

PLAY YOUR RIGHTS



CARD 1 – TOOLKIT

The *Play Your Rights* toolkit is designed to promote children's participation as a fundamental right. Participation must be an imperative in all relationships established between children and adults or between children and institutions. Children's participation must be authentic and meaningful and adults and institutions must be prepared to take children's visions, dreams, hopes and concerns on board. An authentic and meaningful children's participation requires a radical shift in adult thinking and behaviour as well as a radical shift on the institutional level — from an exclusionary to an inclusionary approach to children and their capabilities.

Children's participation has an important role in science and education. As argued by Lacan no one can be educated, psychoanalysed or politicised, it is a subject's task. Paulo Freire signed in the same direction by saying that knowing is the task of subjects, not objects. And it is as subject and only as a subject that human beings can truly know. Therefore science and education should provide children with the experience to develop their talents and abilities to full potential, to gain confidence and self-esteem, to use their initiative and creativity, to gain life skills and take informed decisions and to understand. The right to education means the right to experience citizenship. Children must be perceived not as mere recipients of knowledge, what Freire names as Bankarian Education, when children are perceived as an empty bank account in which adults launch information.



CARD 1 – TOOLKIT

Adults and institutions must develop their practice to take children as active players in the learning process. It is for this reason that the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* puts so much emphasis on the aims of education (article 28) and on an educational system that respects the child's human dignity. Perhaps the first feature of human dignity is freedom.

Despite children's participation being a right which all the United Nations members have signed and only 3 nations have not ratified, it remains the most violated right. Despite all the scientific evidence adults still rule the children's world without their participation.

The *Play Your Right* toolkit is organized as a series of activities which can be applied as a whole or taken separately to foster attitudinal and institutional change in the relationship between children and adults.



CARD 2 – TOOLKIT OBJECTIVES

Toolkit Objectives:

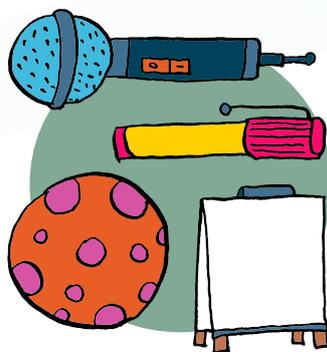
- To help with the process of increasing the participation of children and young people in decision-making and policy-making
- To be a resource for organizations taking part in SiS Activities
- To support organizations throughout consultations and participatory activities with children and young people in the area of access to Education and Science
- To help ensure consistency and quality in consultations
- and participatory activities, taking into account the diversity of groups
- To provide a summary of the different approaches and methods of participation in relation to policy consultations
- To be a comprehensive and accessible on going resource for policy consultation with children and young people that will also be available via the Internet



CARD 2 – TOOLKIT OBJECTIVES

Who is this toolkit for?

- Policy makers and decision makers including the European Commission, local authorities and the European Parliament
- People working with children and young people in local authorities (e.g. in community education), schools, science museums and children's Universities and higher education institutions
- Children and young people involved in consultation processes
- Young people involved in carrying out consultations with their peer groups



CARD 3 – SIS CATALYST

SiS Catalyst was a 4 year, European Commission funded *Mobilising Mutual Learning Action Plan*. It was an initiative to foster and support ethical, effective and sustainable engagement between children aged 7-14 years and the social, cultural, political, scientific and educational institutions which make the decisions that shape their futures. We believe that enhanced interaction will benefit both children and institutions through exchange of views and improved mutual understanding.

While it seeks to empower children everywhere and influence all kinds of institutions to engage with them, the initiative has a particular focus on strengthening relationships between post-secondary education institutions and the children who, despite ability, currently appear unlikely to enter them.

Based in Europe, SiS Catalyst involved people and institutions from other regions of the globe and drew on many different sources of ideas, energy and wisdom.

The SiS Catalyst community included government and non-government educational, cultural and scientific institutions and organisations, expert advisors and other individuals and groups who shared a vision. It was co-ordinated through the University of Liverpool, U.K.

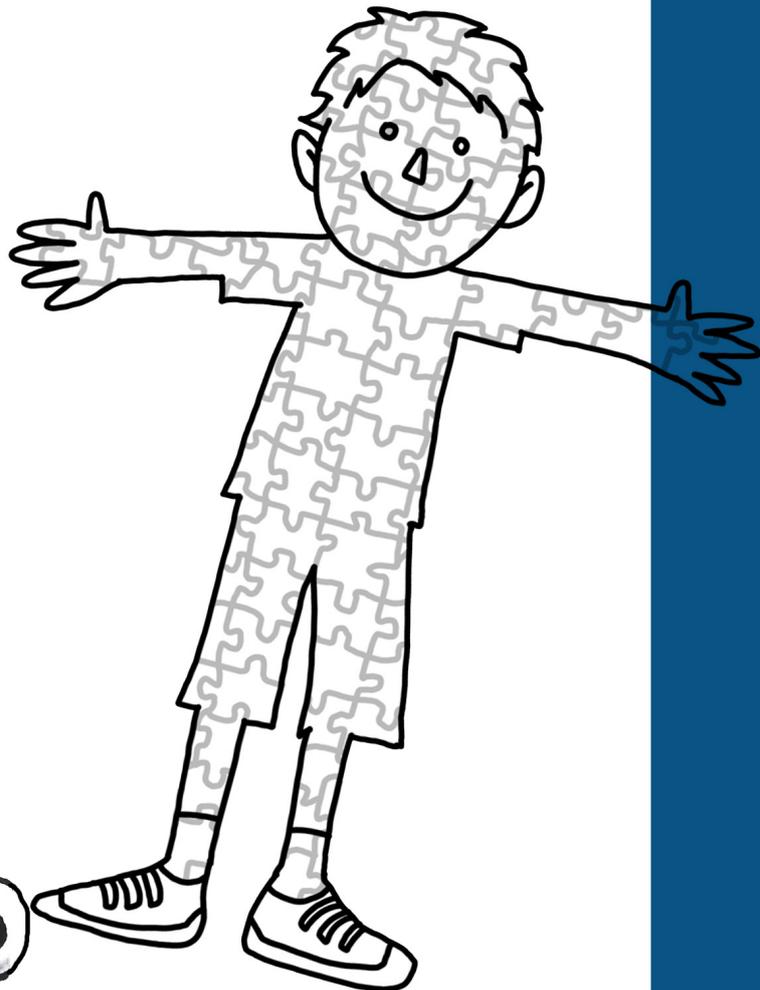
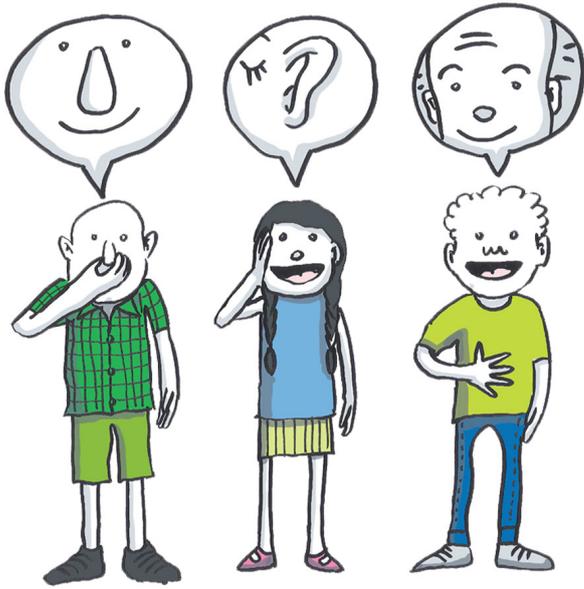


CARD 3 – SIS CATALYST

SiS Catalyst Aims:

- To explore and identify the best ways to involve children (aged 7-18) in the social, cultural, political, educational and scientific decision-making processes that will affect their futures
- To support and guide institutions and people new to working with children through training, exchange of best practices and mentoring
- To mobilise mutual learning among stakeholders at different levels and from different sectors, regions and countries
- To encourage institutions to empower children and instil early positive attitudes to learning through activities such as 'Children's Universities'
- To provide a blueprint of activities for engaging, inspiring and motivating children with ability who appear unlikely to progress to post-secondary education
- To enrich lifelong learning and social inclusion through the next generation of learners.







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CARD 5 – HOW TO USE THE CARDS

During the 4 year SiS Catalyst project we found several situations where children's rights are violated even though there is much talk about child participation. Thinking of changing this scenario we developed a toolkit to promote the right to participate. Pointing in the direction of a paradigm change but with a hands-on approach, we developed activities focused on attitudinal and institutional change. Our guide provides games and exercises that inform children and adults about the rights to participate in a playful and reflexive manner indicating concrete ways to promote the right to participation. We believe that children have the right to be equal whenever difference diminishes them; children have the right to be different whenever equality de-characterizes them. Thus children have the right to develop a relationship with adults and their institutions based on equality and equity.

Cards 1-3 introduce the reader to SiS Catalyst, the project generating the toolkit and describe the ideas behind the *Play Your Rights* toolkit, its aims, objectives and target group.

Card 4 is the Index which works as a menu of all the cards.

Card 5 is a brief description of how to apply the cards.

In Cards 6 and 7 the reader will find a discussion about children's rights of participation.

On Cards 8, 9, 10 and 11 are activities for people to introduce themselves bringing different aspects of their personhood to the group.

Card 12 is a key activity through which the reader will learn how to develop a group contract, setting up rules in a democratic way.

Card 13 is an ethical framework for working with children on participatory rights developed by UNICEF.

Cards 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 are respectively articles 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. These articles are related to the right of participation. The first step in working with children on their rights to participate is to inform them that they have these rights and put these rights into a context.

Cards 19 and 20 were designed to debrief the content of these rights and put them into a context.

Cards 21 to 40 are a selected series of games and exercises developed by Forum



CARD 5 – HOW TO USE THE CARDS

Theatre to explore situations where children's rights are violated and create feasible alternatives to overcome those violations.

Cards 21, 22 and 23 explain in details how Forum Theatre works.

Card 24 to 39 are games and exercises to explore situations of violations and prepare all the participants to perform.

Card 40 is the description of a Forum session.

Card 41 is related to how collect and Performing Child Stories to perform through Forum Theatre.

Card 42 provides the Bibliography and credits.

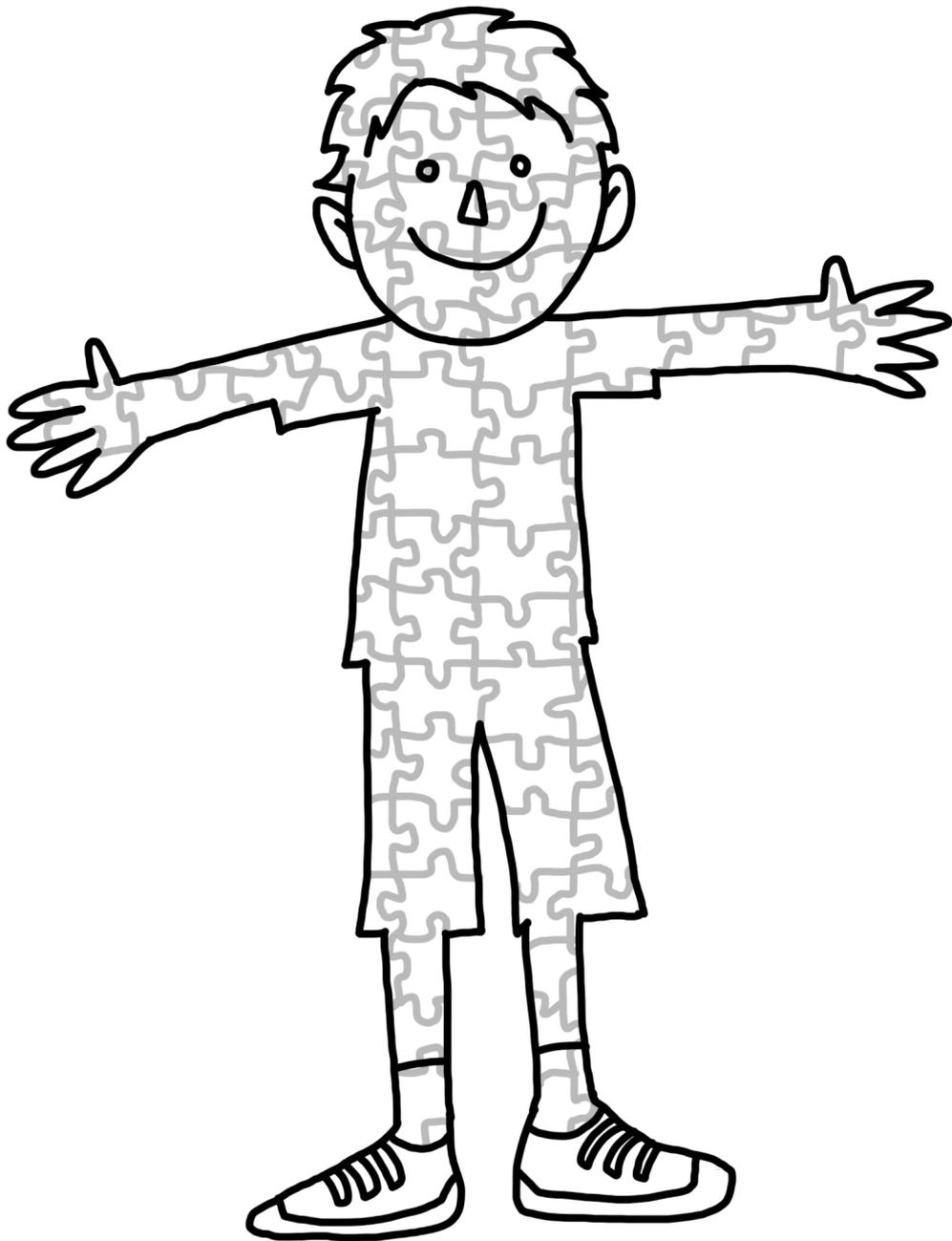
There is no right or wrong way to use these cards, but remember this is a toolkit to foster children's participation. The aim is to promote children's voices as well as the ability to listen and therefore create a dialogue based on the rights to participate.

We recommend you begin by reading cards 1 to 6, especially no's 5 and 6 which deal directly with the participation rights. Card 13 sets out ethical principles for developing any work in this field.

It is an imperative that you then read the cards providing articles 12 to 16 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Once you have done that reflect on your own activities and try to imagine how you could implement these rights at the interpersonal, group or institutional levels. You can pick one activity to incorporate into your practice or you may begin with ***presentation activities, group contract, introducing and debriefing participatory rights and staging children's rights.***

Of course we hope that you will bring your experience and your own reflections on the theme and develop your own ways to foster children's participation. Taking part in training courses and workshops may help but you should take the chance to develop your own dialogic practises. Explore and Enjoy!

RIGHT TO TAKE PART





CARD 6 – RIGHT TO TAKE PART

The notion of human rights was born in the modern era, gaining institutional protection after World War II with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the creation of the United Nations.

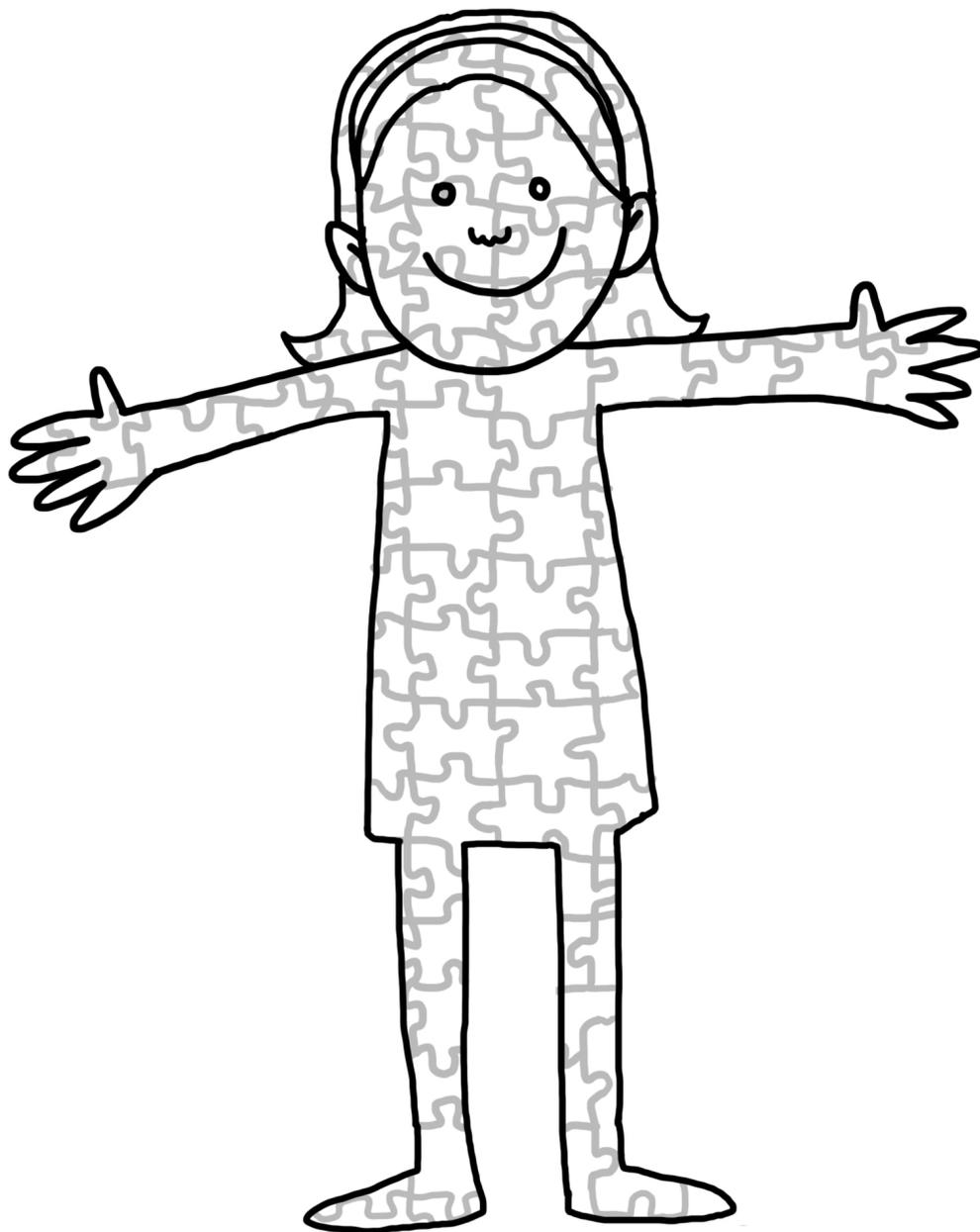
The declaration establishes the legal basis of the idea of a universal human. *The Declaration of Human Rights* promotes the rights of all human beings irrespective nationality, ethnicity, religion or age. However bearing in mind the need to ensure the child rights the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations in 1959 deepening the proposal of the Geneva Declaration of 1924. The convention adopted in 1989 establishing the paradigm of integral and special protection of children and adolescents.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises that children are not merely passive recipients, entitled to adult protective care. Rather, they are subjects of rights who are entitled to be involved, in accordance with their evolving capacities, in decisions that affect them, and are entitled to exercise growing responsibility for decisions they are competent to make for themselves.

The theory of integral protection is based on the understanding that the legislation which protects children must conceive them as full citizens. Integral protection means that everyone is responsible for ensuring the rights of children and their rights should be implemented wholly, in other words, rights are indivisible, so we must ensure all rights. The principle of the protection takes into consideration moral stage, physical and psychological development, therefore prioritizing the protection of children.



RIGHT TO TAKE PART





CARD 7 – RIGHT TO TAKE PART

Children's rights can be divided into three major groups: provision, protection and participation. The rights relating to provision are those concerned with services such as health, education, social assistance, food, housing, among others. The rights relating to protection are those that protect the integrity and dignity of children as well as keep them safe from any form of oppression and discrimination. The rights to participation are those that guarantee freedom of expression, association, opinion, belief and religion as well as guaranteeing the right to privacy. The articles below are those related to participation:

Art 12. Children have the right to give their opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Art 13. Children have the right to find out things and share what they think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

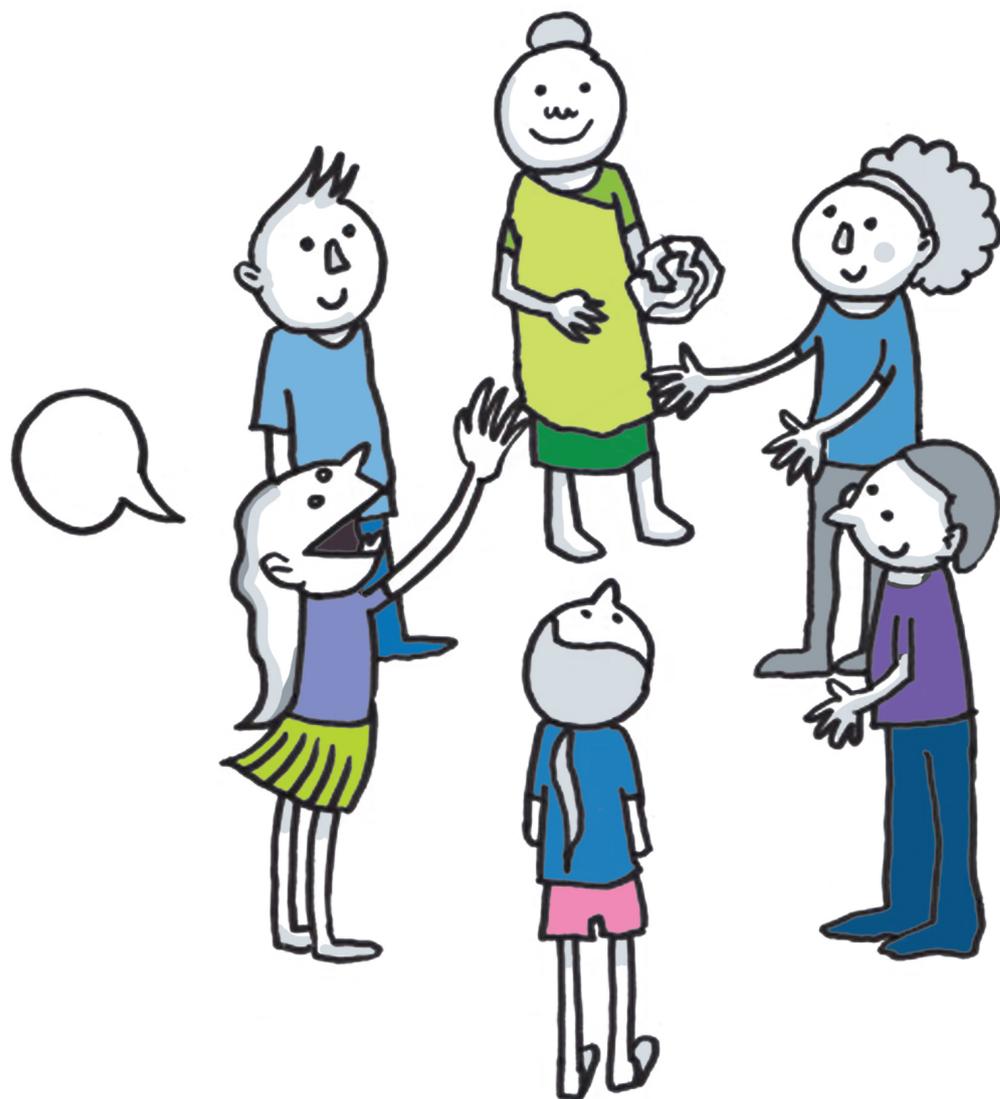
Art 14. Children have the right to choose their own religion and beliefs. Their parents should help them to decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for them.

Art 15. Children have the right to choose their own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

Art 16. Children have the right to privacy

Western countries have advanced greatly in regard to protection and provision. However the rights related to participation are the most violated worldwide. The adult-centric culture does not perceive the child as someone able to participate. There are children's right violations perpetrated actively by adults, for example anti-social behaviour orders (ASBO) in England. Violations are perpetrated passively by adults as for example the failing to ensure spaces for participation in schools.

Participation is paramount in education and science communication. However educators and scientists often perceive the child only as a mere receptacle of their own knowledge and neglect the child's rights to participate actively in processes of their own education as subjects of knowledge and rights. Phrases like 'science is fun' or the 'kids are the future' often conceal a bias that prevents participation. In the first case, children are portrayed as only interested in fun activities, as unable to enjoy concentration and quietness. In the second case the idea that children are the future hides the idea that the future is to be adult, therefore children are not mature enough to have a say in the present. Adults are waiting for children to reach adulthood, thus they don't consider children's opinions in the present.



BALL AND CIRCLE



CARD 8 – BALL AND CIRCLE

Objectives:

Integration, interaction, presentation, relaxation, interpersonal relationship, warming up, observation / concentration, communication.

Resources:

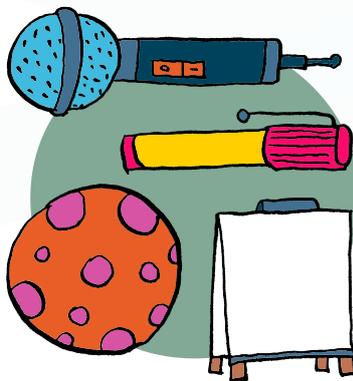
None

Time:

10 minutes

Instructions:

Make a ball of paper. Arrange participants in a circle and ask them to think about the activities which they carry on in their daily lives, selecting the one that they like to do the most and the one they like the least. The facilitator starts by saying his/her name, what he/she likes to do the most and least in their daily lives then passes the ball to someone else, asking them to do the same. After speaking, this person passes the ball to another person - repeating the same steps above until all participants have contributed.





TWINS



CARD 9 – TWINS

Objectives:

Integration, interaction, presentation, relaxation, interpersonal relationship, warming up, observation / concentration, communication.

Time:

50 minutes

Instructions:

Divide participants into pairs (A and B). Ask participants to get to know their partner (name, age, marital status, children, education, goals at the event, institution, hobbies or leisure activities).

After time for this activity, each person will present information about their partner to the group (A about B, B about A).

It is important to ensure a relaxed mood and openness to questions, but keeping the purpose of presentation. The exercise concludes when all participants have contributed.

I LIKE YOU  BECAUSE





CARD 10 – I LIKE YOU... BECAUSE...

Objectives:

Integration, interaction, presentation, relaxation, interpersonal relationship, warming up, observation / concentration, communication.

Resources:

None

Time:

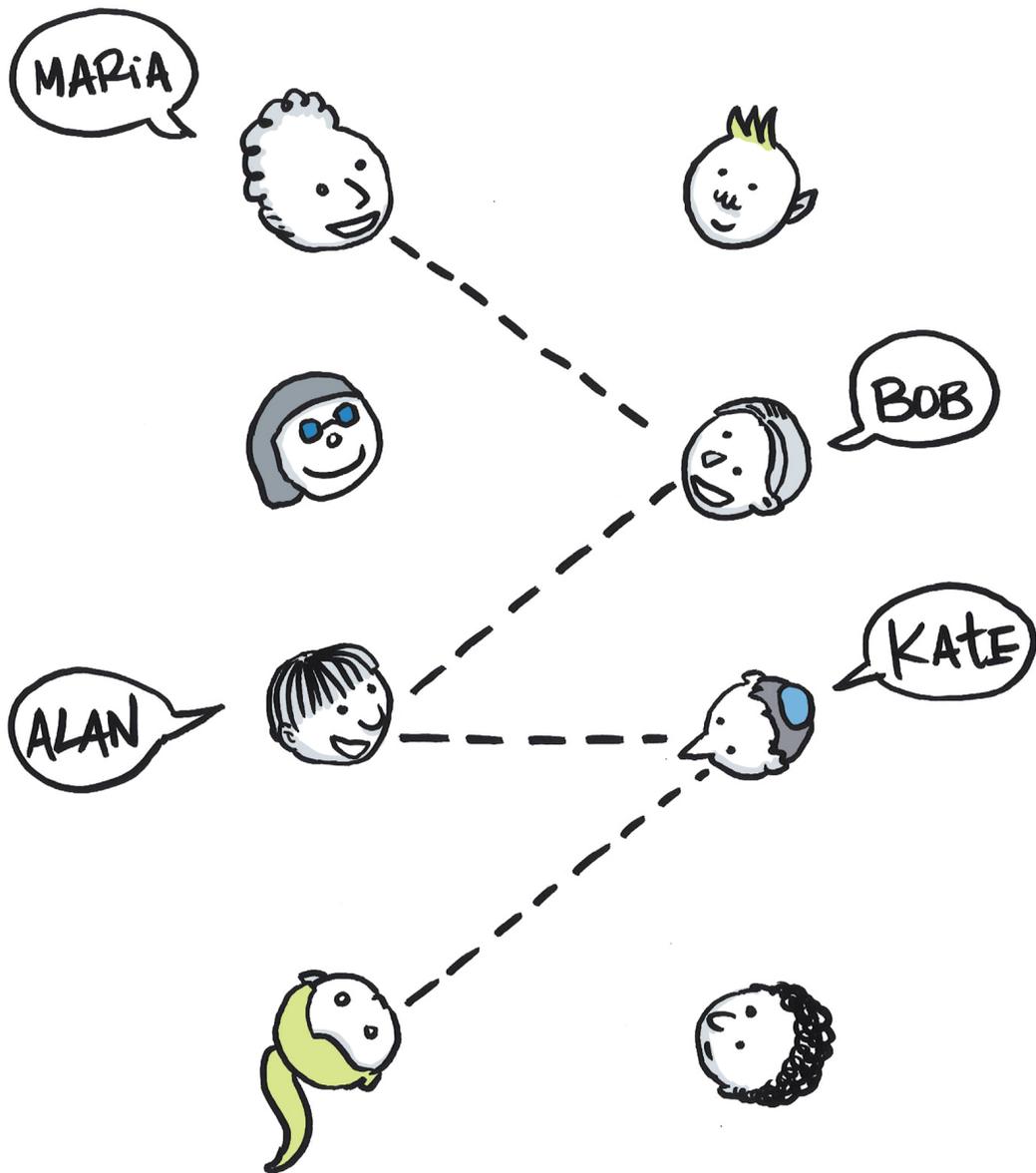
15 minutes

Instructions:

Participants sit on chairs arranged in a circle. There is one chair too few for the number of people. The person that doesn't have a chair stands in the middle of the circle and has to say "I like (name of one of the others) because (come up with a reason: can be an external characteristic or one that you can't see)".

The person to whom the affirmation was addressed then stands and all other participants who also fit the description given have to stand as well, and look for another chair to sit on. The person who can't find a new chair makes the next affirmation.

VOLLEYBALL





CARD 11 – VOLLEYBALL

Objectives:

Integration, interaction, presentation, relaxation, interpersonal relationship, warming up, observation / concentration, communication.

Resources:

None

Time:

15 minutes

Instructions:

Put the participants in two lines, one in front of the other, and ask each one to say their name.

Tell them they will play volleyball, but the ball will be their names: each line is a team, and they have to throw the “ball” to the other team saying the name of someone in the other team and making the gesture of throwing the ball with their hands.

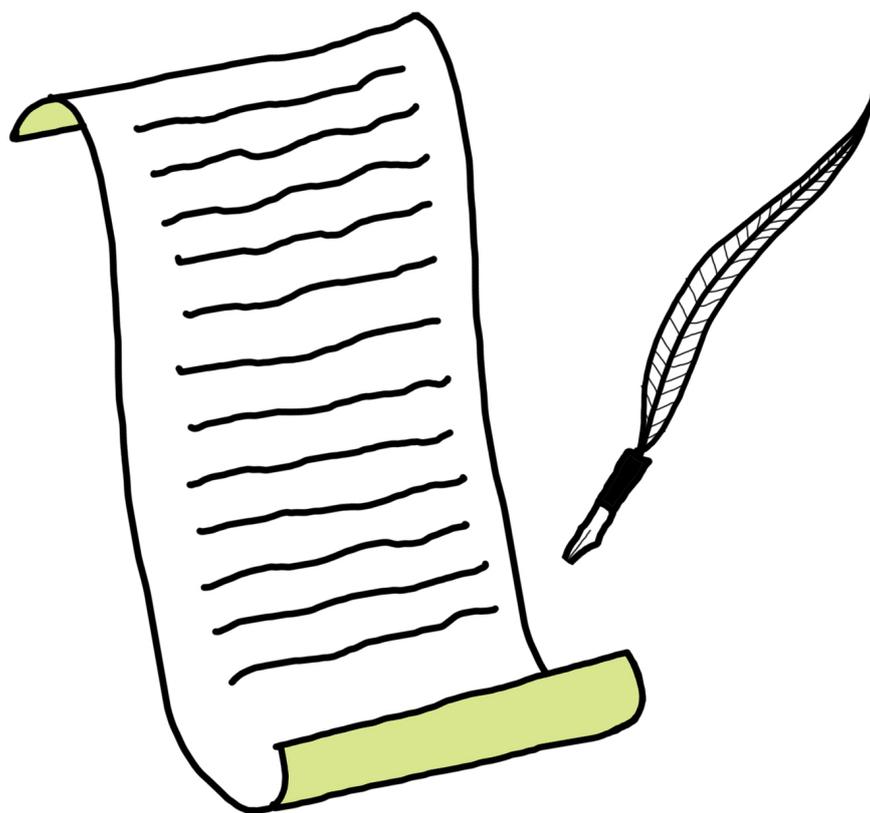
They have to follow what they hear, not the gestures.

Let them practice for some time, then play the game.

If someone makes a mistake (“catches” the “ball” if it wasn’t their turn, or doesn’t catch it when it was their turn, for example), they have to leave the team.



BUILDING A GROUP CONTRACT





CARD 12 – BUILDING A GROUP CONTRACT

Objectives:

Collective rules for work, developing a relationship based on democratic rules and a reflexive approach to their application.

Time:

10 minutes

Resources:

Flipchart paper and markers.

Instructions:

Introduce the group to the importance of having an agreed framework for working together.

State that the dynamics of the work in the workshops and the success of these meetings depend on all participants. Then write the following words on a flip chart: listening, speaking, cooperating, organising.

Ask participants to choose one of these topics and encourage them to put forward an idea about how they will contribute to the success of the workshop from the chosen word.

Set schedules and timetables for the event, detailing all activities including breaks.



ADULTS MUST HAVE IN MIND





CARD 13 – ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Transparent and informative – children must be provided with full, accessible, and age-appropriate information (that is also sensitive to children’s diversity) about their right to express their views freely; information should include how their views will be given due weight, how the participation will take place, and its scope, purpose and potential impact.

Voluntary – children should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and they should be informed that they can cease their involvement at any stage.

Respectful – children’s views have to be treated with respect and children should be provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities. Adults working with children should acknowledge, respect and build on good examples of children’s participation – for instance, in their contributions to the family, school, local culture, and work environment. Adults also need an understanding of the socio-economic, environmental and cultural context of children’s lives. People and organisations working for and with children should also respect children’s views with regard to participation in public events.

Relevant – the issues on which children have the right to express their views must be of real relevance to their lives and enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities. In addition, children need to have opportunities to highlight and address the issues they themselves identify as relevant and important.

Child-friendly – environments and working methods should be adapted to children’s capacities. Adequate time and resources should be made available to ensure that children are adequately prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to contribute their views. You need to consider that children will need differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities.

Inclusive – participation must be inclusive, avoid existing patterns of discrimination, and encourage opportunities for marginalised children (girls and boys) to be involved. Children are not a homogenous group and participation needs to provide for equality of opportunity for all, without discrimination on any grounds. Programmes also need to ensure that they are culturally sensitive to the situation of children from all communities.

Supported by training – adults need preparation, skills and support to facilitate children’s participation effectively – for example, they need to develop listening skills, and to know how to work with and engage children in accordance with their evolving capacities. Children themselves can be involved as trainers and facilitators on how to promote effective participation; they require support to develop or strengthen necessary skills – for example, awareness of their rights, and training in organising meetings, raising funds, dealing with the media, public speaking and advocacy.

Safe and sensitive to risk – in certain situations, encouraging children to express their views may put them at risk. Adults have a responsibility towards the children they are working with and must take every precaution to minimise the risk to children of violence, exploitation or any other negative consequence of their participation. Actions to mitigate such risks and provide appropriate protection include developing a clear child protection strategy, which recognises the particular risks faced by some groups of children, and the extra barriers they face in obtaining help. Children must be aware of their right to be protected from harm and must know where to go for help if needed. Investment in working with families and communities is important in order to build understanding of the value and implications of participation, and to minimise the risks to which children may otherwise be exposed.

Accountable – a commitment to undertaking regular follow-up and evaluation of participation activities is essential. For example, in any research or consultative process, children must be informed as to how their views have been interpreted and used and, where necessary, given the opportunity to challenge and influence the analysis of the findings. Children are also entitled to receive clear feedback on how their participation has influenced any outcomes. Wherever appropriate, children should be given the opportunity to participate in follow-up processes or activities. Monitoring and evaluation of children’s participation needs to be undertaken with children themselves at the centre of the process.

ART 12.

CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO GIVE THEIR OPINION,
AND FOR ADULTS TO LISTEN AND TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.





CARD 14 – ARTICLE 12 OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided with the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

(Children have the right to give their opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.)

