



# PROBLEM TREE

Lesson Plan For Teachers In Senior Classes (3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>)

## Introduction:

- To start this lesson ask the children to stand for a physical exercise

## *Instructions:*

- *Use your body as an acting tool. Imagine yourself as a small seed; get down on your knees and curl up*
- *While I count to 20, start 'growing' (stand up) to become a full blossomed tree with your arms as branches and your fingers as fruits*
- *Feel a gentle breeze blowing the branches back and forth, then a storm and then the wind is dying down. (move your arms gently, then roughly and then gently again)*
- *Let the tree free itself. Let the roots move a little (move your toes) and then the branches (hands) and the fruits (fingers)*
- *Now imagine the tree is being poisoned. The poison enters the tree through the roots, moving up to the fruits (fingers die), branches (hands die) and finally the trunk. The whole tree dies (end up by falling down to the floor)*
- *Ask the group to sit down and explain a healthy tree gets sufficient nutrients from its roots. But if the 'fruits' begin turning bad, this indicates that something is not right. The nutrients are insufficient or totally poisoned. What we can see first are the visible signs above ground – the fruits, leaves, branches and trunk of the tree begin to get sick and this indicates there might be a problem at the root level. This is the same for life; problems that we see, such as fighting are sometimes the visible result of other problems that already existed (anger, low self esteem).*

## Development

- Divide class into groups of three/four. Give each group a copy of drawing of problem tree (provided beneath this lesson) which has tree with several large roots and numerous branches with fruit.
- Each group is also given one of the two scenarios (provided below).
- Inform the class that that the scenarios will involve a young person from Cambodia or Ireland and the children must examine the problem from the young person's viewpoint.
- Ask them to write the causes of the problem on the roots of the tree and the consequences of the problem on the branches and fruit. Also ask the children to consider whether the location of the young person (Cambodia or Ireland) will influence their tree
- The groups then read out their scenario and report back to the whole class presenting their problem tree.
- Children provide feedback to groups on their problem tree (two positive things and one area which the tree could have been improved)



### Closure:

- Whole class brainstorm on possible measures that either individual could use to help their problem

#### Scenario One:

*Sockchea is a twelve year old boy from Cambodia. He lives with his parents and younger three year old brother Chuny in rural area just north of Siem Rep. He is an intelligent child and dreams of being a hotel manager when he is older. He likes school but he misses many days lately because he has to look after Chuny when his parents are working on the rice farm. His parents need to work to have enough money to feed Sockchea and Chuny. Sockche's exam results aren't as good as they used to be and he knows if he is to improve he has to go to school. If he is to go to school though he doesn't know what will happen to his family and he doesn't want to let his parents down by not looking after Chuny.*

#### Scenario Two:

*Nóra is a fourteen year old girl from Ireland. She is finding it difficult to form friendships as many classmates don't want to be friends with her. She is a member of the travelling community and encounters racial discrimination on a regular basis. Nóra finds school difficult and doesn't want to go anymore as she feels way behind in school work and hates when the teacher asks her questions or to speak in class. The only class she likes is PE as this is because she is good at sports. She would like to play football but doesn't want to join a team as she thinks she will just be picked on.*

