



What's The Story?

What's The Story? Collective is a group of young adults, youth workers and artist, **Fiona Whelan**. Working from Rialto Youth Project since 2008, they have been collecting personal stories anonymously – and retelling them through film and live public readings. Having first recorded the collective's own experiences of power and the gardaí, their new film, **Eight Dublin Lithuanian Stories**, is their re-enactment of stories told by young Lithuanians living in Dublin.

Nicola Whelan

Fiona sent out letters with three questions. I thought they were real interesting so I decided I'd go see what it was about. I went to the group, liked it and stuck with it. We'd explore things; come up with ideas; work hard. A few dropped out, but we've a steady circle now.

We sat down with one person – a youth worker – and felt comfortable to tell our stories. They were recorded – and each was to be anonymous. From there, we made a film.

We also had a live reading for the public. There was a story about me and all my friends were there and they could tell it was mine. That was uncomfortable – but it wasn't that much of a sharp story so it was ok.

The audience were all rattled by the experience, they were nervous. People didn't know where to look, they were coughing and all.

When mine was read out I was scarlet – hoping nobody knew it was me. I was real nervous someone would guess from my face.

When you see someone else telling the story – you don't focus on 'oh that poor person' you just hear the story.

Now we've made a film of anonymous stories by children at 4 Vejai [4Winds] Lithuanian School in Inchicore. It's interesting to hear someone else's story – what it's like to move out of home. We're taking the film to Vilnius – I'm looking forward to experiencing their culture, their weather and their food. Oh God, the snow! We want to try and be in their shoes – then we'll come back, show them what we've done.

The project just keeps rolling – you don't know where it's going to go. Hopefully it gets well busy.



Micka Byrne

I acted in Lithuanian Stories – telling someone else's story. It was a really different experience. When you really thought about what it was like – you could feel how it was to be them. Really taking on the character and feeling the story is a good way to do things.

Some of the stories showed a bit of slagging between Irish people and Lithuanian people. One girl had fought back after an Irish person slagged her off. Then she was worried she wouldn't be able to make amends with the rest of her class, who were all Irish.

Other stories were about bullying, being different and school – how teachers can't pronounce their names. Others talked about how, if they moved back to Lithuania they'd have nothing. Many missed home – the cows, the countryside, grandparents. And lots were about simple things like food – one girl talked about how crisp sandwiches were one of the weirdest things she'd come across!

In Vilnius, we'll get to imagine what it's like to be a Lithuanian for five days. Imagine what it's like to suddenly have to move there.

It'll be a totally different culture, and understanding will be difficult especially if there are lots of people talking at once. One thing, I think, will be the jaywalking – I'll have to watch that so I don't get arrested! Showing the film in the van is going to be mad – think of all the different people we'll meet. We've a different van kitted out over there – it looks like an army van, but hopefully we'll turn it into something. We have great ideas for it too. For our projects here we have a Mercedes Sprinter, with Section8.ie painted on the side. It's got a screen, orange and white seats and a projector inside. We've taken it to the University of Ulster, Belfast's New Lodge and Galway's Westside Youth project – that was mad. Galway was great – we didn't show the film, we just had discussions – it was great to find out what people thought of your stories ●

Watch the film at <http://neunow.jotta.com/portfolio.html?id=412989id> and check out other What's The Story? projects at www.section8.ie

