture of them doing something that is empowering and shows their skills and talents. Reflect and discuss what is happening here: how there is a danger sometimes in stereotyping or labelling people merely as categories or passive victims, e.g. "refugees", so that they can be reduced to dry statistics rather than perceived as real people who are active participants in their destinies.

### ***More drama***

In small groups make a 'numbskull' brain for someone making a decision around one of the SDGs. Portray a 'brain department' that connects with the five senses, eyes, ears, etc. Also there will be messages arriving from the heart and stomach that have to be responded to and processed.

In a play titled ‘Calling the Shots’ that is included in Afri’s publication: *Just a Second: Exploring Global Issues through Drama & Theatre* (see Appendix), a former government minister is depicted in this way as he makes and justifies a decision to divert public pension funds towards companies making cluster bombs. (Afri, alongside others was working at the time towards achieving a global ban on these terrible weapons.) In this instance, the internal ‘discussion’ can be seen to relate to SDG 16 (peace & justice), as well as SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production).

### **History/religion/CSPE/SPHE**

The ancient Greeks revered the number three, exemplified three-dimensionally in the tripod. Ancient Celtic Ireland had a concept of ‘three cauldrons’, each relating to parts of the body/mind: the solar plexus area was *Coire Goirath* (soul/spirit/life force), the heart, *Coire Emmae* (emotions) and the head, *Coire Sois* (thoughts/wisdom/inspiration). Each cauldron had to be in the right position within a person for a balanced state of wellbeing: e.g. the *Coire Sois* began upside down at birth and had to be ‘turned the right way up’ through continuous engagement with the other two cauldrons. Linking back to the exploration of indigenous peoples in Project One, Carl Jung, the famous psychoanalyst, once met a Native American chief who told him Europeans appeared to be always agitated and dissatisfied, constantly looking for something. Jung asked the chief why he thought this was so. The Chief said Europeans thought too much from “in here”, pointing to his head. A puzzled Jung asked him where his ‘thoughts’ came from and the Chief put his hand on his heart. As we have seen in that earlier project, many indigenous cultures relate to nature in a way that calls on heart, spirit and soul as sources of wisdom.

**Heads, Hearts & Hands** – Concern Ireland also has an excellent teaching resource that utilises a three-way construction to explore the SDGs (see Appendix).

## **PROJECT THREE: “A PIECE OF THE CAKE”**

– HARNESSING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO EXPLORE THE BASIC MEANING OF FAIRNESS; WIDENING TO EXPLORE EQUALITY AND JUSTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF LAND OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF RESOURCES, (focusing initially on SDGs 3, 2 and 10, moving on to 1, 4, 8 and 16).

**Age range: infants upwards. There will be a cut-off point where it becomes aged 10 upwards.**

Two sessions: 80 minutes each.

Preparation: Make four-six photocopies of the 10-page script (\*see note below).

### **Introduction**

*A Piece of the Cake* is in the first instance a moral allegory, an update of the old *Little Red Hen* story: in this version the question is “Who will eat the cake – and who will get the biggest slice?” On one level it is very simple and accessible for younger groups, but it will soon become apparent that we are dealing with very complex themes and issues, relating directly to the SDGs. I’ve found that older pupils, including ‘cool’ teenagers particularly enjoy doing this.

The teacher can simply read it to infant groups. Certainly from 2<sup>nd</sup> class on they should be able to act it out. You can read it sitting in a circle or in a regular classroom setting, with the six members of the Hen family holding their scripts standing out front. Remember that reading or acting out the text, while being a fun and rewarding experience in itself, is intended mainly as a stimulus towards more drama improvisation, leading to the children devising their own scenes.

The role of Granny Hen, the main storyteller, needs someone in the class who will be confident in taking on the role. Or else the teacher can play her, which can be fun too for the class (and teacher!)

This short play (10 pages) is designed so that **only SIX copies of the play are needed**: for Granny Hen, Little Red Hen, the three Chicks and

Rooster. (\*If the three chicks share it's down to **FOUR** copies.) The teacher can use the text in this book to read stage directions. This makes it all very practical in terms of photocopying, but there is a deeper reason for this arrangement which will become apparent once the play is read and explored. For the moment it is important to note that ALL the class will be taking part, by using animal noises, for which they will not need a written script.

In Session One the class will read through the play-text with an initial focus on emotional intelligence and broad moral-ethical concerns around fairness and equality that will be applicable to all ages. There are then several follow-up activities that will expand exploration of these basic themes.

In Session Two, the class will be invited to take a look at the play from a completely different angle, taking us into a level of enquiry around the SDGs that will be most suited to 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> classes in primary school and then upwards into all age groups in secondary. In fact, it will go on to a level that would be fit for adults.

# THE CHARACTERS

Little Red Hen

Chick One

Chick Two

Chick Three

Granny Hen

Rooster

\*

Sheep

Dog

Cat

Goat

Cow

Horse

Duck

Goose

And mouse, donkey, pig - as many more animals are needed to fit the number in the class.

# **SCENE ONE:**

## **THE FARMYARD: GRANNY HEN IS DOZING AND THE YOUNG CHICKS ARE LAZING AROUND.**

CHICK ONE: I'm bored!

CHICK TWO: Me too.

CHICK THREE: And me!

LITTLE RED HEN ENTERS

CHICK ONE: Mammy – there's nothing to do.

LITTLE RED HEN: (whispering) I know, let's make a cake for Granny Hen's birthday, from everyone in the farmyard.

CHICK THREE: Yes!

CHICK TWO: (looking at Granny Hen asleep) Shush, don't wake her up...

LITTLE RED HEN: Everyone can help.

CHICK ONE: Oh – I've just remembered I have to do my homework.

CHICK TWO: And I have to tidy my straw.

CHICK THREE: (trying to think of something) And...and...

LITTLE RED HEN: (frowns) Yes I can see you're all very busy. Right, I'd better get started.

LITTLE RED HEN EXITS

GRANNY HEN: (waking up) What's happening?

CHICK ONE: Oh nothing.

CHICK TWO: We're bored Granny Hen – tell us a story!

GRANNY HEN: Hmm...what kind of story do you want?

CHICK THREE: A long one!

JUST THEN DOG WANDERS IN

CHICK TWO: With a dog in it!

(Note: here the teacher asks the class who wants to be Dog. Dog can either remain seated, or if you are reading it in a circle, Dog can sit down in the centre of the circle.)

DOG: Woof!

GRANNY HEN: So I wonder, will this be a shaggy dog story?

ALL CHICKS: Yes!!!!

GRANNY HEN: All right. Once upon a time, there was a dog. A sheepdog. And this dog looked after...

CHICK ONE: Sheep!

GRANNY HEN: (getting up) Come on, I'll tell you as we walk, I'm a little stiff after my rest.

GRANNY HEN AND THE CHICKS EXIT, FOLLOWED BY DOG

(Note: Again, if you're acting this out, they can leave the circle and stand over to one side.)

LITTLE RED HEN COMES BACK INTO THE FARMYARD

LITTLE RED HEN: Now, where am I going to get all these ingredients?

SHE SEES DUCK

(The teacher asks the class who wants to be Duck. This will be the same with all the other animals who are yet to appear.)

DUCK: Quack.

LITTLE RED HEN: Hello Duck – I'm looking for some eggs to make Granny Hen a cake.

DUCK: (shaking head) Quack quack quack....

DUCK HURRIES OFF

LITTLE RED HEN: Goodness, someone's in a hurry.

SHE SEES GOOSE

GOOSE: Honk honk.

LITTLE RED HEN: Goose, do you by any chance have...

GOOSE: (shaking head) Honk honk honk!

GOOSE HURRIES OFF

LITTLE RED HEN: Everyone seems to be busy today.

SHE SEES COW

COW: Mooooo....

LITTLE RED HEN: Ah, Cow, you must have some milk or butter to spare?

COW: (shaking head and walking off) Mooooooooooooooooooooo....

LITTLE RED HEN SEES CAT

LITTLE RED HEN: Excuse me Cat, do you have...?

CAT: (running away) Meeow!

AS LITTLE RED HEN LETS OUT A BIG SIGH AND LOOKS AROUND THE FARMYWARD, THE TEACHER ASKS EVERYONE IN THE CLASS TO CHOOSE A FARM ANIMAL AND BE READY TO SAY "NO" USING THEIR ANIMAL VOICE.

LITTLE RED HEN: Will anyone help me with this cake?

ALL ANIMALS TOGETHER: Nooooooooooooo!!!!!!!

LITTLE RED HEN SITS DOWN LOOKING REALLY FED-UP

(AT THIS POINT THE TEACHER SUSPENDS THE ACTION TO ASK THE CLASS A QUESTION: HOW DO THEY THINK LITTLE RED HEN 'FEELS' IN THIS MOMENT. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MOMENT AS IT OPENS UP THE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THEME THAT WILL BE RETURNED TO AGAIN LATER ON. PUPILS MAY SAY "SAD" "LONELY" "DISAPPOINTED" "CROSS" "HURT" - DON'T MOVE ON TOO QUICKLY, ALLOW THIS

MOMENT TO BREATHE, I'VE FOUND THAT EVEN YOUNG CHILDREN MAY VOLUNTEER QUITE SURPRISING AWARENESS AND RANGE OF EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY.)

GRANNY HEN COMES BY, TELLING HER STORY, FOLLOWED BY THE THREE CHICKS AND THE DOG.

GRANNY HEN: So one day this sheepdog couldn't find one of the farmer's sheep – and off it went to look: over the walls and through the fields...

THE CHICKS HIDE BEHIND GRANNY WHEN THEY SEE THEIR MOTHER

LITTLE RED HEN: Oh dear, Granny Hen is talking to herself again.

(NOTE: WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN THE TEACHER MIGHT WANT TO ASK THE CLASS WHY GRANNY HEN SAYS THIS, AS IT MIGHT NOT BE OBVIOUS TO THEM THAT THE CHICKS ARE HIDING BECAUSE THEY SAID EARLIER THAT THEY WERE TOO BUSY TO HELP HER.)

GRANNY HEN CONTINUES HER WALK FOLLOWED BY THE CHICKS AND DOG

ENTER ROOSTER –

ROOSTER: Rock a doodle doooooo!

LITTLE RED HEN: Rooster – there you are.

ROOSTER: Hey baby – you're looking good.

LITTLE RED HEN: Don't call me "baby" – I'm not in the mood.

ROOSTER: (shrugs) OK, sorry I crowed.

LITTLE RED HEN: Darling husband, I don't suppose you have a moment to spare?

ROOSTER: Uhhhh...I was just about to...

LITTLE RED HEN: Forget it. I'll do everything myself as usual.

LITTLE RED HEN EXITS

ROOSTER: (scratching his head) Must be something I said?

GRANNY HEN, THE THREE CHICKS & DOG COME BY AGAIN –

GRANNY HEN: (continuing her story) ...And there was the missing sheep, stuck deep in some mud. With just its head and tail sticking out.

(ASK SOMEONE TO PLAY SHEEP. IF YOU'RE ACTING IT OUT SHEEP CAN GO INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE CIRCLE.)

CHICKS TWO & THREE: Stuck in the mud – stuck in the mud!

GRANNY HEN: (sitting down) I think that's enough walking for the moment.

CHICK ONE: What happened then Granny?

GRANNY HEN: Well, Dog took hold of Sheep's tail, and pulled, and pulled. But couldn't pull sheep out of the mud.

CHICKS TWO & THREE: Stuck in the mud, stuck in the mud!

GRANNY HEN: Yes dears, exactly.

CHICK ONE: Now what?

GRANNY HEN: This dog needed help of course. So, off he went, over the walls and through the fields, across the bridge, until he came to the farmyard. And there he found...

CAT HAS WANDERED IN –

GRANNY HEN: Cat – will you help me pull Sheep out of the mud? asked Dog. And Cat said...

ALL CHICKS: Yes!!!

(THE TEACHER CAN PAUSE FOR A MOMENT TO SAY THAT BECAUSE IT SOUNDS LIKE A BIT OF AN ADVENTURE, ALL THE ANIMALS WILL SAY "YES" THIS TIME WHEN ASKED)

CAT: (*nodding*) Meeoww.

GRANNY HEN: So, across the bridge through the fields over the walls, until they came to Sheep, still stuck in the mud. And Cat took hold of Dog and Dog held onto sheep's tail; they pulled and they pulled, but –

CHICK THREE: Still stuck.

GRANNY HEN: So, over the walls and through the fields, across the bridge, and back to the farmyard, where they found...GOAT...

(ASK SOMEONE TO PLAY GOAT)

CHICK ONE: And goat said –

GOAT: (*nodding*) Meeeeehhhhh

GRANNY HEN: So off they went, across the bridge through the fields over the walls, until they came to Sheep, still stuck in the mud. Goat took hold of Cat and Cat held onto Dog and Dog held onto Sheep's tail – and they pulled and they pulled, but – couldn't pull poor Sheep out of the mud.

CHICK THREE: Still stuck!

(IF THEY ARE ACTING IT OUT, CLEARLY THERE IS AN OPTION HERE FOR THEM TO PHYSICALLY TAKE HOLD OF ONE ANOTHER. IT DEPENDS ON HOW MUCH SPACE THERE IS IN THE CIRCLE, BUT ALSO WHILE THIS IS FUN IT CAN GET A BIT UNWIELDY AND THE TEACHER MIGHT PREFER TO MAINTAIN FOCUS BY KEEPING IT ALL IN THE IMAGINATION.)

GRANNY HEN: So off they went again, over the walls, through the fields, across the bridge, and back to the farmyard, where they found...

COW HAS WANDERED IN –

COW: Moooo?

GRANNY HEN: And Cow said?

COW: (*nodding*) Moooooo!

ALL CHICKS: Yes!!!

GRANNY HEN: So back across the bridge through the fields over the walls – until they came to Sheep. Cow took hold of Goat who held onto Cat who held onto Dog who held onto Sheep's tail – and they pulled and they pulled, but – couldn't pull poor Sheep out of the mud.

CHICK ONE: (*sighs*) What will they do now Granny?

GRANNY HEN: Back over the walls, through the fields, across the bridge, and into the farmyard, where they found...BIG STRONG HORSE!

(ASK SOMEONE TO PLAY HORSE)

CHICK ONE: And Horse said –

HORSE: (*nodding*) Neeeeeeeeigh.

GRANNY HEN: So back across the bridge through the fields over the walls – until they came to Sheep. Horse took hold of Cow, who held onto Goat who held onto Cat who held onto Dog who held onto Sheep's tail – and they pulled and they pulled.....but – couldn't pull poor Sheep out of the mud.

CHICK TWO: Oh dear.

GRANNY HEN: So, off they went again –

CHICK THREE: (*getting impatient*) Granny!

GRANNY HEN: (*insisting*) over the walls, through the fields, across the bridge, and into the farmyard, and who should be passing by but...

ENTER ROOSTER

ROOSTER: What are you all rockadoodle-doing? Can anyone join in?

GRANNY HEN: So Rooster rounded up Duck, Goose, Pig, Rat and all the other adult animals – back across the bridge through the fields over the walls – until they came to Sheep. They all took hold of Rooster who took hold of Horse who held onto Cow, who held onto Goat who held onto Cat who held onto Dog who held onto Sheep's tail – and they pulled and they pulled.....but – couldn't pull poor Sheep out of the mud.

CHICK TWO: (*sadly*) They'll never get poor Sheep out.

GRANNY HEN: (*determined*) Anyway, back over the walls, through the fields, across the bridge, and into the farmyard. But now what were they to do? There were no animals left who could help, except... (*she looks at the chicks.*)

CHICK ONE: Three little chicks!

GRANNY HEN: Who weren't very big, but they said –

ALL CHICKS: Yes!!!

GRANNY HEN: So off they went again, and found Sheep, still stuck in the mud. The chicks joined in holding onto everyone else, including Rooster who held onto Horse, who held onto Cow, who held onto Goat, who held onto Cat, who held onto Dog, who held onto Sheep's tail – and they pulled and they pulled.....and suddenly, OFF CAME SHEEP'S TAIL! And they all fell down in the mud.

(IF ACTING THIS OUT, THEY WILL ALL BE IN A HEAP, SO YOU'LL PROBABLY NEED A SHORT PAUSE HERE FOR THEM TO GATHER THEMSELVES.)

GRANNY HEN: And that's the end of that story. Did you like it?

CHICK ONE: Yes Granny...it was fun.

GRANNY HEN: And do you know – if that sheep's tail had been stronger, my 'tale' would have been longer?

CHICK TWO: Oh – clever Granny!

(THE TEACHER MIGHT ASK THE CLASS, DO THEY 'GET IT'? FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN YOU COULD WRITE THE TWO WORDS ON THE BOARD – 'TAIL' & 'TALE'.)

CHICK THREE: But it can't be the end. Sheep is still stuck in the mud!

GRANNY HEN: Ah yes, of course, you're right. So what should they do?

CHICK THREE: Stick the tail back on with glue!

CHICK TWO: And pull again!

CHICK ONE: Everybody together!

GRANNY HEN: So that's what happened – they all pulled and pulled... and this time – out came Sheep!

CHICKS: Hooray!

GRANNY HEN: So – there you are. Everyone helped. Even the smallest ones made a difference.

LITTLE RED HEN CAN BE HEARD SINGING –

LITTLE RED HEN: Something sweet, something runny – something yummy for someone’s tummy...

ALL THE ANIMALS LICK THEIR LIPS –

GRANNY HEN: (*sniffing the air*) Something smells good.

LITTLE RED HEN APPEARS – CARRYING A BIG CAKE, COVERED IN CANDLES.

ALL CHICKS: Surprise!!!

LITTLE RED HEN: For a very special Granny Hen.

CHICK TWO: Look at all the candles! (*counting*) One, two,...

GRANNY HEN: (*smiling*) Please dear, I don’t really want to know.

LITTLE RED HEN: It’s all for you Granny Hen.

GRANNY HEN: Goodness me. Thank you. But it’s so big – I’m not sure I can eat it all by myself.

LITTLE RED HEN: I might just have a small slice to keep company. You chicks can run off and play.

CHICK ONE: (*protesting*) Mammy...

CHICK TWO: We’ll help you eat it!

LITTLE RED HEN: Really? And which one of you helped to make it? (*She looks at all the animals*) I thought everyone was too busy to help?

ALL THE ANIMALS HANG THEIR HEADS

(HERE THE TEACHER TAKES A PAUSE FOR REFLECTION; ASKS THE CLASS, WHAT ARE THE ANIMALS FEELING NOW? THEY WILL OFFER: “Guilty” “ashamed” “sorry” “hungry” “bad” etc. AGAIN, LET THIS MOMENT BREATHE BEFORE MOVING ON.)

GRANNY HEN: Oh dear me...

LITTLE RED HEN: What do you think Granny Hen – do they look a bit ‘sheepish’?

GRANNY HEN: I wonder if they’re trying to say they’re sorry?

THE ANIMALS NOD THEIR HEADS

LITTLE RED HEN: Well, it's up to you Granny – it's your cake.

GRANNY HEN: I suppose they did help pull the sheep out of the mud...

CHICK ONE: That was just a story Granny.

GRANNY HEN: Yes, but stories can tell us a lot about ourselves.

THE ANIMALS LOOK MORE HOPEFUL

LITTLE RED HEN: (sighs) It's the thought that counts, I suppose.

(TENSE PAUSE)

GRANNY HEN: So I'll share then.

CHICK ONE: Hooray for Granny Hen!

CHICK TWO: Hooray for Mammy Hen!

CHICK THREE: Hooray for everybody!

LITTLE RED HEN: So, I wonder who should get the first and biggest slice?

ALL CHICKS AND ANIMALS: Party time!

# A PIECE OF THE CAKE

## – Session One, continued

(all ages)

Initial feedback/discussion: Here are some questions the teacher can ask the class, to help them reflect back on the story and explore what they feel the play is about.

There is a story within the main story – what is it? (Answer: *The Sheep's Tale*.)

Why did Granny Hen tell that particular story? Draw out how Granny Hen witnessed the three chicks and the other animals behaving selfishly. Being very wise, she told a story that invited them all to help – she appealed to their 'better nature' – even turned helping into fun as well as an experience in solidarity, even if it was in their imaginations.

In the original Little Red Hen story, the animals don't help her when she wants to make bread. She then refuses to share it, so that they are punished and have to learn a hard lesson. Here, they are forgiven – because they are genuinely sorry and as Granny Hen says, they helped pull Sheep out of the mud. Remember how she said, "Stories can teach us a lot about ourselves." Ask the class what they think: was this the right decision? Was it fair? Was it a 'rational' decision, or based on something else?

What words could be used to describe Granny Hen and Little Red Hen's behaviour at the end? Are they being generous, tolerant, forgiving, compassionate – or perhaps foolish, fanciful?

Do the class feel the animals learnt something from this experience?

Identify key moments in the story where important decisions were made: Little Red Hen decides to make a cake for Granny Hen/the animals refuse to help, including her own children/Granny Hen tells a story in which all the animals agree to help/the cake gets shared.

Pick out moments when 'feelings' were particularly heightened.

### ***Exploring the issue of fairness: how now to share the cake?***

At the end of the play, just as everyone is feeling settled and positive, Little Red Hen asks rather innocently: “So who will get the first and biggest slice?” She means Granny Hen of course, but this does open up a potential ‘can of worms’ as it invites more questions around fairness and unfairness that offer to take the situation to another level.

Tying in with questions around fairness, there might also be a sustainability issue to consider in that Granny Hen and Little Red Hen probably don’t want more than a slice each, two at the most – so if the animals were to be punished by being denied any cake, most of it might go to waste, which you could say was also behaving irresponsibly, linking back to the amount of food we produce and then throw away.

Ask the class: what would be the simplest and fairest way to divide any cake? How about the same number of pieces to match the number of people present to avoid any arguments?

But wouldn’t it also be ‘fair’ for some ‘special’ individuals to get more? Suppose in this story, Granny Hen or Little Red Hen got an extra or bigger slice, surely no-one would mind too much, after all for Granny it’s her birthday and her daughter made the cake. But what if Rooster or Cat got two slices – and maybe Goat got three...

Dog might argue she found the sheep and should get another slice. Sheep might say he suffered the most and should have an extra one.

Supposing Horse has a bright idea and suggests dividing the cake up into equal portions, but then each animal gets the same number of slices as the number of legs they have, so Horse gets four.

Goat says: “Good idea Horse.”

Rooster says: “Hmmm, I’m not sure I agree.”

Millipede says: “Brilliant!”

Worm says: (sadly) “What about me?”

## **Moving this conversation towards making up new scenes for the play**

Firstly, let's consider the various uses of language in the play. We can note how all the Hen Family (Mammy, Granny, Rooster, Chicks), speak like human beings as well as displaying several other human characteristics and in this way we subtly connect them to the world of people even though there are none actually present in the story. In contrast the other characters keep to their 'animal' voices and appear to be closer to the non-human world of nature. This will remind us of the animals and their various languages in Project One. So let's begin with exploring how these animals might communicate and articulate their thoughts and feelings.

### ***Drama improvisation exercises:***

- (i) Divide the class into pairs. Each child picks an animal and they have a conversation using their animal voices. The teacher can say "freeze" at any point and ask one pair to continue while everyone else listens-in. Here you can point out how e.g. Rat can clearly understand Pig's language and vice-versa. But what are they saying? We who are listening don't understand their 'words' so we have to rely on other things, such as tone of voice, body language, facial expressions. (Note how human communication is 93% non-verbal: think how when you hear people talking in another room you might not hear what they're saying but you can pick up the general tone of their conversation.)
- (ii) Now suggest more specific contexts: e.g. they are having a disagreement, maybe over whose football team is best. Or one of them is trying to explain something and the other one just doesn't get it. They might even use bits of each other's language, when repeating a phrase. Again, you can call a freeze and listen-in to some of the pairs, observing how much is also being communicated though voice tone, body language and facial expression.
- (iii) Remember the 'translation' button from Project One? Use that to get one pair to unfreeze and continue their conversation

in English or Irish. Think how in the play the animals do understand the human language used by the Hen family. Switch back to using animal sounds; then invite them to jump between the two, like they're fluent in both animal and human language.

- (iv) Now ask each of them to choose a specific *feeling*, to underline what they're saying with their animal sounds. When the class listens-in to each pair, can they 'read' these emotions: e.g. is pig upset, sad, fed-up, bored, happy...?

Now take the class back to that key moment in the play when Little Red Hen asked for help and they all said no, even her own chicks. Remember how the class suggested she might be feeling upset, angry, let-down, isolated, hurt etc. Think about how life continued on in and around the farmyard while she went off to make her cake.

Still in their animal pairs, ask them to move their conversations to this specific context – so their talk relates to how they are feeling about what has just happened, e.g. Rat: "I feel bad now that I didn't offer to help." Pig: "Yes, me too...it might mean we won't get any cake?"

You can point out that if there was ever to be a presentation of the whole play, these scenes could be included as a montage, offering a snapshot of what life is like on the farm. It gives us a taste of the general atmosphere in the farmyard: is it a pleasant harmonious place or are there underlying issues and frictions?

### ***'Human' type animals***

Now let's consider the members of the Hen family. While they are given real words to communicate with, they don't always express their inner feelings out loud. As we have already pointed out, when Little Red Hen doesn't get any help, we only sense she is feeling lots of things – hurt, disappointed, cross, sad. Imagine an actor playing this part, trying to capture all those feelings at the same time: quite a challenge! The class could improvise more scenes that involve members of the Hen family relating to the other farmyard animals.

After sharing these scenes, the pupils might benefit from reflecting back on what has been learnt so far around language and communication, as well as the broad issues of fairness and equality that have been

identified and explored. In Session Two for older pupils, we will be connecting with the wider global concerns contained in the SDGs, focusing on peace & justice (SDG 16), and reducing inequalities, (SDG 10).

In the meantime, here are a few more drama exercises that can fit into this or the following session to expand on what has been explored so far around language, communication and emotional intelligence.

**‘Feelings circle’:** standing in one big whole-class circle, go round one person at a time, simply saying the word for a feeling – sad, happy etc. Ask them not to repeat feelings that have already been said. Everyone should repeat each one back as a chorus. Note how this is extremely important in demonstrating appreciation for each contribution by the whole group.

Now go round again, this time adding a physical gesture to each feeling. Again, the group repeats back each gesture.

### ***Feelings exploration in pairs***

One person acts out being in a strong mood, but without using voice, relying only on gesture and body-language. See if your partner can ‘read’ your mood, pick up what you are feeling.

Being sensitive to other people is part of what might be called ‘emotional intelligence’ and an important part of how we engage with the world. Being aware of one’s own feelings and moods is important too. Thinking back to the play, when can we observe the animals tuning-in to their own feelings?

### ***Thought-tracking in pairs***

One person becomes an animal (or person) doing something while in a particular mood, (make the activity clear). Your partner says what they imagine you are thinking and feeling.

### ***Feelings game in pairs***

On small pieces of paper, the teacher writes down different feelings, enough for everyone in the class; except each feeling will be included twice, so for a class of 28 there will be just 14 feelings. The children

pick them out of a hat and don't reveal what 'feeling' they've picked to anyone else. Now each person must find the other person in the room who shares the same feeling – without talking, just through reading facial expression and body-language.

## **CROSS-CURRICULAR FOLLOW-UP (ALL AGES)**

### **Art**

Make masks for the animals out of paper plates, papier-mâché or even latex if you're feeling ambitious. (This was done for an actual production of the play in one primary school.)

Draw or paint a picture of the farmyard, or the animals pulling the sheep out of the mud, or make animal figures out of clay or play-dough.

### **English**

- (i) Ask them to use their imaginations to get inside the head of one of the farmyard animals. Write a diary entry – a typical day, or perhaps something more eventful.
  
- (ii) In the story there is a 'play on words' mixing up *tail* and *tale*: tell the class the name for words that sound the same but have different meaning. Ask them to think of another word that sounds like "piece" but is spelt differently and has a different meaning. Ask them how this word ("peace") relates to the theme of fairness. Ask: does fairness and justice depend on peace? Are you more likely to have unfairness when there is conflict? (NB: this will be developed to another level in the section for older pupils, relating directly to SDGs 10 & 16.)

### **Maths/geometry**

Make a simple pie-chart to show how a 'cake' can be divided up into fractions or percentages. They could also do a 'fun' division based on some kind of arbitrary inequality such as the one suggested earlier by Horse.

## **Geography**

Focus on interconnectedness by thinking about what goes into a typical cake and where the ingredients come from. (They can't just say "the shop"!!) Take chocolate for instance: what plant is it made from – how is it grown – which countries produce it? Do the same for bananas, eggs, flour, milk, butter etc. Relate this to the Martin Luther King quote used in Project One: "Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning you've depended on more than half the world."

## **Physical Education, Movement & Dance**

Move as fast as you can on two legs, four 'legs', and one leg. Try three legs, in pairs.

Get into groups quickly according to different numbers the teacher calls out. You can opt to make this a bit competitive by saying the first group to do this will score a point. Note how one or two children will likely find themselves left out each time as the groups are formed. Don't dwell on this brief moment of exclusion: move it on quickly by calling another number, bigger or smaller, so all the groups have to break up and re-form. To highlight and encourage inclusion you can be quite clever here: if for instance you've said "seven" the first time and there are two children left out, by saying "nine" next the nearest group will quickly pull these two in, so this time *they* will be included and someone else will find themselves excluded. This can help develop awareness of how anyone can find themselves isolated. The onus is now on being open to inviting others into 'your group'.

Freeze-frames: in small groups they have 10 seconds to organise themselves into circles, triangles, rectangles, diamonds etc.

Move around the room as one of the farmyard animals. Focus on body shape and exploration of space. Consider too the rhythm of the animal's movement: is it fast, slow, steady, smooth, erratic, unpredictable – turn this into a dance!

# A PIECE OF THE CAKE:

## SESSION TWO

*AGED 10 and upwards*

This might be the moment to point out (if it's not clear to them already), how the play they have been exploring is an allegory: the farmyard represents the world and the animals can be seen to represent people. We will now link more directly into the whole area of fairness/unfairness and justice/injustice within human relations, focusing particular on how vital resources are shared.

### INTRODUCING AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE:

Give the class the following **new information** which will open up a discussion on how we might review the entire situation in the play.

Imagine that sometime in the past, the farm and the land and its resources belonged to all the animals. But one day the Hen Family arrived, with an ideology that claimed they were superior and entitled to this land. Having taken over, they put the other animals to work as second-class citizens – to serve them. So we can now see the farmyard as a two-tier 'society' founded on historical events involving conquest (through force and probably violence), appropriation of the land and resources, with this exploitation and injustice continuing into the present moment. It should be immediately apparent how this will affect any conversations around peace and justice (SDG 16), and reducing inequalities, (SDG 10).

### *Embracing a cross-curricular approach*

At this point we might wish to underline the value of taking a holistic cross-curricular approach – and doing this from the start of this session, rather than as an 'add on' or follow-up to any initial drama exploration. We can mention subjects one at a time, but hopefully it will be clear by now how they continually overlap and invite joined-up thinking (and feeling!) when engaging with something as broad as Development Education. We want to encourage teachers of history, geography, science, art, music, languages, English, home economics, sports,

religion and maths, to see regular opportunities for incorporating a drama element into their classes.

**History and geography** teachers can take this into a discussion around colonialism and empire: British, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, German, Japanese, US, Soviet and others – where native peoples of countries taken over were turned into second-class citizens and often suffered brutal repression through direct violence, or worked to death, along with succumbing to new diseases brought in by the invaders. (See the example of Tasmania in Project One.) At one time a huge percentage of the world was under the British Empire: including India, Australia, Canada, Ireland, even the fledgling USA. To understand clearly the global situation today, we have to take on board how things became this way. While native populations of many countries successfully fought for independence from their colonial rulers, they were then punished in other ways. Haiti was forced to pay off enormous ‘compensation’ to France (for loss of revenue!), crippling it for hundreds of years to come. Today, rich and powerful countries continue to use economic muscle to bully poorer and weaker countries into trade deals that are disadvantageous to them. Global inequality is increasing exponentially year by year, wealth and power becoming concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, even as we appeal to a sense of universal citizenship in trying to implement the SDGs.

There are also hierarchical divisions *within* most societies. In some countries this is at an extreme level, where some dominant groups or tribes lord it over other lower-class citizens. In Ireland too, the wealth-gap has widened in recent years, with one out of five children falling below the poverty line. Certain groups like Travellers experience additional challenges linked to racial and cultural prejudice.

### **Reconsidering ‘A Piece of the Cake’ in this new light**

So with all of this in mind, focusing back on that key moment in the play when Little Red Hen ‘asked’ the other animals to help, consider now what it might have meant for them. Perhaps they felt resentful. They might have helped in the past and got no thanks for it. It would also have taken them away from doing their own work and attending to their own daily challenges. We can see how this links immediately to the need for decent work and economic Growth (SDG 8), and reducing inequalities (SDG 10).

## ***History continued***

A famous person was supposed to have said, speaking about poor people who couldn't afford to buy bread: "Let them eat cake!" Ask the class if they know who this was. Here you might use a fun game of "Who am I?" The teacher picks a well-known historical person, e.g. Robin Hood. (By the way, note how this character's attitude was the exact opposite to Marie Antoinette's.) The pupils ask one question each, such as "Are you a man?" or "Are you still alive?" or "Did you live more than 500 years ago?" These have to be questions the teacher can answer either "Yes" or "No" to. The teacher isn't allowed to elaborate. If it's clear that they'll never get it, you might opt to give them some subtle clues. After everyone has asked one question each, they can try to guess who you are.

Note how this is both fun and engaging, showing learning (and research) to be enjoyable. It also illustrates the value of a collective approach, where there is a pooling of information as it is gathered, with each child building on answers to previous questions. So it is a lesson too in attentive listening and joined-up thinking.

## ***Religion/CSPE***

We have touched on broad ethical themes in talking about equality, fairness, justice, tolerance, compassion, selfishness, and altruism – values and concepts that are central to all belief systems. Prophets like Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, as well as wise leaders amongst indigenous peoples, have all used stories to carry a moral message, or teach/pass on wisdom, awareness. In the same way as one might examine the parable of 'The Good Samaritan' for meaning, *A Piece of the Cake* can be a similar vehicle for learning.

## ***Home Economics***

Make a cake: talk about where the ingredients come from. Use fruit such as raspberries grown locally or even in the school grounds.

**Note: I hope it's obvious by now that we're trying to bring everyone along, covering all subject areas not just the English teacher with an interest in drama, the person responsible for Development Education if there is one, or the TY coordinator.**

## **Sports!**

We haven't forgotten the sports teacher, who might join this 'Canterbury Tale' style pilgrimage of enquiry by utilising the movement section contained in the lesson for younger groups as a warm-up.

## **English**

At secondary school level, students will see some obvious parallels with the novel *Animal Farm* (which is on the Irish Leaving Cert list of prescribed books), and these connections will be considered here shortly.

## **Connecting all of the above to SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**

We've been using *A Piece of the Cake* as a stimulus for considering how things can be fair or unfair, equal or unequal in our world. And we have mentioned some of the historical causes. We will now probe further and ask why access to food, education, medicines and vital natural resources *continues* to be grossly unequal for different communities. Does this mean some people are actually more deserving than others? If so, is this apparent 'deserving' linked to power and force and ideas of 'superiority' and 'inferiority'? How do moral ideals such as sharing, caring, tolerance and generosity fit together with market-driven concepts such as efficiency, competition, and value for money? Do these two sets of concepts always have to compete, or can they overlap, sync in together?

In continuing the discussion you might mention examples of natural resources such as oil, gas, coal, water, or valuable minerals like copper or cobalt. A useful overall reference would be: *If the World were a Village* (see Appendix). Maths teachers can check out the pie-chart exercises referred to earlier for younger groups, which might also be applicable here.

**Looking at decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), bringing in child labour (sub-section 8.7), while also connecting to the need for quality education (SDG 4).**

Think now about the Three Little Chicks in the play and how their lives might compare with the children of the other animals in the farmyard.

Remember how, along with the other members of the Hen Family, they were given the play-text because they'd had access to education and learnt to read. Tell the class there are millions of children in the world who never go to school because they have to work all the time, even from a very young age. Many of them work in areas such as agriculture because their parents are too poor to pay for their education. There is also such a thing as bonded-labour where children are 'loaned out' to an employer, often to pay off a family debt. Many of these children work in extremely unpleasant and often dangerous conditions (e.g. sweat-shops, making explosives, on rubbish dumps, mining). One example of the latter would be the children who search through mud for cobalt in countries like Democratic Republic of Congo, so that we can have our smart-phones and other devices, or the ones who dig with their hands for gold; it takes the removal of ten tons of earth to produce just one gold wedding ring! If you add in child soldiers, the millions of homeless children, those without parents due to natural disasters like the earthquake in Haiti, war, disease – the goal of getting these children into full-time education is a crucial one if whole generations of citizens aren't to be continually left behind.

Let's go back to Little Red Hen's cake and take a single ingredient, chocolate, which is derived from cocoa beans, much of it grown in West Africa (in countries like Ghana and Ivory Coast). Harvesting and processing these beans is often done by children who never get a chance to go to school. This can be developed into an enquiry around which countries have a better or worse record on this as well as help the pupils appreciate how Fair Trade benefits workers, including children. (Note that we will also be exploring the specific issue of child labour later on in Project Six.)

### ***Beginning the Drama Exploration***

As in Session One we will be making up **new scenes for the play** but this time taking on board the new information introduced at the start of this session, as well as the ensuing discussion we have had so far.

Go back to that moment when Little Red Hen asked for help to make her cake.

In pairs, improvise a scene between two animals in conversation, talking about what is going on. They can start with how Little Red Hen

has just asked them to help and how they feel about it. They can also talk about life in general in the farmyard and on the farm.

(Or they can work in threes – this could just as easily be a three-way conversation.)

Share these scenes aloud, incorporating freezes so everyone can listen-in to the various conversations. The effect will be to create a composite and possibly contrasting image of life in the farmyard.

Reflect and discuss what the general atmosphere is like: tense, distrustful, unpredictable?

At this point the teacher might decide to introduce a **written exercise**, rather than continue immediately on with more drama improvisation.

### *English/creative writing*

Ask each pupil to write a new scene which can fit into the play. It could be set at the point already mentioned or at some other moment. Time and memory can come into play: the scene might be set in the recent past, or even in the future – maybe the animals are remembering something or they are thinking about what life could be like on the farm if only things were different.

This scene might involve two or three of the farmyard animals, or perhaps it could be one of them talking to a member of the Hen family. They can talk about how things are organised in the farmyard: their daily lives, how they're feeling, their thoughts and attitudes, hopes and dreams. How do they see their futures? Are there any positive benefits to the way things are? What would they like to change? How?

Before the pupils start writing, it will help to give them some instruction about how to lay out a play on the page as this may be new to them. Here are just a few examples to illustrate how these scenes might look on the page: note the way dialogue and action are separated; how atmosphere can be suggested with a few simple stage directions and sound effects; how internal thoughts can be indicated, and how there can be switches in time and location.

# SCENE:

## JUST OUTSIDE THE FARMYARD

CAT AND DOG ARE SITTING UNDER THE OVERHANGING ROOF OF AN OLD BARN.

**FX: (sound effects) Rain Falling...**

CAT: I don't like getting wet.

DOG: (*shrugs*) Not a bother to me.

CAT: And I don't like the way Little Red Hen bosses everyone around.

DOG: (*nodding*) And expects everyone to be running around at her beck and call.

ENTER HORSE IN A RUSH

CAT: What's the matter?

HORSE: Duck said something upsetting to Little Red Hen and now there's a lot of kerfuffle, you'd better come...

Or

# SCENE:

## A FIELD, DAY

HORSE: (*thinking aloud*) It's so hot, I'm exhausted from pulling that heavy plough all day.

THE THREE CHICKS COME BY ON THEIR WAY TO SCHOOL

HORSE: (*thoughts cont'd*) Life really is unfair.

THE SCENE CHANGES TO SHOW INSIDE HORSE'S  
IMAGINATION

## **SCENE: SCHOOL CLASSROOM**

HORSE IS SITTING AT A DESK ALONG WITH THE CHICKS

TEACHER HEN: I see we have a new student with us today...

(NOTE: after this scene there can be a freeze: the characters do a turn and they're back as before, in reality.)

## **SCENE: SAME FIELD AS BEFORE**

HORSE: (*thoughts aloud*) If only I could go to school...

ROOSTER COMES BY

HORSE: Rooster, can I ask you something?

ROOSTER: It had better be quick, I'm busy – and I need you to do some pulling...

Or

## **SCENE: THE FARMYARD, DAY**

GOAT AND GOOSE ARE BY AN OLD RAIN BARREL

GOAT: (*chewing something over*) I wonder, is that rain barrel half full or half empty?

GOOSE: That's a very profound question Goat.

GOAT: I wonder sometimes if I'm achieving my full potential.

GOOSE: Sometimes it's better not to wonder too much. Get on with things is what I say.

ENTER MOUSE

GOAT: What do you think Mouse?

Or

## **SCENE: THE FARMYARD – TWO YEARS EARLIER**

THE ANIMALS ARE ALL LINED UP. ROOSTER IS WALKING UP AND DOWN INSPECTING THEM

ROOSTER: From now on, you will all be working for me and my family.

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Once their scenes are written, some of them might be acted out – or this could be left until another day and allow time for a little rehearsal. Each writer can invite other pupils to help play all their characters.

It's important to emphasise how all of these new scenes can contribute to expanding the overall story: they are not competing, rather showing a range of possibilities.

## **CROSS-CURRICULAR FOLLOW-UP**

### ***English/Animal Farm***

Connections with another 'parable', the novel *Animal Farm* (on the Junior Cert list), have already been mentioned. Ask the class: is the situation comparable, what are the overlaps? Do they present similar or different ruling regimes? *Animal Farm* resembles a totalitarian society whereas in *A Piece of the Cake*, rule and control is perhaps closer to a liberal capitalist system? Suppose the animals rebelled and won the right to vote. Now they have some form of democracy, how might this change the situation?

### ***Creative writing/journalism***

Write an article or news piece for an imaginary newspaper or journal, reporting on the opening of a new form of animal parliament. Think about what the different parties might be and who they might represent. Some will want the old order, others will want change.

Connect some of the content in the article specifically to SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 16 (peace and justice).

### ***English/history/geography/CSPE***

Discuss what has been learnt from exploring the play and how it can be applied to understanding and implementing the SDGs. Bear in mind how pupils may have contrary views and opinions to the teacher, perhaps reflecting whether their parents have liberal or conservative views. In sessions I have run myself, children have sometimes argued that if a person or country is wealthy then good luck to them, why should they share it – especially if someone works hard they deserve to be better-off. I tend to avoid trying to directly contradict these views, but offer instead some opposing arguments to open up the discussion, such as the view that poor and disempowered people also work hard but get very little for it and don't have the same opportunities to accumulate wealth or have a voice in decision making. A person may have just been born rich, or even if they worked hard, handed better opportunities to make money. They might also have taken advantage of other people to accumulate their fortune. We have already noted how whole countries have become richer by exploiting other nations and communities in this way. Also, from an ethical/moral angle there is a question of how it affects the attitude of a given society if people who are poor, hungry, homeless, or even sick are blamed as if it's their own fault. But because these issues are complex we find them worthy of discussion. Sometimes things don't appear so black and white. By exploring these themes in a play like *A Piece of the Cake* and opening ourselves to viewing things from multiple perspectives, we hope to understand ourselves better in relation to the world around us.

# PROJECT FOUR USING “STREET MARKETS” TO EXPLORE ALL THE SDGS

*Single 80 minute session*

*Age 10 upwards*

Here we will be using the setting of a street market to explore all the SDGs – as if we are trying to ‘sell’ these ambitions framed as policies, to the public. Will they ‘buy’ into them? Decisions are made at a global level by the UN and World Health Organisation (WHO) but national governments will also play a key role in whether the SDGs will be implemented. And national governments are answerable to their populations, who may be either ahead or behind the curve in terms of awareness. Also, within national populations there are regional factors and often competing interest groups: think of the new ‘green’ agenda in Ireland which means cutting back on fossil fuels such as peat, but with the loss of jobs in one sector or certain regions. The government, particularly the Green Party, as well as groups like Friends of the Earth, have to ‘sell’ this to the people.

## STAGE ONE

### Setting up a typical market scene:

Stand in a circle. They can either work individually or in pairs. Each person or pair is going to have a stall in a market. So the first thing is to build belief.

Ask them all to think of something they might sell in a regular market: vegetables, flowers, clothes, jewellery, fish, cheese, pet food, etc. Or meals: soup, pancakes...

Now they can mime setting up their stall and its produce. Here you might simply let them ‘mime’ in a relaxed instinctive un-fussed way and not be too concerned with ‘acting’ skills.

But there is an option of feeding in one or two ideas as they’re doing this. You can freeze them occasionally and address the whole class to show them the following:

When handling imaginary objects, fruit, clothes etc – there is a

technique used in mime called the “clac”. Taking hold of an imaginary apple, say “clac” in your head, or even whisper it out loud, to punctuate the movement as you curl your fingers around the fruit. Now an audience will ‘see’ the apple held in your hand. When the apple is then placed somewhere else and released, there is another silent ‘clac’ as the object is let go. The audience ‘sees’ the apple is gone from your hand, which is then free to do something else. It helps make actions clear, akin to a written or spoken sentence, with the first ‘clac’ acting like a capital letter, and the final ‘clac’ acting like a full stop. If there isn’t this indication of separation, an audience will still ‘see’ the apple stuck to the hand. Ask the pupils to pick up several apples one at a time from a crate and place them in a row on the stall. With each ‘clac’ we see a new apple being placed on the same surface.

When working in pairs, this ‘clac’ needs to be coordinated and mutually understood. When two people pick up a piece of furniture like a table, one does a ‘clac’ as they take hold of one end, and their partner does a ‘clac’ as they take hold the other end. This helps them work together as a unit.

Another thing you can draw attention to is that all objects have size, shape, weight, texture and properties, e.g. some things bounce (a ball), and other things don’t (a cabbage).

If you have time within this lesson you can bring everyone briefly into one big MIME CIRCLE to illustrate this further by passing round objects with different attributes: e.g. a box, a ball (bounce it), steel rod (try to bend it), a stick (snap it in half), a set of weights on a bar (to lift it up takes exertion), a rabbit (stroke it), a baby (don’t drop it, they don’t bounce either!).

It can also be useful to play a “Yes” game. Ask them to set up their stalls again but to say the word “Yes” with every action, (NO OTHER WORD IS ALLOWED). This is to help consolidate agreement as well as help coordinate actions between two people. It is also a way of introducing attitude, feeling, towards developing some simple characterisation. So when the first person says “Yes?” it operates as a question: “Are you ready with your end?” When the other person answers “Yes” it’s an affirmation: “Yes, I’m ready.” They can play around more with *how* the word is said. Note the way this links back to the language exploration in Project One regarding how tone of voice, facial gesture

and body-language come into play in creating sub-text. “Yes” can vary from sounding firm: “Yes!” to doubtful, hesitant: “Yes...?” It can sound begrudging (especially if you add a world-weary sigh). It can be said softly, aggressively, complainingly, lovingly, adoringly, busily, reluctantly, irritably – the list is endless. Some basic characterisation may begin to develop for each pair: they might even become a double-act (think of Laurel & Hardy). Consider more relationships: this could be father-son, mother-daughter, two brothers or sisters, boss-apprentice. There are endless openings here for establishing relationships: just by using the word “Yes”, we can start to pick up whether one is working happily with or for the other, being exploited? Maybe a son is reluctantly doing a job for his father. Maybe they both love this work, or one person is a little more into it than the other.

Share these short pieces in the class. Everyone will see how it helps to consolidate and fix the actions. It shows how “Yes” helps two *actors* work together as a unit – while at the same time tone of voice or gesture can suggest sub-text that allows their *characters* to have a “No” voice – making it possible for conflicting attitudes and underlying tensions to be part of the drama.

Overall, these scenes of people setting up their stalls, taken all together with everyone saying “Yes” create a communal atmosphere: Yes, we are all market people, these are our stalls and we all have something to sell. And yes, let’s get started!

### **ADDING MORE TEXT TO SELL THE PRODUCE**

Tell them this is early in the day, the stallholders are relaxed, calling out to the public, advertising their wares: “Come and get your fresh fish...” – “Lovely juicy red apples, locally grown...”

Let the market come to life as one WHOLE-CLASS improvisation to get a real sense of it being a shared scene.

### **VISITING OTHER STALLS**

Ask one person in each pair to take a wander and look at other stalls, check out what’s on sale, touch things – engage in conversation, banter with another stallholder. They can get a cup of tea, maybe even some food.

So this now feels like a real ‘live’ market.

## **ADDING TENSION THROUGH A CHANGE IN CONTEXT**

Tell them it's now mid-day and the market is in full flow – the busiest time – voices are raised – the stallholders might expand their sales-pitch: “Lovely fresh fish, straight from the sea...” and now maybe a little urgency can be allowed in as they compete for customers – raising voices a little, with a bit more projection.

## **ADDING MORE TENSION THROUGH THE TIME FACTOR**

Now tell them it's near the end of the day, it will soon be time to pack up. They haven't sold enough, so their appeals become a bit more desperate.

To avoid unwanted shouting, say they can only whisper – or find other ways of pulling customers in, through eye contact, voice tone, and *what* they say: “It's all going to rot if you don't buy it!” They can even try getting down on their knees begging someone to buy!

Note here how everyone is sharing what are imaginary customers/shoppers.

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# **STAGE TWO:**

## **APPLYING THE MARKET SCENARIO TO THE SDGS**

Now instead of selling normal market produce, each stall will be trying to sell an SDG. Options here might be to try and have all 17 SDGs represented (with 34 pupils in a class it would obviously be perfect), or alternatively let them choose and allow for the possibility there will be several stalls selling the same SDG and no one selling some of the others.

Note how the second option does in fact mimic a real market, where there could be more than one fruit and vegetable stall; the same with clothes, jewellery, hot food etc. It means you might have several groups looking at the same ones but then comparisons can be made between the different approaches taken to sell the same SDG – so still an opportunity for pooling of experience, knowledge and imaginative ideas.

### **BEFORE SETTING UP THE STALLS**

The pairs can leave their stalls for a while to sit and discuss which SDG they are selling and what they will say when trying to persuade people to buy. They might also think of any physical things they can show on the stall: e.g. a water pump, solar lamp; seeds, diagrams, a compost heap (I'm reminded of the eco-area at Electric Picnic and other festivals). Let them practise, e.g. "SDG 2 – zero hunger for sale..." or "Come and help make a better world..." Try being broad in appeal, e.g. "Come and make a difference..." as well as specific: "Fair Trade goods for sale..." or "Everything organic..." – "NO child labour involved in production of these items..."

Some stalls could have almost a fairground element, with things people can do that offer a challenge; or else a craft element, learning to make something?

As the pupils dig into their imaginations around this, they'll be conscious of any gaps they themselves have between what they know and what they *don't* know. They can ask the teacher for help here: then make this questioning part of the way they engage with customers e.g. "Come

and find out everything you didn't know about creating sustainable cities..."

## **WHOLE CLASS IMPROVISATION – BRINGING THE SDGS MARKET TO LIFE**

As they do this, again one person from each stall can visit other stalls to sample what's on offer, and then the other person gets a turn.

### **FEEDBACK & REFLECTION**

Afterwards ask them how did that go? What did they learn? What else do they need to know to sell the SDGs? What are the key points: what were the public most interested in, what engaged them? What were the main challenges in 'selling' something such as 'action on climate change'? What difficulties did they face, or imagine they might face, from 'customers': ignorance, apathy, selfishness?

Think back to how the original eight Millennium goals were not fully achieved – and how the UN had to learn from this by taking on board factors that might have been underestimated before formulating the next generation of goals, the current 17 SDGs.

### **A NEGATIVE/DIVIDED MARKET**

We can explore some of the factors that might still hinder progress of the SDGs by setting up an alternative 'negative' market. This time the stalls might sell weapons, fossil fuels, bottled water stolen from indigenous people's lands, harmful pesticides, or fracking machinery. They can also sell abstract ideas: "Come and buy a bag of prejudice" – "Get your male superiority here" – "Try this soup, guaranteed to make you feel more important" – "Nice big juicy greeds, freshly grown" – "Armed conflict going cheap" – "Global warming at best competitive prices..."

## **SWITCH BACK TO SELLING CONCRETE AS WELL AS ABSTRACT ‘GOOD’ THINGS**

“Come and get your clean water and cheap medicines...” or “Wealth redistribution over here!” or “Love, kindness, compassion, generosity going cheap!”

### **FINAL REFLECTION**

Ask them how did it ‘feel’ playing these opposing roles. Did it feel good selling the SDGs – alongside values such as kindness, sharing, caring?

When they were selling the ‘bad’ things, did they feel powerful for a moment: did it help in understanding why some people and institutions choose to be greedy, hateful, bullying, or enjoy having power over others?

Link all of this back to PROJECT TWO: BRAINS HEARTS & STOMACHS, regarding the question of how and why people make either good or bad decisions around the SDGs.

### **FOLLOW-UP**

**Science & technology:** consider how S&T might come into play when selling an SDG?

**Economics & Politics:** ask, who are the main players? What forces are at work? Can an open ‘market’ solve everything or should there be more central planning, government and global intervention, i.e. social management.

**Geography:** consider the diverse groups of people that make up any population – the importance of local conditions in a country or regional area: soils, cultural beliefs, etc. Look broadly at ecology and sustainability.

**History:** ask how did this situation come about: e.g. famine – does it help us to see links between the Great Irish Famine and a modern famine in Yemen or South Sudan? Check out the Afri resource: *Just a Second, Lessons from History*, (see Appendix).

**Maths:** look at the numbers involved: the levels of funding needed; the people to be included and targeted. Make cake diagrams, pie-charts. Link back to *Project Three: A Piece of the Cake*.

**CSPE:** Identify three basic positive values that underpin the aspirations attached to each SDG. Also examine what negative/destructive values, attitudes and beliefs oppose them.

**English:** Write out information leaflets for the stall, with a summary of actions needed etc.

**Languages:** reflect on the different 'languages' of persuasion used during the improvisations, e.g. how a determined whisper might sometimes be more effective than simply shouting or browbeating someone who doesn't understand what you're saying.

## **PROJECT FIVE: USING FAIRY STORIES AS A VEHICLE TO EXPLORE ALL THE SDGS**

(AGE 6 and upwards initially: at a certain point this project will go in a separate direction for pupils **aged 10 and over**. **Session One – 80 minutes**)

### **First, some background to this.**

I started working with Afri in 2005, after meeting them in Louisburgh Co Mayo, where I was involved with local primary schools devising a presentation called *Know Yourself Know the World* for the Sonas Arts Festival, (see *Appendix*). Joe Murray asked me to work with a group of transition years (aged 15-16) in a Dublin school to devise a short play for Afri's Féile Bride Conference/Festival. The theme that year was food security and food sovereignty and I was asked to focus this short play around the specific issue of "seeds".

Afri's development education coordinator at the time, Clare O'Grady-Walshe came into the classroom with me to give an introductory session to the TY group who were going to be involved in devising the play. I found the subject matter fascinating, but I was also taken by Clare herself and her passion and commitment and decided I wanted to put the question of how someone becomes an activist at the heart of this play about seeds: what was the 'seed' that set off all that interest and passion in her?

I had around eight double classes with these students, in which to get to know them, explore the theme and background issues, devise a presentation, rehearse it and work out how to stage it. Along the way they had to use improvisation to discover material and develop confidence in themselves as actors and be able to deliver this play in what was to be a public performance to an international audience no less, many of whom would already have some expertise in seeds and themes of food security and food sovereignty. We were asked to open the conference with a 15-20 minute performance piece that would identify and highlight what were quite complex issues in an accessible way; to educate, but also to entertain. Overall quite a tall order! All on a bare stage with no set, lights, or props and at most a couple of rehearsals of the piece we had devised.

Somehow our play proved to be a great success: the keynote speaker following us said how he had his speech all prepared, but didn't know what to do now because we'd already covered everything!

I outline all of this because sometimes the simplest vehicle can be found to say the most complex and profound things. Information, statistics, scientific detail, can be communicated viscerally through drama using a principle of 'show not tell' where a complex idea might even be captured in a single image. A simple song or poem within a dramatic context can communicate a huge amount, touching the heart as well as the head.

While getting them warmed up in one of the early sessions I asked them to do some basic freeze-frames where we used the usual situations such as seaside, supermarkets, hospital operations etc. As it was coming up to Christmas we then moved on to doing freeze-frames around pantomime stories. After this I asked them in small groups to look at the theme of seeds and food security through the lens of these fairy stories. One small group picked *Jack & the Beanstalk* and on seeing it we knew we'd discovered a frame for our play. In the story, the beans Jack brings back from the market (in exchange for the cow) are seen as useless by his mother and thrown out the window into the field. But they then become the vehicle for change, to tackling the ruling status quo (the giant in the clouds), conquering fear and leading to prosperity.

We invented a central character through *hot-seating* (see *Glossary*), and surprisingly perhaps this all-girl group created a boy called John. John became 'Jack' and in a subsequent session, Jack morphed into Jackie and now we also had a gender aspect to our play (see SDG 5).

# SESSION ONE

*Age group: 6 and upwards initially*

## USING FREEZE-FRAMES

Hopefully, the class will already have experience doing them from the earlier projects, certainly with the youngest children it would help if they have already done Project One, which introduces the basics of the freeze command and working in small groups to compose a frozen tableau, (otherwise see the *Glossary* for freeze-frames).

But with all ages, even youth groups in their late teens, there's no harm in a quick reminder and getting the muscles of imagination, cooperation and articulation going and it's a great way to get the bodies warmed up.

Begin with concrete situations: weddings, seaside, supermarkets etc.

Bring in geometric shapes: triangles, rectangles, diamonds etc.

## INTRODUCING FAIRY/PANTOMIME STORIES

Now you can call out the names of fairy stories. It's good to still limit them to 10-second countdowns as it leaves no time for getting bogged down in lengthy discussion; everyone just thinks of something quickly and freezes. A 'picture' may involve a whole group in one location and moment, or it might break into smaller sub-units: there may even be individuals doing their own thing in their own worlds. Taking "**Cinderella**", they will quickly think of the story, moments that jump out to them: so in a group of eight pupils, two are wagging their fingers, bossing a third around while she is sweeping, another pair are trying to squeeze on some shoes, another pair are dancing, another is waving a magic wand. Together they are presenting a composite of highlights in the play. Because it all happens so fast, they haven't time to worry about whether they are coordinated or whether it adds up to make complete sense.

Another group may have formed a single picture built around the first person to get into position – maybe at the palace ball.

This variety between groups is part of the fun. While they are frozen,

invite them to look around the room and take in how, taken as a whole class, they are offering a composite picture of 'Cinderella'.

Say "unfreeze" and ask them to add movement, but with no sound (e.g. a shoe gets slipped onto a foot); then freeze them again after a few seconds.

The next time you say "unfreeze", they can add sounds and words, e.g. "Ouch..! I know it will fit..."

Call out more titles: *Snow White/Little Red Riding Hood/Beauty & the Beast/Rapunzel/Sleeping Beauty/Aladdin/etc.*

After say the eighth one, it might be a good time to review and consolidate these drama skills. Ask them to run through them again but this time they will have just three seconds to get into position and freeze; then as you call the next one, unfreeze and into that one and so on. So you say "Cinderella – 123, freeze!" "Snow White – 123, freeze!" "Beauty & the Beast – 123 freeze!"

You'll find by now they are really adept at this and so praise them for being highly skilled at using this dramatic device, which from now on can be used in any kind of playmaking.

The teacher might also take note here how effective this has been in organising the drama. A freeze acts as a form of punctuation. There is a clear full stop at the end of each scene. When you call "unfreeze" and they move into the next scenario, they can now be in a different location, even a different time (in the past or future). To really accent this, another device (and skill) is to do a quick spin or turn before changing and moving on.

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## APPLYING FAIRY STORIES TO THE SDGs

NB: Here we might suggest the content will probably be more suitable for aged 10 upwards.

(Younger groups can follow a different path with their exploration: e.g. drawing pictures.)

We have already seen how *Jack & the Beanstalk* became a vehicle for a play about seeds and food security.

Let's look more closely at this example for a moment and consider how the play was built around the main message in the original story: how Jack did something 'wrong' initially and got into trouble but then (ironically) it turned out to be 'right'. (Thinking back to Project Two, compare this with Greta Thunberg and the criticism she had to face for her initial action.) Here, you could say that Jack's mother might have done something 'right' (by telling him off), but wrong by throwing the "useless" beans (seeds) away. As it turned out a seed grew into something big and powerful – like the Fridays for Future Movement, (or the "Me too" or "Black Lives Matter" movements), one small voice (seed) growing into something much greater.

We don't want to pre-empt the pupils in their investigation and discovery so the teacher can either share the following scenarios with the pupils as illustrations, or withhold them until later, after they've done some exploring themselves. But you can have these examples up your sleeve so if they need some help, you can feed in hints, clues – ask questions which might help them towards making their own discoveries. Remember that if they come up with something I or you, haven't thought of, then that would be brilliant, certainly don't try and make them come around to these scenarios if they have invented something different.

Remember too that we are looking to devise dramatic set-pieces for exploration, not attempting at this stage to create what you would call a 'play', or performance piece: but they are nonetheless there to "show" – illustrate, reveal, demonstrate, throw a light on a subject and challenge an audience (even if it's only the rest of the class) to 'see things' in new ways, which is the aim of all art. Sometimes we are introducing new information to people (educating), other times we are trying to get them to look in a fresh way at something that has become

perhaps all too familiar and accepted, (e.g. the homeless on the streets) and re-experience what might have been forgotten: that this is wrong, shocking; recover that urgent feeling that we must do something about it!

In considering the following examples, also bear in mind there might not be an obvious perfect 'fit' between each story and the SDG: but this isn't supposed to be concrete, it's merely an imaginative vehicle, a way of exploring and 'thinking outside the box' – perhaps what we all need right now.

### *Cinderella*

This would appear to have an immediate relevance in terms of how domestic workers are often treated, including child labourers, millions of whom work in domestic service. Cinderella is underpaid, not appreciated, bullied and abused. And she is tied to the situation through no fault of her own, merely through circumstance. This could connect to SDG 1 (no poverty), as well as examining gender issues (SDG 5), which are obviously so integral to the story.

What if the 'ugly sisters' became ugly brothers, who abuse her, take her for granted and see themselves as superior? This underlines her powerlessness and how she can't even leave the home she is trapped in. Already the story is transformed. Her 'Fairy Godmother' might appear as an inspirational figure, who empowers Cinderella by saying she has her own power residing within her. This might be a Malala Yousafzai-type figure, even Malala herself (she's seen by Cinderella on TV perhaps) and her 'magic wand' is her ability to reveal the truth of the situation: that Cinderella is not less than the others, or deserving of how she is treated. She is entitled to a better life, to be free of exploitation and discrimination. The 'handsome prince' won't just be handsome in a superficial sense, but someone possessing an essential goodness and who has the power to really 'change her life'. This person dances with her while she is disguised (unprejudiced by prior assumptions) and falls for her because she is so natural and unspoiled. When she then rushes off at twelve midnight, she loses one 'glass slipper', leaving behind a part of herself. When the prince in searching the town comes to where she lives and she tries it on and it fits, at first he's taken aback. Yes, his views are challenged – she is lower caste; but she has already won him over. He sees through the nonsense and declares a new law that

condemns this kind of discrimination: her brothers feel ashamed and change and everyone is happy ever after. And why not!

### ***Snow White & the Seven Dwarves:***

maybe they too are child labourers (with no parents) who work in a mine or stone quarry? When they take her in it shows solidarity, and the power of community. The 'poisoned apple' offered to Snow White represents harmful ideas, like advertising vanity products, rubbish TV, fake-news, tempting her to want stuff that exploits others. Perhaps this is linked to what the dwarves are forced to dig up in the mine, like gold or cobalt? The Queen is vain – she just wants jewellery and gold (which could involve child labour or come from war zones). She tricks Snow White: the dwarves come back and find her taken over, in a trance. Again it takes a 'kiss' of awareness from someone essentially good and with the right ideas to support her on her journey to becoming her true self and follow her destiny.

### ***Aladdin***

Think 'magic carpets': how a child making a carpet in a sweatshop for an evil boss, dreams of escaping on one of the carpets she is making, how it might allow her to fly away and escape. But she also knows that in reality it's a pipedream, so she writes a message to a potential buyer, "this is a magic carpet – it has the power to transform *your* life – to take you out of yourself – allow *YOU* to escape the narrowness of your limited awareness." So people who buy the carpets and who *do* have power to do something, change things. Or she weaves her message into the actual pattern so that it can be 'read' by someone who is aware enough to understand it, and who then 'falls' for her and takes up her cause.

### ***Hansel & Gretel***

The witch's cottage is seductive because it offers sweet things that pull you in (materialism, greed, irresponsible consumption), but you 'go in' too far and end up in the oven yourself (global warming!) unless you can find a way back to awareness and remember your trail – your goals, what you were looking for in the first place in the 'forest' of ideas and expectations. Maybe this is an allegory that can apply to all of the SDGs?

## ***Pied Piper***

Child labour again – they could have all been safe in school! The Piper does a good deed initially, but the town’s Mayor is corrupt and double-crosses him. The Piper then teaches the town a ‘lesson’ by taking the children away. Ironically and pointedly, only the boy who is deaf and blind (not taken in by the seduction) is saved. But was it the mayor and the community who were deaf and blind to the situation in the first place?

## ***Beauty & the Beast***

As with all the stories, look at what happens (basic storyline) but then ask what is the underlying theme, the message, the moral? Here it might be “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” or “don’t judge a book by its cover”. In other words beauty is superficial and doesn’t reflect the ‘beauty’ in the ‘real’ person. The story shows how people can change their attitudes and expectations and how a sad, unhappy situation can turn out for the better with a certain amount of empathy, determination, imagination and moral courage. Note how all of these values are directly relevant to the attitudes required to implement any of the SDGs, where policies and practise need to be informed by the heart as well as the head (as we discovered in Project Two).

So one application here might be a sectarian theme: this story can be seen as a parable that deals with fear of ‘the other’ – the “Beast” is someone who is seen in cultural or ideological terms as ‘ugly’ or difficult to deal with, perhaps someone to look down on. Fear and prejudice are key elements in the story. One side perceives itself as “beautiful” and sees the other side (tribe/class/religion) as “beastly”. Think Catholic/Protestant in the North of Ireland, Sunni/Shiite Muslims; or in the USA, Democrats and Republicans. Besides being about building mutual respect it also draws attention to the need for self-respect, self-esteem and a wider sense of feeling good about oneself (SDG 3: good health and wellbeing).

In composing their pieces, remember the value of freezes and unfreezes & the spin/turn; how a picture can tell a story in itself, often say more than words. Words can then be added to *extend* the meaning. The groups might link two scenes from the story, or just show one key scene where attitudes are challenged, and positions shift and change.

(See Project Two again regarding transformations from one emotional state to another.)

Remember all we are trying to do here is see the issue from a novel standpoint. If it offers even one new idea, insight, or way of seeing, it will be worth it. And all the while it is testing their knowledge of the SDGs. Do they really understand their internal dynamics, the inherent challenges – what may be holding back implementation and what aspects of human nature are involved in driving that negativity?

### ***Joined-up thinking needs ‘joined-up’ people***

Note too how as moral parables, these stories appeal to the heart (emotions) as well as the head (thoughts/ideas), which combine to inform our overall ‘emotional intelligence’. One can argue that we will be forever standing still or even going backwards, unless we can find a way of combining joined-up thinking with joined-up feeling and discover our whole selves, both individually and as a community. (Again, see Project Two.)

# SESSION TWO: USING FAIRY STORIES

- focusing on CHILD LABOUR (SDG 8.7)

Age group: 10-18

Here we'll take just one of the previous examples, **Aladdin**, and show how a few simple scenes can run together to form a narrative story, that could if desired even become a complete 'play' to be performed. This version actually originated in one of the classes I was teaching many years ago, while exploring the theme of child labour. In more recent times people will remember the true story of a child in a sweatshop slipping a note into a garment which ended up in a Penneys shop in Ireland; so that too could inform the following scenario.

What follows is the skeletal outline of the play – groups can utilise this at two levels:

- 1) As a guide/stimulus for taking their own improvised scenes from Session One and shaping them into a linked narrative, a 'play'.
- 2) Borrow this scenario, but develop their own dialogue and action sequences, with a further option to add new characters, story elements, even a new ending.

## SCENE ONE:

The sweatshop/day. "Stop dreaming!" says the Boss to one of the workers. The Boss gets a big order on the phone for carpets. They speed up. One child hears children playing outside. Another's thoughts out loud are about their parents and whether they will ever be taken home. One child makes a mistake and is beaten. Again we witness their thoughts and feelings as they weave them into the carpets. The boss dozes off. They all gather around the child who was beaten to show solidarity and then begin to circle around slowly.

THIS BECOMES A 'WHIRLWIND' AS THEY START TO SPIN THIS CHILD AND THEMSELVES AROUND, (LIKE IN 'THE WIZARD OF OZ'). THEY HAVE BECOME A 'WIND OF CHANGE' – THE WIND EVEN WHISPERS SOME OF THE WORDS THAT WERE

WEAVED INTO THE CARPETS: ALL THE KIDS' HOPES AND DREAMS...BECOMING LOUDER...

FREEZE AND TURN INTO -

**Scene Two:** In a Western country, e.g. Ireland or UK – a woman has bought a new carpet. She lies on it and enjoys the luxurious pile. She hears voices – looks around. Eventually she realises they are coming from the carpet.

(THE KIDS CAN DO VOICES FROM OFFSTAGE – OR IN THE SHADOWS.)

THE WOMAN ALMOST 'SEES' THEM IN HER IMAGINATION. SHE ALSO HEARS SOMETHING BUT HAS TO REALLY FOCUS TO TRY AND 'TUNE-IN' TO WHAT IS BEING SAID. SHE LOOKS BACK AT THE CARPET AND STROKES IT APPRECIATIVELY, FEELING THE PATTERN LIKE SOMEONE TRYING TO READ A MESSAGE IN BRAILLE. AT FIRST WHAT SHE DISCOVERS IS A SHOCK, SHE DOESN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND YET.

**Scene three:** Later she's watching TV and sees the news about the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh.

AGAIN WE HEAR THE VOICES SAYING "THIS IS A MAGIC CARPET – IT HAS A MESSAGE TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE..." WE SEE HER NOD AS SHE MAKES THE CONNECTION. SHE LOOKS AGAIN AT HER 'MAGIC CARPET'.

NOW THE KIDS COME ON STAGE AND DO THE WHIRLWIND AROUND HER, SHE FINDS HERSELF BEING LIFTED UP, SPINNING, TRANSPORTED...

**Scene four:** Sweatshop: the Boss is telling them to hurry and finish – the "rich lady with the big order" is coming in personally to collect a load of carpets. The woman from Ireland arrives with the police and the Boss is arrested.

THE WHOLE SCENE NOW BECOMES A WHIRLWIND UNTIL IT SETTLES INTO A SCENE SHOWING CHILDREN HAPPILY PLAYING.

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## **FOLLOW-UP REFLECTION**

Despite its simplicity, this play is obviously profound in meaning and wide-reaching in implications for the SDGs. It is of course rather innocent at a certain level: one harsh reality is that police corruption could mean the Boss being given a tip-off before the raid. Many years ago while working on this theme of child labour with Poetry Ireland's Development Education in Schools project I was fortunate to meet a woman who worked in an ashram in India. She talked about her job rescuing children from this kind of situation, along with a police escort, taking these kids back to the ashram where they were looked after, educated, loved and if it was advisable, returned to their parents. She said how the police involved could not be told beforehand where they were going in case they gave a tip-off.

### ***But who ultimately should take responsibility?***

So what happens once the boss is arrested: is that the end of the matter? During one of the improvisations when devising this play, a child in role as the boss defended his actions, saying he was only "doing his job", simply responding to consumer demand and went on to blame the government for turning a blind eye to illegality and bringing in everybody else as well. It was a fair point: the role of the woman who bought the carpet highlighted how we are all interconnected and to some degree potentially responsible. Should we have a greater sense of shared responsibility in relating to these issues? We will explore this now in Project Six, with a focus on SDG 17 (partnership for the goals).

# **PROJECT SIX: PUTTING CHILD LABOUR (AND THE WORLD) ON TRIAL – EXPLORING SDG 17**

*(partnership for the goals)*

Note: This project can stand alone but will work best following-on from the last one.

## **SESSION ONE:**

*80 minutes – age 10 upwards*

### *First some background*

In 1999, then US President Bill Clinton addressed the International Labour Organisation's annual conference and talked about child labour. He said:

“...by putting a more human face on the world trading system and the global economy, by ending the worst forms of child labour, we will be giving our children the 21st<sup>st</sup> century they deserve. We will not tolerate children in slavery or bondage. We will not tolerate children being forcibly recruited to serve in armed conflicts. We will not tolerate young children risking their health and breaking their bodies in hazardous and dangerous working conditions for hours unconscionably long.”

The new Convention defined for the first time what constituted the "worst forms of child labour," including the forced or compulsory recruitment of child soldiers for armed conflict. It also called for international cooperation on social and economic development, poverty eradication and education to realize its terms, and provide for broad consultation among governments, workers and employers – the "social partners" in the ILO's tripartite structure.

The ILO estimated that around 250 million children between the ages of five and 14 worked. About half worked full-time, while the rest combined work and schooling. In some cases as many as 70 per cent of these children were engaged in hazardous work.

The Convention defined the worst forms of child labour as: "All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; and, work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children."

After the conclusion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, the UN reported progress had been made on all the goals, but it was limited and patchy: good on some fronts, but weaker in other areas and so raising concern. It stated: "...further progress will require an unswerving political will, and collective, long-term effort. We need to tackle root causes and do more to integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development."

So ending the worst forms of child labour was adopted as Goal 8.7 in the new SDGs. But why didn't we follow through more on President Clinton's promise in those 15 years 1999-2015: why did we take our eyes off the ball? Is it because we didn't care enough (lack of empathy) or perhaps we just couldn't organise it (incompetence). Maybe we simply couldn't afford to take 200 million children out of child labour situations and put them all into full-time education? The truth is the estimated cost for this would have been close to what Western Europeans spend on ice-cream just in one year...and that's not counting Eastern Europeans, Americans, Russians, Chinese, Australians and everyone else! And that's just ice-cream, we could have said biscuits or coffee or anything else. In Afri's *Just a Second* project we worked around the stark statistic of just **10% of the global military budget would have paid for all the millennium goals.**

So 'we' collectively could easily have afforded it. Maybe one problem is how wealth is concentrated in too few hands. Globally, the top 1% wealthiest individuals have more than the bottom 50% put together: that's 3.5 billion people! With a few notable exceptions those super-rich people are generally less inclined towards altruistic thinking.

Moreover, they also have a huge disproportionate influence over governments and policy, (e.g. the global reach of the Rupert Murdoch Press, particularly in the USA with its control of TV stations like Fox News). But can we simply blame the rich and powerful and those who lead us? After all we either elected them (politicians), or we passively allow this system of inequality to persist. So maybe it's really down to all of us – individually and collectively: either *we* don't care enough, or maybe we do but we find we're too busy, or too distracted for joined-up thinking and feeling.

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## SETTING UP THE IDEA OF A TRIAL

In this session we will be using the dramatic scenario of a 'trial' to explore the issue of child labour, as well as responding to the accusation made by the sweatshop boss at the end of the Aladdin play, that we must all take some responsibility, accept joint-ownership of this issue.

The scene set-up that will follow shortly is offered only as a framework, within which the pupils can invent their own dialogue and storylines. This dramatic structure also came out of a classroom improvisation in one school, which then turned into a play that was performed in public. I have used it again in several more schools, so it's very adaptable and accessible.

The approach here is to turn the mirror around the other way as it were and put the global community 'on trial' – asking what “partnership for the goals” (SDG 17) actually means: how an issue such as child labour requires connectivity and a sense of shared responsibility. We must take on board how many key sectors within society are in hostile competition with one another rather than acting together.

**Teacher's preparation:** access some images for child labour and do some background checking on sweatshops, including the 2013 Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh.

Read the folk poem: *Who Killed Cock Robin?* (see Appendix) and check the internet for a song by Bob Dylan, *Who Killed Davy Moore*.

You could also have in the back of your mind a hypothetical poem/song titled: “Who killed the Rana Plaza Workers?” – (something we will be returning to later on in the session).

## **STAGE ONE**

Tell the class that you will be following up on the *Aladdin* play from the previous project in order to explore child labour in relation to partnership for the goals (SDG 17).

Read *Who Killed Cock Robin?* to the class, or else they can read it aloud themselves, taking a verse each; or even split each of the 14 verses into two (question and answer), allowing for 28 voices.

Discuss what happens in the story. When Cock Robin is killed, there is no need for an investigation to assign blame because Sparrow owns up immediately, saying “I did it”. That could be the end of the matter with Sparrow being punished, but what follows is really interesting as the whole bird community comes around, first as witnesses (they don’t turn a blind eye and say “nothing to do with me”), recounting what they saw and heard. Then they all offer to do something: e.g. owl offers to dig the grave. So what we have is a sense of community, all feeling affected and connected, sharing their grief, alongside a practical sense of what to do.

Now read or play the Bob Dylan song: *Who Killed Davey Moore*. The song is about a real-life boxer who died in the ring during a fight. (Dylan was fond of taking old songs and giving them a modern interpretation and twist.) Here each verse has a voice saying: “Nothing to do with me! I’m not to blame,” – his manager, the referee, the crowd, the sports writer, even the other boxer that delivered the fatal punch. So no one takes responsibility.

We can observe then how the two situations offer polar opposites: either everyone is involved in some way, or nobody is. So what is the truth, one of these or somewhere in between? This is what we are going to explore.

I sometimes offer one more analogy here, to bring it closer to home for the pupils, using the rather more mundane, but important issue of litter. (This will in fact lead on to wider issues around pollution that will be explored in Project Seven.)

Suppose there's a lot of litter in the playground and everyone walks around it, saying to themselves: "I didn't drop it." We have something akin to the Davy Moore scenario. If one person picks a piece up and puts it in the bin, and then another person does the same, we have something closer to the Cock Robin story. But, we ask ourselves, *why* wouldn't people just instinctively pick up the litter?

Ask the class for possible reasons why 'someone' (not them!) would refuse to pick it up. When I've explored this in class, answers have included: "they didn't drop it" or "if you picked up one piece you'd have to pick it all up," or "now everyone would expect you to always be the one to do it every day". Often the answers relate to disconnection and fear. "I thought about picking it up but then couldn't be bothered," or "I was going to, I knew the teachers might be pleased, but I didn't want to look stupid or be laughed at by all the other kids."

This is interesting in that there's a sense of it not being "cool" to be too helpful: rather, "cool" relates to negativity, sarcasm, making fun of "goody-goodies" etc. We might consider how an issue such as Climate Change, despite being so vital to our planet was ignored for so long, often dismissed as being too dry, distant, unexciting or whatever (by all ages), until people like Greta Thunberg helped to make it "cool" and exciting: showing how doing good things can be fun and rewarding.

Supposing there's always a lot of litter and everyone has become apathetic. One brave person goes out one day and starts picking it up piece by piece. At first everyone just watches. Some laugh, point, snigger; others may secretly be impressed but are afraid to say it out loud. What then if just one more person joins in: how does that change things?

Now the focus has shifted. Beforehand people threw stuff away without even thinking about it, hardly aware of what they were doing, maybe with some vague thought that "someone will pick it up" (e.g. the school caretaker). But now if they drop litter it is while being aware of someone else picking it up under their noses, one of their fellow pupils

even. They are being made more conscious of their actions and the consequences, how things and people are interconnected. What then if a lot of people join in, is there a 'tipping point' (sorry for the pun!) where things really change?

So, with all of the above in mind, we can go back to our child labour theme. When the sweatshop boss was arrested at the end of the Aladdin play he said others should share the blame. Did he have any justification for claiming this?

Remembering the Cock Robin and Davy Moore stories, let's apply a similar lens: if we asked, e.g. "Who killed the Child Slave?" consider who or what might take up a verse. If "kill" seems like too strong a word, remember that many children do die as a consequence of the conditions they work in. Also we can think of it in terms of 'killing' their hopes and dreams for a better life. You can do this as a brainstorming, writing a list on the board.

We can start with the woman who bought the carpet, made with child labour. When people buy stuff, do they check to see how things got made, would they even be aware of this issue: would they care? Would the factor of getting something cheap be more important? By demanding very low prices, consumers feed into the need for cheap labour (and there's nothing cheaper than children). The Boss said he was responding to orders for his products. So can he justifiably say "not only me"? Here are a few more participants to consider for the list: you can tease out more with the children.

- 1) The government of the country in which the child labour takes place – for allowing this (illegal) activity to take place. Tease out why: it's cheaper than even low-paid adults. Children's small fingers are very good for making carpets.
  
- 2) The government of the country that imports the carpets for not monitoring supply chains; not making robust laws against it.
  
- 3) The shop selling the carpets, ("we're just making money, it's legal, and consumers don't care that much").

- 4) The company buying carpets (or clothes) from the producer. Note how firms like Penneys and Benetton were put under pressure after the Rana Plaza disaster.
  
- 5) The children's parents: can they be blamed for allowing them to end up this way? Look at 'bonded labour': how poor families appear to have no choice. Sometimes children and their parents work alongside each other in near slavery conditions.
  
- 6) The police, local authority/council, the community that accepts this happening within it.  
Add as many people/institutions as you can think of. We can return to extend this list later on in a follow-up exercise but this might do for now.

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## **STAGE TWO: portraying multiple child labour situations using freeze-frames**

Split the class into small groups (e.g. 5/6 pupils per group, giving 5/6 groups in a class of 30). Ask them to do 10-second countdowns into freeze-frames of child labour situations: working in sweatshops, mines, stone quarries, making carpets, on rubbish dumps, picking bananas, child soldiers.

Then ask them to respond to you calling out a brisk (army-like) rhythm as they do quick-fire changes from one into the next: "1-2-3-sweatshop!" (freeze), "1-2-3-stone quarry!" (freeze). This gets them really sharp and focused, as well as energised and into the 'spirit' of the theme.

Also, when unfreezing each time, they can do a 'spin' into the next one: this device (and skill) has been highlighted before and will be used later on in this session.

## **STAGE THREE ‘The Trial’ – divide the class into units to prepare roles for what will become a whole class improvisation**

The basic idea is to put the various bosses in these child labour situations on trial in an imaginary courtroom, where there will be a defence and prosecution, jury etc. The children will testify and call up the scenes we have just seen as a way of showing what happened. The bosses will also have their defence lawyers and will be able to call witnesses in an attempt to mitigate their error by spreading the blame and responsibility.

One pupil from each of the groups volunteers to play the role of a ‘main witness’ – representing one of the child labour situations: so five kids might cover stone quarry, mine, dump, child soldiers and sweatshop.

Now pair each of these five child labourers with five more pupils playing their prosecution lawyers: so there will be 10 pupils altogether in this section. They can go and sit together in pairs: lawyer and witness to prepare by running through each child’s story.

Meanwhile: five pupils take on roles of the bosses/generals representing each of the same five child labour situations and sit down in pairs with five pupils playing their defence lawyers (10 pupils).

So that’s 20 members of the class altogether in these roles. But remember: they will also maintain their earlier roles as the kids in the child labour scenarios, switching between roles as the trial unfolds.

The rest of the pupils (10 in a class of 30), will cover a couple of essential roles: a judge and clerk of the court, as well as play the jury. Note that when assigning everyone a role it’s best to leave the jury till last, to fit the number of pupils left. With the help of the teacher these pupils can start setting up how the courtroom is going to look and establish what the judge’s role is and what s/he will say and when; what the clerk of the court says; and what the jury’s role is.

Note: these pupils **will also maintain their earlier roles** in the child labour scenes that will be shown during the trial.

### ***Setting up the courtroom in the classroom:***

I have found this works best with the judge seated in the centre, clerk of court nearby; witness box to one side, and jury over to the other side, all facing out into the room. Facing them, as in a real court, will be the prosecution lawyers and their child-witnesses on one side and the defence lawyers with the bosses on the other.

The teacher can allow this to run as a live whole-class improvisation, but with license to freeze it at any point to clarify anything.

Each child witness will enter the box and swear “to tell the whole truth...” then continue with the words: “This was how it was...”, at which point the pupils who were playing their fellow child-labourers in that situation freeze/do a turn and from where they are standing or sitting show the relevant scene from the stone quarry or whatever. This means someone in the jury, or a lawyer, even the judge may find themselves temporarily switching roles. The action will embrace the whole space and is very exciting and theatrical while enhancing their awareness of the ‘bigger picture’.

The improvisation can begin with the clerk of the court announcing:

CLERK: All rise for Judge Jane...

Everyone stands as the judge enters and sits.

CLERK: This is a multiple case your honour involving child labour. Please call the first defendant, Boss Big to the witness stand.

CLERK: Boss Big, you are charged with running a mine that exploits children as child labour, what do you plead?

BOSS BIG: Not guilty.

PROSECUTION LAWYER: I call the first witness for the prosecution.

ONE CHILD ENTERS THE BOX

CHILD: Well, it was like this...

THE CHILD LABOUR SITUATION IS BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR A FEW SECONDS, JUST A GLIMPSE OF WHAT IT WAS LIKE.

NOTE HOW THIS IS IN THE PAST (MEMORY)

THEY FREEZE (TURN) AND THE COURTROOM RETURNS TO NORMAL (THE PRESENT MOMENT)

THE PROSECUTION LAWYER CAN NOW CALL ONE MORE WITNESS, PERHAPS ONE OF THE CHILD'S PARENTS

PARENT: We had medical bills to pay for Granny who was seriously ill and would die without treatment. This man (points to the Boss) offered us a loan in return for sending our daughter to work for him. He promised to treat her well and give her an education.

CHILD: He starved and beat me!

THE BOSS'S LAWYER CAN CROSS-EXAMINE THIS WITNESS, ASKING IF THEY COULDN'T HAVE RAISED MONEY ANOTHER WAY.

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THE TRIAL MOVES ON TO THE NEXT BOSS/DEFENDENT, RUNNING THROUGH THE SAME PATTERN OF INTERACTION UNTIL ALL FIVE CHILD LABOUR SCENARIOS HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED BY THE COURT.

NOTE: WHEN THEY GET TO THE BOSS OF THE SWEATSHOP, THE CARPET SCENARIO COULD BE RE-VISITED FROM THE PREVIOUS PROJECT (FIVE) AND THE WOMAN WHO BOUGHT THE CARPET COULD BE CALLED TO TESTIFY GOING TO THE SWEATSHOP AND THE AWFUL CONDITIONS SHE WITNESSED THERE.

AGAIN, THE DEFENCE LAWYER CAN CROSS-EXAMINE AND ACCUSE THE WOMAN OF BEING COMPLICIT BY ORDERING AND BUYING THE CARPET IN THE FIRST PLACE.

The whole improvisation can end with the jury going off to consider a verdict for each of the accused. What will they decide?

# CHILD LABOUR ON TRIAL:

## SESSION TWO

Everyone in the class will now have new roles as members of ‘a jury’.

The teacher can lead a recap on what happened in the last session. They have heard all the evidence. They must discuss each case and decide:

Is each of the accused fully responsible – bearing maximum guilt?

Or partly responsible – i.e. others share the blame?

Link back once more to what was learnt from examining the two texts: *Who Killed Cock Robin* and *Who Killed Davy Moore*, taking on board how actions involving one individual connect with local and global communities.

IN SMALL GROUPS (as small juries, one for each boss) discuss each child labour case and reach a verdict for each of the accused.

### ***Feedback to whole class***

Each group presents their decision to the whole class, giving their reasons and saying whether it was a unanimous or majority decision. Those who disagreed might explain their positions.

The teacher can sum up by observing how a boss or business owner might indeed be guilty of using child labour, while at the same time, a shared sense of culpability has been identified regarding the causes and perpetuation of child labour. So there is a need for shared responsibility and **partnership** in tackling this and all the other global issues (SDG 16).

## **CROSS-CURRICULAR FOLLOW-UP**

### ***English***

Everyone in the class writes a few verses for a new poem/song that could be titled: “Who will help to end child labour?” or perhaps something broader: e.g. “Who will give the world some hope?” This can

add up to one big poem/song shared by the whole class. In reading it out, each child can pick their favourite verse from the ones they've written. Get the class to read them aloud as one continuous piece, allowing it to flow from one contribution to another.

These verses can be kept simple, like in *Cock Robin* – the poems can rhyme or not rhyme, be in any style from lyrical to rap so that the overall 'poem' becomes a shared space for multiple and contrasting voices. Allow flights of fancy: anyone can be named and asked to take a position on the matter: "Me..." said the teacher, shopkeeper, traffic-warden, football coach, priest, comedian, doctor, TV host, hairdresser, musician, actor, postman, van driver, etc.

Here's a rude attempt at a few rap-style verses. The whole class will say the title to start, even repeat it throughout as a chorus. So: "Who will help end child labour?"

"Me," said the teacher, I saw that child in a news feature; poor creature, I'd like to reach her, maybe teach her, (chorus)

"Me," said the politician, I'll take a position, of my own volition, be a useful addition, (chorus)

"Me," said the traffic warden, a bored one, my name is Gordon (not Gorgon!) Yes I'd like a new carpet if I can afford one, but not one made through child labour, that'll be an ignored one, (chorus)

And so on. Remember, learning can be fun!

### ***English/creative writing continued***

Write a journalistic report covering the trial or be a magazine writer composing an article that includes an interview with a child-labourer.

### **CSPE**

Look again at the 'Cock Robin' & 'Davey Moore' stories – discuss their contrasting positions from a moral/ethical stance.

Discuss the basic assertion we have been examining: how an individual or group might be guilty of doing something wrong but that the whole society can still take responsibility for what happened, as well as what happens next.

## **PROJECT SEVEN: USING TOPICAL NEWS STORIES TO EXPLORE THE SDGS.**

SESSION ONE “GRACELAND” WILL EXAMINE PEOPLE & HABITATS, LINKING TO SDG 11 (*sustainable cities and communities*) AND SDG 12 (*responsible consumption and production*). IN SESSION TWO, “SEAGULLS & STARFISH”, THE FOCUS WILL BE ON POLLUTION (SDG 6: *clean water and sanitation*) AND SDG 14 (*life below water*).  
*Age 10 upwards*

### **First some background to the ‘Graceland’ project.**

While living for a while in North London, I taught drama at a school in Edmonton, where I was a one-person drama department (head of!) and had to plan seven or eight drama classes a day, including O & A levels. I found myself recycling lesson plans, adapting familiar material to different themes and at the same time always on the lookout for something new, especially something topical which the pupils could immediately relate to. One day I was on the bus to work and read a newspaper article about Westminster council’s plans to “move Billy Fury’s grave” to a new site to accommodate a luxury housing development and the protests by various interest groups. I told my first drama class about it and suggested we used it as a theme for exploration. They hadn’t heard of this admittedly fairly minor 1960’s British pop star, but they had heard of Elvis Presley, so we relocated it to the USA and asked: what would happen if they dug up Graceland?

This class had one particularly challenging dynamic: one extrovert boy, who, while full of energy, tended to hog the limelight and I felt possibly inhibited the others who were generally quite passive and restrained. So I had it in my mind to also try to tackle that issue in some way here.

Regarding the chosen topic, we can see how it might relate to issues we have looked at already in this book, such as the human right to protest, connecting that to examples such as indigenous Native Americans protecting a sacred site from an oil pipeline, or closer to home the case of Rosspport and the Shell to Sea campaign; protests against the destruction of jungles & forests, polluting of lakes by mining companies, water-appropriating companies, palm oil manufacturers, etc.

We talked it through, asking ourselves who would be involved, what

interest groups? There would be roughly two sides – those for and those against the moving of the grave. So, who would be on either side? As a class we brainstormed this, writing it on the board. Against it were Elvis fans, led by the fan club; sympathetic members of the local community, sympathetic politicians and community representatives, and local heritage groups. For the removal of the grave were local politicians behind the luxury housing scheme, the construction company, town planners, and local people who saw jobs as more important than anything else.

We considered how the protestors might argue that there would be only a limited number of jobs, especially for local people, and these would only be temporary, whereas as the fan club put it, “Elvis was forever!” This had symbolic as well as practical implications: the tourist industry would suffer if he was moved to another not so sacred site, where it would have far less appeal.

We divided the class in half (for and against), reminding everyone that this was about playing a role for the sake of the drama, not necessarily the position each person would have taken up if this was real. Then each side divided into smaller units to represent the different interest groups. The ‘no’ side included the Elvis Fan Club, local people interested in heritage, people in the tourist sector, while the ‘yes’ side included reps from the local council, the company contracted to do the removal and build a new ‘Elvis Museum’ somewhere else (but inappropriate for the protestors), local people hoping for jobs. Within these groups they decided on individual roles, e.g. head of the fan club, head town planner, company boss.

The boy I mentioned earlier said he wanted to be Elvis – and immediately started to mime singing into a microphone. I was keen to encourage this natural enthusiasm (and skill) but also allow space for others to take centre stage as it were. So I said, yes he could be Elvis – but to take on board that he would be dead. However, I didn’t want him left on his own so he joined the Fan Club group and lay there speaking as if from the grave, reminding them of his presence and feeding in his ideas.

The small groups improvised various scenes to build a general background to what was going on. There was a meeting between the heritage society and the town planners. A fan club member had an argument with a friend who was applying for a job in the construction

company. It all added up to a community divided, even within families: husband and wife, parents and children, grandparents with long memories of similar issues etc. One group wrote up a petition to give to the local mayor. We had five or six scenes which when run together gave a composite picture of the situation. We played around with running these consecutively and then having them going on at the same time, using freezes to hop between them. Overall the effect was to turn the classroom into this wider community.

This took up the first lesson. When I met the class again we decided to move it all towards one big final improvised scene where everyone comes together in a 'final showdown'.

The setting was Graceland and the area surrounding the grave. The company were coming in to start work, accompanied by security guards, and the various groups of protesters would be there to meet them.

I made it very clear that there were two key and essential rules for the improvisation:

- 1) Everyone must listen to everyone else, and say in their minds "Yes and..." or "Yes, but..." before responding. We couldn't have everyone shouting over each other. All voices had to be heard.
- 2) It had to be a peaceful protest. So they could ONLY talk and argue: non-violent action was OK – e.g. lying down in the road in front of the bulldozers, but no person could use physical force, for the moment anyway.

I was concerned of course that if I allowed them to act this out as if for real, it was almost inevitable that this would become a 'violent' scenario and even if they did it in slow motion difficult to manage in classroom terms. Also it probably wouldn't actually teach us anything. I wanted them to think beyond that outcome. Was there another way to end the play that offered something meaningful, transcendent?

The bulldozer crew looked at the fans, with everyone trying to think of something...

At this point Elvis sat up in his grave, taking everyone by surprise. He

seemed to levitate...as he got up, took hold of an imaginary mic and started singing: “Are you lonesome tonight...”

It was a magical theatrical moment, full of symbolic power. The bulldozer drivers just shrugged and gave up. If it was a play, it was a great way to end it – on a powerful and empowering note – where values around something lasting wins out over short term gains.

So, maybe in real life it wouldn't end like this. But we did learn a lot from following this story. There are different kinds of “truths”: some are based on facts, while others are based on values and shared beliefs.

## **SESSION ONE**

*(80 minutes)*

### ***Improvisation one***

In small groups of say five or six, organise a protest/demonstration around a chosen social issue relating to one of the SDGs (e.g. gender equality, peace and justice, or climate action). Focus on tactics and thinking imaginatively to try and make the action suit the issue. What will be said/sung/chanted? What kind of visual aids such as placards, banners will be used?

One person in each group can play the role of a TV reporter, who will arrive and interview the protestors, asking them why they are doing this, who are they, what made them aware of the issue?

Afterwards, share these in the class.

### ***Improvisation two***

Now we move into an exercise in reflection, switching the POV entirely, focusing on how the protest might be perceived by those witnessing it, whether live in the actual locality, or through media such as radio, TV, social media. Note that in the previous improvisation, the TV reporter came into the scene, but then became a part of the live situation, on the ground as it were.

Three members of each group continue as protestors, the TV journalist remains in role – but now they are relaying this report back to two TV anchors in a TV station, giving this out as ‘the News’. You can do this as a spontaneous improvisation, or they can take a little time to discuss it and plan out some of what they might say and do, before acting it out.

What we are focusing on here is how the event and what it contains is being reported and mediated in two stages, and whether this affects how ‘the story’ is told. So, the protestors give their story, their views, their reasoning and their feelings to the reporter, who then gives a snapshot version of this back to the newsroom. The TV anchors then give a third version: a summary for public consumption.

Again, share these back in class.

Reflection: back in the same groups, they can talk about what happened. Are the protestors happy with how their views and feelings were reported? Is the reporter OK with how the TV anchors summarised the story? Was there a different slant added? Ask was the TV News ‘neutral’ – did it add any bias? Maybe it did, simply by including some of the info and leaving other stuff out, affecting the whole tone of the report. Overall, did the public receive the truth of the situation?

### ***Improvisation three***

The groups will now organise a TV chat show. One person will be the host, one person is the studio producer and the others are the guests on the show. The aim here is to have guests who will offer contrasting viewpoints and offer a good debate on the issue concerned. For the guests to get into role, they must decide who they are, what their viewpoint is, what work they do or what informs this viewpoint, and why they are connected to this issue. They can also be aware of how their view is based on what they are trying to achieve, that they may have a biased perspective. In a discussion about say ‘wind-power’, consider who might have a viewpoint, and what vested interests would be involved. The host has to know something about it each guest, have some questions prepared and a sense of how to facilitate discussion, move it on when it gets stuck, interrupt someone who is going on too much, etc. The host and producer will be conscious that this is supposed to be informative, but also ‘entertaining’: the worst thing is if the viewer switches channels. The host might also consider the style of

their show: is it akin to the ‘Late Late Show’, or closer to Oprah Winfrey? The producer’s role will be to monitor proceedings and maybe make interventions, such as signalling to the host to ‘move things on’ or ‘get off that subject’ or ‘wind it up’. As part of the preparation the host and producer can talk beforehand and agree on some visual signals.

Share these improvisations in class. Afterwards, have a whole-class reflection on how things went. Each group can talk and share whether they thought they’d covered the issue sufficiently: if not, what was missing? What could have been done better? Don’t forget to remind them they are discussing the characters created, not themselves and certainly not anyone’s acting ability. Criticism will be along the lines of, “When I was in role as a guest on the show I wasn’t happy with the questions the host asked me.”

So, did we expand our understanding of the SDG being discussed, explored? Would this lead to greater awareness? There are lots of questions here.

This scenario of a TV interview/debate was actually included in the play *Jackie & Her Beanstalk* that we have already referenced. In Session Two we will develop that connection.

**TOPICAL NEWS STORIES, SESSION TWO:**  
**“SEABIRDS & STARFISH”** – FOCUSING ON POLLUTION AND OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATURAL WORLD; RELATING SPECIFICALLY TO SDG 14 (life on and below water), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), and SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy).

**Age 10 upwards**

This scenario also dates back several years. At the time I was listening to the radio and heard about seagulls covered in oil from a tanker spill and how people were gathering on a beach and volunteering to help. We used this setting as our first whole-class improvisation when devising *Jackie & Her Beanstalk* (see *Project Five*). Later on in this session, we will be referring to an article in the newspapers in 2009 about 50,000 dead starfish washed ashore on a beach at Lissadell in Co. Sligo.

We might begin by thinking about how marine life has to share the waters with billions of bits of plastic and micro particles, sewage pollution, pesticides, oil & gas drilling, nuclear submarines and sonic-booms. Besides seabirds and starfish, we see news about mass beaching of whales and wonder what caused it. For the following improvisation we will use the example of seabirds, if only because they are easier to pick up than starfish or whales!

**STAGE ONE – WHOLE CLASS IMPROVISATION**

Bring everyone into a circle and say you are going to give them an imaginary situation. Ask the pupils to space themselves out in the room. Tell them to shut their eyes, while you narrate where they are, what they are doing there and why.

“You are someone on a beach. It’s not a holiday beach; this one is wild and desolate – windy and a bit cold. You can hear the sound of the surf, seagulls; there is the smell of seaweed and you can feel the wind on your face. You are here because you have volunteered to help. The beach is covered in seabirds, covered in oil from a tanker spill out at sea. When we begin, the immediate task will be to pick up as many as we can and place them on a lorry which is in the centre of where we are

standing. The birds will be taken away to be cleaned with detergents. We will try and rescue as many as possible. It is a huge task but we must also be careful not to rush and cause them more harm. You are wearing gloves, but think about how you pick up a bird that is covered in oil. How do you approach a bird that has been traumatised, picking it up with care and letting it know you are helping? Think about how you lift it so that you support both body and wings – and then place it down in the lorry. Be careful too that you do not step on other birds, there are so many. It is a huge task. For the moment we will work silently, on our own, totally focused on the birds, (pause). When I say ‘open your eyes,’ we will all be there, and we can begin our task.”

“Open your eyes and begin” –

The whole class go into role picking up the birds. This will be slow and focused. The teacher can be in role, picking up the birds too.

You can continue your narration to add atmosphere and help them focus: e.g. “As we pick up each bird, we’re saying to it in our mind, ‘Don’t be frightened, I’m here to help.’”

#### ADDING TENSION THROUGH A TIME FACTOR

Now ask them to pause, but to stay in role. Tell them the tide is coming in: the birds are unable to fly or swim, so they will drown. We might not be able to save them all but we will try and save as many as we can.

Say “Continue with what you’re doing.” As they step up the pace, remind them to still be careful. (Don’t let this run too long, less than half a minute.)

Say “Pause” then continue the narration. “The tide is in – we’ve done all we can – we might come back tomorrow and see if any more have been washed ashore.”

#### COMING OUT OF ROLE

Now say you are bringing them HALF out of role – they are going to reflect on what happened in the drama but you want them to hang onto the feeling of what it was like being ‘in there’.

#### SIT IN A CIRCLE

Ask them how they felt while they were rescuing the birds. Note how this is like the “feelings circle” exercise we’ve used in earlier projects, but here it is applied to a specific dramatic situation.

Go round the circle: each child names what they were feeling. When I’ve done this with groups, emotions that have come up include: sad, angry, ashamed, guilty, anxious, fearful (that they might not pick up the birds properly or frighten them even more), mad, bad, frustrated (that they couldn’t help more), hopeless, inadequate, small, big and clumsy...

It’s very important to acknowledge and accept the value of all these contributions. These are partly imagined and partly real feelings: as Yeats said, “Tread softly, you tread on my dreams...”

#### SO WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE ON THE BEACH – (WITH ALL THESE FEELINGS)

Ask them to close their eyes again. Explain they are now going to make up a whole bunch of characters – as each child answers your questions in their head this will start to build-up a portrait of one of the people who were there on the beach. This person doesn’t have to be like the pupil themselves: they can be any age, gender or nationality – remember these are made-up, fictional characters. The pupils stay quiet, keeping their answers to themselves. Tell them not to worry if after a number of questions it all starts to get a bit contradictory and strange: human beings ARE often contradictory and confusing, both to themselves and others.

# Teacher's questions:

What gender are you?

How old are you?

Are you local or did you travel to get here?

How did you travel: bus, walk, bike or car?

Did you come on your own, or with someone else; a group?

Have you done anything like this before?

How did you hear about the seabirds?

Did you volunteer or were you asked?

Did you think much about animals and birds before this?

Did this situation surprise you: did you know about oil spills from tankers?

Would people you know – friends, family members – agree with what you are doing, be interested?

Were you aware of this pollution problem being an issue globally?

Teacher continues: “So we are starting to get a picture of this person, a kind of portrait or self-portrait. Think more about your day so far. How it began. Getting up, how did you feel when thinking about what you were going to do? What did you have for breakfast? Deciding what to wear? Think about the journey here. And then think back to what you did on the beach.”

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## STAGE TWO

Now the class can work in small groups to further explore the dramatic situation and expand their awareness of the issues. If this was to add up to making one whole class 'play', what scenes might we put into it? What locations – and what kinds of people might be involved in these scenes?

The teacher can refer back to the scene on the beach. Each person there might be asking HOW the situation came about and what can be done about it. Can *they* do something? Who will help them? Who might stand in their way?

Through brainstorming, you can draw out possible locations for scenes. Some examples might be:

GROUP ONE: Several of the people on the beach get together in a cafe to talk about what they can do. They have some similar ideas but also different ones. They try and agree on a plan of action.

GROUP TWO: A family: 'Jane' is talking about what happened. Members of the family have different levels of interest and sympathy.

GROUP THREE: A scene with activists arriving to meet an oil company boss.

GROUP FOUR: Another TV chat show, with the roles now more clearly focused: the host talking to Jane, a representative from the oil company, a local politician, a wildlife expert.

GROUP FIVE: Jane's mother in a supermarket – meeting a friend who says something against what her daughter is doing in attacking the oil company, who are offering local job opportunities.

When sharing these scenes in the class, use freezes to run them together to shape a composite picture. What sort of narrative has been created overall?

Now trying running these pieces using a different sequence, to see how the narrative develops or changes its slant.

Reflect/discuss: Again, remember it is so important to stress that they are playing a role. They are serving the drama: the person playing the

oil company boss may or may not have views that are the same as their own. 'Jane' can be a very different kind of person to the child playing her, i.e. she may be a different age, have different attitudes, personality: she may be more (or less) confident, fearless than the child playing her.

Further improvisations can broaden and deepen awareness of how people might behave in such a situation:

Using 'voices in the head' –

Work in threes: Jane's mother is wondering what to do after hearing a neighbour talking about her 15 year old daughter, concerned she is getting far too involved. Or maybe Jane's mother is concerned about her own mother (Jane's granny), who is getting involved even though her health isn't great. Whichever character is chosen, they have two opposing voices in their head (standing either side) offering conflicting opinions and advice. (See *Glossary* for more on this dramatic device.)

The class can break into threes and do this with any of the characters that have been created so far.

Again, share these scenes and note how they form a composite whole-class picture of the situation, and offer further illumination and subject matter for reflection and discussion.

Also working in groups of three, they can borrow from Project Two: "Brains, Hearts & Stomachs" and apply that approach here.

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## IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP

### *English/creative writing*

Write an entry in Jane's journal/diary: e.g. "My name is Jane. I am 67 years old. I have never done anything like this before. I read about it in the paper. I just got on my bike and came over..."

Or write a journalist's report on the situation for a local or national newspaper.

Poetry: I wrote a poem myself in response to the news article mentioned earlier about the starfish washed ashore (*see Appendix*). You could read it to the class and discuss what they think the poem might be saying. Ask when the meaning is clear and when it is in a kind of code (using metaphor). Consider the language of alliteration and assonance, onomatopoeia – the use of “s” and “c” sounds in words like “succour” and play on sound and meaning in “sucker-punch”.

Write a poem about the seagulls. Along with telling a story and providing detail, ask them to search for metaphor and a style of language that mirrors aspects of the seagull’s life and its habitat: water, air, flight, as well as being grounded, stuck; helpless.

You could use the line-by-line approach outlined in the follow-up to Project One. Or, here is another way into writing this poem that builds around empathy and strong feelings. Think back to that first improvisation on the beach and consider what emotions underpinned that experience: sadness, guilt, anger, fear, frustration etc.

Now imagine a stone being dropped into a lake, pond or the sea, (think of this as the emotional stimulus for the poem). Someone comes along a few moments later (the reader) and by now the stone has sunk but the ripples spreading outward are still there and visible: the reader can pick up clues, emanating from both text and sub-text.

Breaking this process down, pick a strong emotion (e.g. sadness, guilt, anger) and allow that to be in the back of your mind while writing a poem about seabirds covered in oil, or any animal that is threatened. (Again, see Project One for more ideas about writing about animals.) But DON’T name this emotion in the poem (e.g. “picking up dying seagulls made me sad,”) rather, describe in detail picking up the seagulls and allow the accompanying emotion to be implicit; it might be partly suggested by the presence of water: a metaphor for tears? In other words, don’t always give the reader everything on a plate: invite them to read the clues, decipher the metaphors, actively discover for themselves what your poem is saying and feeling.

## ***Geography & Ecology***

Look at oil as a source of energy and how it is transported. Discuss in relation to the debate on fossil fuels and climate change (SDG 13). Ask what other issues they could apply this mode of exploration to, such as plastics pollution in the oceans (SDGs 12 & 14). Consider competing value systems: respect for nature and long-term sustainability versus short-term profits that benefit some people more than others. Take one high profile disaster such as the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and explore links between resources, economics and politics.

# **PROJECT EIGHT – “Interdependence Day: The Aliens are here!”** – using a science-fiction scenario to explore ALL the SDGS together. **Age 10 upwards**

## **SESSION ONE** **one double lesson**

*approx 80 minutes*

This project uses a ‘doomsday’ science fiction scenario to draw students into an imaginative way of exploring the SDGs with an extra sense of urgency. “Tell it slant,” said the American poet Emily Dickenson – inviting us to discover alternative angles, open new doors of perception when looking at challenging issues. As in some of the earlier projects, the teacher will take on a simple and accessible role, in this case acting as a go-between, linking pupils with the alien visitors. The class will be aware that the UN had aimed to achieve the SDGs by 2030: but now there is only a very short window of time to save the planet – the length of this class in fact.

### ***Preparation***

The teacher explains to the class that they are going to explore the concrete reality of the SDGs by following a fictional story scenario. Clear the room to make space. Sit in a circle.

### **INTRODUCING THE STORYLINE**

The teacher narrates: “We have a very urgent challenge. A spaceship has arrived from another galaxy and is hovering above our planet. Those aboard have told us the following –

They have studied us human beings – how we live and behave – and based on all the wars and hunger, exploitation, greed, inequality, destruction of our fellow species and more, they have concluded we are not fit to run this planet. They say they have met this problem before in other galaxies where the top species isn’t getting it right. They pose a simple challenge: either we prove to them that we are fit to continue in charge – or they will land and take over as the top species and run

things. We will be relegated to being just another secondary species. It will be better all round for the planet.

They are looking down at us now – here and everywhere on Earth. They invite us to respond. They point out how their technology is sophisticated at a level we can only dream of – e.g. they can hear all 7.8 billion of us at once – and they will respond to every voice they hear immediately. So, does anyone here have anything to say?”

## **PUPILS ARE INVITED TO RESPOND**

Within the circle, individuals can make their points, ask questions. The teacher will operate as a go-between moderator, hearing the aliens answering each point (through telepathy!) then relaying this back to the pupils. One person already has their hand up:

CHILD ONE: “This isn’t fair, we’re human beings!”

You say back: “Our visitors want you to explain to them exactly what that means.”

CHILD TWO: “We’re...special!”

CHILD THREE: “We’re intelligent!”

So here are some suggestions for how you can respond to these and other potential questions:

Explain that the aliens are so far ahead in terms of intelligence, the gap between them and us is comparable to the distance we place between ourselves and cows, pigs, chickens or sheep. Do we ask cows for permission regarding what we do to them? Do we consider their feelings? Have we ever thought about learning their language? Would we listen to them if they did try to talk to us, convince us of their worth as living creatures rather than there simply to be used and consumed? The aliens point to the way we use other animals to serve and service us. In the same way we may be given similar opportunities to contribute to this ‘new world’: some of us could be eaten, others put to work pulling things, some could run around fast and they could put bets on us? (Seemingly the aliens have a dark sense of humour!)

CHILD FOUR: “Can’t we just shoot them down?”

You say that they have examined our weapons, even nuclear missiles etc. Their spaceship is too well defended: it would be like us throwing tomatoes at a tornado to stop it spinning. They have already demonstrated their capability by removing an uninhabited mountain from the Himalayas – leaving a temporary hole – just so we can imagine what this might mean if done to one of our cities. They have put it straight back but hopefully they have made their point. So this is not going to be *War of the Worlds* or *Independence Day*: we need to think beyond the usual cliché of some kind of battle and us showing our superiority and achieving military victory. This is going to be about joined-up thinking, being interconnected (remember the last project on partnership). It will have to be another movie altogether: ‘*Interdependence Day!*’

CHILD FIVE: “But what can *we* do? We’re only kids.”

Explain that the voices of the young are highly valued by the aliens back on their own planet – many of the messages they have monitored coming from our Earth that have impressed them have been from children. In fact they think that if anyone can save our world it will be the youth, because they have the potential to be more open and imaginative – to discover new ways of thinking. We here in this classroom really could make all the difference.

Go on to say how the aliens are aware that we Earthlings often have “good intentions” and that they know there are many among us who are trying to do the right thing for the planet. Unfortunately, for some reason which is beyond them, we insist on putting people into power and leadership who often have the worst ideas, are the worst behaved and lead us into doing more damage – which undermines all the good work done by more humble folk. They have noted we have set ourselves worthy “goals”, but sadly only a limited number of humans whole-heartedly support them and those that do are being held up by the opposition they face from powerful people with a vested interest in exploiting the rest of us and the planet. But if we could prove to these visitors that together we COULD achieve these noble goals – and sooner rather than later – we might have a chance of saving ourselves. But before that we’d need to prove to the aliens that we even understand what the goals are – and even more importantly what values

they are based on. And even before that we also need to show that we understand *ourselves*. Overall, we need to prove our credentials: offer illustrations of our awareness and intelligence, especially our *emotional* intelligence. They think one of the main problems for us is how our emotions get all tangled up and in the way of one another – how greed, fear, suspicion, hatred, insecurity continually get in the way of hope, compassion and solidarity.

But how are we going to show ourselves as worthy?

Explain to the class that these aliens are fond of – in fact they “think” through – symbolic means: they like shape, pattern, images and metaphors. They’re not against words as such, but they don’t like being lectured to or just being told things – it gives them a headache! They respond to creative and imaginative ways of communicating. “Show, not tell” is their mantra. Words are OK if they are sung, chanted, in the form of a poem or rap – as long as they are used creatively and not just as ‘talking’. They will mostly be persuaded by the impact of what we *show* them through symbolic images. They especially love drama. (Seemingly they’ve been watching some of our Earth TV – they enjoy some of the cartoons.)

Say to the class, “OK, perhaps we need to talk about this, have a discussion...” But you immediately get a message from the aliens saying: “No, don’t begin with discussion – if you are going to end up with symbolic images as your final presentations you need to begin in that mode. You can have some discussion later, AFTER you’ve used your bodies and imaginations to explore first.” So it’s back again to them thinking on their feet. Suggest the class begins with some freeze-frames.

### **QUICK REMINDER OF FREEZE-FRAMES**

Take them through a quick reminder session, moving from naturalistic images to geometric ones (*see Glossary for freeze-frames*).

Now reiterate how the aliens want us to take a good look at *ourselves* – before we jump into discussion and attempts at persuasion that arise out of the same old wrong-thinking that has got us into this mess. We need to understand better where our ideas come from, how our actions are informed by both thoughts *and* feelings. In short, we need to prove

our overall emotional intelligence. Note how what follows will link back to their explorations and discoveries when doing Project Two, 'Brains, Hearts & Stomachs'. So this is a chance to show off what they learnt.

### Exploring emotions

In small groups, do freeze-frames that show images of celebration, disappointment, anticipation, fear, suspicion, hope and solidarity. Recap on how even a still-picture tells its own story. Point to any observable 'common language' between the groups in their use of symbolic imagery, but with subtle variations (a bit like different dialects), e.g. with *solidarity* – the variation in the use of hands and arms, (holding hands, fingers intertwined, arms linked or around shoulders). Looking at the picture for 'fear' – ask how is the community experiencing it? Where is the fear coming from: from within or without? With *suspicion*: is it shared equally by everyone – or targeted at an individual or minority grouping? The main focus here is on having the ability to read images that reveal content and meaning through non-verbal communication such as body-language and gesture. Bring in the suggestion by the aliens that while global society is changing fast, technology flying ahead, our basic awareness appears to be lagging behind. We need to show we understand *how* and *why* things change for better or worse – what are the drivers for this?

### **Transformations: exploring the relationship between thoughts and feelings**

Take up the **solidarity** freeze again. Ask each person to think of one phrase to go with a thought/ feeling that goes with being in this position: e.g. "I love everyone." "We are a community". "We are all equal." "I feel warmth inside me towards everyone."

Going around the groups, they can say these thought/feelings out loud, one person at a time. It's a good idea to ask them to repeat them: the second time allows the lines to sink in more and deepens the reflection.

Now they are going to move very slowly – *slow motion* in fact – and change **from solidarity to suspicion**. This must take at least 15 seconds, before they end up in the second frozen picture. But before they even start, they must imagine they have been like this for a long time: it feels like second nature, so it won't just suddenly change. So when

you say “begin”, nothing happens for the first few seconds, then only a tiny change, maybe a foot twitches, the chin tilts slightly...as a new thought slowly enters the head and new feelings appear in the body, asking it to respond. Then gradually the movement becomes clearer and more focused, as they change their alignment until they finally find themselves frozen in a state of “suspicion”.

Ask them to ‘tune-in’ to what is going on: what is the new thought/feeling? Give them a moment to decide on a new phrase. Again, allow each group to articulate them out loud one at a time: e.g. “I’m sure they’re talking about me,” or, “S/he’s looking at me weird,” or “I don’t like the look of that lot over there.”

Try and relate each thought to an identifiable feeling: is it pride, anger, fear, hurt, loss, distrust? What part of the body does it most strongly connect to: stomach, neck, back, eyes, hands, mouth, whole face...?

### ***Moving from Suspicion to Solidarity***

Now do the same in reverse. Start with the ‘suspicion’ freeze-frame. Again, remind them how they might have been like this for generations: all that distrust, anger, hatred and resentment, built up and handed down so that it has become second nature. It’s in the communal culture and mind-set, instilled into each individual from early childhood. We learn to think in terms of ‘us and them’ – what has been done to *us* in the past: it even plays a part in making us “who” we think we are – informing our identity. Tune-in to where such thoughts/feelings are located in the body.

Again, ask them to put words to these thought/feelings and to say them out loud.

As they receive the instruction to unfreeze, let’s try to follow slowly what might be going on here. From somewhere there’s an impulse towards change. It starts off at first like a vague thought, a small feeling of discomfort, or an itching to move in the body. (You might be reminded of Project One and that moment when the tiny new seed began to crack open and may refer to this later when reflecting back.) So the first movement is very slow, tentative... a feeling in the fingers perhaps as a new thought comes in and a new feeling. Now there is more of a focus – there might be an exchange of looks with someone

else in the group. Is this safe, can this feeling be trusted – can ‘they’ be trusted; will this gesture be returned, reciprocated?

If the movement from one freeze-frame to the other is akin to a sentence, think how there may be some commas (pauses) along the way, as trust is built: nothing can be assumed, each person is taking a risk, an initiative, a leap of faith, following their inner impulse towards wellbeing – before the final full stop, (another freeze).

Again, ask them to formulate a thought and an accompanying feeling for their new stance, e.g. “This feels great!” “We’re united,” “I feel so much better now inside without all that bitterness”.

Ask, what emotions are *these* thoughts attached to: loving, caring; feeling peaceful, relaxed, calm? Did the change start with a thought or a feeling? Which bit of the body felt it first? Chin, eyes, neck, feet? Does it feel like a whole mind-body experience now?

### ***Write it down before it’s forgotten!***

Before all this rich information is lost, give them a moment to quickly write down the thoughts and accompanying feelings that went with each state of being. Also, when the suspicion became unbearable, how did the body feel it? Stiff neck, ache in the gut, itchy feet? “I was fed up with standing still or looking back all the time, loaded down with anger and bitterness. I realised it was hurting me more than those I was trying to hurt.”

They now have some rich texts, which could be utilised later. It might even work as one whole-class ‘Greek chorus’ (see Project One).

As a quick aside you can also point out how they really have been ‘thinking on their feet.’ Many great philosophers and scientists, e.g. Einstein, report how they got their breakthrough ideas while walking and moving around, rather than sitting still and just thinking. Newton famously sat under a tree to experience his ‘Ah, Eureka!’ moment, but prior to that he’d been doing a lot of walking and thinking, his ideas percolating and synthesising, so that he was then able to recognise the huge significance of that ‘apple falling on his head’.

But look at the time! How are they going to apply what they’ve done in the freeze-frames to cover all 17 goals in, what do they have left...40 minutes!

## THE ALIENS MAKE CONTACT

They say yes, time is short. But for the moment what they really wanted to see was US – and to consider whether WE are worth saving. We have had to prove ourselves as human beings first. They are actually quite impressed by what we were doing with the freeze-frames and so they'll be content for now if we take just one or two of the SDGs – as a way of illustrating our awareness: so how about SDG 1: *Ending Poverty* & SDG 2: *Zero Hunger*? They remind us not to lose sight of all we have achieved so far in this session. It is vital.

The aliens ask for each of the groups to prepare a *still picture* – that tells as much of a story as it can before unfreezing and coming to life with movement and sound. Remember, no rhetoric please – words still have to be used in a creative, imaginative way. They do NOT want to hear a speech – they've heard enough of these already from the world's leaders that haven't impressed them. They simply want to be SHOWN something.

Remember too how the aliens are **able to read good intent** – something that comes from the heart – and they will appreciate any emotional intelligence implicit in these dramatic pieces.

## ORGANISING THE PRESENTATIONS

So each group now has a set amount of time (10-15 minutes) to create something that connects with and illustrates their understanding of SDGs 1 & 2 – dealing with poverty and hunger.

Remind them of what they have learnt from doing the freeze-frames about showing abstract concepts such as solidarity: how these shapes can be powerful in themselves in sending out a message; how they can also portray change and illustrate deep understanding. If words are then used as well in the form of a poem, chant, rap – it will add to the overall effect.

Showing/sharing

When the pieces are ready, they can share them with one another and the aliens, who are watching. Ask the class not to respond to each individual piece until they all are shown, as this is a combined effort forming one big composite picture as far as the visitors are concerned.

No clapping in the class – so all will get an equal response. Also we don't want to be getting ahead of ourselves.

Afterwards the aliens will make their decision. So this is “it” – the planet's future depends on this!

Note: the teacher has the option here of saying either, a) there are other groups all over the world doing this now at the same time, or b) this group alone has been chosen to represent Humanity. (An important choice – the teacher will have a sense of what might appeal best to their class.)

When they've all shown all their pieces, you can nod appreciatively and say you're now waiting for a response from the aliens. Tension – expectation, drama! What will they decide?

If there's time another option here might be: the aliens make contact and say they just want to ask a few quick questions. This retains the tension but it allows for a further moment of REFLECTION adding to the learning experience. Here are some examples of questions the aliens might ask, (you may have spotted something yourself that you want to draw attention to, in a positive re-affirming way of course). Or, if time is short, you can leave all this until afterwards.

Did you enjoy doing that together?

Did everyone get to make an input?

Do you feel you know yourselves a little better?

Could these 'dreams' come true? Could these ideas help deliver the goals?

What do we understand now about emotional intelligence?

(Perhaps one of the pupils will say, “Please teacher, we want to know what happens next!”)

## **THE ALIENS FINALLY MAKE A DECISION**

They say how they are very impressed – even surprised. And ... thankfully it's enough to give us a reprieve, but only temporary. They'll be back in an unspecified time to see if we've followed through – it might be a year, or shorter or longer...

## **IMMEDIATE REFLECTION**

Before the class come completely out of role and are still 'in' the drama mind-space, allow some time for some reflection and feedback on what happened, and what may have been learnt.

Ask what it was like playing a role in the drama. Did they feel the weight of responsibility? How do they feel about the aliens and their decision: is it fair? Was it a compromise? Was it an anti-climax?

## **Time Management**

NB: to help the teacher plan out the whole session it might be helpful to have broken it down into time units:

- 1) Introducing the dramatic situation – the storyline & challenge  
– (5 minutes)
- 2) Pupils pose some initial questions (5 minutes)
- 3) Move into drama mode: quick freeze-frames reminder (5 minutes)
- 4) Into depicting emotions (10 minutes)
- 5) Emotional transformations (10 minutes)
- 6) Writing down the thoughts and feelings that came up (5 minutes)
- 7) Devising group presentations/simple freeze-frames that come to life (15 minutes)
- 8) Showing/sharing these group presentations (15 minutes)
- 9) The aliens respond. Conclusion/wrapping up/reflection (10 minutes). Total: 80 minutes.

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# INTERDEPENDENCE DAY

## – SESSION TWO: LOOKING AT ALL 17

### **SDGS** (*This can take up one or more sessions: see \* below*)

Having proved themselves as human beings through their imaginative and meaningful illustrations for SDGs 1 & 2, they can now move on to demonstrating their understanding of the remaining 15 SDGs. For a change, in this session they might take a break from immediately ‘thinking on their feet’ and go into a discursive brainstorming mode first.

### **NAMING ALL THE 17 SDGS**

Ask the class to name the ones they know. Write them on the board. You can then fill in the ones that are missing.

You might also remind the class how before this there were the eight **Millennium Goals** that were set in 2000 to be achieved by 2015. That date came and went with some major improvements but progress was slow and patchy in certain areas and none of the goals were fully achieved: in fact, we probably went backwards on some, (consider the impact of war and conflict/the refugee crisis). In hindsight we had to admit we were missing a few crucial ingredients. The new 17 SDGs set in 2015 (to be achieved by 2030) try to take account of aspects of our own behaviour that we had perhaps underestimated previously.

Ask the class to consider all the different perspectives we should take on board when looking at the goals, so we get a broad spread of knowledge and expertise. We should also not allow one perspective to dominate and must make space for all viewpoints. Remind them what the aliens said about youthful voices that might see things differently from adults.

### ***What different perspectives should they consider for each SDG?***

**Historical** – to understand the situation in the round we’ll need to know how we got to this point.

**Geographical** – where and on who does it most impact? What are the local conditions?

**Science & Technology** – how can it help? But also bear in mind how S&T has been used badly before, sometimes as part of ‘quick fix’ remedies.

**Ecological** – remember Project One: all of this has to be SUSTAINABLE and not harm the biosphere (animal, plants, physical elements like earth, air, water).

**Business/Economic** – how do we pay for it? How can we redirect wealth owned by a few individuals and corporations to creating a true commonwealth for all? How can we ensure that any ‘deals’ are driven by common good rather than just making a profit for a small minority?

**Social/Political** – which individuals and what groups can be engaged to help bring about positive progress? Which institutions might get in the way of progress? This might include a gender perspective, or perhaps that one deserves its own category?

**Gender** – yes, remember SDG 5 and make space for women in the conversation, recognising how in the past, discussion on policy has been dominated by men within a global patriarchal culture. Distinguish *history* from *herstory*.

**Minority and other voices** – the social/political aspect should also consider the voices of those who are marginalised or have been disempowered.

**Youth voice** – we’ve mentioned several times a need for fresh and youthful perspectives to these discussions; that represent the concerns of young people.

Also we must remember to be constantly looking at the whole picture from a broad **ethical and values** standpoint.

### ***How long will it take to cover all the remaining SDGs?***

Now that they have bought some time from the aliens and the immediate urgency has abated, you might decide to spread exploration over a number of sessions, rather than try and cover them now all in one go.

**Option A:** spread it out over say three sessions and cover five SDGs in each one. For a class of 30 pupils, that means there could be groups of six working at any one time on a single SDG.

**Option B:** cover the remaining 15 SDGs in a single session by dividing the class time in half and cover 7/8 in each half. To cover 8 in a class of 30 would mean 3-4 pupils in each group.

Obviously with option 'A' there would be more time for a deeper discussion.

### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS/BRAINSTORMING**

Here are some examples of what members of the groups might offer as inputs into the conversation: (bear in mind that contributions will vary in length and depth depending on how imaginative, confident, articulate a child is – but all must be valued equally – this exercise in itself is not a test, or to be seen as competitive).

**History:** People are only poor because of what has been done to them in the past by more powerful groups, nations. (Remember Project 3: *A Piece of the Cake*.) We must make sure that doesn't happen again: that those same rich nations don't try and blame poverty on the victims. (Reference another Afri resource on the Great Famine in Ireland, *Lessons from History*: see *Appendix*.) History is about looking back but we can also look forward in time to our shared future. It's easier for well-off rich societies to plan and be sustainable. Poorer societies may have viable alternatives linked to their rich traditions and understanding of nature and have their own strategies for long-term sustainable planning, but for now they are forced to live day-to-day, hand-to-mouth in crisis mode. They often haven't got time, or simply can't afford to think about the bigger picture. There also has to be balance between immediate fixes such as aid and more long-lasting and sustainable self-help projects. We do have a history of some bad ideas, e.g. the so called "green" revolution of the 1950's.

**Geography:** Following on from that: where do we need to direct our energy? We need to understand local conditions such as soils, water availability, climate; referring to the previous points, yes, the use and availability of seeds for instance must be free from powerful corporate interference.

**Science & technology:** We need to move from focusing on big projects like dams to smaller initiatives like local irrigation systems and water wells; simple things like Afri's solar lamps. Linking to an ecological perspective consider alternative sources of power: wind/solar/wave/biomass.

**Ecological:** Several good points have already been made, but it all has to be sustainable. Mistakes have been made with biomass for instance. We must also factor in the impact of hazardous waste and other forms of pollution; the effect on human and wild-life habitats.

**Business/economic:** Who is going to pay for all these projects? How can we reform the tax system to target well-off individuals and companies who are avoiding payments that impact particularly on the developing world? Look also at the role of national governments and the way big companies lobby in an attempt to avoid payment (e.g. Ireland & Apple), despite them making huge profits. Look at the example of *Self Help for Africa* and how this works as an alternative economic model that benefits workers in developing countries.

**Social/political:** We need to reform the United Nations. It's hard to deal with something like poverty and climate change when there are so many catastrophic wars going on. The same governments that we're asking to take part in partnership are creating these wars or the conditions for them, for profit and power, global influence – and then at the UN Security Council, they veto any attempt to do things that might help. We must also be aware of our hypocrisy as human beings – which these aliens have already noted. We fly to economic conferences like Davos then talk about climate change; talk about helping the poor while maintaining our own rich lifestyles.

**Gender:** Women are affected differently and often disproportionately. When aid is given to women it proves to be more productive, yet despite this, women have less of a voice in societies around the world – to make the big decisions. The Coronavirus has reminded us how much women are the main carers: child care issues need to be shared by society so women are free to take part. If we think about food and nutrition and wellbeing, consider the example of breast milk versus powdered milk produced by companies driven by profit and with a history of exploiting people, especially minorities, as well as the environment.

**Minorities:** carrying on from that last point, we need more bottom-up thinking, to involve and empower those who are most impacted, who are losing out the most, and who possess valuable local knowledge and wisdom.

**Youth voice:** there should be a permanent youth representation at UN level. We need to take another look at schools and education so that kids don't have to wait until they're adults to be able to make an impact and contribute. Young people, who are also consumers, have an influence on adults and how they behave, e.g. with food, whether they buy Fair Trade or not?

Note: it is so important for this exploration that the focus is on listening – acknowledging each point so that everyone in the group gets to speak. Be wary of how some voices might become more powerful or persuasive than others. Before they conclude, ask has everyone been given space to make their points.

Remind them too how this is about respecting what is said by others even if you disagree. Also, to distinguish between sharing personal opinions (as in a normal discussion) and **taking on a role** (as in a drama improvisation), where someone might be playing devil's advocate: e.g. representing an economic/business perspective in order to serve the discussion, when they'd be more at ease themselves with promoting an ecological stance. Overall it's not about one perspective versus another, more a **pooling of all these viewpoints** to be shared by everyone – to give a full a picture as possible, offering multiple things to consider. An action plan can come later.

### **Taking this into drama mode**

As when SDGs 1 & 2 were presented in frozen pictures that came to life in Session One, awareness gained from exploring each of the remaining SDGs can now be illustrated in similar fashion. Again, they might have 10-15 minutes to prepare these pieces and then share them in class. Finally, they could finish off this session by stringing together all the starting freeze-frames in rapid succession.

Now, if the aliens should ever return to check how things are coming along, the class will be ready with 17 illustrations for each of the goals. Quite an achievement!

## **Drama Day!**

Given this project might be spread over a period of time and multiple lessons, it might mean waiting say a week to ‘drama’ day – but this is OK. It’s like doing a sport once a week – you pick up where you left off in entering that ‘zone’. Or it’s like when you’re reading a book at night and put it to one side during the day – each time you return to it the characters are still there waiting, and you can slip back into the fictional world of the story with all its ‘suspended belief’.

## **MORE IDEAS FOR FOLLOW UP**

### ***English***

Each pupil takes on one SDG to write something more substantial: say a proposal to the UN or the next Irish National Children’s Assembly.

*Journalistic skills:* Write a news report for an imaginary paper or journal on the encounter with the alien visitors. Give an account of what happened, how and when – but also allow for the writer’s own interpretation of events: make this an ‘opinion piece’, include their own personal reflections. They might consider what kind of publication they are writing for: e.g. *New Scientist*, or *Vogue Magazine*?

### ***English/science***

Take up the point made earlier that doing drama is a way of ‘thinking on your feet’ and how famous scientists and other great thinkers (musicians, philosophers, mathematicians), walked a lot and thought on their feet – how this contributed to helping them think ‘outside the box’ or tune-in to what was often staring them in the face, but somehow beyond their awareness.

### ***Languages***

Focus on how the aliens communicated, how they had to learn English (and/or Irish). Remembering the animals in Project One, would the aliens also be able to speak multiple *animal* languages? Note how they communicated with the teacher through telepathy and then how they valued the ‘language’ of symbol, sign-language, gesture, body-language etc. (See *Appendix* for how this was explored in the sci-fi play ‘More!’ in

another Afri resource: *Just a Second – Exploring Global Issues through Drama & Theatre.*)

## **CSPE**

What did the class learn overall about human values? Do we need to literally “walk the talk”? How do values relate to thoughts and feelings? Are our values changing in society? Globally, do we all share the same basic values?

## **Maths**

The SDGs number 17: is that number in itself interesting in any way? E.g. is it possible to make a 17 sided polygon? What is the square root of 17? Think about some of those statistics: 1 billion who are hungry; how many zeroes in a million – or in a billion? A trillion spent on arms: what is a trillion, how many noughts? In terms of *time*, how long is a million seconds in days/weeks? Similarly, how long is a billion seconds? (Answers: a million seconds = about 11.5 days; a billion seconds = 3 years and two months; a trillion seconds = 3150 years!) To get a sense of these figures operating at a social level, consider then how wealthy is a billionaire? Think again about the billions in absolute poverty.

Connecting to SDG 16 Peace & Justice

Afri’s *Just a Second* schools project draws attention to the trillions spent on war and arms: the extraordinary statistic that just 10% of the annual global military spend would have covered all the original UN Millennium goals for one year. (See the *two queues* exercise in the *Just a Second* resource mentioned above.)

## **Science & technology**

What might we need to develop to help achieve the goals? Are scientists neutral and independent of politics?

## **History**

Reflect on how we survived the challenge posed in the fictional scenario. Are we facing a more real possibility of extinction, through climate change, pandemic diseases, ecological destruction, nuclear war and other threats? Link this to earlier mass extinctions of species.

Regarding the SDGs, can we learn from history, or are we, as in the famous George Santayana quote, condemned to make the same mistakes over and over again? We can also bear in mind Einstein's famous words: "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

## AFTERWARD

Hopefully readers of this book will have found it useful as a springboard for exploration of the SDGs. The title includes "for all ages" and I hope that teachers themselves feel included in this: that they have been learning and discovering alongside their pupils and that it has been equally revealing for them – that it has been stimulating, surprising and satisfying. I would also stress how the teacher is always encouraged to improvise within and around the strategies presented, as well as devise their own. Although structures such as freeze-frames and teacher-in-role are now a staple part of any drama teacher's tool-kit, someone must have come up with these ideas originally. The frameworks offered here for the eight projects are my own imaginative responses to concrete situations and challenges that I have faced in the classroom.

A central tenet of the book is the concept of "interdependence between everything". I have stressed throughout how individual subject areas such as science, geography, history, philosophy, ecology, politics and ethics, can all inter-connect and act as a form of 'community' when exploring the SDGs. We can also think of this principle operating *internally* within a single subject area. The concept of inter-dependence implies prior existence of independent units, so in scientific terms this might correspond to identifying the discrete particles of quantum physics, while recognising how, when interconnecting, these separate particles can behave as one entity, as a wave. Within the quantum universe there is a fluid interchange between these particle and wave states, (as shown in Schrödinger's legendary experiments). Any observed moment in time (within a space) must be seen in terms of both/and rather than either/or. Teachers of religion and CSPE can appreciate why the Dalai Lama's view that "everything is interconnected" extends to his keen interest in science, explored in his many books and in

online conversations with the likes of quantum physicist David Bohm, (see *Appendix*). Interconnectedness is also present when we consider ecology, environmental awareness, and our communion with Nature – holistically, in the spirit of what some people call “Gaia”. In their book, *The Quantum Society* (see *Appendix*), Dana Zohar and Ian Marshall ask us to think of ourselves as individual particles that also act together as communities in a wave-like way. In an earlier book, *The Quantum Self*, Zohar suggests this can also be seen to operate as an internal process within individuals; so we might connect this to our own focus on emotional intelligence and exploration of inter-connectedness between brains, hearts and stomachs? Again, returning to the macro-level we can view independent particles such as countries and other social and political structures, all ideally interacting and acting with love and compassion as a united positive ‘wave’ for change. And this is why we have stressed the importance of SDG 17 – *partnership* for the goals. Overall, while we have given due attention to how the personal is connected to the global, there is also within each person a need for another kind of interconnectedness, between thought and feeling; between body and soul, mind and spirit. Or to put it another way, to have joined-up thinking we need joined-up (fully aware) people.

## GLOSSARY

**(Listed below are the various drama structures referred to in this book)**

**Freeze-frames:** in small groups, the pupils are given a scenario or abstract idea and during 10- second countdowns they must organise themselves into frozen pictures. Start with concrete situations, e.g. the seaside, supermarkets, weddings; landing on the moon, circus skills, making a movie, hospital operations and musical groups. Bring them to life. Move on to geometric shapes, then abstract concepts and emotional states.

**Teacher-in-role:** the teacher plays a part in the story alongside the pupils.

**Greek Chorus:** whole class improvisation, with voice and movement. In the theatre of Ancient Greece, the chorus never left the stage; it presented the ordinary community as witness to the high-drama surrounding their leaders and the gods.

**Feelings circle:** stand in a circle – each person names an emotion/feeling and everyone repeats it back. Go round again and add a gesture with each feeling. Again, everyone repeats it back.

**“Yes and...” listening game:** in a circle, someone starts telling a story, just a few lines: e.g. “The other day I was out walking...” and the next person has to continue from there: **“Yes, and** then I bumped into a strange creature coming the other way...” and so on. Keep going until everyone has made a contribution.

**“Yes, but...”** follows the same idea except it might go: “The other day I was out walking...” then the next person: **“Yes, but,** it was actually night and it was more like I was running!”

Note both games have to work from the previous prompt: you can’t just start a completely different story, but you can go off at a tangent, bring in a new angle in the same way a novelist will develop a story, or introduce new characters.

A more sophisticated and challenging version of this is for the teacher to intervene occasionally with commands such as: “re-cap” (the next person has to try and tell the whole story so far), or “add suspense” or “bring it to a conclusion.”

**Organic machines:** the class are given a theme: e.g. ‘time’. One person starts a movement and sound and keeps repeating it: e.g. by becoming a ‘clock’ using their arms to show the hours and minutes. The next person joins in with another action and sound: e.g. saying “Cuckoo!” And so on until everyone is part of the “time” machine.

**Spatial triangles:** move around the room, weaving in between one another without making contact. I usually say: “like bumper cars that don’t bump,” or “Imagine a force-field around each person that you bounce off when you come near them.” Ask them to be aware of what is going on all around, so they don’t back into anyone. Say freeze. While they are frozen ask them to select one other person in the room

(person A) but not to give away who they have picked. When they unfreeze and move around again, they have to be continually aware of where that chosen person is (again without looking directly at them, like having eyes in the back of their heads). Freeze again. Now they pick a second person (B). When they unfreeze and move around they try to sense where both A & B are at any time. Freeze again. Finally, you tell them that when they unfreeze they must (silently) form an **equilateral triangle** with the two people they have picked. Remind them this means equal angles and equal lengths between each person. Pick two people yourself to demonstrate how you must be placed so all three are equidistant from one another. Add the final crucial aspect of the challenge: point out that no sooner have you formed your own triangle – one or both of the others will move to form their own triangles, so you now have to adjust yours again to keep it equilateral. Bear in mind these triangles can be big and take up the whole space and the people picked still don't know you've picked them. You can let this go on forever; it rarely comes to a stop!

**Piggy through the middle:** get into groups of three – the challenge is for each person to pass between the other two and so gain a point. (They add up their own scores as they go along.) One important rule is that no one can score two points in succession (to stop someone simply 'hogging' the space between the other two), so after each point gained they have to wait until someone else scores a point. While this involves being quick on their feet, it also invites some strategic thinking, mixing patience with alertness.

**Voices in the head:** (good angel/bad angel, or divided conscience) – a person playing a role has two more people either side, representing opposing voices feeding in contrasting views and perspectives, giving advice, acting as coaches. The two voices might or might not be allowed to address one another. A variation is to have just one other voice, representing the 'inner' persona. (This popular process drama device has also been used in several well-known plays: e.g. Brian Friel's *Philadelphia Here I Come* and *Overtones* by Alice Gerstenberg.) These voices can be static or they can follow the main character around, commenting as they look in mirrors, eat, try on clothes etc.

**Thought tracking:** one person says aloud what they imagine another person is thinking. This works best while that person is preoccupied with doing something.

**Hot Seating:** Someone answers questions from everyone in the class to build a character. Or a person already in character can be quizzed by the group to help clarify and develop their sense of themselves.

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**Notes on ongoing evaluation:** remember how at any point during an activity, the four simple categories of *imagination*, *cooperation*, *articulation* and *reflection* can be used to assess individual contributions as well as how the class is progressing as a whole. The teacher might reflect on how an individual or group, or the whole class is developing during a single session or over a longer period of time and take initiatives to strengthen any of the above categories.

## APPENDIX:

*Who Killed Cock Robin* (traditional poem) used in Project Six, Session One: Page 105.

Who killed Cock Robin?  
I, said the Sparrow,  
with my bow and arrow,  
I killed Cock Robin.

Who saw him die?  
I, said the Fly,  
with my little eye,  
I saw him die.

Who caught his blood?  
I, said the Fish,  
with my little dish,  
I caught his blood.

Who'll make the shroud?  
I, said the Beetle,  
with my thread and needle,  
I'll make the shroud.

Who'll dig his grave?  
I, said the Owl,  
with my little trowel,  
I'll dig his grave.

Who'll be the parson?  
I, said the Rook,  
with my little book,  
I'll be the parson.

Who'll be the clerk?  
I, said the Lark,  
if it's not in the dark,  
I'll be the clerk.

Who'll carry the link?  
I, said the Linnet,  
I'll fetch it in a minute,  
I'll carry the link.

Who'll be chief mourner?  
I, said the Dove,  
I mourn for my love,  
I'll be chief mourner.

Who'll carry the coffin?  
I, said the Kite,  
if it's not through the night,  
I'll carry the coffin.

Who'll bear the pall?

We, said the Wren,  
both the cock and the hen,  
We'll bear the pall.

Who'll sing a psalm?  
I, said the Thrush,  
as she sat on a bush,  
I'll sing a psalm.

Who'll toll the bell?  
I, said the Bull,  
because I can pull,  
I'll toll the bell.

All the birds of the air  
fell a-sighing and a-sobbing,  
when they heard the bell toll  
for poor Cock Robin.

(Note: illustrations in some 18<sup>th</sup> century publications indicate the 'bull' to be a bullfinch – keeping the story contained to a population of birds.)

**Humours of Lissadell** (used in Project Seven, “Topical Stories” Session Two follow-up, P125.)

*'Up to fifty thousand dead starfish, washed ashore at Lissadell, Co. Sligo' –*

*Irish Times, November 5<sup>th</sup> 2009*

Unworldly strange exotic debris: these beached pentangles –  
a new galaxy, fallen from the night sky and stretched along  
the morning tide; star-struck aliens trespassing on our shore.  
Difficult to fathom what brought these multitudes together,  
if it was to feed, no evidence of prey has arrived alongside.

And why gain access here, arrive at this particular venue?  
Maritime opinion cites stormy weather in the northwest  
sweeping them in this direction, while our scientists assert  
they lack a brain as such: either way not a matter of choice.  
Still, nonetheless, here they are at Lissadell.

*Fifty thousand dead starfish, washed ashore...*

Am I just falling for a sucker punch? Incurable romantic  
seduced by enigma; swapping flawed intelligence for wishful  
thinking – fishing for a coded message that says in some way  
these seemingly simple creatures might share our concern for  
heritage, history, rights of way and poetry; catch myself hoping  
this was a conscious threshold, that they had gathered together  
purposefully for final communal succour, some stubborn gene  
insisting this departure should at least be noted – they too had  
achieved a modest level of importance in the scheme of things,  
experienced their share of loss, mass extinctions of fellow  
beings;  
had clung tenaciously to life; brought along a story to tell.

*Fifty thousand dead starfish, washed ashore at Lissadell...*

(The poem is taken from *Session: Salmon Poetry 2011*)

**Who Killed Davy Moore** song by Bob Dylan, 1963: lyrics are available on  
the internet, (for Project Six, page 105).

**Publications from Afri referenced in this book:**

*Just a Second: Exploring Global Issues through Drama & Theatre*, Pete  
Mullineaux, 2014

*Just a Second: Pathways for Peace*, Rose Kelly, 2015

*Just a Second: Lessons from History*, Danny Cusack, 2017

(Also: Lesson plans to be used in conjunction with Afri's Development Education Resources (Miriam Barragry, 2019)

*Seeds of Hope in a World of Insecurity*, Clare O'Grady Walshe

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## **Other Publications referred to in the book:**

*Know Yourself – Know the World* (Learning Horizons Educational Publishing Dublin 2006, now available through *Outside the Box Learning Resources*: author Pete Mullineaux)

*Head, Heart, Hands* educational resource, looking at the SDGs (Concern Ireland)

*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (Dee Brown: 1971 Pan)

*Ecology, Ethics and Interdependence: The Dalai Lama* (Simon & Shuster).  
*The Sheltering Tree of Interdependence*, (a 30 part poem) (website: [dalailama.com](http://dalailama.com))

(See also the Dalai Lama in conversation with quantum physicist David Bohm on YouTube)

*If the World Were a Village* (David J. Smith & Shelagh Armstrong: A&C Black, 2003)

*Globalisation and Seed Sovereignty in Sub-Saharan Africa, Seeds of Hope in a World of Insecurity*, (Claire O'Grady Walshe, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019)

Danah Zohar: *The Quantum Self*, (Flamingo Books 1990)

Danah Zohar & Ian Marshall: *The Quantum Society*, (Bloomsbury 1993)

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See Afri YouTube channel for a range of short films relevant to this publication.

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Relevant Websites:

WorldWise Global Schools: [www.worldwiseschools.ie](http://www.worldwiseschools.ie)

Irish Aid: [www.irishaid.ie](http://www.irishaid.ie)

Concern Worldwide: [www.concern.net](http://www.concern.net)

Trócaire: [www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org)

IDEA: [www.ideaonline.ie](http://www.ideaonline.ie)

Oxfam: [www.oxfam.org/en](http://www.oxfam.org/en)

Christian Aid: [www.christianaid.org](http://www.christianaid.org)

Goal: [www.goalglobal.org](http://www.goalglobal.org)

Comhlámh: [www.comhlamh.org](http://www.comhlamh.org)

DICE PROJECT: <http://www.diceproject.eu/>

Centre for Global Education Belfast: [www.centreforglobaleducation.com](http://www.centreforglobaleducation.com)

Children in Crossfire: [www.childrenincrossfire.org](http://www.childrenincrossfire.org)

Greenpeace: [www.greenpeace.org/international](http://www.greenpeace.org/international)

Friends of the Earth: [www.foei.org](http://www.foei.org)

Síolta Chroí: [www.sioltachroiei](http://www.sioltachroiei)

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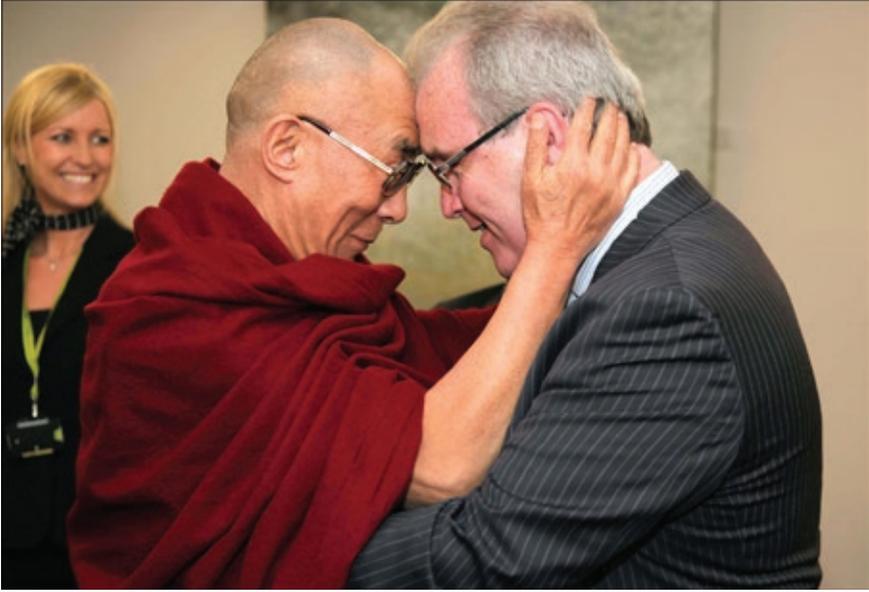
## About the author

Pete Mullineaux lives in Galway, Ireland. He is a writer and educator, teaching global issues through drama and poetry: this is his third published educational resource. He has also written articles for *Policy & Practise: A Development Education Review* (Centre for Global Education, Belfast) and given talks at National University of Ireland Galway, Trinity College Dublin and New York State University, Oswego. Pete has published four poetry collections, most recently *How to Bake a Planet* (Salmon Poetry 2016) and written a number of stage plays for Galway Youth Theatre. Three plays were produced by RTE radio including *Butterfly Wings* (2014). He has been interviewed and his work discussed on Ireland’s leading arts/culture programme ARENA. In 2020 he published a political science-fiction novel, *Jules & Rom* (Troubador Books) that offers a futuristic take on Shakespeare’s timeless play, exploring artificial and emotional intelligence and engaging with global issues such as war and climate change.

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## **About Afri**

Afri's work focuses on four major themes – climate change, anti-militarisation, forced migration and hunger. This publication explores these themes and others through the use of drama and theatre and is part of Afri's *Just a Second* project which aims to highlight the obscene wastage of resources on war and weapons while so many people lack the basic necessities of life. The objective is to invite people to stop and think about the choices we make or allow governments and corporations to make on our behalf – choices such as the annual spending in excess of \$1900 billion on the war industry while hunger stalks the world and the Sustainable Development Goals remain unachieved. This Global Citizenship Education resource is aimed at transition year pupils and others working alongside Afri project facilitator Pete Mullineaux. Afri's *Just a Second* project also links with the International Peace Bureau's Global Day of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS) which highlights this issue on an annual basis. Afri is a justice and peace organisation which is involved in many other issues and campaigns. To find out more about Afri, visit our website: [www.afri.ie](http://www.afri.ie).



12.4.2011. Dublin Airport. Richard Moore from Children in Crossfire greets H H the Dalai Lama at Dublin airport at the start of his 3 day visit to Ireland. ©Photo by Derek Speirs

*Interdependence Day: Teaching the Sustainable Development Goals through Drama for all Ages* is an innovative and imaginative resource that can be used by teachers, educators, drama facilitators, theatre practitioners anywhere in the world.

While the themes and issues explored are global in reach, the content will suit the Irish primary and secondary school curriculums, offering eight projects that are relevant and appropriate to all ages, from children as young as four through to older teenagers. The book is the latest in a series of publications extending out of Afri's Just a Second schools education programme, where the overarching aim is to encourage a whole-school approach to global citizenship education as advocated by WorldWise Global Schools and Irish Aid.

In primary school it should be a natural fit and at secondary level the intention is to bring on board teachers in all subject areas, offering engagement with history, geography, science and technology, ecology, ethics and religion, business and economics, politics and society, art, dance and movement, mathematics, even home economics!

**“Everything is interdependent” – the Dalai Lama**



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