

What influences me?



Summary

Pupils hear how Dennis from Honduras teaches poor children in his community; pupils look at the different influences on Dennis – his family, community and Government; individually, pupils draw their own ‘influences chart’.

Objective

- To help pupils recognise that they can influence others

Curriculum links

PSHE and citizenship 1a; (2h); 41, b; (5a)

Resources

- Background information on Dennis and Honduras for teachers
- Dennis’ story
- A copy of activity sheets 3.6a and 3.6b for each pupil

What to do

1. Read Dennis’ story to the class. Talk about how Dennis noticed something that needed changing. He also saw that the Government was not helping, and decided that the community needed to take action.
2. As a whole class, look at all the influences on Dennis using activity sheet 3.6a.
3. Discuss all the influences that pupils feel affect them - parents, teachers, friends, religious leaders, the media, MPs, pressure groups, etc.
4. Give out the photocopies of activity sheet 3.6b and ask the children to fill in sections 1 and 2. They should then get together in pairs and share their incomplete charts with a partner.
5. In their pairs, they should try to work out some ways that they can personally influence these people - through writing letters to MPs/newspaper editors, talking to people, joining groups, joining the school council, etc. Together they should complete section 3 for each of their charts.

Key questions

- What positive influences are there in your life (eg, friends, family)?
- What possible negative influences are there in your life (eg, peer group pressure to be unsafe)?
- How do others affect us, and how do we affect them?



Dennis

- standing up for children's rights in Honduras

Dennis is 12 and lives in a poor neighbourhood in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. Many children living in his neighbourhood are forced to stop going to school and work to earn money for their family. In Central America, the number of children working is increasing, with an estimated 800,000 children aged between 10 and 14 years in the workforce, along with many children under ten. Many of these children work in the informal economy, particularly as street sellers, or in agricultural or domestic work, where they earn relatively little.

Community groups in Honduras have been working to find ways in which children can get an education while still earning money for their family. Along with many other children, Dennis has been trained as an educator.



FACTFILE: CHILDREN IN HONDURAS

- children under 18 make up 49 per cent of the population – 31 million out of a total of 63 million
- 86 per cent of children aged 5-11 are enrolled at primary school
- 90 per cent of people have access to safe water
- 18 per cent of children under five are underweight
- women have on average 4.1 children
- out of every 1,000 children born, 42 die before the age of five





aged 12, Honduras

“I live in Tegucigalpa, which is the capital of Honduras, with my older brother and my mother. My neighbourhood is very dangerous. There are lots of gangs. They have fights between each other and hurt other people. Many parents worry that their children will not be safe in the streets and so they do not let them out so often.

I started going to church when I was six years old. Through this, I began helping children in my neighbourhood. My family also got involved with a community group that helped us a lot.

My neighbourhood is a poor one. Families have moved here from the countryside to make a better living. But there are problems. The government isn't interested in communities like this. We don't have clean water. The drains are very unhealthy. Sometimes people complain that the government doesn't help, but there are things we can do ourselves to keep the community united.

For me, poverty is something very ugly. It stops you doing what you dream of. Poverty means a lot of people don't have money to buy food. Seeing it around makes me feel bad.

I'm lucky. Thanks to my mum, I've been able to go to school. But many children where I live don't have the same chance. They don't have enough money to pay for the fees and uniforms. They feel terrible when they see other children going past on their way to school. They ask, “Why can't I study too?”

I wanted to do something because I know what poverty is like. I began to teach children to read and write. Ten children came at first. Now I hold classes every day of the week. I also teach children about their rights. If you know what your rights are, you can speak up if you see something that's bad. Our community group helps me with my teaching. We are also planning to start a canteen for children whose families do not have enough money to buy food.

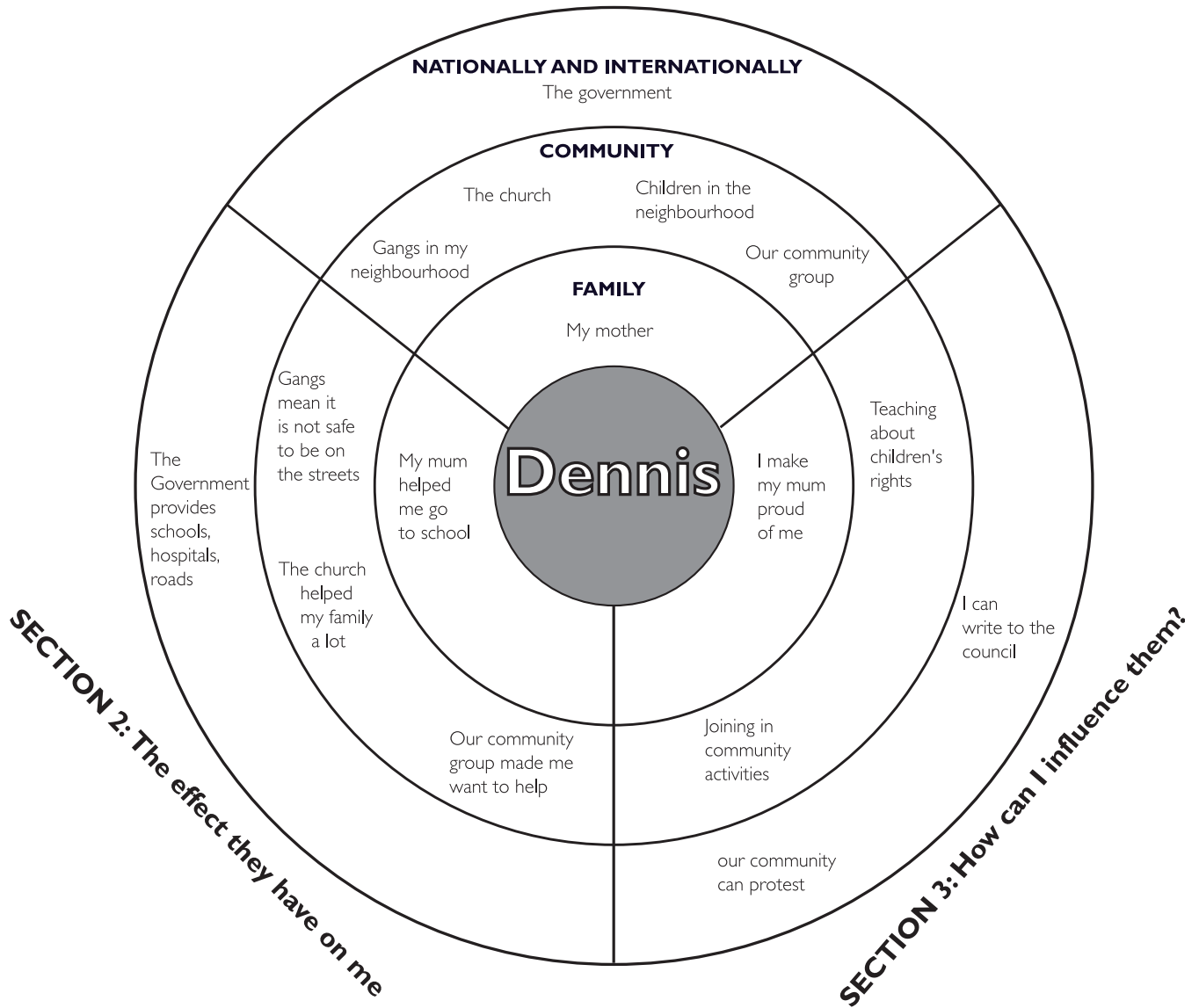
All this has changed me. I have learned to understand people, especially children. They tell me what's bothering them and I try to give advice. I would like other children to have good lives, to be able to learn and to have all their rights fulfilled.”



Save the Children

What influences Dennis?

SECTION 1: People or groups who affect me



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