

# **Partnerships for Participation**

## **Child Participation Handbook**



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# CHILD PARTICIPATION

Handbook for Educators



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# INTRODUCTION

## The Partnerships for Participation project

This handbook has been developed in the framework of the EU-funded global project ‘Partnerships for Participation’, an innovative project which aims to increase the quality and quantity of children’s and young people’s participation in the democratic life of ten communities in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America through building genuine and sustainable partnerships between teenagers, youth organisations, schools and local authorities. Working with young people aged 13-18, we aimed to challenge the misperception that teenagers are only capable of participating in matters directly affecting them individually by involving them in the decision-making of schools and local authorities.

Very often, child and youth participation is a one-way process: young people give their opinion and are listened to, but real dialogue and partnership between them and the adult decision-makers seldom takes place. With the support of ten European Voluntary Service (EVS) volunteers, we established more sustainable participation projects with schools, local youth clubs or city councils.

This publication aims to raise awareness of the importance of child participation and to support educators to empower children to participate in decision-making, inside and outside their groups and organisations.

### Who we are

The International Falcon Movement – Socialist Educational International is an international educational movement working to empower children and young people to take an active role in society and fight for their rights. We are an umbrella organisation for child and youth-led movements all over the world, educating on the basis of our values of equality, democracy, peace, co-operation and friendship. Through our member organisations and our international activities, we aim to ensure that children and young people are well informed about their rights and are empowered to ensure they are respected. To reach this goal, we organise a variety of activities including seminars, training courses, international camps and conferences.

Child participation is one of the basic principles of IFM-SEI. It is our firm belief that children are able to make decisions and have strong opinions on a global level as well as local matters directly affecting them. They simply need genuine empowerment so that their voices can be heard in society.

We promote the participation of children within our member organisations and the international movement, involving them from a very early age in the planning and evaluation of programmes, supporting them to organise their own activities and empowering them to take on leadership roles in the organisation. At the same time, our children’s groups participate in the communities they live in to shape decisions affecting them on a broader scale. They organise and take part in demonstrations, analyse the child-friendliness of their cities, take action against child poverty, speak out against racism and much more.

In our activities and groups, children learn about their rights and how they can ensure that they are respected. Being part of a strong group helps them to develop self-confidence to have their say in public, and offers a safe space to start taking responsibility for themselves and others.



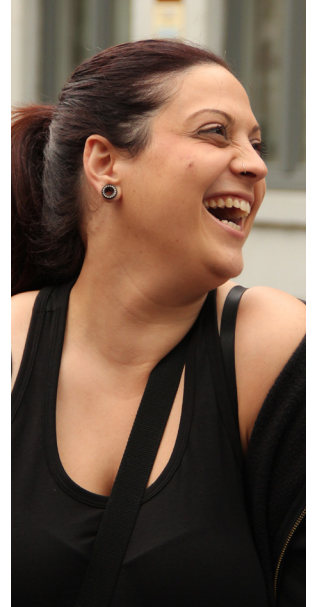
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You might notice that we talk about child and youth participation. Children are all human beings under 18 as defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. There is no clear definition of young people, and since our project mostly worked with children between 13 and 18, who are also often defined as youth, we use the words interchangeably.

The EVS volunteers were hosted by IFM-SEI member organisations in Cameroon, Indonesia, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Latvia, Germany, Finland, Spain and Belgium. They took part in the everyday life of their organisations and worked with a group of teenagers on a 'partnership for participation'. This ranged from the representation of children in a neighbourhood committee in Germany to self-organisation of young people in a youth club in Finland and the empowerment of girls in a school in Bolivia.

### Jess, EVS volunteer in Finland

For me, participation means giving your opinion and that your opinion is being taken into account. It means expressing your feelings and thoughts, sharing ideas, listening to others and being listened to, making decisions, respecting everyone's opinions and feeling involved.



## How to use the publication

This handbook is divided into three parts:

- The first part introduces the topic by providing different concepts of child participation and giving examples of participation practices from our work. We encourage you, particularly if you are unfamiliar with the topic, to work through this section either by yourself or with colleagues before introducing it to your group.
- The second part is more specifically aimed at you as an educator. You will find tips for your participation work with children and young people, and some educational activities that you can do with other educators to learn more about the topic yourself and to help plan projects.
- The third part comprises educational methods on participation to use with children, from sharing their participation experiences and learning about their rights, to thinking about what they want to influence in their community and how they can make a change.

You can easily adapt the activities to suit other age groups, and even run them with groups of young leaders if you go deeper in the debriefing section. We have used them in international seminars and in local groups, with children and with leaders. You know your group and your context best, so feel free to adapt them to your needs.





# INTRODUCTION TO CHILD PARTICIPATION

## What does it mean to participate?

To participate can either mean to take part in an event organised by others, or to take an active role in doing something, so it can be active or passive. When children participate actively, they can, whether successful or not, challenge their community or try to influence something. Passive participation means they accept an offer and take part in activities that are mostly designed by others.

### Connie, volunteer in Germany

For me participation is a process which involves a decision. It is the process where many parties interact in order to achieve a common goal by sharing decisions, and for me it is fundamental to build democracy.



While in IFM-SEI we focus on active participation and want to support children to change society and play an active role in it, passive participation is not negative by default; it can often be an important breeding ground for active participation.

For us, active participation means seeking information, sharing opinions, taking decisions and assuming responsibility.

Participation is not a goal in itself; we participate in something with a purpose. Often adults say that child participation is important so that children learn to become future decision-makers.

For us, this is not the reason why children need to be able to participate - we need children's decisions today! Child participation is important to ensure democracy, to achieve social change, and to reach decisions that are useful for those affected by them.

At the same time, participation can also be an educational process important for the personal and social development of children. They can learn how to be autonomous, how to self-organise, how to take responsibility for themselves and others. They can develop their creativity, their reasoning and critical thinking skills, learn how to work in a team, how to negotiate and choose alternatives.

Participation is not a one-off project; it should be an ongoing process that contributes to a culture of participation throughout a child's environment: in families, schools, institutions, on a political level and in wider society. Participation evolves gradually with the evolving capacities of a child, but children can participate from a very early age. At first they might just be asked for their opinion, but later they can also implement their own ideas, and soon after take responsibility for themselves and others. It is not so much about how old children are, but how much experience in participating they have and how much the information and decision-making processes are adapted to their capacities.



## Participation is a children's right

Child participation is not just a nice extra that institutions can provide if they feel like it. It is a clear right enshrined in the UNCRC.

UNCRC stands for United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is a list of rights that all children and young people everywhere in the world have, no matter who they are, where they live or what they believe in. The UNCRC was signed in 1989 by all UN member states, except for the USA. It has 54 articles, out of which 42 rights are for children and young people up to 18 years of age. The others are about how governments and adults should work together to ensure children and young people can access their rights.

The four main characteristics of human rights also apply to children's rights:

- **Universal:** Human rights apply to each and every individual, independent of their origin, citizenship and background.
- **Inalienable:** No one can take human rights away from someone, they belong to each individual, from birth to death.
- **Interdependent:** Human rights are interrelated, they depend on each other. Would a person starving be able to make the most of their right to education? Or would the right to have an opinion be possible without the right to education or access to information?
- **Indivisible:** Human rights are not divisible. One does not have just part of these rights. They are all equally important.

Do you want to read the UNCRC?

Have a look at the child-friendly versions of this legal document on page 67 in this publication.

Children's rights are all the things that children and young people need in order to make sure that they are safe, have the things they need to survive and develop, and have a say in decisions that affect their lives. Children also have all of the rights formulated in other universal legal documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, due to children's development process they have specific needs which require special attention. The UN Convention guarantees these specific rights recognised for children. As children and youth organisations it is our task not only to inform children about their rights, but also to remind adults of their responsibility and power to ensure they are respected.

### Meritxell, volunteer in Colombia

For me participation is a process of involvement in the community life which starts with the will and the wish to change a current situation. Accessing and understanding information is one of the conditions that make participation real, together with possibilities to defend one's own ideas and the right to be listened to and included in the decision-making process.



Children's rights can be divided into three categories:

**Protection rights**, guaranteeing the safety of children and covering specific issues such as abuse, neglect and exploitation.

**Provision rights**, covering special needs of children such as education and health care, goods and services.

**Participation rights**, recognising the child's evolving capacity to make decisions and participate in society, to be heard and involved in decision-making.

These are the rights concerned with participation:

Article in the UNCRC		Element relevant for participation
<b>Art. 17</b>	State Parties [...] shall ensure that the child has <b>access to information</b> and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.	Information
<b>Art. 13</b>	The child shall have the right to <b>freedom of expression</b> ; this shall include freedom to <b>seek, receive and impart information and ideas</b> of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.	
<b>Art. 14</b>	State Parties shall respect the right of the child to <b>freedom of thought, conscience and religion</b> .	Expression and exchange of opinions
<b>Art. 12</b>	State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views <b>the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child</b> , the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.	
<b>Art. 15</b>	State Parties recognise the rights of the child to <b>freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly</b> .	Meeting

## What is participation and what is it not?

We often talk about genuine and meaningful participation of children, because not everything that is called child participation really takes children seriously. For us, whenever children are forced to participate, asked to participate in something they are not interested in, or asked for their opinions which are not to be taken into consideration, it does not constitute participation.

In a General Comment on Article 12 of the UNCRC, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states that good quality children's participation has to fulfil nine requirements:



- 1) Participation is transparent and informative.
- 2) Participation is voluntary.
- 3) Participation is respectful.
- 4) Participation is relevant.
- 5) Participation is child-friendly.
- 6) Participation is inclusive.
- 7) Participation is supported by training for adults.
- 8) Participation is safe and sensitive to risk.
- 9) Participation is accountable.

### Isabelle, EVS volunteer in Cameroon

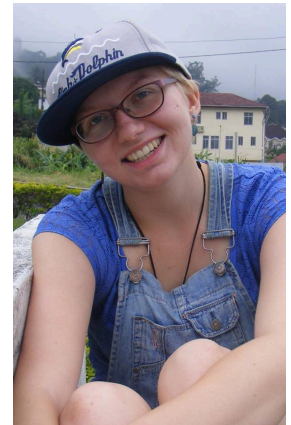
For me child participation is important for all the same reasons that public participation and every other kind of participation is important - no human should ever be ruled by another, no opinion should ever be ignored or valued less than others, just as no person should ever be valued less than others. Every human is different in their ways, but equal in their worth.

When it comes to children, people tend to concentrate on the amount of experience and knowledge these young humans (don't) have, instead of concentrating on what is really important - that these young people can feel, sense and understand what is good for them and what is not, what feels right and what doesn't, what matters to them and what doesn't. Every person should at least have the possibility to decide about and rule their own life, no matter their age or, for that matter, their gender, sexual orientation, ways of expression, family background or anything else.

I think children should be heard and paid attention to wherever they decide to participate; wherever they feel their participation is important. It is not for me to decide what they are interested in and what they think what matters.

For younger children it can be difficult to express their ideas and opinions in a way that adults understand. Often they think and express themselves in images rather than as detailed plans and they might not know (yet) how to formulate a certain idea. A lot of places like bodies or committees that adults use are not really made with children and young people in mind. Many young people are not able or willing to sit still for a long time (why would they be?). To concentrate for a few hours and stay on topic can be really, really difficult for them.

As for adults - many are taught that children's voices and opinions don't matter as much as those of adults and authorities. To rethink this can be quite challenging, as with anything else that doesn't fit into your view of the world. Some might not be willing to pay attention to someone they see as 'less than' themselves or as inexperienced or uneducated. As an adult in our society you already have a lot of unsaid rules: capitalism is The Thing, society doesn't change (or only very slowly), history is history, the future is the future. Humans are great and civilised, more important than others. Dreams don't come true, utopia is a thing for idiots - and children. Most of them can't or are not willing to accept that children, who see many of these things differently, have a valid point. That they have the right and good reasons to think differently and to take these thoughts into adulthood.



Rakesh Radjani<sup>1</sup> drew up the following table, giving examples of what participation is and is not and explaining the nine requirements:

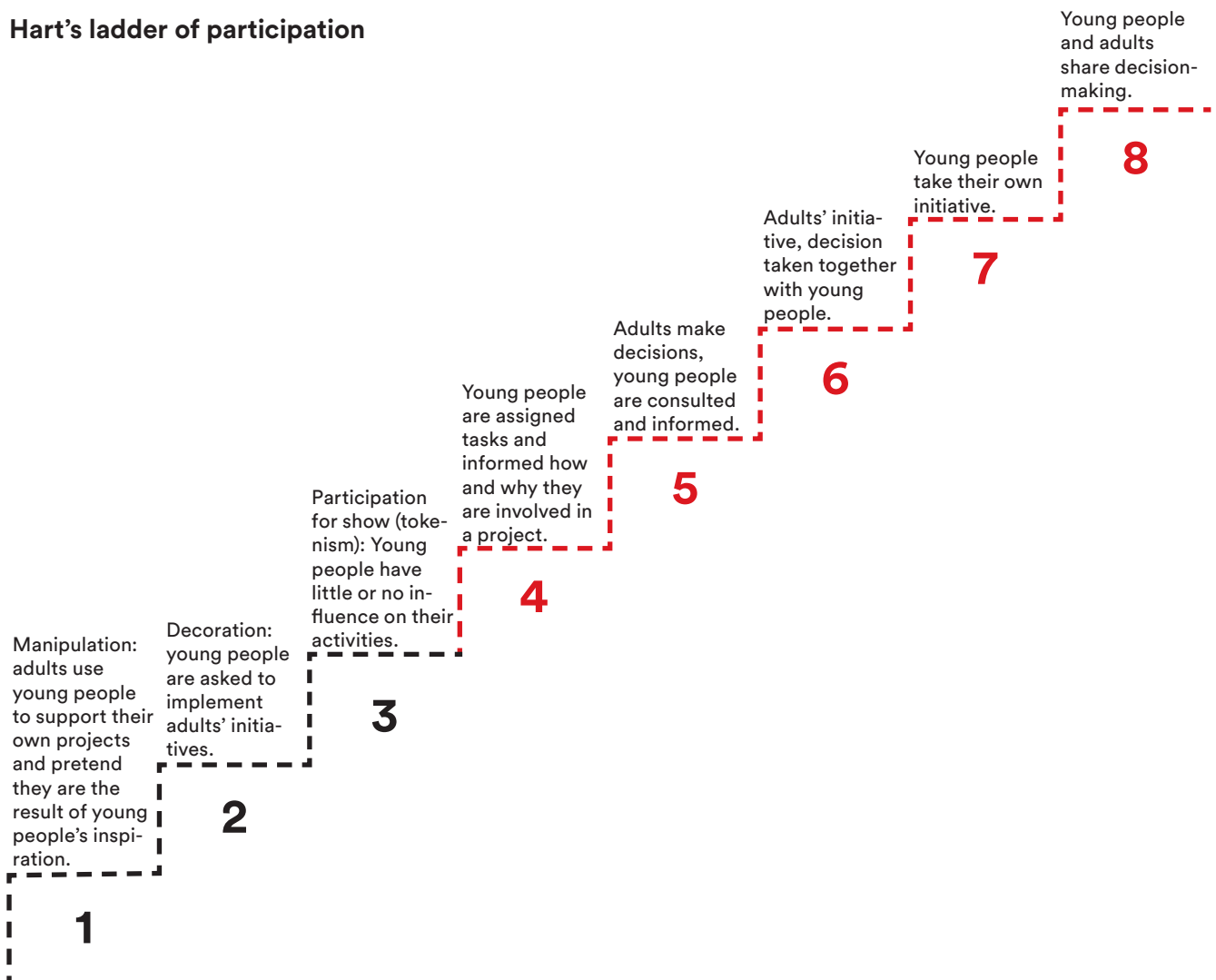
Real participation	False participation
Is it voluntary? Real participation is something a young person should want to do.	If children and young people are made to demonstrate against their will, or are forcibly 'volunteered' into committees.
Is it equitable? Real participation is inclusive; it does not discriminate on the basis of sex, wealth, rural/urban location, ethnicity, disability, etc.	If activities are practically only accessible to rich or urban young people or only boys are asked questions, or only the smart ones are selected for meetings.
Is it valued? Real participation requires all participants, including children and young people, to be valued, listened to and taken seriously.	If children and young people are present, but get little chance to participate. When they do, people don't listen carefully or don't take children and young people's views into account.
Is it respectful? Real participation means addressing each other with respect and care, not derision or paternalism.	If the chair of a meeting ignores the children and young people or speaks to them in a way that shows they do not value their presence or what they have to say.
What's the point of it? Real participation requires young people to see the value of doing it.	If children and young people are simply told what to do, if they don't really know or understand why they are doing it.
Does it matter? Real participation happens when the area or issue is of interest to young people.	If children and young people are made to participate in something that they don't care much about.
Does it make a difference? Real participation means young people's contributions have an influence and make a difference.	If children and young people are asked for contributions that make no difference whatsoever in influencing thinking or changing conditions.
Are the physical arrangements fair and conducive? How the seating is arranged makes a big difference.	If the adults sit in chairs while children sit on the floor, in the room's periphery or under the hot sun.
Is it done in a language that children and young people understand well? Real participation requires young people to feel competent and comfortable in the medium of communication.	If discussions are held in a national language that the children don't usually speak, or the manner is very formal and full of 'big words'.
Are the rules fair for all? Real participation is done in a manner in which everyone can participate equally and comfortably, and often involves children and young people in making the rules.	If some adults dominate, while children and young people don't get a chance or are cut off too early. If they are made to contribute in ways they do not know or like.
Are the children adequately informed and prepared? Real participation means children and young people have had enough time, opportunity and support to prepare.	If adults have experience and information whereas the children and young people are just pulled in with little sense of what is happening and little time to prepare.
Is it honest? Real participation respects ethics, avoids manipulation and is clear in its purpose and methods.	If children and young people are not told the truth or deliberately left in the dark about what is happening.
Is it safe? Real participation takes all steps to ensure no participation is endangered.	If confidentiality is not maintained where appropriate, such as when the child who tells the truth about something is punished.
What happens afterwards? Real participation is clear and transparent about how the output of the participation will be taken forward, and how it connects with other processes. It often aims to institutionalize participation for sustainability.	If children and young people actively on something important but it is not clear what follow-up will take place or what will be done with their contribution. If a session report is not shared or checked with young people.

<sup>1</sup> RAJANI, Rakesh, 'The Participation Rights of Adolescents – A Strategic Approach', Working Papers Series, UNICEF, New York, 2001.

There are many different forms of participation – children can take part in official consultations, they can organise activities completely independently, they can join youth movements, have seats on councils or be able to vote.

The child rights academic Roger Hart<sup>2</sup> put different forms of participation into eight levels, which also shows the false forms of participation described above. His famous ‘ladder of participation’ helps us to analyse different participation approaches.

### Hart’s ladder of participation



In levels 1-3, children are either manipulated or their participation is only tokenistic or decoration. These do not represent meaningful participation. The examples in the table above show very clearly what kinds of adult behaviour can be found in these three steps.

To identify the level of a participation project, we have to ask ourselves:

- Do the children and young people receive information?
- Can they express their opinion?
- Are their opinions taken into consideration?
- Do they take the decision?
- Are they responsible for implementing the decision? Who is accountable?

<sup>2</sup> HART, Roger (1992): 'Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship', UNICEF Innocenti Essays.

From the fourth step on, being higher in the ladder is not always necessarily better. We always have to take into consideration the situation, context and capacity of the participants and make sure that there is a balance between evolving capacities and increasing responsibilities of children. Different participatory spaces and projects can exist on different levels, and one project can be placed on different steps at different moments.

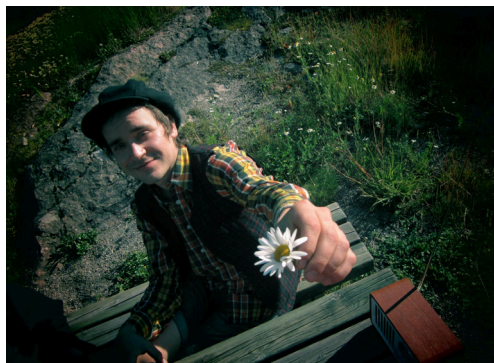
Participation approaches could also be classified into:

- **Consultative participation** (where adults maintain the control over their idea and implementation, but ask for children's opinions).
- **Collaborative participation** (where adults initiate something, but children are involved in the development and implementation of the idea and can take stronger ownership and responsibility over time).
- **Child-led participation** (where children initiate, plan and implement something and adults only play a supporting role).



#### Jerri, EVS volunteer in Peru

For me, participation means taking down the old structures, bringing new ideas, anarchy, and also having fun. I highly recommend participation!



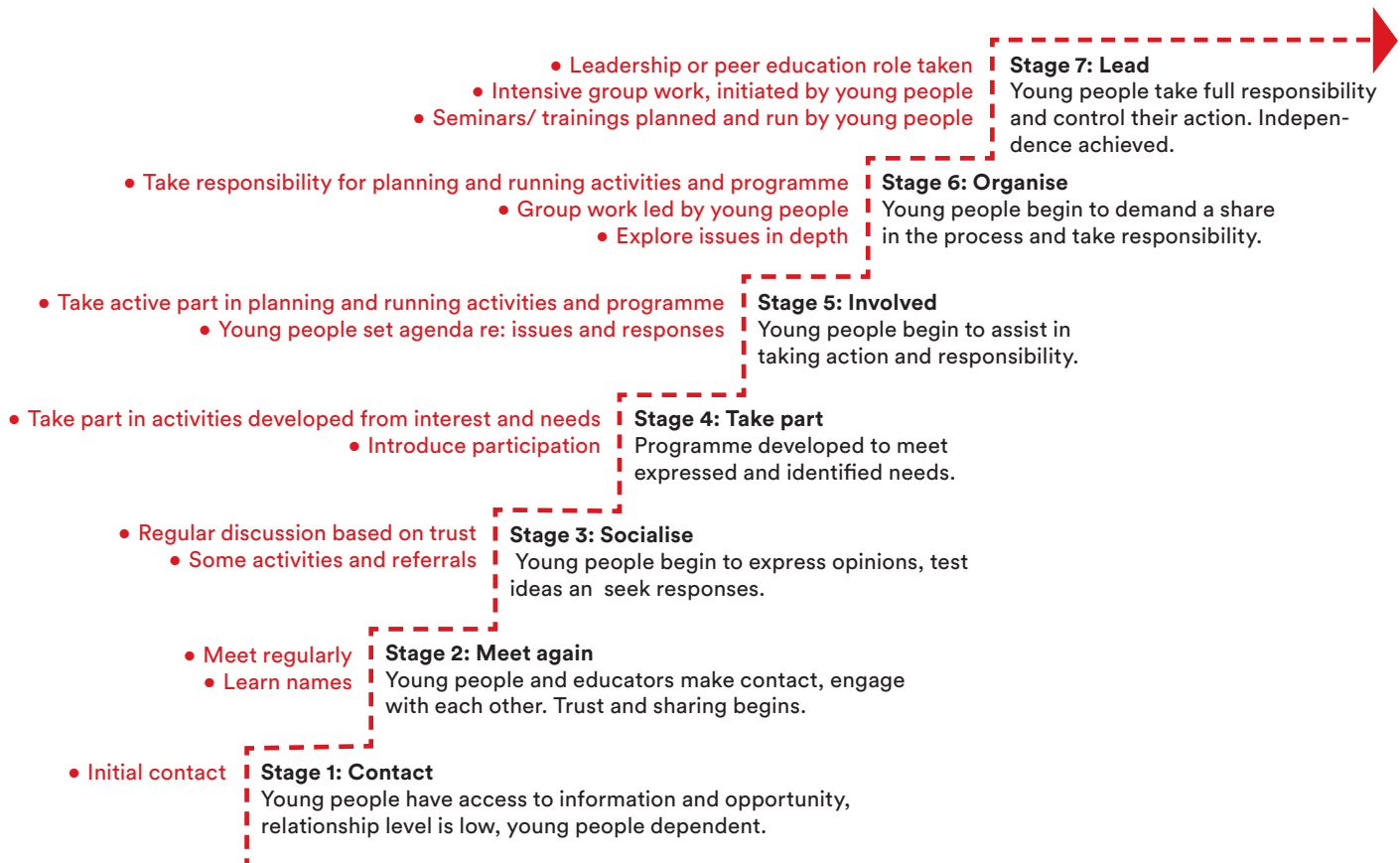
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When you compare the ladder with the participation rights in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, you will see that it focuses on consultative participation. The element of decision-making is lacking in the UNCRC – our approach to child participation goes, therefore, much further than what is guaranteed by this legal document.

The researcher John Huskins<sup>3</sup> developed another kind of ladder, showing how capacities and responsibilities can increase throughout the lifetime of a group working together in one project. The more competencies children and young people develop, the better they can take decisions and assume responsibilities.

<sup>3</sup> HUSKINS, John (1996): 'Quality Work With Young People'.

## John Huskin's model of progressive levels of responsibility



## Conditions for participation

In Huskin's model, we can see that participation is a gradual process, and that certain conditions need to be met to ensure participation is possible. We can divide these conditions into three parts:

- **Competencies:** Knowledge, skills and attitudes to participate and take decisions
- **Motivation:** Willingness to take an active role in community life
- **Opportunities:** Means and power to make decisions and resources available

These concerns don't only have to be met by the children and young people, but also by the adults working with them. When we speak about child participation we tend to focus on children, but often forget that participation is mostly based on an educational relationship between adults and children. Therefore there are many things that we, as adults and educators, also need to take into consideration.

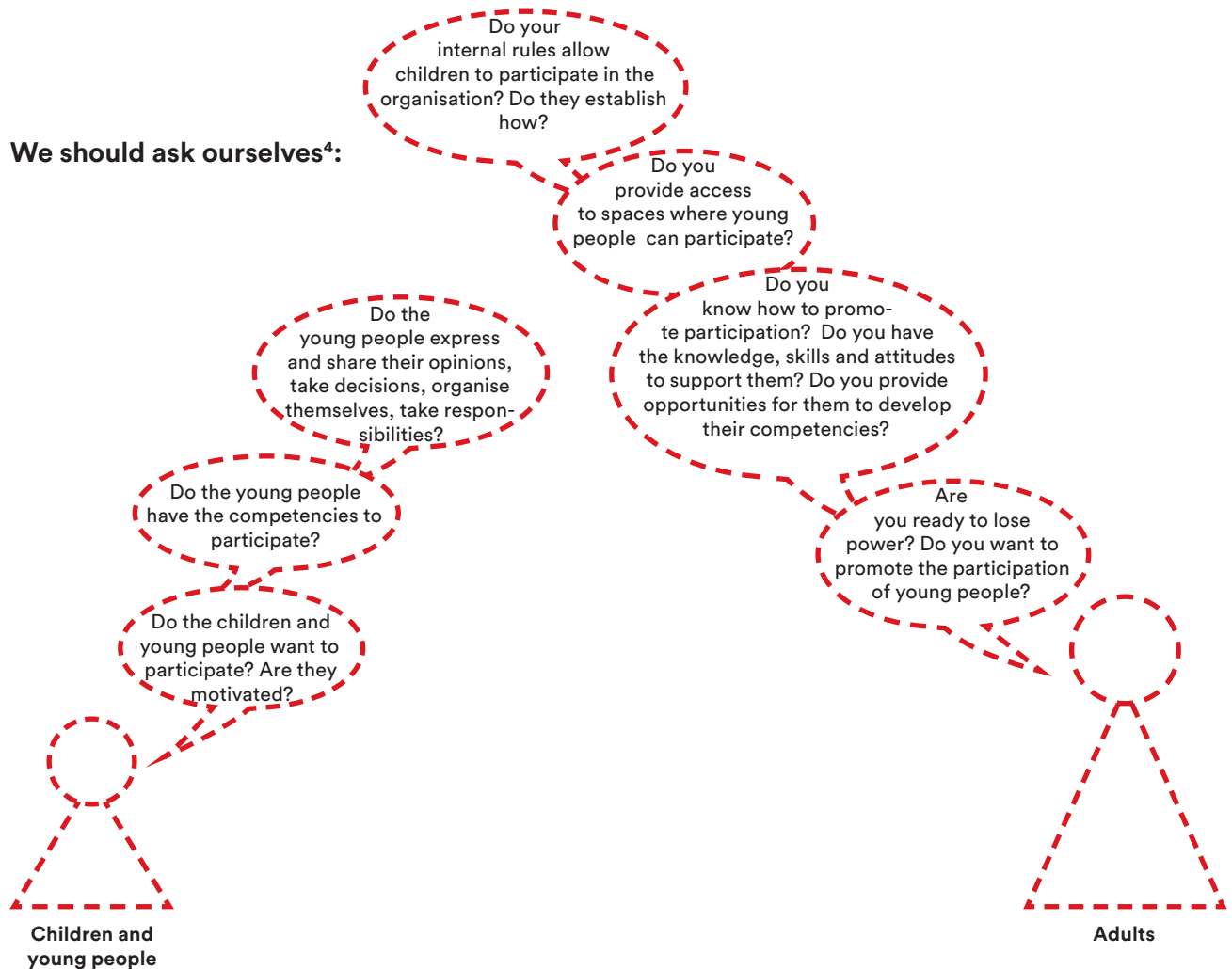
### Martin, youth leader in Peru

I think that child participation is important because it allows us to include them in decision-making in their community and we can empower children through new competencies.





**We should ask ourselves<sup>4</sup>:**



### Competencies for participation

Below are some examples of competencies that children and young people need to participate. You can come up with more and think about how to develop these competencies. You can also link these back to Huskin's progressive model and check which attitudes, skills and knowledge participants should acquire on which of the steps described.

- Active listening
- Discussion skills
- Group work and cooperation
- Self-confidence
- Being able to explain their point of view
- Being able to critically analyse information

Educators also need to have specific competencies to support participation. They should, for example, be able to develop a child-centred approach, be able to facilitate participatory methods and know how to build trust in a group.

<sup>4</sup> Table developed by Elena Diez-Villagrasa (2014)

## Motivation for participation

One important competence is to know how to motivate young people for participation projects and processes. For many young people, passive participation seems to be an easier option; active participation requires a lot of energy and enthusiasm. When we hear that children and young people are not motivated to participate, this is probably because the participation processes we offer are either not challenging enough for them, or are too complicated to understand. Motivation for participation can be developed when the ‘3Cs’ are met: connection, challenge and capacity<sup>5</sup>.

**Connection:** young people need to feel connected to the issue of participation: they need to be interested and have the willingness to change something. At the same time, they also need to feel a connection to the other people in the group and to the educator to be motivated to work with them.

**Challenge:** The participation project needs to be interesting and challenging – if change seems too easy, it is unlikely that young people will get creative and feel compelled to participate. If it is compelling and challenging, the group will feel proud to be able to participate.

**Capacity:** Young people need the competencies and resources to participate. This includes time, space and sufficient support.

Probably more difficult than motivating the children and young people is the task of motivating organisations and institutions to let children participate. Child participation costs time and effort, and it is also risky for organisations, as they cannot calculate what kind of changes the young people will want to bring. Last but not least, most adults are afraid of losing power.

A useful exercise for your organisation is to go through the following ‘pathway to participation’<sup>6</sup>, and check if you are actually ready for child participation. It follows the levels of Hart’s ladder, but focuses on organisational readiness and commitment. Readiness is related to the motivation for participation, and commitment is further explored in the following section on opportunities for participation when talking about power. You can use the activity ‘Footsteps’ on page 26 to go through the pathway with a group.

### Terry, EVS volunteer in Indonesia

For me, participation is about removing apathy from young people so they feel engaged. It’s about asking challenging questions to decision-makers because young people know best.



<sup>5</sup> STROOBANTS, Celis, Snick & Wildemeersch (2001) in Report on Youth and Participation by JeP

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from: Shier, H (2001): Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations. Young People and Society. Vol. 15 Jon Wilsey and Sons Ltd.

## Shier's Pathways to Participation

Levels of participation	Openings	Opportunities	Obligations
<b>Level 5</b> Young people share power and responsibility in decision-making.	Are you ready to share some of your adult power with young people?	Is there a procedure that enables young people and adults to share power and responsibility for decisions?	Is it a policy requirement that young people and adults share power and responsibility for decisions?
<b>Level 4</b> Young people are involved in decision-making processes.	Are you ready to let young people join in your decision-making processes?	Is there a procedure that enables young people to join your decision-making processes?	Is it a policy requirement that young people must be involved in decision-making processes?
Shier states that level 3 of his model is the minimum practice needed to meet the requirement of the UNCRC.			
<b>Level 3</b> Young people's views are taken into account.	Are you ready to take young people's views into account?	Does your decision-making process enable to take young people's views into account?	Is it a policy requirement that young people's views must be given weight in decision-making?
<b>Level 2</b> Young people are supported in expressing their views.	Are you ready to support young people in expressing their views?	Do you have a range of ideas and activities to help young people express their views?	Is it a policy requirement that young people must be supported in expressing their views?
<b>Level 1</b> Young people are listened to.	Are you ready to listen to young people?	Do you work in a way that enables you to listen to young people?	Is it a policy requirement that young people must be listened to?

## Opportunities for participation

Finally, we also need opportunities that allow us to support children and young people to participate. This includes tangible things like resources – we might need money to pay for the young people to travel to spaces for participation, a meeting room where they can work together and enough time to spare from other regular activities. Opportunities also include, for example, the power to change something in the organisation. If the group wants to improve something inside the organisation – are you in a position to influence change? What are the internal regulations of the organisation? And finally, opportunities can arise externally, for example during election periods, the announcement of official consultations or the freeing up of a public space for which new possibilities are sought.



### Jess, EVS volunteer in Finland

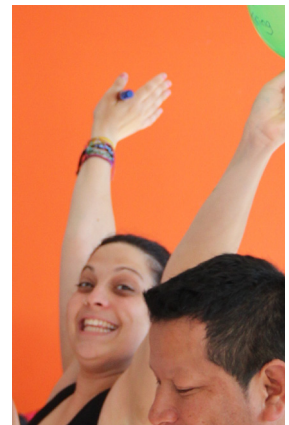
I have been an EVS volunteer in Finland working with Nuoret Kotkat. I do activities with a Falcon club once a week and since the summer we've been working on the theme of participation.

I have also been running a project with a group of teenagers aged 14 - 17 in a youth house in Järvenpää. The group decided that they wanted to do an activity on the International Day of Children's Rights. They decided to spend the whole night in a youth centre doing activities, cooking, playing games. I ran a session about the ladder of participation using the Theme Park activity. Everything we did came from them. I offered to run the activity about participation but first asked them what they thought about it.

The challenge with youth participation is that children and teenagers need information and need to learn how to participate. If you ask what they would like to do, they often answer by saying they'd like to do something they've done before. So in this case, they chose to spend the night in the youth house because they've done it before and enjoyed it. The activities they chose were all things they already do and enjoy. I think if young people have examples and more information they can be more creative to do something different and make changes.

Group work is also important for participation - making sure you have a strong group where everyone has done the activities and is informed. It's also important to have the space and resources you need to run projects.

Of course I will continue to encourage participation. It's very important that everyone feels part of something. When you feel involved, you feel you can share your opinion, share ideas and you get motivation to do amazing things. It's important for children to participate to make sure they are doing something they like and enjoy, they can express their feelings and thoughts and they feel comfortable.





## GUIDE TO NONFORMAL EDUCATION

This publication has been developed as a tool for nonformal education. Nonformal education is a planned learning process in which the learners take part intentionally and voluntarily. It is a participatory process where the participants learn from their own experiences, are not judged or graded, but led through a process of self-reflection and consideration of how they want to use the results of their learning in their lives. Therefore nonformal education methodology naturally generates learning for participation, even if you don't talk about participation as a topic.

There is no strict division between nonformal and formal education. If you are a teacher and work in a formal setting, you can still use these activities. You just have to be aware that the children and young people who participate in the activities must have the opportunity to express their opinions freely, that they are taken seriously, are not judged and that they are at the centre of the activity. They communicate, reflect and decide what to do with what they have learned.

### **Socialist education**

In IFM-SEI, we consider that we do more than just nonformal education – we do socialist education. This does not mean that we brainwash children to vote for specific political parties. For us, socialist education means that children and young people critically analyse existing power structures on all levels of society and are motivated and empowered to take action for social change. We do not only learn to live in and cope with the current world order, but rather think about how we can construct a better one. Further to this, socialist education for us also means that in our groups and activities, participants can experience a 'counter-world' of solidarity. We aim to create spaces where children do not have to live through the discrimination and exclusion that they face in their everyday lives, but rather experience cooperation and equality within their group.

### **Your role as facilitator**

As a facilitator, you are responsible for setting the stage for the learning of your group. You prepare, present and coordinate the activities and create an environment where children can learn, experience and experiment. Different from the traditional 'teacher' role, you are not there to simply give information or 'teach' children what is right or wrong. At first this might be challenging for you and also for the participants, but you have to give up your role as 'expert' and the children have to accept responsibility for their own learning. Through learning by doing you can shift to a child-centred, experiential approach to learning.

### **Self-awareness**

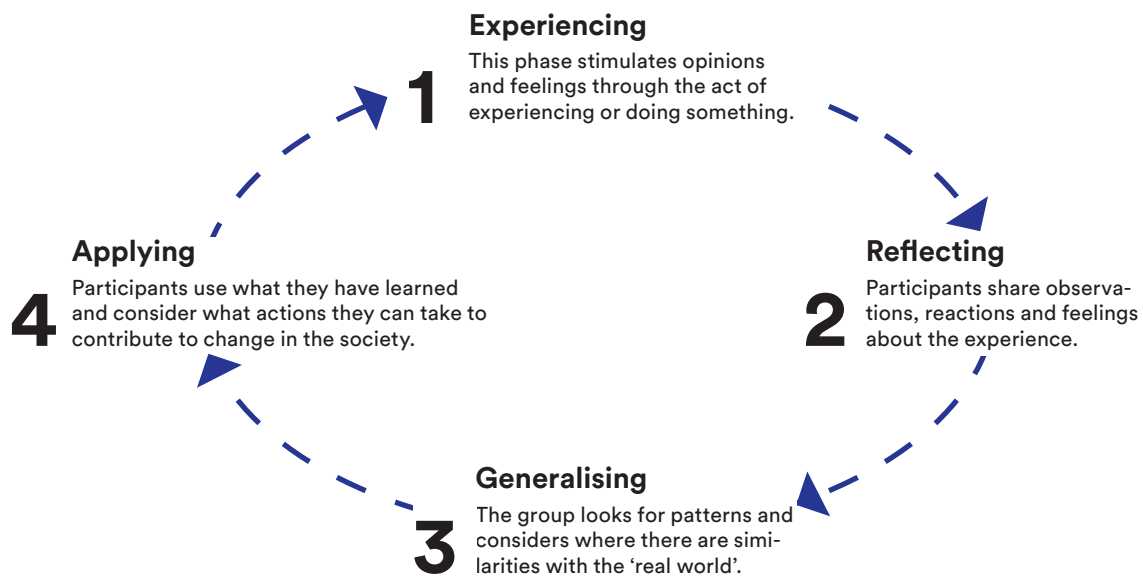
The art of facilitation does not only requires a shift in focus, but also a high degree of self-awareness. Because children and young people are powerfully influenced by the behaviour of adults in their lives, you as facilitator must take care to act according to the values you wish to convey. An activity on participation, for example, will be useless if you don't want the participants to influence your educational programme. For this reason, facilitators must recognise, acknowledge and consciously address their own privileges, prejudices and biases, even more so if they are directed against members of the group.



Don't be afraid to critically reflect upon yourself. We all have our stereotypes and privileges, but we have to be aware of them in order to change our behaviours and eradicate them.

## Experiential learning

Most activities in this publication are based on the approach of experiential learning or 'learning by doing'. While the different phases in the experiential learning cycle may not always be obvious, most activities are planned with this four-stage cycle in mind.



The logic behind this approach is that in each activity participants are consciously given the space to reflect and digest their learning, ensuring that what they have learned will be consolidated and that participants don't leave the activity confused or with negative feelings. The cycle leads the group logically to consider actions they can take; ensuring education contributes to wider social change.

## Debriefing

The most important element of any educational activity is the debriefing. It's during this part of the activity that the participants are led carefully through the three phases of reflecting, generalising and applying. If debriefing is not well thought through or is rushed, learning can be jeopardised and the activity is reduced to the level of a game, soon forgotten. Throughout this publication, we suggested debriefing questions for you to use. Take some time to review the questions carefully before each activity and also develop your own. When asking questions, take enough time so that everyone understands and has the chance to say something (without forcing anyone to speak). It helps to ask open questions that promote reflection and cannot be answered with 'yes' or 'no' to encourage deeper participation.

# SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS



In this section, we would like to give you some tips on how you can best support children to participate, ranging from useful tips for your educational process to a step-by-step guide for planning participation projects. They are mostly addressed to educators who work with a regular group of children or young people. Many of your questions might also be already answered in the previous sections, so don't forget to have a look at them, too.

## Phases of a participation project

When you are planning a participation project, you should make sure that you go through these phases together with the children or youth group that you are working with:

- 1) **Analysis:** what happens in your organisation, school or in your town? What problems do the children see? You could use the activity 'Putting rights on the map' (page 42) or 'Child rights news' (page 44) to do this analysis.
- 2) **Proposals:** What would the group like to change? Make sure you all agree on concrete objectives. Your ideal might be to change the world, but to be able to do that, you need to break the big aim up into smaller objectives that are realistic to achieve. The activity 'What if...' (page 46) can give the participants good insights into which changes will be beneficial.
- 3) **Planning and implementation:** Once you know what you want to achieve, you can start the planning and implementation process. Everyone in the group should have a role in this that they feel comfortable with. The participants might need training for specific tasks. If you plan to meet adult decision-makers during the project, you could do the activity 'Convincing adults' (page 58) to help prepare for the meeting.
- 4) **Evaluation:** Never forget to evaluate what you have been doing, as this is where a lot of learning can happen, both for the group and for you! If the implementation process is very long, you can also set medium-term goals and have evaluation moments during the implementation phase. You can find some evaluation methods on page 65.

### Sergio, youth participant in Bolivia

The participation of children in our communities is very important, whether in nonformal or formal education. It's not a reality in our schools or colleges, but we can fight to achieve it.



Our member organisation Esplais Catalans<sup>7</sup> has developed the following table that can help you as an educator to plan the project with your group. It stresses that in each phase of a project, the participatory elements of information, opinion, decision and accountability can be found, and for each phase you might need to work on specific competencies with your team of educators and the children.

	Actors	Educators	Educators and children	Children
Phases	Competencies Actions	Knowledge, skills and attitudes	Knowledge, skills and attitudes	Knowledge, skills and attitudes
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving information</li> <li>• Giving opinions</li> <li>• Taking decisions</li> <li>• Being accountable</li> </ul>			
Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving information</li> <li>• Giving opinions</li> <li>• Taking decisions</li> <li>• Being accountable</li> </ul>			
Planning and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving information</li> <li>• Giving opinions</li> <li>• Taking decisions</li> <li>• Being accountable</li> </ul>			
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving information</li> <li>• Giving opinions</li> <li>• Taking decisions</li> <li>• Being accountable</li> </ul>			

You don't always have to fill in the whole table, but it can give you a good overview of which parts are especially important for you, who will be responsible for them and where you might need resources to equip the group, yourself and your colleagues with the competencies needed to implement this phase. After filling in the table, you should be able to say whether the steps in your project can be considered as consultative, collaborative or child-led participation (see page 12).

Finally, be aware that the process is as important as the outcome. If the project does not lead to great results, but you had an interesting educational process, then this should be positively evaluated.

<sup>7</sup> Volem, podem, sabem: participem! [We Want, We Can, We Know: Let's Participate!] (2009) Rafa Cortés Arrieta and Elena Díez Villagrasa; Esplais Catalans: Barcelona. Page 120

## Tips, tips, tips

**Make participation regular.** Participation should not be an exciting one-off project, but should become something completely normal for the children and young people in your group. No matter how young your participants are, have, for example, a short evaluation round after each of your activities, asking your group how you could make activities better. If you don't plan your programme together with the children and young people, you could introduce regular times where the group can decide what they want to do.

**Talk about what's happening around you.** No matter what the topic of your group work is, at informal moments, discuss what's happening in your community and in the world with the children and young people. This will encourage them to seek information, and if you spot a topic that the group is particularly passionate about, you can include it in the official group programme to go deeper and get more involved.

**Be transparent.** Whatever you are planning with your group, you need to be transparent with the young people about the process. They need to know who is able to take a decision about their issue and what official role they are able to play. They also need to know from the start how much support they can get from you and others.

**Prepare adults for meetings with children.** When you plan a meeting between children and adult decision-makers, make sure that you prepare the adults properly. Talk with the decision-makers in advance about the setting of the meeting and also about the follow-up. How will they be able to take children's opinion into account? How will the meeting be organised? In what format can the children share their opinions? Do they have to talk in front of a big group or can it be more informal? Don't let the adults impose anything on you. You know your group and what works best for them. Make sure that all members of your group can be included, no matter their abilities, age or background.

### Connie, EVS volunteer in Germany

I've been doing a project with girls around 11 years old. The idea is to work on things they would like to change in their neighbourhood. We have had two meetings per month on Sundays with them, where we learned about children's rights, child participation, the idea of progressive participation, how they can participate, and the 'life spiral' where they could think about where they have been able to participate already. They definitely know more about children's rights and participation now, and the ladder of participation was really useful.

They would like a playground for teenagers and were looking for ways to protect and keep the playgrounds clean as at the moment they are very dirty from rubbish, cigarettes and bottles. We were supposed to participate in a network meeting of the neighbourhood committee, but in the end it wasn't possible; they meet in the mornings when the girls are at school. Some other problems I've come across in the participation project is that children do not think they will be taken seriously, they sometimes don't realise the importance that participation can have in their lives, and keeping up their motivation is challenging. I came up with some things like breakfast meetings in cafés to encourage them to come to meetings. Sometimes there isn't enough interest or motivation from the organisation and sometimes bodies like the city council forget about meetings and promises they made.



**Prepare children for meetings with adults.** The preparation with the children is of course also important. Make sure they understand who they are meeting and why they are meeting with these decision-makers. They should know what can result from this meeting and what cannot. Take enough time to prepare the topic of the meeting and inform them about the setting.

#### **Muslim, youth participant in Indonesia**

Child participation is where children give their ideas and adults help to achieve them. I believe that adults all over the world should listen to children.



#### **Sakti, youth leader in Indonesia**

I think child participation is really important. Because children have the right to participate with adults, to express their opinions and take decisions together. I want to tell the world: listen to the sound of a child.

**Not everything is interesting.** Children and young people don't want to participate in everything. There will be lots of rather dry topics in your organisation that you don't have to burden everyone with. Instead, find specific events where children can get involved in all aspects, from fundraising to running programme, for example at your annual summer camp. Then the children can see clear results of their participation, which will motivate them to stay active.

**Agree on clear goals and targets.** When you plan a project together with your group, agree on clear goals and targets with everyone from the start. Introduce SMART objectives to them: those which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. This will help the group to set realistic expectations and avoid frustrations at the end.

**Be aware of the limits of participation.** Children also need to know they cannot change everything immediately. Don't get their hopes up too high, but equally don't demoralise them. You can show them examples of how things have changed in society – usually not with a big bang, but through steady engagement for a specific cause. When you plan an activity together, let the children and young people think about the limits of their participation project, and find solutions together on how they can try to push these limits.

**Don't forget the follow-up.** Children should always be informed about the outcome of the process in which they participated and how their views were considered, no matter whether it is a positive or a negative outcome. Discuss with them why nothing happened and how they themselves can follow up the matter.

**Be prepared to be challenged.** If you are ready to let children participate, then you also should be ready to be challenged. Children will tell you how you should change, and you need to be able to also support them through ideas that at first might sound crazy to your adult ears.



## How to overcome challenges

When planning and implementing a participation project, especially in partnership with authorities, numerous challenges can occur. You can never plan participation in every detail, because what the children and young people decide and how the authorities interact with them is unpredictable. We present you here below some of the challenges we discussed during our project meetings:

### We don't know how to select child representatives from the group

Very often, it is not possible for the whole group to meet adult decision-makers or take the seat in representative spaces. So how do you find the balance between a democratic decision of the group and the selection of a person who is ready for the job? The key is information and transparency. If the group knows the tasks that the person is expected to perform, and the required commitment of a position, then they will be able to take a decision not based on popularity. Make sure you have gender balance if you can select more than one child. One difficulty in our project was that representatives who were selected by the group were then not able to attend meetings because of visa difficulties or the unwillingness of parents to let the children travel abroad. These are things that you can only partly influence, but it is extremely important that you talk to the children about this and involve everyone in the preparation for meetings – so that the whole group's view can be represented, and to have a possible back-up person.



## The parents are not supportive of the project

Adults can often be wary of their child's involvement in your group, especially in societies where political participation can be risky. Again, transparency is the most important tool to overcome this challenge. Involve the parents in the process, give them enough information and also explain how you protect the children from any possible risks. You could organise training for the parents on the same topic, so that they know what the children are doing. One of the groups in our project decided to meet at a different family home every week, so that the families could also feel ownership over the project and get to know the work of the group.

## We don't have many participants

If this is the case, your project probably does not meet the 3Cs: capacity, challenge and connection. If the participation project is too demanding for children and young people in terms of their time capacity and competencies, if they don't feel challenged by it or if they simply do not feel connected to the topic that you would like them to engage in, then it will be impossible to convince them to participate. Think about how you can make the project better fit the 3Cs. Find adequate spaces that children feel connected to and comfortable in, use creative and challenging methods, offer training that will help the young people to make a change in your project and also help them in their personal development. Use connections of people who are already in your group and can invite their friends. And most important of all, let them participate in all stages of the process, beginning with deciding what they want to achieve through participation.

## We want to work with local authorities, but don't know how to start

Before you contact your local authority with a concrete proposal, you could invite them to other activities of your organisation, so that they can see how you work and establish a personal contact. It always works better if you can contact a specific person, rather than sending a more general email or letter. When you propose your specific idea, give them the possibility to shape it together with the children, so that they feel that it is also their project. But don't forget to be precise about what you expect and need from the authorities.

### Heidi, EVS volunteer in Bolivia

For me participation means that everybody has equal rights and opportunities to speak and to be heard. Everybody should have the same chances to take part in activities, discussions and be part of decision-making processes.



# FOOTSTEPS

Age	16+
Duration	40min
Group Size	Any

## Overview

Participants reflect and evaluate how their groups or organisations encourage child participation and think about further steps to improve participation.

## Objectives

- To reflect on what participants' organisations are already doing to encourage participation
- To reflect on how participants' organisations could take further measures to improve participation and decision-making procedures
- To introduce Shier's pathway to participation

## Preparation

- Draw the outline of a footprint and make lots of copies in two different colours.
- Prepare a diagram of Shier's pathway to participation (also see page 16) on a piece of flipchart paper, either using a visual pathway or by simply writing out the questions for reflection.

## Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that you are going to do an activity to reflect on and evaluate how your organisation encourages and supports child participation.
2. Together or in small groups, go through the questions of the pathway to participation. For each question, the participants should think of concrete examples and write them in the footprints in one colour. You can encourage them by going through the different activities you have done during the year, or through all the aspects of one specific activity.
3. When you come to questions where you can't find an example, you should put an empty footprint in the second colour on the path on the floor. Once you have gone through the whole pathway, try to find ideas for the steps that are symbolised by the empty footsteps. Cooperatively identify and decide on which steps you would like to act upon, come up with concrete ideas to move forward and write these on the footprint outlines in a second colour.

## Debriefing

- How was the activity?
- Did you learn anything new about your group or organisation?
- What did we identify that we are good at when it comes to encouraging child participation?
- What did we identify that we can improve upon to encourage child participation?
- Why is child participation important?
- How can we measure whether we are improving? Will there be concrete results?
- What challenges might arise?

## Appendix - Shier's pathway to participation

### Level 1 (Young people are listened to)

- Are you ready to listen to young people?
- Do you work in a way that enables you to listen to young people?
- Is it a policy requirement that young people must be listened to?

### Level 2 (Young people are supported in expressing their views)

- Are you ready to support young people in expressing their views?
- Do you have a range of ideas and activities to help young people express their views?
- Is it a policy requirement that young people must be supported in expressing their views?

### Level 3 (Young people's views are taken into account)

- Are you ready to take young people's views into account?
- Does your decision-making process enable you to take young people's views into account?
- Is it a policy requirement that young people's views must be given weight in decision-making?

### Level 4 (Young people are involved in decision-making processes)

- Are you ready to let young people join in your decision-making processes?
- Is there a procedure that enables young people to join in decision-making processes?
- Is it a policy requirement that young people must be involved in decision-making processes?

### Level 5 (Young people share power and responsibility in decision-making)

- Are you ready to share some of your adult power with young people?
- Is there a procedure that enables young people and adults to share power and responsibility for decisions?
- Is it a policy requirement that young people and adults share power and responsibility for decisions?



## CASE STUDIES

Age	16+
Duration	90min
Group Size	Any

### Overview

A discussion activity where participants analyse different examples of child participation.

### Objectives

- To think about the pros and cons of different forms of participation
- To reflect on ways in which young people can be more involved and supported in decision-making

### Materials

- Copies of the case studies (appendix)

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that you are going to look at different scenarios of child participation to consider the pros and cons of different forms of participation.
2. If you are a larger group, divide into smaller working groups. Distribute copies of the case studies to the groups or read them together. For each case study, the group should think about the following questions. You can ask the groups to prepare posters with their results to make it more visual.
  - a. What do you like about this example?
  - b. What works well for children's participation?
  - c. What are the downsides of this example?
  - d. What hinders meaningful participation of children?
3. Come back together and go through the case studies one by one.
4. If you haven't done so in an earlier activity, you can here introduce Roger Hart's ladder of participation (see page 11). Ask the whole group to think where they would put the examples on the ladder of participation. Finally, think about what could be done to improve the level of participation in each situation. You can note down these ideas on flipchart paper.

### Debriefing

- In what places are children and young people allowed or encouraged to participate in these examples? Is it the same in your communities? Do you know other examples?
- Which examples could be implemented in your communities? Why? What could hinder you? What could help you to implement things like this?
- Should we always aim to be at the highest step of Roger Hart's ladder? Make it clear that higher does not always mean better; between steps 4 and 8 it depends on the context, the competencies of the children and adults involved and the resources and opportunities given.
- How can we encourage and support children and young people to participate and make decisions?



## Appendix: case studies

A regional youth work organisation has had a young people's committee for many years. This committee acts as a consultative body, and has representatives on the organisation's board of management. Until recently there was a part-time support worker employed to support the group and co-ordinate their work. However, due to budget cuts, the new worker has very little time to support the group in between meetings.

Some young people at a local youth club have been attending the club for several years, and are keen to become involved as leaders. They talk to one of the youth workers, who arranges for them to organize a film night on a Friday evening, and says they can have a budget of 50 Euro. She says that if they write a list of what they need she will buy it for them in time for next Friday night.

One of the projects of a town council youth initiative is a communications youth group, which produces a youth magazine. The young people involved plan and write the articles, carry out interviews, do the design and so on. The articles in the magazine can be on anything that the young people on the communications group think will interest other young people.

There is a network of young people aged 12 to 18 who work together to promote youth rights, based on those laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The network is entirely youth led, with young people completely making up the management group, which sets the agenda. Whilst adults are employed by the group, their role is to coordinate the day to day activities as determined by the management group. For legal reasons, young people must be at least 16 to be on the management group, but young people under 16 can still be active within the network, and they help to inform the decisions and directions at the grassroots level. Every young person who is interested can become involved in the network.

The town council has been told that they need to consult young people on their planned changes to the services they provide for young people. They invite two local high schools to send two or three members of their student councils, and invite the teenage children of some of the council staff. The young people attend a meeting where they are told about the planned changes and asked their opinions. After they leave the meeting they hear nothing more about it.

After a recent inspection, the government has told a local high school that they need to make more effort to involve young people in decisions that affect them. The head teachers discussed the matter at their last meeting, and have decided to put three suggestion boxes up around the school. They will encourage young people to use them by telling the students about the boxes at the next school assembly.

# SNAKES AND LADDERS

Age	15+
Duration	45min
Group Size	4–8 or play in several smaller groups

## Overview

A board game to explore the benefits of participation by introducing examples of participation and non-participation.

## Objectives

- To think about the benefits of participation
- To evaluate examples of participation and non-participation

## Materials

- Dice
- Copies of the snake and ladder cards (appendix 1)
- A copy of the board (appendix 2)

## Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that you are going to play a game of snakes and ladders.
2. Each person should roll the die once and the participant with the highest number starts. One after another, participants throw the die and move forward the number of places on the board.
3. When somebody lands at the base of a ladder, they should pick up a blue card. When somebody lands on the head of a snake, they should pick up a white card.
4. Each card has a situation on the back which the participant should read aloud to the rest of the group when they pick it up.
5. Then the whole group should take a few minutes to discuss the situation. Why is this an example of participation or non-participation? What are the benefits of the situation? Are there any problems with the situation? How could the situation be improved?
6. Keep rolling the die until somebody has reached the final square on the board.

## Debriefing

- Were there any controversial examples of either the snake or ladder cards that you would have put into the other category?
- What is the situation in your group or school? Can you think of any snake or ladder examples of participation that you have experienced?
- What would need to change in your organisation or school to have better participation possibilities?

## Tips for facilitators

- Although in the section for educators, you can also easily play this game with younger participants.
- This game is based entirely on luck, but in reality, it is up to us to promote child participation and ensure the young people in our organisations are able to give their opinion and are listened to and ensure that the power and responsibility is shared between the adults and children in the group.

## Appendix 1: snakes and ladders cards

The leaders of a youth group make up the programme for the term based on what they think the children and young people will enjoy.

In a youth group, participants tell their leader they would like to visit a zoo. The leader tells the young people that they have already arranged the programme for the term and it won't be possible to visit a zoo.

A teacher in school gives a lesson about why wearing school uniform is a good thing. Then they ask the class to vote whether they think uniform is good or not and whether the school should keep it.

A 10 year old girl is told by her parent that she has to choose a club or youth group to participate in after school.

Some children talk to their teacher about including include feminist topics in their lessons but the teacher says that students can't have any say about the curriculum.

A youth leader explains that for the international peace day, the group will do a demonstration. The leader has already prepared the banners and invited the local newspaper.

Young people are invited to a conference about youth unemployment, organised by a political party. There is a panel discussion between adult experts, and then time for questions and answers.

A group of high school children want to make a recipe book and sell it for charity. Their teacher encourages them, lets them use some of their time to make the book and asks them if they would like to sell some of the calendars in the staff room.

At a school council meeting, some young people were asked their opinion about the school uniform. The children said they didn't like the colour and would like to change it. The head teacher listened but said it would be too difficult for everyone to change their uniform.

In a youth group, participants tell their leader they would like to visit a zoo. With the help of the leader, they choose a date, find out how much it costs to go and organise how they will get there.

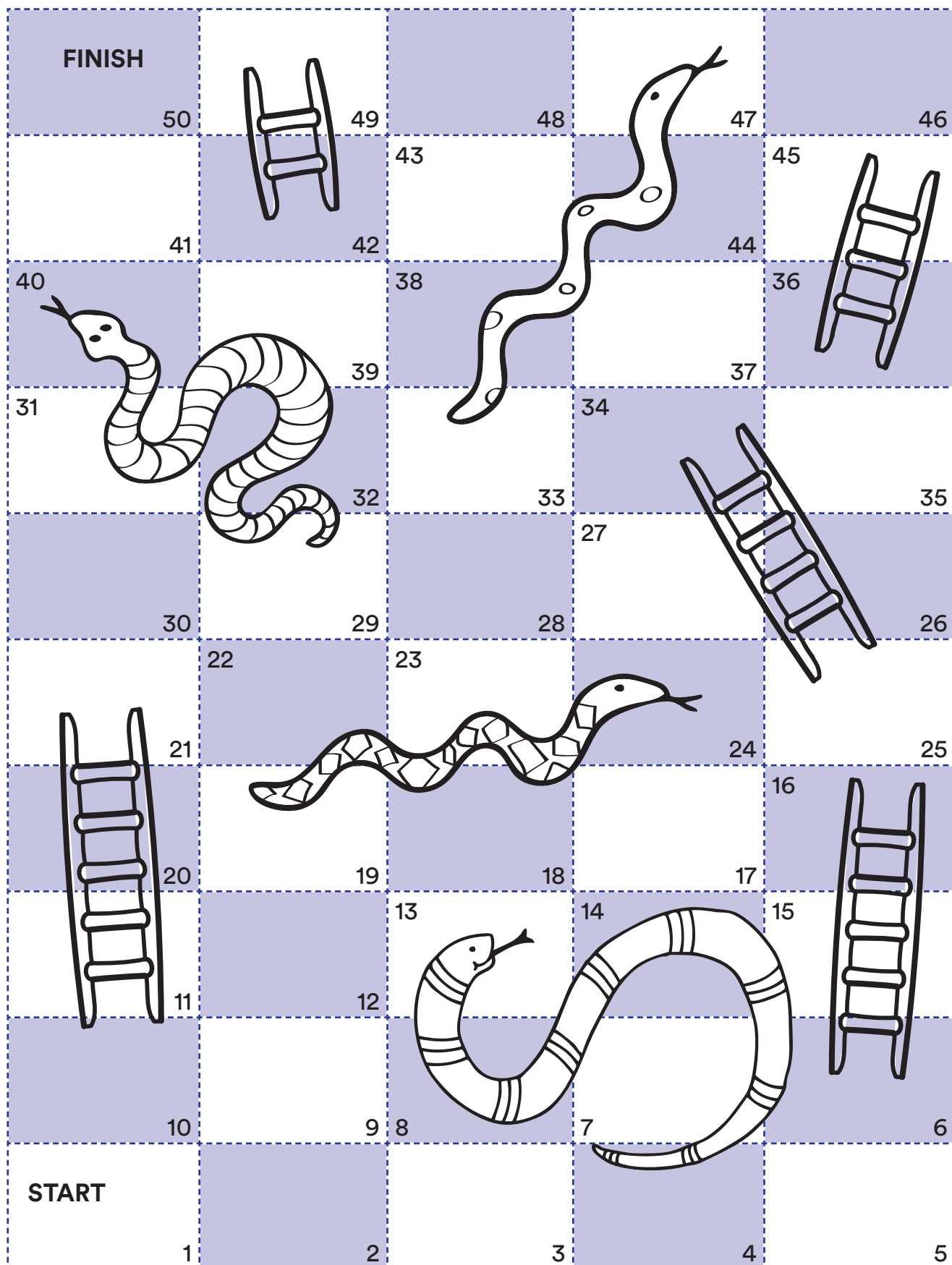
A political party invites young people to a conference about youth unemployment. They meet beforehand to discuss which methods would be interesting for the young people and explain who else will attend the conference, so that the young people can prepare their arguments together.

A 10 year old girl tells her parent she would like to join a youth group that lots of her friends go to after school. The parents take her there for the next meeting, talk to the group leader and wish her a good time.

In a youth group the leaders ask the children what they would like to do in the programme for this term. The children come up with 20 ideas and then they all vote for the 10 most popular to do.

The town council decides to set up a youth council to get the opinions of young people about matters regarding them. Each school in the town is asked for 4 representatives. Some schools hold elections to nominate representatives and in some schools, teachers ask 4 young people (2 boys and 2 girls) to go the council meetings.

## Appendix 2: snakes and ladders board



# TAKE A STAND

Age	16+
Duration	60min
Group Size	Any

## Overview

Participants have to take a stand on provocative statements about child participation.

## Objectives

- To discuss the benefits of child participation
- To reflect on the meaning of safe and meaningful participation

## Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain to the group that in this exercise they need to take a stand on different statements about child participation. They can only agree or disagree with a statement, nothing in between.
2. Agree with the group which side of the room stands for agreeing with a statement, and which one stands for opposing a statement. Once you have read out a statement, they need to go to the side of the room that stands for their answer.
3. Read out the first statement and wait until everyone has taken a side. Make sure no one stays in the middle of the room. Then you can invite some participants to explain their opinion – make sure you give both sides the chance to speak, and ask participants not to repeat what others have already said.
4. After hearing a few arguments, ask if anyone has been convinced and would like to switch sides, and let them explain why.
5. Then continue with the next statement. Make sure that discussions don't drag on for too long, and that different people share their opinion during the activity. If everyone goes to the same side, you can also invite someone to play devil's advocate and take the other side just for the sake of the argument

## Debriefing

- For which statements was it most difficult to take a position? Why?
- Are there any statements that you often hear from other people?
- Based on the discussions about the different statements, what do you think are the best arguments for children's participation?
- How would you define meaningful participation? You can take notes of these answers on a flipchart.
- What do you think are the main challenges of participation?

## Appendix: statements

- Children prefer to play, not to take responsibility.
- Children should be involved in all decisions taken in our organisation.
- Children should not be involved in every decision, because often they are not able to see the consequences of their decisions.
- Children usually take better decisions than adults.
- Children don't need adults' help to actively participate in society.
- The voting age should be lowered to 16.
- I consider it active participation when children organise a public party.
- Every city council should have a place for a child representative.



## WHO SHOULD DECIDE? (Educator version)

Age	16+
Duration	45min
Group Size	5+

### Overview

A short discussion activity to think about who can and should participate in different situations.

### Objectives

- To think about when children can start to participate
- To think about participation appropriate to evolving capacities
- To evaluate child participation in our own groups

### Materials

- Flipchart paper and markers
- 3 different coloured cards, for example, blue, red and green, with enough sets for each participant

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that you are going to discuss participation. Use a flipchart to brainstorm answers to the following questions: What is participation? What can people participate in? What do you participate in? What age can we start to participate?
2. Next tell the group that you are going to read out a series of questions and they should think about who should make a decision in each situation. If they think the child(ren) should make a decision, they hold up the blue card; if they think the youth leaders should make a decision, they hold up the green card; and if they think both should make a decision together, they hold up the red card. You can see if the result changes when you ask about children at different ages. Discourage discussion at this point and leave it until the debriefing.

### Debriefing

- How did you find responding to the questions? Which ones were easier to respond to and which ones were more difficult? Why?
- Is there a right answer or a wrong answer to the questions? Why (not)?
- What difference does the age of the child make?  
Explain the concept of 'evolving capacities'; that children require enhanced competencies for responsibility and for taking decisions. Children in diverse environments, cultures and life experiences will acquire these competencies at different ages. The contributions and decisions children can make and the capacities they possess should always be acknowledged.
- Why is it important that children take decisions?
- Are there areas where children should not take the decision?
- About which kind of questions can children first take decisions?
- Are children involved in making decisions in your organisation? Which decisions are they? Are there decisions that they take on their own?
- What are some ways that children can participate in the decision-making in your group?

### Tips for facilitators

- The questions given in the appendix are only suggestions. You should think of others or adapt these to make them relevant to your own group.
- If your group prefers to learn through movement, or you don't have coloured card available, you can conduct the activity by designating three corners of the room to signify the three possible answers.
- There is an equivalent activity for children and young people in the next section of the handbook

### Appendix – questions

Who should decide what game to play in the afternoon when you meet?  
At 3 years old? / At 6 years old? / At 11 years old?

Who should decide whether you should wear a raincoat when going out for a trip in the rain?  
At 3 years old? / At 9 years old? / At 14 years old?

Who should decide whether smoking cigarettes is allowed in the breaks of your activities?  
At 6 years old? / At 9 years old? / At 15 years old

Who should decide whether you can stay up later than midnight during summer camps?  
At 5 years old? / At 9 years old? / At 14 years old?

Who should decide whether you can use a mobile phone during a summer camp?  
At 6 years old? / At 10 years old? / At 16 years old?

Who should decide on the destination for the next weekend-trip?  
At 8 years old? / At 12 years old? / At 16 years old?

Who should decide on the transport to take for that weekend-trip?  
At 8 years old? / At 12 years old? / At 16 years old?

Who should decide on the activity programme of the organisation for the next semester?  
At 8 years old? / At 12 years old? / At 16 years old?

Who should decide on how to spend the budget of the group for the next semester?  
At 8 years old? / At 12 years old? / At 16 years old?

# THEME PARK

Age	16+
Duration	90min
Group Size	20+

## Overview

A simulation activity where participants have to build a model of an ecological theme park in small groups. Each group simulates different levels of participation and adult involvement.

## Objectives

- To simulate different models of child participation
- To understand different stages of Hart's ladder of participation
- To understand the role of adults in child participation

## Materials

- Copies of the role cards and the situation (appendix)
- Lots of craft materials to build the theme parks – old cardboard, matches, match-boxes, glue, sticky-tape and coloured paper (including pink and green, or change the role descriptions to match the colours available).
- Blindfolds

## Step-by-step instructions

1. Divide the participants into 5 groups. Ask each group to agree on two people who will play the role of an adult. Hand out the situation and role cards accordingly.
2. Also distribute materials and props, such as the blindfold, and then give participants 20 minutes to build the model.
3. After 20 minutes, come back together for a presentation of the models. Once everyone has presented, ask them to stand up and shake their body to shake off their roles. Once everyone is themselves again, debrief.

## Debriefing

- How was the exercise? How did you feel during the exercise? What made you feel that way?
- Explain what happened in your group step by step. (You can make notes of these comments.)
- What were the main differences between your groups? How did the adults behave in each of the situations?
- What do each of your situations show about the participation of children?
- What did it symbolise that some people were blind-folded or had one hand tied behind their back?
- Were some groups' experiences more participatory than others? Whose experience was most participatory? How would you order them on a scale?
- Do you think that all of these experiences involve participation? Which ones (if any) do not?
- At this point you can draw and explain Roger Hart's ladder of participation (see also page 11 for a diagram and more explanation about the ladder). See if the group came up with an order which matches the ladder model.
- Have you ever been in situations that you would place on the lowest levels of the ladder? What was it? How did you feel in the situation?
- Have you ever been in situations that you could place on the highest levels of the ladder? What was it? How did you feel in the situation?

## Tips for facilitators

- Although in the section for educators, you can also run this activity with younger participants.

### Appendix 1 – situation

Congratulations! Your organisation has been granted funds from the Foundation for Active Participation to build an ecological amusement park. Co-operation with the group of children and young people that was described in your application is a crucial aspect of your project.

According to the activity agreement, we now ask you to provide us with a model of your amusement park. You have 20 minutes to build it. To build the model you may use matches, toilet paper rolls, match-boxes, glue, sticky-tape and paper. Everything should be built on the cardboard base.

### Appendix 2 – role cards

#### Group 1

**Adults:** Your aim is to promote your brand (your colours are pink and green) as well as co-operation with McDonald's restaurant. At the site of the park you would like to build a car park for McDonald's with a mini theme park for children. In the future this theme park will become the main source of income for your organisation.

You would like to use the help of the young people in your group to help build a fence for the model, but according to your ideas. You don't inform the young people in your group about your aims but ask them to sign the list of participants as this is necessary for the grant you have been given.

**Young people:** You are young ecologists. You have heard that an organisation you got in contact with has received a grant for building an ecological amusement park. You have lots of ideas and you are willing to join the work on preparing the model of the park. You are blind-folded.

#### Group 2

**Adults:** Your aim is to promote your brand (your colours are pink and green). It is essential for you that your experts get well paid. You are also very concerned about the quality of the model of the park, so for preparing the model you employ an expert. You invite young people for consultation only in order to let them propose the name of the park. You explain to them that any other decisions have to be taken by the board of your organisation.

**Youngsters:** You are young ecologists. You have heard that an organisation you got in contact with has received a grant for building an ecological amusement park. You have lots of ideas and you are willing to join the work on preparing the model of the park. You are blind-folded.

**Group 3**

**Adults:** You want to strengthen your position in the local community and you consider the ecological amusement park project to be very useful for this. You have already consulted a few experts and you have several project proposals prepared, which include a skate-park, natural education pathways, and a hedge maze. Now you invite young people from the community to choose between these proposals. You inform them about the aims of the project as well as its time frame. After the consultation you begin to build the model of the park together, but the young people are under your direction. You are allowed to remove the blindfolds from the young people's eyes.

**Young people:** You are young ecologists. You have heard that an organisation you got in contact with has received a grant for building an ecological amusement park. You have lots of ideas and you are willing to join the work on preparing the model of the park. You are blind-folded.

**Group 4**

**Adults:** You are aware that there is an active group of young ecologists in your local community. You would like to give them the grant you have received. They will be responsible for coming up with ideas for the project, realising it and writing the financial report. Your role is only to support the young people if they ask you to. Inform them about the guidelines of the project, including the need to prepare a model of the ecological theme park.

**Youngsters:** You are young ecologists. You have heard that an organisation you got in contact with has received a grant for building an ecological amusement park. You have lots of ideas and you are willing to join the work of preparing the model of the park. During the task one of your hands is tied to your back.

**Group 5**

**Adult:** You are an engineer. You help the young people to build the amusement park, but only if they ask you for help.

**Youngsters:** You are an association of young ecologists. You knew that the Foundation for Active Participation was opening a call for a grant and you applied to build an ecological amusement park with your design idea. You can ask the support of an engineer if you need it. During the task you have one hand tied behind your back.



# DIAMOND RIGHTS

<b>Age</b>	12+
<b>Duration</b>	90min
<b>Group Size</b>	5–30

## Overview

An activity where participants rank children's rights according to their importance. Each group simulates different levels of participation and adult involvement.

## Objectives

- To reflect on the indivisibility of children's rights
- To introduce participation rights and discuss their role in achieving all children's rights

## Materials

- Copy of the list of rights for every two people (appendix)
- Blank sheets of paper for participants to copy the diamond shape. Alternatively, you can prepare the shape for everyone in advance.

## Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask the group what they know about the UN Convention on Children's Rights. Briefly explain that it is a document that has been signed by almost all countries in the world, stating rights that are specific for all people under the age of 18.
2. Ask the group to get into pairs and hand out the blank paper to every pair. Show them the diamond shape (appendix) and ask the participants to copy this shape onto their piece of paper.
3. Hand out the list of rights and ask them to read through the list. They should then arrange the rights in a diamond pattern in order of importance. They should write the most important right at the top of the diamond. Underneath it, they should write, side by side, the two next most important rights. Underneath these, they should write out the next three rights of moderate importance. The fourth row should have two rights and the fifth row one, the right that they thought was the least important. Two rights cannot be included in their diamond.
4. When they are done, they should find another pair, compare their diamond rankings and find a compromise to come up with one diamond that all four agree on.
5. Once they are done, they can meet another group of four and compare their rankings once again. If you have time, you can ask them to discuss and compromise once again. If not, just let them compare.

## Debriefing

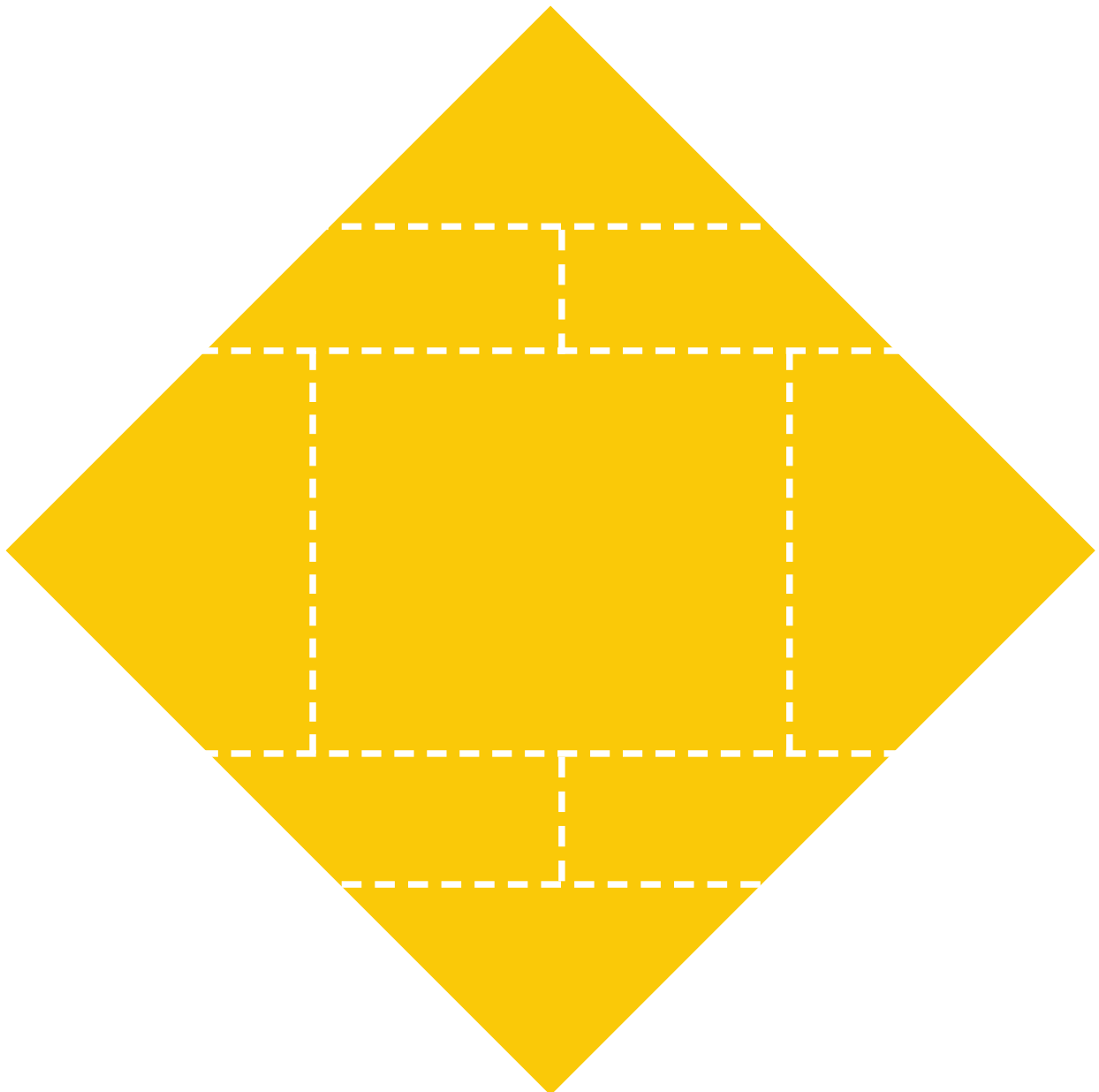
- How was it? Was it difficult to decide on the most important and least important right?
- How do the results compare? What are the similarities and differences between your rankings? Why?
- Did you include rights that are about how children can participate in society? Which ones do you think are about participation? (Articles 12, 13, 14, 15, 17 are considered to be the participation rights).
- Why do you think the participation rights are important? If you didn't put them high up, can you explain why not?
- Which rights do you think are well respected where you live, and which not? What needs to change so that they are respected? What could you do for that?
- Would you like to add any other rights that can ensure you are able to participate in society?

Point out that there is no right or wrong ranking, and the activity is supposed to be difficult. Priorities are different for different people depending on their backgrounds and experiences. Here, it might be also useful to introduce the principles of human rights: that they apply to everyone everywhere; they all have the same status so there is not one that is more important than others, violating one leads to the violation of others, and fulfilling one requires the fulfilment of other rights (universality, inalienability, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence). We need the full spectrum of human rights to access participation; all of these rights are important for us to be able to take part in structures and processes which affect us. Also read on page 7 for more information.

#### **Tips for facilitators**

- It might be useful to start with an activity introducing the concept of rights or children's rights more generally. Have a look here for activities: <http://www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/>

#### **Appendix 1: Diamond shape**



This activity is an adaptation of 'Children's Rights' of Compass: A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People (Council of Europe, 2014)

## Appendix 2: Set of rights

**Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child):** When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

**Article 13 (Freedom of expression):** Children have the right to get and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others. In exercising the right to freedom of expression, children have the responsibility to also respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others.

**Article 14 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion):** Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.

**Article 15 (Freedom of association):** Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as it does not stop other people from enjoying their rights. In exercising their rights, children have the responsibility to respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others.

**Article 17 (Access to information; mass media):** Children have the right to get information that is important to their health and well-being. Governments should encourage mass media to provide information that children can understand and to not promote materials that could harm children. Mass media should be encouraged to supply information in languages that minority and indigenous children can understand. Children should have access to children's books.

**Article 24 (Health and health services):** Children have the right to good quality health care, to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 27 (Adequate standard of living):** Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families who cannot afford to provide this, particularly with regard to food, clothing and housing.

**Article 31 (Leisure, play and culture):** Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

**Article 37 (Detention and punishment):** No one is allowed to punish children in a cruel or harmful way. Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults, should be able to keep in contact with their families, and should not be sentenced to death or life imprisonment without possibility of release.

**Article 28: (Right to education):** All children have the right to a primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this right.

**Article 23 (Children with disabilities):** Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support, as well as all the rights in the Convention, so that they can live full and independent lives.

## PUTTING RIGHTS ON THE MAP

<b>Age</b>	8+
<b>Duration</b>	90min
<b>Group Size</b>	4–20

### Overview

Participants cooperate to create a map of their local community and identify the places in their neighbourhood associated with different children's rights and especially the right to participation.

### Objectives

- To develop familiarity with the UNCRC
- To think about where participation can happen in children's local community
- To evaluate the climate of children's rights in the community

### Preparation

For younger children it might be useful to prepare a map outline of your local neighbourhood.

### Materials

- Large sheets of paper
- Art supplies
- Copies of the list of rights (use the one of the previous activity 'Diamond rights' or make your own, selecting from the child-friendly version of the UNCRC in the back of the book.)

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Ask participants to shout out important places in their local neighbourhood, (parks, town hall, schools, places of worship, hospitals, fire station, police station, grocery stores, cinema, pharmacy, library etc).
2. Then divide participants into smaller groups of 4-5 and distribute the paper and art supplies. Ask the groups to work together to draw a map of their neighbourhood, marking their own homes and the places you have just thought about together.
3. When the maps are complete, you can come back together as a big group and distribute copies of the list of rights or read them together. Explain that they, together with other rights, form the United Nations Conventions of Children's Rights (you can have a look in the introduction part for more information about the UNCRC). Pick out the participation rights and discuss what they mean and why they are important.
4. Then ask the participants to return to their smaller groups and think about which of the children's rights they associate with the different places on the map. In which places are children able to participate in their community and express their opinions and ideas? For example, a place of worship might be associated with freedom of thought, conscience and religion; a school with the right to education; the post office with the right to privacy and self-expression; the library with the right to information. As they identify these rights, they should write the article numbers next to each relevant place on the maps.
5. When everyone has finished, they can present their maps to the other groups.

## Debriefing

- Were you surprised to discover children's rights in our neighbourhood?
- Did your map and ideas differ from other groups?
- Did any parts of your map have more than one right connected? Why?
- Did any parts of your map have few or no rights? Why?
- Are there any rights which are especially prominent in your neighbourhood or community?
- Are there any rights that no group included on their map?
- Which places did you associate with the participation rights? How can you participate there?
- In which places, where you cannot participate yet, do you think the participation rights should be better respected? Why?
- Are there any places in the community where people take action to protect children's rights or prevent violations from occurring? (What about the role of parents, other family members, teachers, social workers, lawyers, police. What is their role in promoting and protecting child participation?)
- How is the right to participation linked to other rights? The right to participation is relevant to the exercise of all other rights, within the family, the school and the larger community context.

## Tips for facilitators

- The activity assumes the participants are already somewhat familiar with the concept of rights and helps them to put that conceptual learning into a well-known context. However, you might still need to discuss with them what rights actually are.
- You can use your maps to take a walk around the neighbourhood and observe the children's rights in action.
- You could invite a neighbourhood social worker, long-time resident or local activist to talk to the group about how they see the neighbourhood, how it is changing and what needs to be done to make it a better place to live.
- The activity is an ideal starting point to discuss what the participants would like to change in their community.



## CHILD RIGHTS NEWS

<b>Age</b>	10+
<b>Duration</b>	120–150min
<b>Group Size</b>	8–24

### Overview

Participants become reporters and document children's rights conditions in their community.

### Objectives

- To develop awareness of children's rights in everyday life
- To understand how rights can be both violated and defended
- To develop cooperative skills for active participation to defend rights and end violations

### Materials

- Copies of the child-friendly UNCRC for each team (see page 67). Underline rights that are relevant to your group.
- One camera for each group
- Note pads and pens
- Maps of the community for each group
- Printer or projector

### Step-by-step instructions.

1. As a group, discuss what newspapers or news shows the participants read, watch or know about. Explain that they are going to be news reporters for the day and will investigate children's rights where you live.
2. Ask participants what they know about children's rights. Show them the child-friendly copies of the UNCRC with relevant rights underlined and discuss their meaning as a group.
3. Explain to the participants that they are going to investigate children's rights in the community. Split into small groups and give each a camera, notepad and pens. Tell them that they should go around their local neighbourhood and take photos of examples of children's rights in action, either showing where they are promoted and respected, or where children's rights are violated. They can also take photos of things that they would like to change.
4. Before they go out, they should think about which right(s) they want to focus on. Give the groups some time to plan and think about where they will go to collect evidence. Explain that they can take it in turns but that everyone should take at least one photo and everyone should take notes for at least one photo, describing how it is linked to a specific right. Set a time for the groups to return before they leave.
5. When the groups return, explain that they are going to present their findings and ideas in a news report. They can perform a TV news show or make a newspaper report. It should include a title, captions for each picture explaining where it was taken, which rights it shows (or shows the lack of) and what they would like to change about their environment from that photo.

## Debriefing

- How did you like being a reporter?
- Was it difficult to capture the situation in a photograph and write captions?
- Did you find anything surprising about your community or see anything in a new way?
- What did you find out about children's rights in your community?
- Did you see any positive examples of children's rights being protected and enjoyed in your community?
- Did you see any negative examples of children's rights being violated or not encouraged?
- Are there any photos where you wrote down some concrete suggestions for how things could be improved?
- The UNCRC guarantees children the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them. Do you use this right? If yes, how? How could you use it more effectively? Can we use the results of this activity to express our views to the community?

## Tips for facilitators

- Rather than taking the entire UNCRC document, the activity might be easier if you select a few articles and discuss them as a group before asking the participants to go out and report on them.
- The activity 'Putting rights on the map' (p ) also surveys how rights are realised in the community.
- The activity can be easily adapted so that it focuses only on child participation, or other issues such as violence, gender equality, disability rights, play and leisure.
- You should emphasise that reporting is not just about finding violations but also evaluating what is already good about where you live.
- Make sure that the participants all know how to use the camera. If you don't have enough cameras for all groups, you could also ask them to draw the places, or to interview people they meet at the different places. If you have more time and enough resources, you could also do videos and edit them together.

## WHAT IF...?

<b>Age</b>	8+
<b>Duration</b>	60min
<b>Group Size</b>	8–20

### Overview

Participants imagine the consequences that could arise from particular situations, using drama techniques to think in particular about what would happen if children took all decisions.

### Objectives

- To think about what impact child participation in decision-making could have
- To consider the impact of rights in our daily life

### Materials

- Situation cards (appendix 1)
- Paper and pens
- Copies of effects cascade for each group of 3 or 4 (appendix 2)

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Introduce the activity, explaining that everybody tries to imagine ‘What if...’. Sometimes we imagine good situations (e.g. What if there were no more wars?) and sometimes bad situations (e.g. What if a war occurred in my country?). In this activity they will be given a situation and asked to consider what effects it might have on people’s lives.
2. Introduce the effects cascade (appendix) and illustrate how one situation can lead to a chain of events. Use a simple, familiar situation (e.g. What if you were not allowed to go to school? > Not learning to read > Not being able to follow written instructions, understand a map, write a letter, use the computer).
3. Divide the children into small groups and give each group a situation and a copy of the effects cascade, and pens. Ask them to work together to complete it.
4. When the children have completed the effects cascade, explain that they should now prepare one or a series of ‘freeze frames’ (a human statue, showing something with their bodies) which shows what effects that they have imagined could arise from the situation. Give the children time to prepare their presentations.
5. Ask each group in turn to read out their situations and act out their presentation.
6. After each presentation ask for questions and comments, asking questions such as these:
  - What did the group show?
  - Do you think the effects described are realistic?
  - Can you think of other effects that this situation might have?

### Debriefing

- How do you feel about this activity?
- Was it easy to imagine the ‘what if...?’ situations?
- Do you think these situations should exist in the world? Why? Why not?
- Do you think children or adults are better in taking decisions? Explain.
- Can you think of any examples in these situations where children’s rights are promoted? What about where they are violated?
- When one right is promoted, how does that affect other rights? Can you think of any examples from the presentations?

- What about if one right is violated? How does that affect other rights?
- When children can participate and take decisions, do you think rights can be better respected? Why (not)?

### **Tips for facilitators**

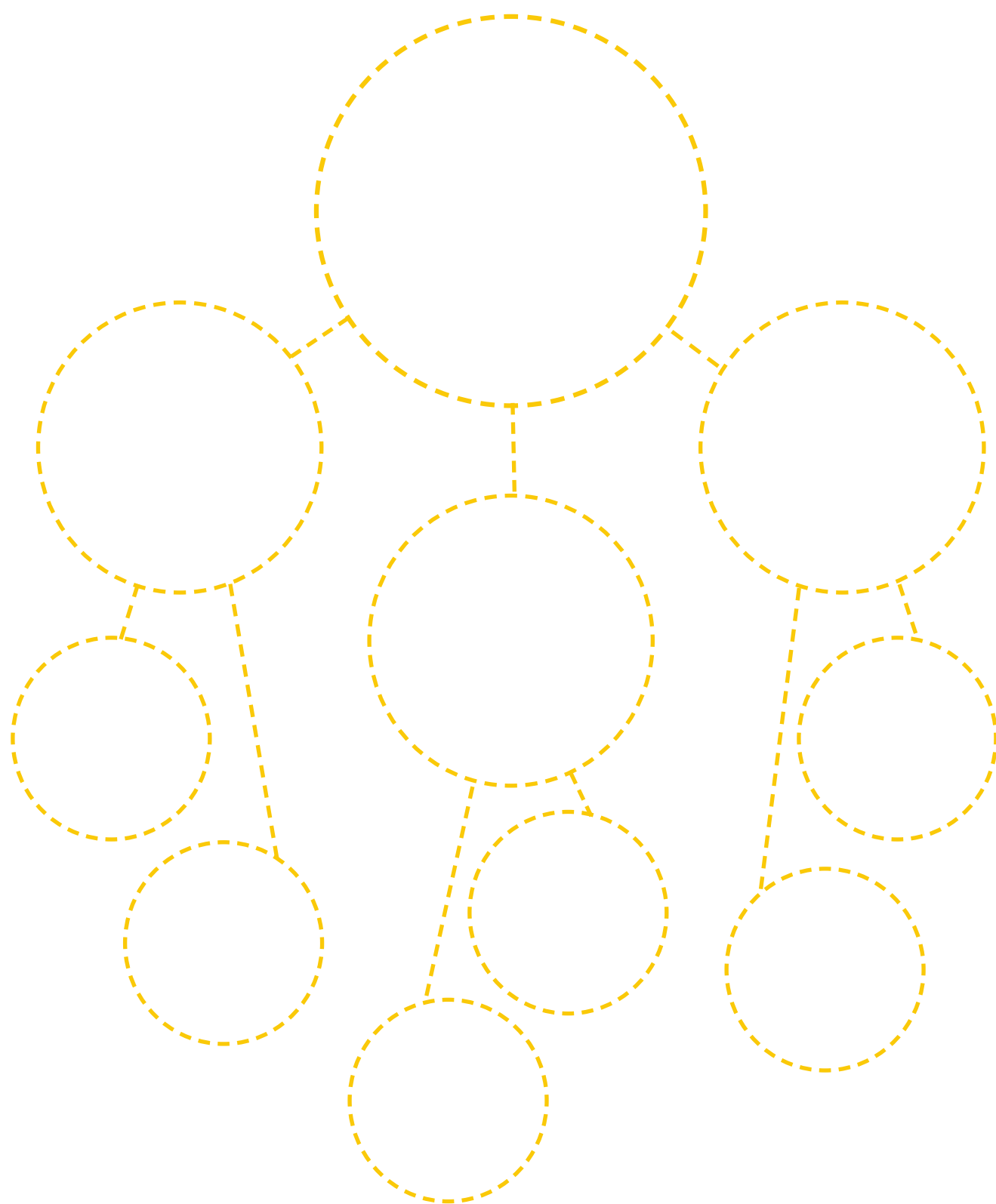
- The effectiveness of the activity greatly depends on the kind of situations you offer. Adapt or develop new situations that relate to the participants' experiences and concerns. Try to include both positive and negative situations.

### **Appendix 1 – ‘What if...?’ scenarios**

What immediate effects would these things have? What about in future years?

- What if all schools and universities were closed? From tomorrow onwards, all children can do anything they want instead of going to school.
- What if children took all decisions about what happened in school?
- What if there was a child mayor working alongside the adult mayor in your town?
- What if children were not allowed to go to clubs and organisations anymore?
- What if it were forbidden to play on the street, in parks, schools or anywhere public?
- What if there were a youth council to advise politicians on matters relating to young people? Every school elects two representatives to serve on this council.
- What if the government decides that children with disabilities should be encouraged to participate in the community as much as possible? Barriers to participation should be removed, and the children provided with whatever assistance they may need, such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, books in Braille and computers. As far as possible, children with disabilities should be in school with all other children.
- What if every child who failed one test was removed from school? Only children who never fail a test are allowed to continue studying.

Appendix 2 – Effects cascade





# PARTICIPATION BAROMETER

<b>Age</b>	10+
<b>Duration</b>	60min
<b>Group Size</b>	5+

## Overview

Participants think about and prioritise decision-making possibilities in their communities.

## Objectives

- To think of concrete ideas for what groups would like to change if they could take decisions in their schools or communities
- To analyse the situation of participation rights in their community

## Step-by-step instructions

1. In small groups, ask participants to draw a map of your community that includes your organisation and other places relevant to children and your organisation.
2. Then ask them to draw different sized dots next to each place according to how much children and young people can participate in decisions taken in these places.
3. Come back together and compare the dots on the map. Briefly discuss: Where is it possible for children and young people to participate? Where not? Where would they like to participate? Discuss how it is not possible to be involved in every single decision taken in your school or community but it is important to know our priorities when asking for more participation possibilities.
4. Distribute copies of the 'participation barometer' questionnaire (appendix) and explain that individually, they should decide where on the scale of 'very important' to 'not important at all' each of the examples should go.
5. When everyone has completed their individual barometer, get back into small groups and compare results. Which topics did people place as being 'most important'? Then come back together for the debriefing.

## Debriefing

- Are there any topics that everyone in your small group found very important or not important at all? Which ones?
- Were there any topics that you all marked differently? Why?
- Which topics were the most important for you?
- Do you think you are able to take these decisions? What do you need to be able to participate in these issues?
- Where are these things decided? Did you mark them on the maps? How big is the dot you gave them?
- What is the situation of participation rights in your community? How could it be improved?

## Tips for facilitators

- You can skip the first two steps if you start with the activity 'Putting rights on the map' (page 42).
- The appendix includes an example list of participation topics but you can add to this and think of topics relevant to your group's situation

## Appendix: Participation barometer

### Which installations to put in a new playground



### How money is divided within the budget for youth (e.g. between the youth club, a summer festival, home-work help, a youth exchange...)



### The general town budget



### The general school budget



### What should be taught in history lessons



### How many history lessons students should have per week



### Which teachers to recruit in your school



### Where a new bus route should go in your town



### Police controls on the streets in your town



### Rules about water pollution in your town



### What sort of food should be served in the school cafeteria



### Who can vote in the general local elections



### Which activities should be run in the youth club



### What to do against homophobia in your town



## CHANGE THE SITUATION

<b>Age</b>	8+
<b>Duration</b>	90min
<b>Group Size</b>	5–20

### Overview

A drama activity using forum theatre techniques where participants act out how they would change scenarios they are not happy with.

### Objectives

- To think about things participants would like to change in their schools and communities
- To think about how young people can participate and make a change in society
- To evaluate problems with different forms of participation

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that you are going to look at different ways people can respond to situations they would like to change. Read out the problems (appendix) and ask for suggestions of what could be done. You can write these down on flipchart paper and discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
2. Next ask the participants to get into smaller groups and choose one of the examples you have already discussed or another situation they can think of that they would like to change. Give the groups some time to practise their scenario before they perform but remind them that the forum theatre method means that the audience can intervene at any point and they will need to improvise the changes that are suggested.
3. During the performance, members of the audience should be encouraged to participate. They can pause the scene at any moment by clapping, and then shout out proposals or solutions. They can also come on stage after pausing the scene, tap on one of the actor's shoulders and replace them in the scene. The actors then have to improvise and act out the changes that are suggested. If there are multiple suggestions made, the actors can show each of the alternatives in turn.
4. Explain that there can be no magic solutions and the perpetrator cannot suddenly change into a nice person.
5. After each scene, briefly discuss what happened:
  - Which proposal for change do you like most?
  - Do you think it is realistic?
  - What difficulties are there with this change?

### Debriefing

- How was the activity?
- Why did you choose this particular scene?
- How did it feel to be able to change the outcomes of the scenarios on stage?
- Was it difficult to think of actions for any of the scenes? Which ones and why?
- Did the forum theatre exercise change the situation in the way you hoped?
- Can you relate to any of the scenes? Has anything happened in your life that is similar to any of the scenes? Was the outcome the same?
- What other outcomes could there have been?
- If the scenario had happened in real life, would you have been able to change the situation in the same way?
- Why is it important that you change situations you are unhappy about?

### Tips for facilitators

- The suggested problems are only suggestions. You should write your own scenarios that your group can relate to.
- Rather than using the forum theatre method, you can also ask the groups to role play the problem and their response, performing it to other participants and asking them afterwards for alternative responses.
- If there is a situation which really enthuses the group, you could discuss ways how you can redress the problem in real life together. Whether that is a 'no bullying' campaign, petition, initiative, or awareness exhibition.
- Forum theatre was developed by Augusto Boal in his book 'Theatre of the Oppressed' (1979). It is an interactive theatre technique often used with socially excluded or disempowered groups to promote social and political change.

### Appendix – problems

You notice that one of your friends is teasing and making fun of younger children on a summer camp in your organisation. Your friend has also started taking things from them. What can you do?

A new boy in your class is a refugee. Your classmates often say racist things to him, make fun of his accent and tell him to go back home. What can you do?

In your history lessons, you only learn about male historical figures but you want to learn about women in history as well. What can you do?

Your school cafeteria only offers normal and vegetarian food but you and some other people in your class have recently become vegan. You want to eat in the cafeteria like everybody else but you won't always be able to. What can you do?

One of your classmates is seeking asylum in your country but the government is saying they and their family need to be sent back to the country they have fled. You don't think this is fair. Your classmate has made friends here and is getting an education that they wouldn't get if they returned home at the moment. What can you do?

The toilets in your school are often dirty and you don't always feel safe in there alone. What can you do?



## FORMS OF CHILD PARTICIPATION

<b>Age</b>	12+
<b>Duration</b>	60min
<b>Group Size</b>	10–30

### Overview

An activity examining examples of child participation through drama and evaluating where they would be placed on the ladder of participation.

### Objectives

- To introduce the ladder of participation
- To reflect on different forms of child participation

### Materials

- Copies of situation cards (appendix)
- Poster or moderation cards presenting the ladder of participation (see page 11)

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Split participants into small groups of about five and give each one situation card. Ask the participants to discuss in their groups whether this situation is something they would like to have? Does it already exist where they live? Do they think it is useful?
2. Explain to the participants that they need to prepare a short sketch showing their situation.
3. When all the groups are ready, they should perform their sketches to the others. After each sketch, ask the whole group:
  - Is this something you think would be good for your community?
  - What do you think works well/ doesn't work well with this form of participation?
4. Ask participants to rank the examples, from 'non-participation' to 'very participative'. Then explain the ladder of participation to them with the help of a poster or moderation cards. Then, together, try to put the different examples onto the ladder of participation. Ask the participants to get back into their groups and think about how the situation could be improved. How could it be moved higher up the ladder of participation? What would make you want to participate in this way? They should also present the improved version as a play.

### Debriefing

- What did you think of the situations?
- Which situation do you think encourages child participation in the best way?
- What are the results of meaningful child participation?

## Appendix: Situation cards

Whenever the town council has to decide anything that concerns children, they make an online survey on a Facebook page to ask for children's opinions. The results of the survey are then discussed in the town council meeting. After the decision has been taken by the council, they publish the results on the Facebook page.

In a local council with 20 councillors, one seat is reserved for a young person aged between 13 and 18. The young person is elected by all school students of the town. The person has the same voting rights in the council as everyone else.

The school student council is elected by all students in the school. The school director meets with them every few weeks and they have 30 minutes to tell the director what they have done or what they need.

The children from a youth organisation are angry that refugees are treated so badly in their town. They organise a demonstration against racism and collect toys for the refugee children.

There's a lack of meeting spaces for young people in the town. A youth group has the idea to open a youth house in an abandoned building. They meet some town councillors to present their idea. The town council likes their idea and decides to invest in the renovation and running of the building. With the youth group they discuss together how to renovate it and how the group can manage it with someone from the local council afterwards.

The local council wants to raise awareness of child poverty at a public event. They invite the local media, and feel that the interest will be highest if children deliver the message about child poverty. Therefore they invite all first-graders from the primary school, give them T-shirts saying "No to child poverty!" and let them sit in the front row of the event.

The local council organises a panel debate about climate change. To speak on the panel, they invite two climate change researchers, the mayor, a representative of an environmental organisation, someone from the local opposition party and a 14-year old student from the local high school.

A teacher thinks that the refugee children in the town need to have more opportunities to play. She arranges with the refugee centre that her class will come visit the centre once a week to do games with the children there and also collect toys and materials. She then introduces the topic of flight and migration in her class and explains why they will go to the refugee centre every week.

## WHO SHOULD DECIDE?

<b>Age</b>	8+
<b>Duration</b>	45min
<b>Group Size</b>	5+

### Overview

A short discussion activity to think about who can and should participate in different situations.

### Objectives

- To think about at what age children can start to participate
- To think about participation appropriate to evolving capacities

### Materials

- Flipchart paper and markers
- 3 different coloured cards, for example, blue, red and green, with enough sets for each participant

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Explain that you are going to discuss where children can take decisions. Use a flipchart to briefly brainstorm answers to the following questions: What can you decide in your family or in school? From what age do you think children should decide things on their own?
2. Next tell the group that you are going to read out a series of questions and they should think about who should make a decision in each situation. If you think the child(ren) should make a decision, hold up the blue card; if you think the youth leaders should make a decision, hold up the green card; and if you think both should make a decision together, hold up the red card. You can briefly ask for opinions after every question.

### Debriefing

- How did you like this activity?
- Was it difficult to respond to some of the questions? Why?
- Which ones were easier to respond to and which ones were more difficult? Why?
- Why did some people have different answers?
- Is there a right answer or a wrong answer to the questions?
- Does the age of children make a difference?
- What other things, apart from age, should be taken into account when children are going to participate?
- Which of these things can you decide on in your organisation? Which do you want to decide on but can't? Why not?
- Why do you think it is important that children take decisions?

### Tips for facilitators

- The questions given in the appendix are only suggestions. You should think of others or adapt these to make them relevant to your own group.
- If your group prefers to learn through movement, or you don't have coloured cards available, you can conduct the activity by designating three corners of the room to signify the three possible answers.
- There is an equivalent activity for educators in the previous section of the handbook. Why not run both activities and compare the results?

### Appendix: questions

- Who should decide what game to play in the afternoon when you meet?  
At 3 years old? / At 6 years old? / At 11 years old?
- Who should decide whether you should wear a raincoat when going out for a trip in the rain?  
At 3 years old? / At 9 years old? / At 14 years old?
- Who should decide whether you can smoke cigarettes in the breaks of your activities?  
At 6 years old? / At 9 years old? / At 15 years old?
- Who should decide whether you can stay up until later than midnight during summer camps?  
At 5 years old? / At 9 years old? / At 14 years old?
- Who should decide whether you can use a mobile phone during a summer camp?  
At 6 years old? / At 10 years old? / At 16 years old?
- Who should decide on the destination for the centre next weekend-trip?  
At 8 years old? / At 12 years old? / At 16 years old?
- Who should decide on the transport to take for that weekend-trip?  
At 8 years old? / At 12 years old? / At 16 years old?
- Who should decide on the activity programme of the organisation for the next year?  
At 8 years old? / At 12 years old? / At 16 years old?
- Who should decide on how to spend the budget of the group for the next year?  
At 8 years old? / At 12 years old? / At 16 years old?

## CONVINCING ADULTS

<b>Age</b>	10+
<b>Duration</b>	90min
<b>Group Size</b>	10+

### Overview

A fishbowl discussion to practice the group's argumentation skills, with a warm-up drama exercise.

### Objectives

- To gain confidence in talking to decision-makers
- To practice the group's arguments for a specific cause

### Preparation

- Think about statements that you could discuss in the fishbowl discussion. You can either choose from the examples below, or find your own that are more connected to your group's context.

### Step-by-step instructions

1. Divide the group into two. One half are village people, and the other half are salespeople coming to the market in the village.
2. Take the sales group outside the room, and explain that when the market starts, they will enter the room and need to convince the village people to buy butter. Butter is the only product they have, and they really want the village people to buy it, so they need to find convincing arguments.
3. Go back into the room and ask the village people to agree on three problems that their village is facing. Their main concern is to solve these problems.
4. Then announce the start of the market and let the sales group inside the room. Ask everyone to walk around and start conversations with the others.
5. After five to ten minutes, come together in a circle and ask some participants to share their opinions: did they manage to get what they wanted? Then explain that this was just the warm-up exercise to get ready to convince each other of more realistic things.
6. Explain that you will remain in the two groups, but now the village people will be themselves – children or young people from their group - and the salespeople will be adults. Sit in a circle and put four chairs into the middle (for small groups two chairs are enough). Two chairs are reserved for adults, and two chairs are reserved for the children/young people.
7. Ask for two volunteers from each group to sit on the chairs in the middle. They will get a statement that they should discuss – the children share their personal opinions, and the adult group has to play adult decision-makers. They should try to convince each other of their arguments. The other group members should listen carefully, and when they have more arguments, they can come to the middle, tap on the shoulder of their colleagues and replace them on their chair. No one should be in the middle of the circle for more than 2 or 3 minutes.
8. Once there are no new arguments on a statement, you can discuss another one.

### **Debriefing**

- How did you like the discussions?
- Did you feel it was easy to find enough arguments for your side?
- Have you been convinced by some of the arguments of the other group?
- What arguments or way of talking worked best?
- Why can discussions between adults and children sometimes be difficult?
- What will help you to prepare for meetings with adults?

### **Tips for facilitators**

- You can also use other improvisation exercises as a warm-up for your group, for example a shared story-telling exercise or this excuses exercise: A conflict is posed. Two people are on stage and have to play it out. A third person will enter the scene (playing a new character) when the facilitator claps their hands. One of the two first characters will have to find an excuse to leave the stage so that the scene continues with only 2 characters. The process will be repeated until all participants have gone through. Everyone needs to come up with a new excuse.
- If your group likes drama, you could also play the discussion between children and adults out instead of sitting on chairs.

### **Possible statements to discuss in the fishbowl discussion**

- Children and young people should participate in all questions regarding school.
- Children and young people should have a place in the city where they can organise and do whatever they want, without adults.
- Children and young people should decide together with adults how money in the youth sector is spent.
- Public transport in our town should be free of charge.
- There should be no more physics classes in school.



# TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

<b>Age</b>	12+
<b>Duration</b>	120–150min
<b>Group Size</b>	15–40

## Overview

A simulation of different methods of participation to influence a decision about how to spend money in the community, culminating in a town council meeting where a vote is taken.

## Objectives

- To simulate different methods of participation and getting your voice heard
- To experience an example of democratic participation and citizenship
- To think about the importance of different fundamental rights

## Materials

- Copies of the role cards, the situation and rules of debate (appendix)
- Art supplies to make campaign materials – cardboard and markers etc.
- Clock or watch
- Name badges for different groups that will be represented at the meeting
- Small bell for the mayor
- A box for secret voting
- Paper and pens

## Preparation

- Photocopy the role cards, situation and rules of debate
- Prepare some small pieces of paper to be ballots
- Ensure you have space set out for the town council meeting and separate spaces for the different groups so that they can meet others and discuss their position beforehand.

## Step-by-step instructions

1. Read out the description of the situation.
2. Show participants the list of different roles and ask everyone to select one for themselves. Alternatively, you can delegate roles; it is important that there is a fairly equal spread among the groups. Hand out the role cards and indicate where people can meet up before to discuss their position, and where the town council meeting will take place later on.
3. Explain the rules of debate that will take place and then give the participants time before the council meeting starts for them to meet other groups and prepare what they want to say and how they want to vote. Explain that the town council meeting will last 40 minutes and that there may not be a lot of time for long speeches because of the number of people attending so they should prepare just a couple of points they would like to make. Encourage groups to think about other ways they can make their voice heard and influence people. They can use the art supplies available to make campaign material and organise a mini-protest. Make sure that the groups interact before the council meeting, perhaps making it compulsory to speak to at least one other group before the start of the meeting.
4. Use their preparation time to set up the space for the Council Meeting. Ideally people should sit in a semi-circle or horseshoe shape with the Mayor at the front in a slightly elevated position. Groups should be able to sit together with their name tags on the tables in front of them.

5. When the 40 minutes are up (you should set a timer), ask the Mayor to call the citizens for the Council meeting. They should remind the citizens of the rules of debate and give a short speech to introduce the meeting, explaining the situation again.
6. At the end of the meeting, the Mayor should call for a vote. When the votes have been counted and the result declared, you should announce the end of the activity and invite people to bring their chairs into a circle for debriefing. Before you begin the debriefing, ask everyone to shake their bodies or greet everybody by their real names to 'shake off' the roles in the simulation.

### Debriefing

- What was the result of the vote? Did it reflect the position of the person you were playing? Did it surprise you?
- How easy was it to identify with your role? Why, or why not?
- How much influence do you think you (in your role) had on the result? Was this fair?
- How did you try to get your opinion across? Do you think it worked?
- What happened in the period of time before the council meeting? How did you use it to try and get your opinion across?
- Did the interaction with other people or groups change your perspective? Did it alter your approach or attitude to the situation? Did anyone change sides as a result?
- What do you think about these different types of participation? Was the council meeting the best way to influence the decision that was made? Or did your campaigns and protests beforehand made a bigger difference?
- What was the role of the town councillors? Did they influence the decisions at all?
- What was the role of the young people? Could you influence the decisions?
- What is good about making decisions in a town council meeting like this one?
- Can you see any problems with this method of taking decisions?
- How would you feel if this case arose in your town? What would you do? Has this activity altered your attitude at all?
- Why is it important that we participate in democratic processes?
- Read out Articles 12 and 13 of the UNCRC on page 67/68 ('respect for the views of the child' and 'freedom of expression'). What do you think of these rights? How do they relate to the simulation of the Town Council meeting? Do you think these rights are observed in our own community?

### Tips for facilitators

- When deciding on roles, it is important to get an equal distribution of people so that you don't end up with a situation where only one person is fighting their corner. You can also hand out the roles at random, but then you run the risk that for example the mayor is someone who does not feel comfortable speaking in public.
- If people have other ideas about how the money should be spent, then this is also okay. The participants should be encouraged to engage in the activity and if this means changing the stance of the groups then you should be flexible about this.

### Appendix 1 – Situation

You live in Falconville, which has about 80,000 citizens. The Town Council has recently announced that it has been given 10,000 Falcon Dollars by a rich beneficiary who used to live in the town. She hasn't specified exactly what the money should be spent on, only that it should be something that will benefit the community.

In the last 50 years the town has grown a lot to become more diverse but also more crowded. Falconville has seen an economic boost thanks to the arrival of a large number of immigrant families, many from Buddhist countries. This has meant that people from all over the surrounding area come to Falconville to work. But this has also led to more pollution and traffic in the town. And in amongst all this, the young people in the town are frustrated since many of the youth centres in Falconville have been closed down due to lack of funding.

So the town is divided about how the money could best be spent. Some people say it is only fair for a temple to be built with the money because there is currently no place for the large Buddhist community to worship. Others say that the money should be spent on developing cycle paths in the town to encourage people to cycle to work, reducing levels of pollution and making it safer for everyone. Finally, there are people who argue that the money should be spent on Falconville's young citizens by reopening the youth centres that were closed down a few years ago.

There has been a town council meeting scheduled which has been opened to civil society groups to present their ideas and debate which project the money would be best spent on. Town councillors each take a different stance and will support different groups but are ultimately still to make up their mind about how they will vote. So all three groups are now beginning campaigns to promote their ideas about how the money would best be spent.

### Appendix 2 – Rules of debate

- The meeting will be chaired by the Mayor.
- If you wish to speak, you should raise your hand and obtain permission from the Mayor.
- Comments should be brief, not long speeches, and should not exceed 2 minutes.
- The meeting will close after 40 minutes, with a vote on what should be done with the money.
- Anyone attending the meeting is entitled to speak in the debate and to vote at the end.

## Appendix 3 – Role cards

### **The mayor**

You are the Chair of the council meeting and it will be your role once the meeting starts, to welcome participants and remind them of the rules of debate. During the meeting you should try to give everyone the opportunity to speak – and should not allow anyone to speak for too long! You are very worried about making sure that the money is spent according to the wishes of the rich benefactor so you should remind the town councillors and other citizens about the importance of her requests. You also do not want the council meeting to go on for too long or create any bad publicity about the town because of conflicts.

### **Town council member (Diversity Party)**

You represent the Diversity Party on the town council. You believe that the large proportion of people from different parts of the world has added to the culture, interest and economy of Falconville. You think it is therefore unfair that the town has deprived many of these people of the opportunity to practise their religion for so long. It is a fundamental right that has been denied for the town's ever-growing Buddhist population for too long. You will argue that the money should be spent on building a temple and will work with the Falconville Buddhist Association to campaign for this, but you need to talk to the citizens you represent to see what they think as well.

### **Town council member (Environmental Party)**

You represent the Environmental Party on the town council. You can see the benefits that the diverse population has brought to Falconville but also recognise the environmental problem of poor air quality because of the amount of traffic from people coming into the town by car. You think that developing cycle paths would be the best long-term investment for the town as it would reduce emissions and fewer cars on the road would make it a safer place. You plan to work with the Falconville Green Association to campaign for cycle paths but you should also talk to other citizens you represent to see what they think as well.

### **Member of Falconville Buddhist Association**

You have been asking the town council for years to provide a place for the Buddhist community in the town but it has always been refused on financial grounds. Given this, you feel like it is unfair for the council to be putting the use of the money up for debate but you think you have a good chance of winning the vote as you have good arguments. There are no temples in the town despite a large Buddhist population. You feel like the contribution that the Buddhist population has made to the town is not well appreciated and that people in your community are unfairly discriminated against. In not using this money and opportunity to build a temple, the council is denying members of the community their fundamental right to religious freedom. You still need to talk to other people before the council meeting and explain your point of view to them. You should also find out what proposals other people are putting forward. There are citizens who have not yet made up their mind about how to vote and you could influence their decisions.

**Town council member (Populist Party)**

You represent the Populist Party on the town council and support the proposal to build a youth centre partly because you realise that there needs to be more provision for young people in the town and partly because you do not want to alienate the young people in the town as they make up a large percentage of your voters. But you also understand the arguments of the environmentalists and Diversity Party and do not want to create unnecessary conflict in the community. You are also concerned by your seat in the next council elections, it is very important for you to be re-elected.

**Member of Falconville Green Association**

You are the member of an environmentalist group and you see the 10,000 Falcon Dollar grant as an opportunity to develop the cycle paths in the city, which at the moment are non-existent. Among other problems that Falconville is facing at the moment, air pollution and traffic jams mean that the town is becoming unsafe for everyone to live in. It's a fairly new problem but your solution will bring many benefits to the entire town's population. You still need to talk to other people before the council meeting and explain your point of view to them. You should also find out what proposals other people are putting forward. There are citizens who have not yet made up their mind about how to vote and you could influence their decisions.

**Member of Young Falcons**

You are a member of Young Falcons, which was set up a few years ago to address some of the problems for young people in the town. A few years ago, the town council cut the youth budget so lots of the youth centres had to close meaning the members of Young Falcons have decreased. As an organisation you agree with the Buddhist Association that it is unfair for the Buddhist population not to have a place to worship – you have many young Buddhist members in your group yourselves and after all, worship is a fundamental human right. But you are also concerned about the increasing air-pollution and traffic accidents and see the point of view of the Falconville Green Association. But you would really like for the youth centres to be reopened now that there is money available again.

**Citizens of Falconville**

You are worried about the potential conflict about how the 10,000 Falcon Dollar will be spent, which seems to be taking over your town and you therefore want to go to the meeting to vote. At the moment you don't know which option you will vote for; you need to speak to as many different groups as you can and then you can plan to make up your mind.



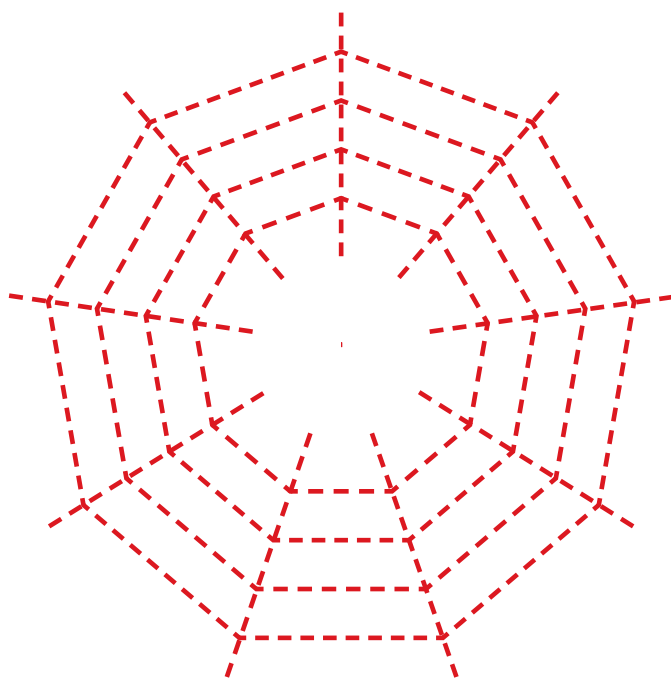


# EVALUATION METHODS

Evaluation is a very important part of participation, and evaluating any kind of activities that you organise with your group can be a good first step to become more participatory in your work. Here we present a few easy evaluation methods that you can do at the end of activities. When you use them, of course you need to make sure that you really take the results into account, and don't just pretend that you let the group participate.

## Spider web

This method works for evaluating different elements of any given topic; after a group night, a camp, a seminar or a bigger project. As a group, cooperatively agree on different elements that you want to evaluate. Ask everyone to draw a spider web like the one below, labelling each strand with one of the elements you want to evaluate. Then the participants should personally rate the success of each element, 1 being the lowest, closest to the centre of the web and 10 being the highest, furthest from the centre. Then you can join the dots up to make a star shape and identify what was successful and what needs to be worked on.



## Dots

This is also a method of evaluating different elements but you can collect the thoughts of the group overall rather than individuals. Choose the different elements you want to evaluate, either decided on as a group or thought of beforehand, and write each one on separate pieces of paper. Give each participant three stickers per sheet of paper. Explain that they can each put a maximum of three stickers on each piece of paper depending on how well they thought that particular element went. They should stick three dots on the sheet if they think it went really well, 2 if it went well, 1 if it didn't go too well and none if that element went badly. Then you can identify which elements the group as a whole thought were good, or need improving. The more stickers on the sheet overall, the more successful or popular that element was! You can discuss afterwards why people placed the number of stickers they did.

### **Voting**

This method uses jars or boxes as ballot boxes to evaluate which parts of an activity or activities participants liked the most. Label each of the jars and give each participant a certain number of ballots that they should put in the relevant jar. The ballots could either be objects, like dried peas, or pieces of paper, in which case they could also write down why they liked that particular activity.

### **Moving**

This method of evaluation requires you to read out statements, so think of the questions you'd like to ask. It is quick and doesn't need much in-depth thought. Once you have said a statement, participants move themselves to different parts of the room based on their instant reaction about whether they agree or disagree. You can also let participants themselves shout out statements for people to decide on. And instead of having two opposite sides of the room signifying 'agree' and 'disagree', agreement could be shown by moving closer to someone stood on a chair in the middle of the room and disagreement by moving further away.

### **H diagram**

On a landscape sheet of paper, ask participants to draw an 'H', splitting the paper into 4 sections. In these sections they should write:

1. What they are evaluating
2. Things that went well
3. Things that didn't go well
4. Things that could be improved.

# UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

## (child-friendly version)

### **Article 1: Definition of a child**

Until you are 18, you are considered a child and have all rights in this convention.

### **Article 2: Freedom from discrimination**

All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

### **Article 3: The child's best interest**

All actions and decisions that affect children should be based on what is best for you or any child.

### **Article 4: Enjoying the rights in the Convention**

Governments should make these rights available to you and all children.

### **Article 5: Parental guidance and the child's growing abilities**

Your family has the main responsibility for guiding you, so that as you grow, you learn to use your rights properly. Governments should respect this right.

### **Article 6: Right to life and development**

You have the right to live and grow well. Governments should ensure that you survive and develop healthily.

### **Article 7: Birth registration, name, nationality and parental care**

You have the right to have your birth legally registered, to have a name and nationality and to know and to be cared for by your parents.

### **Article 8: Preservation of identity**

You have the right to an identity - an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

### **Article 9: Separation from parents**

You should not be separated from your parents unless it is for your own good (for example, if a parent mistreats or neglects you). If your parents have separated, you have the right to stay in contact with both of them unless this might hurt you.

### **Article 10: Family reunification**

If your parents live in different countries, you should be allowed to move between those countries so that you can stay in contact with your parents or get back together as a family.

### **Article 11: Protection from illegal transfer to another country.**

Governments must take steps to stop you being taken out of their own country illegally.

### **Article 12: Respect for the child's opinion**

When adults are making decisions that affect you, you have the right to say freely what you think should happen and to have your opinions taken into account.

### **Article 13: Freedom of expression and information**

You have the right to seek, get and share information in all forms (e.g. through writing, art, television, radio and the Internet) as long as the information is not damaging to you or to others.

### **Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion**

You have the right to think and believe what you want and to practise your religion as long as you do not stop other people from enjoying their rights. Your parents should guide you on these matters.

### **Article 15: Freedom of association and peaceful assembly**

You have the right to meet and to join groups and organisations with other children as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

### **Article 16: Privacy, honour and reputation**

You have a right to privacy. No-one should harm your good name, enter your house, open your letters and emails or bother you or your family without a good reason.

### **Article 17: Access to information and media**

You have the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, including books, newspapers and magazines, television, radio and the Internet. Information should be beneficial and understandable to you.

### **Article 18: Parents' joint responsibilities**

Both your parents share responsibility for bringing you up and should always consider what is best for you. Governments should provide services to help parents, especially if both parents work.

### **Article 19: Protection from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect**

Governments should ensure that you are properly cared for and protect you from violence, abuse and neglect by your parents or anyone else who looks after you.

### **Article 20: Alternative care**

If parents and family cannot care for you properly, then you must be looked after by people who respect your religion, traditions and language.

### **Article 21: Adoption**

If you are adopted, the first concern must be what is best for you, whether you are adopted in your birth country or if you are taken to live in another country.

### **Article 22: Refugee children**

If you have come to a new country because your home country was unsafe, you have a right to protection and support. You have the same rights as children born in that country.

### **Article 23: Disabled children**

If you have any kind of disability, you should have special care, support and education so that you can lead a full and independent life and participate in the community to the best of your ability.

**Article 24: Healthcare and health services**

You have the right to good quality health-care (e.g. medicine, hospitals, health professionals). You also have the right to clean water, nutritious food, a clean environment and health education so that you can stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 25: Periodic review of treatment**

If you are looked after by local authorities or institutions rather than by your parents, you should have your situation reviewed regularly to make sure you have good care and treatment.

**Article 26: Benefit from social security**

The society in which you live should provide you with benefits of social security that help you develop and live in good conditions (e.g. education, culture, nutrition, health, social welfare). The government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

**Article 27: Adequate standard of living**

You should live in good conditions that help you develop physically, mentally, spiritually, morally and socially. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

**Article 28: Right to education**

You have a right to education. Discipline in schools should respect your human dignity. Primary education should be free and required. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 29: The aims of education**

Education should develop your personality, talents and mental and physical skills to the fullest. It should prepare you for life and encourage you to respect your parents and your own and other nations and cultures. You have a right to learn about your rights.

**Article 30: Children of minorities and native origin**

You have a right to learn and use the traditions, religion and language of your family, whether or not these are shared by most people in your country.

**Article 31: Leisure, play and culture**

You have a right to relax and play and to join in a wide range of recreational and cultural activities.

**Article 32: Child labour**

The government should protect you from work that is dangerous to your health or development, that interferes with your education or that might lead people to take advantage of you.

**Article 33: Children and drug abuse**

The government should provide ways of protecting you from using, producing or distributing dangerous drugs.

**Article 34 : Protection from sexual exploitation**

The government should protect you from sexual abuse.

**Article 35: Protection from trafficking, sale, and abduction**

The government should make sure that you are not kidnapped, sold or taken to other countries to be exploited.

### **Article 36: Protection from other forms of exploitation**

You should be protected from any activities that could harm your development and well-being.

### **Article 37: Protection from torture, degrading treatment and loss of liberty**

If you break the law, you should not be treated cruelly. You should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to stay in contact with your family.

### **Article 38: Protection of children affected by armed conflict**

If you are under fifteen (under eighteen in most European countries), governments should not allow you to join the army or take any direct part in warfare. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

### **Article 39: Rehabilitation of child victims**

If you were neglected, tortured or abused, were a victim of exploitation and warfare, or were put in prison, you should receive special help to regain your physical and mental health and rejoin society.

### **Article 40: Juvenile justice**

If you are accused of breaking the law, you must be treated in a way that respects your dignity. You should receive legal help and only be given a prison sentences for the most serious crimes.

### **Article 41: Respect for higher human rights standards**

If the laws of your country are better for children than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should be followed.

### **Article 42: Making the Convention widely known**

The government should make the Convention known to all parents, institutions and children.

### **Articles 43-54: Duties of Governments**

These articles explain how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children get all their rights



# TABLE OF ACTIVITIES

Title	Overview	Age Group	Duration	Page
Footsteps	Participants reflect and evaluate how their groups or organisations encourage child participation, and think about further steps.	16+	40 min	26
Case studies	A discussion activity where participants analyse different examples of child participation	16+	90 min	28
Snakes and ladders	A board game to explore the benefits of participation by introducing examples of participation and non-participation.	15+	45 min	30
Take a stand	Participants have to take a stand on provocative statements about child participation.	16+	60 min	33
Who should decide (educators)	A short discussion activity for adults to think about who can and should participate in different situations.	16+	45min	34
Theme park	A simulation activity where participants have to build a model of an ecological theme park in small groups. Each group simulates different levels of participation and adult involvement.	16+	90 min	36
Diamond rights	An activity where participants rank children's rights according to their importance.	12+	90 min	39
Putting rights on the map	Participants cooperate to create a map of their local community and identify the places in their neighbourhood associated with different children's rights and especially the right to participation.	8+	90 min	42
Child rights news	Participants become reporters and document children's rights conditions in their community.	10+	120-150 min	44
What if...?	Participants imagine the consequences that could arise from particular situations, thinking especially about if children took all decisions.	8+	60 min	46
Participation barometer	An activity where participants think about and prioritise decision-making possibilities in their communities.	10+	60 min	49
Change the situation	A drama activity using forum theatre techniques where participants act out how they would change scenarios they are not happy with.	8+	90 min	52
Forms of child participation	An activity examining examples of child participation through drama and evaluating where they would be placed on the ladder of participation.	12+	60 min	54
Who should decide?	A short discussion activity for children to think about who can and should participate in different decisions.	8+	45 min	56
Convincing adults	A fishbowl discussion to practice argumentation skills, with a short warm-up drama exercise.	10+	90 min	58
Town council meeting	A simulation of different methods of participation to influence a decision about how to spend money in the community, culminating in a town council meeting where a vote is taken.	12+	120-150 min	60
Evaluation methods	A few short evaluation methods that can be used after all kinds of activities	All	10-30 min	65





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