



Save the Children

Think of Me, Think of You

an anti-discrimination
training resource
for young people
by young people

Acknowledgements

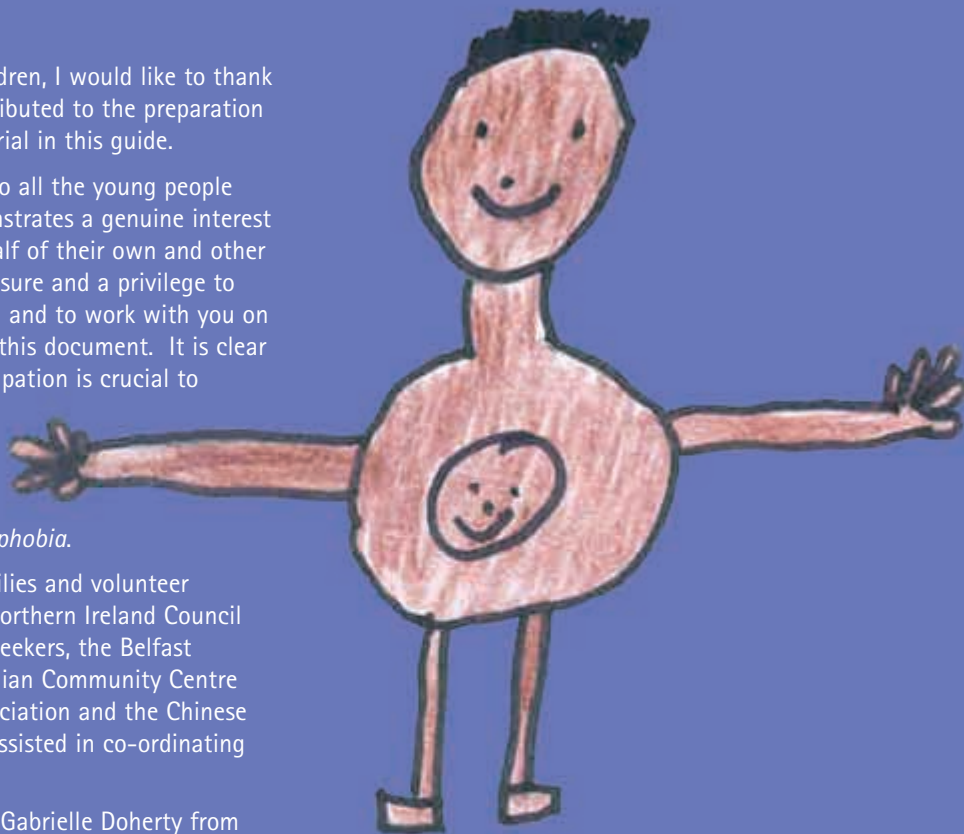
On behalf of Save the Children, I would like to thank all those people who contributed to the preparation and gathering of the material in this guide.

I am particularly grateful to all the young people whose participation demonstrates a genuine interest in working for and on behalf of their own and other communities. It was a pleasure and a privilege to listen to your ideas unfold and to work with you on the content and design of this document. It is clear that your continued participation is crucial to mainstreaming issues of cultural diversity into Northern Ireland and for the eradication of *racism*, *Anti-Semitism* and *Islamophobia*.

My thanks also to the families and volunteer representatives from the Northern Ireland Council for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, the Belfast Jewish Community, the Indian Community Centre and Al-Nisa Women's Association and the Chinese Welfare Association who assisted in co-ordinating the youth participation.

Special thanks go to allies Gabrielle Doherty from NICEM, and Jamie Massey from Generation Y, the youth initiative of the Chinese Welfare Association. The invaluable help your personal and professional commitment added to this project is greatly appreciated.

Dr Katy Radford
Project Co-ordinator
"Think of Me, Think of You"



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Think of Me, Think of You

Save the Children advocates for children's rights and encourages them to take the lead in speaking out about issues that affect them.

Young People's Statement

We are Raj, Kousalyaa, Vyishnu, Jesse, Ranu, Dana, Grace, Rabia, Tina and Saagur.

This guide is a resource that we have designed and developed to help people think about some aspects of *cultural diversity* and *children's rights*.

It covers some of the things that a group of us who are friends and who come from a variety of *minority ethnic communities* have been discussing and thinking about over a long time.

There are lots of other people and communities whose experiences our group doesn't yet know about. But we hope that the way we talk about things will help us to find out about other people's lives and will encourage other people to ask questions, to listen to answers and to make new friends.

We try to meet often and continue to learn about each other's *cultures*. While we always have a good time when we meet, sometimes we discuss and think about things that can be uncomfortable or hard for us. The important thing is that we all respect each other and we all think staying friends with each other is important as we discover our differences and similarities. As Saagur said,

**'Though we have different bodies,
everybody has the same brain'**



GLOSSARY

explaining the terms used in this guide

There may be words or expressions that we use that are new to you. They are important words to understand and so, when a word is written in *italics* in this guide, you can look up its meaning in this Glossary.

Asylum Seeker

If you have come to live in Northern Ireland and don't want to return to your old home country for a number of different reasons, you may be an *asylum seeker*. You sometimes have to wait a very long time before the Government decides if you can stay here as a *refugee*, or if you have to leave.

Children's Rights/
UNCRC

Children have all the same rights as adults. However, they have certain extra ones that our Government has to ensure are protected and upheld. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a piece of law that can be used by people to decide whether or not children and young people are being treated fairly.

Culture

This is a word often used to describe our traditions and beliefs and practices. Everyone has a *culture* that they relate to.

Cultural Diversity

Means that we recognise and can learn to appreciate differences and similarities in each other.

Discriminate

When someone discriminates against you, it means that they have decided to think about you or behave towards you unfairly only because of things they think they know about you, like your age or your gender or your skin colour or your *faith*.

Ethnicity

Everyone has an ethnic background and this is based on our sharing many things, for example the same history, language, beliefs and *culture*.

Faith

A belief system which exists throughout the world, for example, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism.

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Identity

The word we use to describe our own uniqueness, made up of different aspects of our selves.

Minority Ethnic Community

This is a term that we use to refer to those of us who make up the membership of small communities in Northern Ireland. Our communities are in a minority when they are compared to either or both of the two Christian groups that make up the majority community who live in Northern Ireland.

Multiple Heritage Background

If you have parents, grandparents or other close family members who have different *ethnicities* and *cultures*, then you can be described as having a multiple heritage background. Some people use other words liked mixed race or even half-caste, but we do not like these terms.

Racism/Anti-Semitism/ Islamophobia

These are terms that we use to describe unacceptable behaviour or language that is aimed at some of us because of our *ethnicity*, our *culture* or our *faith*. The first word is used to *discriminate* against many people, often based on their skin colour; the second is aimed specifically at Jews; and when the third is used, it shows *prejudice* against Muslims.

Prejudice

Describes the way we make assumptions about people when we think first about their *culture* or *ethnicity* and if we rely on *stereotypes*. That means that prejudices are usually based on a lack of understanding so beliefs based on prejudices are often untrue.

Refugee

If you are an *asylum seeker* and the Government decides that it is not safe for you to go back to your old country, then you become a *refugee* and have the right to stay in Northern Ireland forever.

Stereotypes

Are a bit like *prejudices*. They are very simplistic but very dangerous ways of reducing people to being a bit like cartoons, and which exaggerate or invent a negative part of someone's character.

Can you think of examples of where you have heard these words used before?

Can you think of people you know who may know more about some of these words?



What are Rights?



'Children deserve lots of things, but they shouldn't always have to ask for them.'

In Northern Ireland there are a number of things that the Government have signed up to that mean *Children's Rights* should be supported and protected.

The Children's Strategy is a 10 year plan that the Government in Northern Ireland have undertaken to put into practice that places children's interests at the centre of their work.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a piece of law that can be used by people to decide whether or not children and young people are being treated fairly.

The Children's Commissioner is a person whose job it is to ensure that the rights and best interests of all the children in Northern Ireland are being protected and upheld.

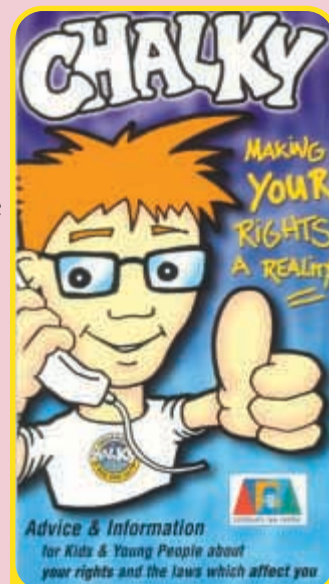
Q What can you do to find out about your rights?

A Look up the UNCRC on page 17 of this guide.

Q What should I do if I think that my rights are not being upheld?

A There are help lines you can contact, for example Chalky at the Children's Law Centre.

They can also put you in touch with other specialist help lines where people may have more experience about the matter you are calling about, like the Parents Advice Centre, Childline or Samaritans.



Telephone
0808 808 5678

E-Mail:
chalky@childrenslawcentre.org

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Think of all the different *cultures*, nationalities, ethnic groups, *faiths* of the people who live here.

How many can you list?

How many of these groups do you belong to?

Which groups do your friends belong to?



Facts about life in Northern Ireland

Less than 1 in every 100 people in Northern Ireland is from a *minority ethnic community*.

If there are only a few people from minority communities, do they have the same rights as other people?

It shouldn't matter how many or how few people there are, everyone has the same rights. The *UNCRC* gives us guidelines to help us understand what these rights are.

Use the guide on page 17 to think of three of your rights that are protected. Can you think of anyone in Northern Ireland whose rights might not be being upheld?



One in every three people who come from *minority ethnic communities* is under 18, and most of them are under 9 years old.

Is that a lot of people?

It means that in Northern Ireland more young people from *minority ethnic communities* than ever before are growing up here, and that figure will continue to grow, so we need to make sure that all their needs and requirements are met.

What changes would you like to see to make life more fair for people whose *culture* is different from your own? Think about some of the ways you benefit when you learn about someone else's *culture*.



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One in every two children who come from *minority ethnic communities* has a *multiple heritage background*.

Does that mean they know more about one part of their background than another?

It might do, but it might also mean that some young people also have a right to discover and explore lots of different parts of their *identity* that they may not yet know very much about.

Think of a *culture* that you are interested in and list 5 things you would like to find out about it.
What ways could you go about finding out this information?

TALKING POINT

Some adult people who live in Northern Ireland as *refugees* were kept in prison when they first arrived here.

Why? Are they all criminals?

No, and even though they are no longer kept in prison, sometimes people who come here as *asylum seekers* are still not always treated with the respect that they deserve. This can be very frightening and worrying for their children.

How might your life be different from others if you or your parents are *refugees* or *asylum seekers*?

What sort of things would make you feel welcome or at home in a new country?

TALKING POINT

Stereotypes

When we *stereotype* people we put them into boxes that we have made up in our own minds. We make assumptions about people that are inappropriate.

'I was born here, my parents were born here, we're all British, but people see us as different just because of the colour of our skin.'

'How can people expect us to be all the same? Just because we're different from them, we're not just copies of each other.'



'People are always on to us about turning up to events, but it's only so we can be seen in saris and to bring food. Your culture's important but it shouldn't just be about us being different!'

Can you think of ways that people *stereotype* you? How does it feel?



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Multiple Heritage Backgrounds

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For some of us, when we think about our families, it is easy for us to recognise that we have more than one heritage or background that influences how we think of ourselves or how others think of us. For others this might be harder to do.

'I don't know or really care what others think I am. I know I'm a mix of my Chinese and my Irish family and that both bits are important to me. But people look at me and make assumptions.'

'It's important to be what you choose to be, not what others choose for you because you might not like it, or you might think something of you was missing.'

'My mum and dad's bedroom is decorated in a Chinese style, but my room has more western things even though everyone thinks of me as Chinese.'

'I'm black, everyone can see that, but my brothers and sisters are white, my mum's white, my step-dad's white, my aunties and uncles are all white. I have no notion of what my dad's life is like, or who my granny is, yet he's still a part of me if I look in the mirror or when someone else sees me.'

We all have multiple identities - how many identities do you have? Think of your gender, your *faith*, your *ethnicity*, your age, your roles in your family and community.



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Joining In?

There are many reasons why some people might find it more difficult to make friends outside their own communities than some other people do.

These are some of the reasons we have experienced:

Feeling different

Sometimes we forget to focus on the things we have in common with other people.

'I want to be somewhere where people treat me like normal. I don't want to feel singled out, it can be quite lonely sometimes being the only person, so I'd rather stay with other people who know what my life's about.'

'My school's really good about giving me a prayer room and all to use, and I don't have to go to mass or anything.'



Can you think of a time when you were left out of something? How did it feel?



Action Point If you think there's someone who lives in your neighbourhood or goes to school who might be shy, who is new or who is being singled out for some reason, you and your friends could invite them to join in with you and ask them about the sort of things they like to do. You'll definitely find more than one thing in common if you look hard enough and learn something new in the process.

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Dressing Differently



There are times when we choose to dress in ways that mean that some other people may focus on our clothes and not on us as individuals.

'People see my clothes as a cloud that hangs over me to oppress me, what they don't see is that it is a smokescreen for me, I feel correct and proper when I am dressed as I am now.'

'I really want to tell people what it's like from my point of view. I'm not oppressed because I dress in a certain way, or behave with dignity and self respect and don't want to do some of the things that my friends do!'

What do you think people see when they look at your style of dress? What is your favourite item of clothing and why? Think of someone else's style that you like. Would it suit you? Why not?



'It's a woman's choice to dress modestly, and to observe hijab. It is a sign that shows self-respect and that women should not be judged on their appearance.'

Action Point Talk to some of the older members of your community or family and find out about how they dressed when they were younger? Ask them what they like about your clothes.

Being new

Doing something for the first time, trying to make friends or visiting a new place can sometimes be a scary thing.

'When I first came here I cherished lots of dreams. I was such a naive girl when I thought I would be able to cope with homesickness.'

'I never speak English at home – and so I often think in two languages!'

Have you ever been to a country where you didn't speak the language?



Action Point

Have you tried to learn another language? Why not try again?

Family and Community expectations

'My mum wouldn't let me go to a youth club or to the Odyssey with a group of boys from school. My friends know I can't go anywhere there would be drinking or to the cinema, it's just an understanding we have.'

Think of three ways that you practise or celebrate your *culture*. Think of three ways that someone you know from a different *culture* celebrates their own.



Action Point Think about places you might like to visit one day where you might have to think differently about what you wear, or what you might be expected to eat, or how you might have to behave.



Tina's Poem

A real friend doesn't care about your race.
 A true friend doesn't care about your religion.
 They don't care if you're black, white or tan.
 You should be the same to them.
 It doesn't matter about personal things,
 Trustworthy friends help you in times of need.
 They should like you for being you,
 Not just because of your culture.
 So do you have this friend? Even in the future?

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Racism, Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

People do not always realise they are being racist. Sometimes we make mistakes and do not understand that these might cause offence to our friends or other people. Just because we don't know doesn't stop it being racist.

'We're not foreigners, we were born here.'

'What can you do about it? In school you're just a squealer if you go crying to the teacher'

'My brother wanted to invite his friend to his birthday party, and so we decided to change the day so that he could come. But when he came to the party, he wouldn't eat any of the food because we didn't know that he had certain things he couldn't eat.'

The largest numbers of racist incidents involving young people in NI occur in public places including streets, shops, fast food outlets and leisure venues.



Being an Asylum Seeker

When adults are *asylum seekers*, they have to go to a police station every week to register.

How do you think it might feel if you or your family had to keep reporting into a police station?

Vishnu's Story

'It was Friday. My big sister woke me up because she had to go to the police station that day. The police station is about 40 minutes away from our house. I could see her shivering as we walked along in the cold and wet. I could see a fear and uncertainty in her eyes. I felt so sorry and frustrated for her that she has to do this every week. She hasn't done anything wrong!'





Kousalyaa's Story

'Sometimes it is hard for us to wear our own traditional dress publicly. We are scared of being given racist abuse. One day I was wearing my own traditional dress to go to the temple. On the way I was humiliated and called names by people just for being different. We had to wait in a queue for a taxi to go home, and while we were waiting, a few people in a cars started calling us racist names, and they drove past three times. People in front of the queue were disturbed by their attitude and let us take the taxi before them. This was shocking and difficult and we felt so insecure'.

Has anyone ever made you feel uncomfortable, threatened or unwelcome?



Action Point Why don't you try something new like joining a multi-cultural youth group or even get a group that you're already in to offer to provide anti-discrimination training.

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What you should do to find out more about someone else's culture

Be Open, Be Honest, Be Clear and Be Respectful about what you want to know, and what you do know.

Sometimes it's hard to be all these things, but if you want to be, you can.

Ask more questions if you're interested.

'If you want to find out about my world, be willing to let me ask you about yours.'

'Be flexible, and try to explain to people what your culture allows and doesn't allow you to do.'

'If we can explain to each other the things that we like and the things that make us or our families feel uncomfortable, then we'll get along better.'

Sometimes there are things that you do or just wouldn't do. Here are some of the things we've asked each other about:

Do you ever have to wear special clothes?

Are there any things you can't eat?

Are there times when you can't visit your friends?

Are you sometimes misunderstood?

What do we have in common?

Raj's Problem Page



Q Dear Raj

I'm going to my friend's house, and am worried that they might serve me red meat. Do you think I should not go?

A Of course you should go, she's your friend isn't she?

But you should explain to her in detail to her about your culture and preferences. I'm sure she will understand you better then.

Q Dear Raj,

A girl at my school has invited the whole class to go to a ceremony in their temple. I'm sure my parents won't want me to go, what should I do?

A Why not ask your parents first before you assume what their answer will be. And if you think it might help, get your teacher to talk to them.

Q Dear Raj,

When I observe hijab, some of the boys at my bus stop make negative comments about women. Usually I ignore them but what can I do to make them understand my point of view?

A Everyone deals with things differently, but by talking to someone else who has gone through the same experience, you might get a range of answers you could chose from that would be right for you.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

All children, from birth to 18 years, have:

- The right to life.
- The right to a name and a nationality.
- The right to be with their parents or with those who will care for them best.
- The right to have a say about things that affect them.
 - The right to have ideas and say what they think.
 - The right to practise their religion.
 - The right to meet with other children.
 - The right to get information they need.
- The right to special care, education and training, if needed.
 - The right to health care.
 - The right to enough food and clean water.
 - The right to a free education.
 - The right to play.
 - The right to speak their own language.
- The right to learn about and enjoy their own culture.
 - The right not to be used as a cheap worker.
 - The right not to be hurt or neglected.
 - The right not to be used as a soldier in wars.
 - The right to be protected from danger.
- The right to know about their rights and responsibilities.



Save the Children

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