

*A practical
guide to including
seldom-heard
children &
young people in
decision-making*


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children &
young people in
decision-making*



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs



Barnardos



The author of this report is:
Olivia McEvoy,
Cnag ar an Doras, Dublin
(ie.linkedin.com/in/oliviamcevoy/)

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Department of Children and Youth Affairs
43-49 Mespil Road
Dublin 4
Tel: +353 (0)1 647 3000
Fax: +353 (0)1 667 0826
E-mail: contact@dcya.gov.ie
Web: www.dcy.a.ie

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Foreword

As Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, I am very pleased to publish this important practical guide to including seldom-heard children and young people in decision-making.

This guide is being launched on the same day as the Government's first *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making (2015-2020)*. The goal of this Strategy is to ensure that children and young people have a voice in their individual and collective everyday lives across the five national outcome areas in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (2014-2020)*.

One of the key fundamentals of the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making (2015-2020)*, is the establishment and improvement of mechanisms that ensure the participation of seldom-heard and vulnerable children and young people in decision-making.

My Department is strongly committed to the participation of children and young people in decision-making. We are proud to be the first country in Europe to develop a *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making*. However, many of us are aware that there is evidence of Ireland failing to give an adequate voice to children on certain aspects of their lives and this is particularly the case where children are marginalised or disadvantaged. I hope this practical guide will support professionals to enable our most vulnerable children and young people to have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

Dr. James Reilly TD
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

Foreword

Barnardos has been working with children and young people for more than 50 years. I have been with the organisation for nearly a decade and have been struck time and time again by the spark, intelligence, ability and resilience of the children, if you only take the time to talk and really listen to them.

Too often, though, these children have not been asked their opinion on anything. Ever. Never mind on things that have a real impact on their day-to-day lives. The unhappy reality is the barriers preventing young people from being heard are only multiplied if they experience any kind of disadvantage, like living in low income households, having a disability or being from an ethnic minority.

Programmes which work with these communities are therefore of considerable importance. This very practical and useful guide will help anyone seeking to implement strategies in their work with children and young people to not only hear their voices, but ensure these voices are listened to and have a real and beneficial impact both for them and for the adults working with them.

A child's right to have their voice heard and given due weight is now enshrined in our Constitution, the highest law of the land. This means listening to children's opinions is no longer just a nice thing to do; it is something we are all obliged to do.

Children's participation in decisions which affect them has benefits which go further than just the matter at hand. It increases their self-confidence and cognitive development. Research has shown those additional benefits are enjoyed more keenly by seldom-heard children and young people.

Sadly in Ireland we have a history of not listening to our most vulnerable children, which as we know has had particularly devastating consequences. We all have a responsibility to ensure a child's right to be heard is realised, and this toolkit provides the practical information to show us how to do it.

Fergus Finlay
Chief Executive, Barnardos

How to use this toolkit

This Toolkit provides an 'Overview and Context' as well as the 'Benefits of including Seldom-heard Children and Young People in Decision-Making' on (blue) pages 1-10. The 'Role of Management in ensuring the participation of seldom-heard children and young people' is then outlined on (purple) pages 11-19.

The *Practitioners' Toolkit* runs from pages 21-154 and includes relevant sections on:

- ◆ Structures for groups of seldom-heard children and young people in organisations;
- ◆ Creating a safe and friendly environment for seldom-heard children and young people;
- ◆ Ways to engage with seldom-heard children and young people;
- ◆ Engaging with children and young people through discussion;
- ◆ Review and Evaluation of how participation is going and taking action to change practice;
- ◆ Top Tips!
- ◆ Further resources on 'participation'.

The *Practitioners' Toolkit* contains a number of icons, uniform throughout the publication, to distinguish the following headings:



The *Practitioners' Toolkit* also contains a vast array of Toolboxes detailing tools, mechanisms, methods and games to include seldom-heard children and young people in decision-making. The Toolboxes are age-appropriate and are tabbed and colour-coded to make them easy to find as follows:

Blue Toolbox: All Ages



Red Toolbox: 13+



Green Toolbox: -12



Additional icons are used within the Toolboxes to indicate activities that are appropriate for **wheelchair users**  and activities that can be used where there are low **literacy rates** 

The Toolkit has a number of Appendices, many of which can be individually tailored. These Appendices will also be available to download in soft copy on the DCYA website: www.dcy.ie

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About the author

Olivia McEvoy is the founder of CNAG AR AN DORAS, providing independent consultancy to organisations in the area of participative practice and citizen engagement, especially for children and young people. She has thirteen years experience in project management, delivering national consultation processes and reports, independent evaluation as well as the development of resource materials and child/youth friendly reports. She has worked with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Office of the President of Ireland as well as other government departments and NGOs.

Overview and Context

The DCYA Citizen Participation Unit and Barnardos formed a partnership in July 2013 to develop a practical guide to support organisations to enable the participation of seldom-heard children and young people, aged 8-18, in decision-making. It was agreed that this guide would be strongly informed by the work of the Barnardos Amplifying Voices Initiative.

The role of the DCYA Citizen Participation Unit is to ensure that 'children will have a voice on matters that affect their lives and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity'. It works on the development of effective participation structures, the conducting of consultations and dialogues with children and young people and the development of evidence-based policy in keeping with national and international best practice. The DCYA is committed to ensuring the inclusion of seldom-heard children and young people in participation structures and initiatives and works in partnership with statutory and non-statutory organisations.

Amplifying Voices (AV) is a 4 year initiative that aims to engage groups of young people aged between 10 – 15 years. AV seeks to target young people who are not actively engaged in existing participatory structures. Young people must reside within or access services within one of the three geographical catchment areas of Amplifying Voices, namely Finglas, Tallaght and Mulhuddart.

This practical guide is aimed at a wide range of professionals who want to find ways to enable marginalised or disadvantaged children and young people to have a say in decision-making at local and national level.

The purpose of the Toolkit is to provide:

- ◆ Information for managers of organisations.
- ◆ A manual for practitioners on how to include 'seldom-heard' children and young people in organisations and events, and how to make the organisation relevant for seldom-heard children and young people.

Policy context

There is both a national and international policy context for the participation of children and young people in decision-making. Most notable is the:

- ◆ UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
With the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, Ireland, like almost all other countries in the world, committed to ensuring that **the voices of children and young people would be heard in matters that affect them.** (UN, 1989).



◆ NATIONAL STRATEGY ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING, 2015-2020

The *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making, 2015-2020 (DCYA, 2015)* is a cross-government strategy which, aims to ensure that children and young people will have a voice in their individual and collective everyday lives. The strategy focuses on the everyday lives of children and young people and the places and spaces in which they are entitled to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives and identifies the following priority areas for action:

- children and young people will have a voice in decisions made in their local communities;
- children and young people will have a voice in decision-making in early education, schools and the wider formal and non-formal education systems;
- children and young people will have a voice in decisions that affect their health and well-being, including on the health and social services delivered to them;
- children and young people will have a voice in the Courts and legal system.

◆ The strategy contains a series of additional objectives, which include:

- promoting effective leadership to champion and promote participation of children and young people;
- development of education and training for professionals working with and on behalf of children and young people;
- mainstreaming the participation of children and young people in the development of policy, legislation and research.

◆ Underlying all objectives in the strategy are the following key fundamentals:

- recognition that children and young people have a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives;
- ensuring the protection and welfare of children and young people in accordance with *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*;
- improving and establishing mechanisms to ensure the participation of seldom-heard and vulnerable children and young people in decision-making;
- collection of data, monitoring and evaluation of children and young people's participation initiatives.

Rationale

Children and young people have a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

With the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, Ireland, like almost all other countries in the world, committed to ensuring that the voices of children and young people are heard in matters that affect them.

There is a growing body of evidence on the benefits of participation by children and young people in decision-making across a range of measures, including improved services, policies, research, active citizenship and, most importantly, improvements for children themselves and for society generally (Kilkelly *et al*, 2014). Inclusion of children and young people in decision-making can promote children's protection, and improve their confidence, communication skills and ability to negotiate, network, and make judgements (Franklin and Sinclair, 2000).

Principles of participation

The principles of participation outlined below are adapted from the Council of Europe (2012) Recommendation CM/Rec (2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on participation in decision-making of children and young people under the age of 18. The principles refer to both the context for participation and the process of participation.

- 1 There is no age limit on the right of the child or young person to express her or his views freely. **All children and young people have a right to be heard in all matters affecting them**, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
- 2 The right of children and young people to participate applies **without discrimination on any grounds** such as race, ethnicity, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation or other status.
- 3 As children and young people acquire more capacities, adults should encourage them to enjoy, to an increasing degree, their right to influence matters affecting them.

- 4 Particular efforts should be made to enable participation of children and young people with fewer opportunities, including those who are vulnerable or affected by discrimination.
- 5 Parents and carers play a fundamental role in affirming and nurturing the child's right to participate.
- 6 Children and young people should be provided with all relevant information and offered adequate support for self-advocacy.
- 7 If participation is to be effective, meaningful and sustainable, it needs to be understood as a process and not a one-off event and requires ongoing commitment in terms of time and resources.
- 8 Children and young people who exercise their right to freely express their views must be protected from harm, including intimidation, reprisals, victimisation and violation of their right to privacy.
- 9 Children and young people should always be fully informed of the scope of their participation, including the limitations on their involvement, the expected and actual outcomes of their participation and how their views were ultimately considered.
- 10 All processes in which children and young people are heard should be transparent and informative, voluntary, respectful, relevant to children's lives, in child-friendly environments, inclusive (non-discriminatory), supported by training, safe and sensitive to risk, and accountable.

Definition of participation

Children and young people's participation in decision-making is defined as the process by which children and young people have active involvement and real influence in decision-making on matters affecting their lives, both directly and indirectly.

(Checkoway, 2011; Couch and Francis, 2006; Council of Europe, 2008; Save the Children, 2005)

This definition is consistent with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Article 24 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

There are obviously a multitude of definitions of 'participation'. Whatever the definition, participation should ensure that children and young people are:

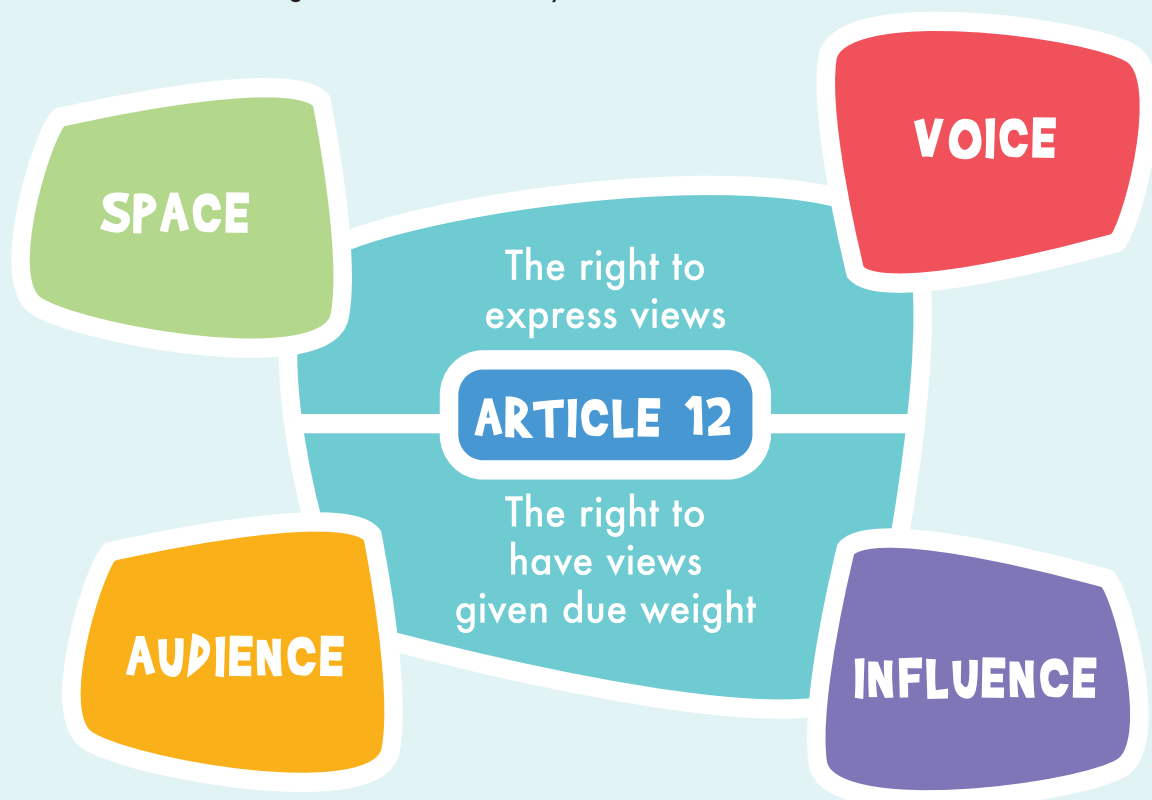
- ◆ empowered;
- ◆ enabled;
- ◆ have active involvement in decisions about their own lives;
- ◆ have real influence on matters that affect them.

Model of participation

There are a range of models of participation on the ways in which participation can be achieved. The best-known models include Hart's Ladder of Participation (1992), first developed by Sherry Arnstein in 1969; Treseder's Degrees of Participation (1997); Shier's Pathways to Participation (2001); Kirby *et al's* Model of Participation (2003); and Lundy's Model of Participation (2007).

The *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making, 2015-2020* is underpinned by Lundy's Model of Participation.

Source: Based on *Voice Is Not Enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (Lundy, 2007)



Voice Model checklist

As an expert involved in the development of the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making, 2014-2020*, Professor Lundy developed a checklist in consultation with a Strategy Sub-Group, comprising representatives of Government departments and agencies.

This checklist aims to help organisations working with and for children and young people to comply with Article 12 of the UNCRC and ensure that children have the **SPACE** to express their views; their **VOICE** is enabled; they have an **AUDIENCE** for their views; and their views will have **INFLUENCE**.

Space

HOW: Provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views

- Have children's views been actively sought?
- Was there a safe space in which children can express themselves freely?
- Have steps been taken to ensure that all children can take part?

Voice

HOW: Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children's views

- Have children been given the information they need to form a view?
- Do children know that they do not have to take part?
- Have children been given a range of options as to how they might choose to express themselves?

Audience

HOW: Ensure that children's views are communicated to someone with the responsibility to listen

- Is there a process for communicating children's views?
- Do children know who their views are being communicated to?
- Does that person/body have the power to make decisions?

Influence

HOW: Ensure that children's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate

- Were the children's views considered by those with the power to effect change?
- Are there procedures in place that ensure that the children's views have been taken seriously?
- Have the children and young people been provided with feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?

Definition of 'seldom-heard'

'Seldom-heard' is more complicated to define than 'participation'. Any child or young person might argue that they are 'seldom-heard' or that their voice is not heard at all on important decisions that affect them. For the purposes of this Toolkit, 'seldom-heard' is a term used to describe children and young people who have fewer opportunities to participate and/or who encounter more obstacles when attempting to participate, including but not limited to seldom-heard children and young people who are:

- ◆ bullied;
- ◆ children in care;
- ◆ experiencing domestic violence;
- ◆ from a minority ethnic background;
- ◆ homeless or at risk of losing their home / living in temporary / unsuitable accommodation
- ◆ in hospital (including those with mental health issues);
- ◆ lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT);
- ◆ living in poverty;
- ◆ living in rural isolation;
- ◆ living with mental health issues;
- ◆ living with parental addiction;
- ◆ living with strained family relationships;
- ◆ not in school;
- ◆ persons with physical and intellectual disabilities;
- ◆ refugees and asylum-seekers;
- ◆ travellers;
- ◆ unemployed;
- ◆ young carers.

The aim of this Toolkit is to provide information and practical advice on how to include this cohort of children and young people, aged 8-18, in the decision-making process on any services, structures, decisions or events relevant to their lives.

Challenges of participation

- ◆ Seldom-heard children and young people are often not used to being asked for their views. As a result, they can have difficulty engaging with mainstream participation processes and need to first develop the skills to participate.
- ◆ Adopting the principles of participation and implementing participation, as defined above, can result in a changed power dynamic in the organisation. Children and young people may also have different views to management. It may be necessary to revise or tweak how you see and do things in the organisation.
- ◆ It is important to manage the expectations of both the children and young people and staff involved as to what can be realistically achieved. To that end, it is useful to:
 - clearly outline what constitutes 'success' for the organisation at the outset;
 - think about whose views are not being heard and what the most effective approach is to engage them;
 - clearly outline what constitutes success for the seldom-heard children and young people at the outset, noting that as well as the end result, the quality and meaningfulness of the journey and process are also important;
 - ensure aims are realistic;
 - be flexible about the outcomes of any programme, which may shift as children and young people get involved;
 - be alert to the need to divert the programme from the original course in order to achieve the main objectives;
 - manage the views and attitudes of all young participants and ensure they are supportive of any seldom-heard children and young people in the group;
 - recognise and alert funders, from the outset, to the fact that the quality of the programme is more important than the numbers of children and young people involved.

Benefits of including seldom-heard children and young people in decision-making

The benefits of including seldom-heard children and young people in decision-making are manifold and extend to children and young people themselves, the organisation and wider society. They may bring new, innovative, different and challenging views to the table.

Benefits for children and young people include:

- ◆ The chance **to be involved** and have their voice heard.
- ◆ Opportunity to **influence and generate change** in the community they live in.
- ◆ Increased **sense of belonging** and connectedness.
- ◆ Improved ability to trust and build rapport.
- ◆ **Increased status** and standing in the community.
- ◆ Increased **confidence and self-esteem**.
- ◆ Increased **competencies, skills** and knowledge, e.g.
 - team work and team-building;
 - working alongside children and young people and adults who have different views;
 - self-discipline and time management;
 - negotiating, planning and reporting;
 - communication skills;
 - problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- ◆ Ensuring that more **relevant and appropriate decisions** can be made with regard to children and young people and their needs.
- ◆ Instilling a **sense of achievement**.
- ◆ Develop understanding of how adults make decisions and the challenges of the decision-making process.

Benefits for organisations include:

- ◆ Brings **new perspectives and ideas** to activities and services.
- ◆ Ensures services and programmes are **responsive and effective**.
- ◆ Increases likelihood of **commitment from children and young people** to programmes/policies/services when they have been involved from the outset in design and implementation plan.
- ◆ Increased effectiveness **reduces time and costs** by reducing the risk of having to make changes.
- ◆ Increased credibility for the organisation as children and young people are actively involved in influencing decisions.

Benefits for society include:

- ◆ Promotes **inclusive and cohesive communities** as adults and children and young people develop more meaningful relationships.
- ◆ Develops **social competence and social responsibility**, increasing the likelihood of continued civic engagement, volunteerism and reduced crime.
- ◆ Greater **ownership and responsibility** as people take greater responsibility for things they have invested in and are less likely to be destructive towards them or let others be.
- ◆ Provides opportunities for **adults to show that they respect** children and young people's views, and vice versa.
- ◆ Provides opportunities for children and young people to demonstrate that they are **capable of being responsible and participating** members of society.



*Role of management in
ensuring the participation
of seldom-heard children
and young people*

The role of management is pivotal to the successful implementation and effectiveness of the participation of any children and young people in an organisation. Ideally, support should be articulated and evident from all levels of management, including the CEO (or equivalent) of the organisation.

'At the DCYA we're strongly committed to encouraging participation by children and young people in decisions that affect their lives. That's why we have a special unit in Department which concentrates on finding ways of improving participation, play, recreation and culture. We support many initiatives in this area, and we're always open to new ideas. We're quite a different type of Government Department than most others, and we always find new and interesting ways of listening and encouraging children and young people to play a full part. We're learning ourselves all the time - which is as it should be.'

Dr. Fergal Lynch, Secretary General
Department of Children and Youth Affairs

'Meaningful participation is something you have to really work at. In Barnardos, we have achieved good participation in many ways, especially in our services, but we're all too aware of the challenges involved in translating that to all levels of the organisation. It takes leadership and commitment from all staff, especially those at the top, to make participation a priority and to make it part of everything we do. We're still a long way from where we want to be, but we know the value of getting there.'

Fergus Finlay, CEO
Barnardos

'My experience of developing services for children tells me that consulting children is always worthwhile. Children who are consulted with respect and listened to carefully provide insight, wisdom and common sense. As a consequence policy improves. Tusla is committed to ensuring that children are always consulted on decisions that affect them. In addition, Tusla is well aware of the benefits of consulting with children more widely and giving them the opportunity to influence policy from a practical perspective.'

Gordon Jeyes, Chief Executive
Tusla, Child and Family Agency

'It is important to plan for children and young people's participation, develop guidelines and best practice principles to ensure all children and young people have equal opportunity to participate. As a simple example, I and other members of Senior Management and Volunteer Leadership hold regular meetings with young people from Foróige's Youth Participation Advisory Committee to ensure that decisions made across the organisation are influenced by young people. For an organisation to be truly participative, it must be part of the culture. Make sure that there is a common understanding of what participation is across the organisation and support both young people and adults involved. Children and young people's participation takes time and it is important that you invest this time as the benefits for both young people and your organisation are limitless.'

Sean Campbell, CEO
Foróige

'A concerted effort has been made to include the seldom-heard voice of youth in the planning and implementation of our services. This has involved inclusion of young people on interview panels, in developing and attending youth workshops, representing the organisation at national and international conferences, and in the provision of training and advocacy for our current service users. Young people have a vital role in transforming how mental health is viewed and treated in Ireland, and we at St. Patrick's will continue to collaborate with this, and all under-represented groups, to make this a reality.'

Paul Gilligan, CEO
St. Patrick's Mental Health Services

'Including seldom-heard young people in BeLonG To has been a pivotal part of our success. The most obvious benefit of including these young people's voices in decision-making is the impact that their inputs have had on the effectiveness of such programmes. Also, although often categorised as "difficult to reach", our experience has led us to believe that when asked to contribute, the voices, needs and concerns of these young people are anything but, and most often they seize the opportunity to have their voices heard.'

David Carroll, Executive Director
BeLonG To

'A child's thinking is not of lesser importance or relevance to that of an adult. It is simply different. Children think with their feelings and not just with their intellect. Communicating with children may be difficult but we can learn as much from them as they can from us. We must be open to hear their needs and experiences. The effect of true education should be to unlock the wealth of that hidden experience and wisdom.'

Sean Cottrell, CEO
Irish Primary Principals' Network

'Creating opportunities for the student voice to be heard is less of a challenge than it might appear. A positive school climate is one where each student, especially those who are seldom-heard, can feel that not only is their opinion sought but it is respected and valued. Listening to the student voice on issues that affect them will lead to a happier, more inclusive school.'

Clive Byrne, Director
National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals

'Including young people in our decision-making sessions for the development of our Strategic Plan supported our mission of "providing innovative and relevant services to those most in need". We aim to "treat all young people with a level of respect that they will remember long after our service and support has been received.'

Conor Hickey, Director and CEO
Crosscare

'Meaningful participation is vital to the lives of young people in care. These young people often feel unheard and disempowered – therefore it is extremely important that they are fully involved in decisions affecting their lives. This toolkit is an extensive resource for practitioners working with young people. The toolkit will help support, educate and raise awareness of creating a participative environment. It will help build capacity among practitioners to meaningfully engage with young people. The importance of meaningful participation structures cannot be underestimated or undervalued particularly for young people with care experience. EPIC hopes that this toolkit will assist in embedding a culture of young people's participation resulting in better outcomes for all young people.'

Jennifer Gargan, Director
Empowering People in Care (EPIC)

'When we went to meet the Mayor in the Council I felt like a legend.'

Participant,
AV Programme

'Being involved in funding decisions has been a powerful experience for me.'

Participant, AV Programme

'My Social Worker asks me what I want and gives me choices.'

Participant,
Teenagers &
Children Talking in
Care (TACTIC)

'We had an adult who refused to meet us and ignored a letter we sent him, we couldn't believe it, and then when our project was nearly finished he wanted to know about it.'

Participant, AV Programme

'When we were designing and writing our Information Pack for children and young people when they are first going into care, we felt really listened to; they are our ideas and voices in the finished pack.'

Participant, Teenagers & Children
Talking in Care (TACTIC)

'We sometimes feel not listened to and talked down to.'

Participant,
Teenagers &
Children Talking
in Care (TACTIC)

'When the Kerry County Council helped us get a grant it gave us new opportunities to do more. We feel like they look out for us.'

Kerry Comhairle na nÓg

'A representative from Clare County Council attended our mental health workshop and the council gave us use of their Chambers which showed us great support.'

Clare Comhairle na nÓg

Whole-systems approach

Including seldom-heard children and young people's needs to be embedded in the culture and structure of an organisation if it is to result in their increased and meaningful participation. It does take time, resources and concerted effort from management or it simply will not happen. It is best to adopt a whole-systems approach and framework to ensure the effective participation of seldom-heard children and young people, including;

Culture

Things you can do to promote a culture and shared understanding of participation in your organisation are:

- ◆ Develop or hone an organisational culture that values the input of and listens to all of the staff, volunteers and service users in the organisation. 'Participation' should contribute to an ethos where every person involved with and in the organisation is valued and listened to.
- ◆ Develop a **participation strategy, policy** or **charter**.

SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: PARTICIPATION STRATEGY/CHARTER

- ◆ The NYCI's Youth Participation Charter resource on how to develop a participation charter is freely downloadable at: http://www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/NYCI_WDW_charter_0.pdf
- ◆ Foróige has produced a 'Charter of Rights' booklet to accompany their Charter (available at: <http://www.foroige.ie/sites/default/files/CharterofRightsBooklet.pdf>).



- ◆ Ensure that equality and inclusion, especially 'the participation of seldom-heard children and young people', is cited in your mission statement and/or **organisational policies**. An example of an inclusive mission statement is:

BeLonG To's vision is for an Ireland where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people are empowered to embrace their development and growth confidently and to participate as agents of positive social change.

- ◆ Nominate **participation 'champions'** at all levels in the organisation, including at senior management level. Champions should have a strong understanding of 'participation' and be passionate in their commitment and drive to ensure the inclusion of seldom-heard children and young people in the organisation.
- ◆ Ensure all staff have a firm understanding and grasp of what it means to include seldom-heard children and young people in the decision-making process of the organisation and that part of the organisation for which they have responsibility.
- ◆ Ensure children and young people's participation is on the agenda for meetings.

Structure

Necessary structural changes may include:

- ◆ Allocation of **resources** to the participation of seldom-heard children and young people. While the cost of including seldom-heard children and young people in decision-making in the organisation need not be excessive, resources of time and money need to be allocated to:
 - staff time;
 - transport costs;
 - refreshments at meetings for children and young people;
 - project administration costs.

- ◆ Investment in **staff development and training** on participation and working with seldom-heard children and young people. Do not assume that staff will automatically understand or be open to involving children and young people in decision-making. External expertise and training may be required.
- ◆ Adaption of the organisational **decision-making structures and processes**, e.g.
 - management committee should include people from a diverse range of backgrounds;
 - development of an advisory group of children and young people, including seldom-heard children and young people.
- ◆ Employment of a **'Children and Young People's Participation Officer'** (if possible), whose role is to organise and develop the advisory group of children and young people; train and support the participation 'champions' and all staff; and address any challenges and barriers to participation. As the successful implementation of children and young people's participation takes time and specific skills, it can often fall off the agenda. Having a Children and Young People's Participation Officer provides both a dedicated support to all staff and ensures that children and young people's participation remains on the agenda for all decision-makers and staff within the organisation.
- ◆ Make it a condition of any project funding allocated that decision-making processes include seldom-heard children and young people.

Practice

While it is most likely that practitioners will devise and implement the 'ways of working' and the methods of involvement to include seldom-heard children and young people, it is also important that management engage with the process so that the children and young people have direct access to and relationships with the decision-makers in the organisation. In addition, it is important to develop positive practices, such as:

- ◆ **Support and training for practitioners and management**, including in support and supervision.
- ◆ Having **balanced expectations** of practitioners and the organisation on what can be achieved in any given timeframe.

◆ Practical supports:

- supporting staff to 'let go of the reins' with seldom-heard children and young people. As children and young people have the opportunities to set the agenda, decide on the direction of the project as well as represent the project or group in public and through making presentations, staff should be supported to 'step back' as the public front of the project. This does not undermine the importance of adult support in enabling children and young people to engage;
- encourage and coach staff in a decision-making role to deal with approaches from seldom-heard children and young people in a positive and open way;
- engaging children and young people while still engaging adults, e.g. timing meetings so that they are suitable for both adults and children and young people – 5pm is often a useful time to meet since school has finished and it is still during the working day for adults;
- supporting seldom-heard children and young people to engage with decision-makers;
- acknowledging the additional efforts and resources it involves for staff to include seldom-heard children and young people in decision-making effectively.

Review

While it is challenging to measure change accurately in 'participation', it is very important to monitor and evaluate the progress of the participation of seldom-heard children and young people. Key aspects of any evaluation include:

- ◆ Establishing **realistic aims** at the outset.
- ◆ **Capturing competencies** and learning throughout the process.
- ◆ **Inviting feedback** from the children and young people from the outset.
- ◆ Having the courage and know-how to **change course when things are not working effectively**.



Practitioners'
Toolkit

Alongside management, the practitioner has a pivotal role in shaping, influencing and supporting the growth of the participation culture, structures and practices of the organisation (see pp. 16-19). It is also the role of the practitioner to drive, devise and implement methods to involve and include seldom-heard children and young people.

This Toolkit outlines some methods and tools to help you ensure effective participation. While the bulk of the manual will focus on approaches to better including collectives of seldom-heard children and young people, it is important to listen to individual seldom-heard children and young people as well as in collective groupings. Indeed, to reach some children and young people, you have to approach and engage with them one-to-one.

TOOLKIT TIP

Through an informal sit down and chat, you may need to assess whether the child/young person is able to participate in a group setting. You may need to work with the child/young person on a one-on-one basis until such time as they have the capacity, confidence and discipline to work in a group setting.

Structures for groups of
seldom-heard children and
young people in organisations

Considerations when setting up a group of seldom-heard children and young people

Learning from the DCYA's *Evaluation Report on the Inclusion Programme* (McEvoy, 2009) and the Australian research that informed it (Bell *et al*, 2008), indicates that there is a tendency for organisations to interpret 'children and young people's participation' as the involvement of children and young people through a structured and formalised mechanism, such as a 'children and young people's advisory group'. Often, the reality is that seldom-heard children and young people do not favour these formal structures at the outset because:

- ◆ Seldom-heard children and young people are often unfamiliar or uncomfortable with decision-making processes and are unsure about what is expected of them as participants.
- ◆ 'Speaking up' or 'having a say' can actively deter seldom-heard children and young people who are not confident or comfortable with public speaking and who are intimidated by the prospect of speaking up in front of others.
- ◆ Seldom-heard children and young people are also deterred by the idea of having to 'represent' other children and young people who have similar life experiences.
- ◆ Participating in decision-making processes about programme or policy change is an alien concept and not a priority. This is particularly true for younger children, children and young people in care, and children and young people with a disability, for whom adults (such as carers, teachers, parents and youth workers) are often responsible for key decisions that affect their lives.
- ◆ Some children and young people are so focused on their own issues (e.g. disability or sexual orientation) that they are not always interested in engaging in issues of wider society. This is not to say that they are not capable of this engagement, but rather that they are still embarking on their own voyage of discovery about their own identity and prefer to concentrate on that rather than other issues that might be discussed.
- ◆ Seldom-heard children and young people often have experiences of being involved in groups that have been dominated by very articulate young people.

- ◆ Seldom-heard children and young people often have experience of being involved in groups where adults have set the agenda and decided on the topic of consultation or participation which they may see as of little interest or relevance to them.

Ways to initially attract and involve seldom-heard children and young people

Attracting seldom-heard children and young people to participate in the first instance can be one of the biggest challenges. Exploring what cohorts of seldom-heard children and young people live in your community is an important first step. When first trying to attract seldom-heard children and young people to the organisation, **informal approaches** are more effective because they are less intimidating. Examples of informal mechanisms include:

- ◆ casual chats between service providers and children and young people;
- ◆ social experiences that provide opportunities for 'chatting', such as outings or pizza nights;
- ◆ specific project involvement with a clear goal, e.g. painting the local library or sports grounds;
- ◆ online tools, such as discussion forums, social networking sites and polling;
- ◆ having a one-off consultation on a particular issue of relevance to seldom-heard children and young people.

It is also wise to **work in partnership with established organisations and intermediaries who are known to and trusted by the children and young people you are targeting**. This has the benefit of:

- ◆ ensuring that the initiative is effectively promoted and 'sold' by people that children and young people trust;
- ◆ being made aware of the capacity, interests and motivations of the children and young people involved;
- ◆ having the facility to build the capacity of the children and young people in advance of your initiative starting.

In addition to working directly with organisations, you can also attract seldom-heard children and young people to your initiative by:

- ◆ ensuring meeting times and locations are suitable for young people, e.g. use the first meeting as an opportunity for the participants to have their say on where and when they would like to meet in the future;
- ◆ using inclusive, simple and accessible language;
- ◆ using visuals in posters and promotional materials;
- ◆ having several means of contacting your service, e.g. via social media, text or drop-ins. Indeed, the use of technology – such as SKYPE and FACETIME as well as social media outlets such as FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM, PINTEREST and TUMBLR – is especially important for including children and young people living in rural isolation. While there is a need for the organisation to have a policy on the use of social media and online tools, they should not be overlooked as a significant means of including a diverse range of children and young people;
- ◆ communicating with children and young people and their parents/guardians/carers;
- ◆ conducting an outreach programme to engage directly with children and young people in their own environment;
- ◆ ensuring buildings where meetings are hosted are accessible and attractive for children and young people, e.g. comfortable seats, informal setting (not a Board or formal table and chairs setting), young person-friendly posters and space for activities and team-building;
- ◆ open and welcoming staff and volunteers;
- ◆ encouraging and coaching any decision-makers the group are meeting to be open and positive in their interactions with the group;
- ◆ incentives and benefits for children and young people, e.g. food on arrival and during the meeting, or awarding a certificate for participation;
- ◆ hanging out informally with seldom-heard children and young people where they feel most comfortable, e.g. local shopping centre.

Structured participation groups

These informal approaches and ways of engagement can be used as a stepping stone towards something more structured or permanent while still remaining informal. Indeed, it is important to note that **it is possible to have a group that is structured and also informal**. Traditionally, participation structures have been called a 'reference panel', 'children and young people's advisory

panel' or 'children and young people's forum', but **it is essential to ask the children and young people both how they would like the group to be structured and what they would like to call it.** Structured participation groups should be ongoing (rather than once off consultation) with a defined purpose and child/young person led. Below is some advice on setting up a permanent participation structure.

Before setting up the participation group

- ◆ Promote the participation opportunity through intermediaries and organisations that have close contact with children and young people from diverse backgrounds.
- ◆ Work with organisations and intermediaries who are already well known to, and trusted by, seldom-heard children and young people, e.g. Barnardos for children and young people whose wellbeing is under threat, the Irish Wheelchair Association for people with physical disabilities or BeLonG To for LGBT children and young people (*see list of organisations on pp. 61-63*).
- ◆ Work alongside these organisations to help ensure that children and young people are involved in decision-making that affects their everyday lives (e.g. about education, housing, employment, budgets (since this increases their capacity and motivation to participate in wider decision-making).
- ◆ Clearly communicate that participation is open to children and young people from all backgrounds, not just young leaders or high achievers.
- ◆ Provide space where seldom-heard children and young people can identify issues and topics that are important to them.
- ◆ Engage with parents and key community figures to help to engage children and young people from minority backgrounds.
- ◆ Encourage seldom-heard children and young people to talk about their own views and ideas and make it clear that they are not expected to represent the views of others;
- ◆ Consider the pros and cons of including seldom-heard children and young people in the same groups as their siblings, friends and/or class members;
- ◆ Investigate and develop appropriate online mechanisms and social networking sites to facilitate participation.
- ◆ Remember that the quality and meaningfulness of the process is also important as well as the end result.

Setting up the participation group

- ◆ Introduce the participation process to seldom-heard children and young people on a gradual and phased basis. It will take time to get to grips with new places, processes and people. For example:
 - organise an event that helps participants to get to know each other before commencing the decision-making process;
 - host the initial meeting in a space that seldom-heard children and young people are familiar with, e.g. soccer grounds, local youth services, skate park.
 - host an event where seldom-heard children and young people can learn about decision-making processes before committing to longer term involvement. When the group has chosen the topic, support them to learn about participation processes.
- ◆ After an initial introduction to participants and processes, work with children and young people to establish a clear understanding of expectations, roles and the parameters of the decision-making initiative. Provide an opportunity for seldom-heard children and young people to shape these, rather than locking in the rules of engagement before the project begins. Specifically, ask them how they would like to be involved and what they would like the 'meetings' to be like. Be open to re-thinking your proposed structure to give ownership to the group.
- ◆ Seldom-heard children and young people are not always interested in 'having a say'. Clearly demonstrate the potential or proposed outcomes or reasons for the participation project to children and young people, acknowledge their contributions and explain why some ideas just cannot be realised.
- ◆ Use fun and engaging techniques (*see pp. 69-138*).
- ◆ Build the capacity of the participants using innovative techniques (*see pp. 66-139*).
- ◆ Having previously supported the seldom-heard children and young people to identify topics and issues they feel strongly about and would like to work on, support the group to choose a single topic they want to work on first (*see pp. 117-119 for techniques*)
- ◆ Be prepared to change the pace and/or direction of the group in response to the group's needs.

TOOLKIT TIP

Tip from a young person in Foróige:

'One of the really good things about our first meeting was the "jargon jar". This was used to help us understand the different jargon and words that are used by adults and other young people. If you didn't understand a word, you could put it in the jargon jar and someone had to take it out and explain it.'

Record keeping

File and record keeping should be an integral part of participation work. Record keeping provides a systematic account of the work and serves as a record of decisions made regarding the planning and review of the work. It provides the basis for writing reports which identify issues, outcomes and patterns. Records allow the worker and the group of young people to reflect on their journey through the participation work. Some things to remember about record keeping are:

- ◆ Only information that is needed for the specified purpose of the work with young people should be gathered and recorded;
- ◆ Records should be written in a factual, non-judgmental manner. Distinctions should be made between information that is fact, observation and opinion;
- ◆ Language should be child/young person friendly, non-emotive, concise, direct and to the point;
- ◆ Records should be inclusive of children and young people with their views and inputs clearly noted;
- ◆ Records should be written as soon as possible after contact/meetings;
- ◆ Project records should be readily available to children/young people and their families. Ideally your records should be used as part of the work you do with the young people; bring the group file into your sessions, tell the young people why you keep it and what is in it.

Let them read and comment on it. Reference it in your work – “Can somebody check the record book to see what we said about this last time?”

- ◆ Individual participant records that include details about consent, medical information or any other private information should be filed separately and kept confidential.

Your publicly available record file might include:

- ◆ Cover sheet: Names of the group, start and end dates;
- ◆ Attendance Records: Information on who attended what sessions;
- ◆ Programme plan: Overall plan for the group including the desired outcomes, the steps that will be taken to achieve these outcomes, the programme outline and any practical information for the project e.g. health and safety measures, co-working agreements;
- ◆ Session plan and Session review: Records the desired outcomes and associated activities for each session. After the session, activities are reviewed to consider what worked well, what did not work and what changes are required for future sessions. Planning and reviewing of activities are combined in one place to enable ease of linking the planning with the reviewing of each session;
- ◆ Work Plan: Record details on the content and actual outcomes/ achievements of each session;
- ◆ Overall Evaluation: Completed when the project is finished, consider the desired outcomes for the group and whether these have been achieved, any learning gained and any follow up issues or changes required to the project. Include the perspectives of young people and Facilitators.

Your confidential record file might include:

- ◆ Consent and Assent Forms including contact and medical information for each participant (See Sample Assent and Consent forms in Appendix 2 and 2a.)
- ◆ Child protection records: Any concerns relating to child protection and welfare should be recorded on the Standard Reporting Form for Reporting Child Protection and Welfare Concerns (Children First)

Example of an INFORMAL participation structure for children and young people

Case Study

Amplifying Voices (Barnardos)

<http://www.barnardos.ie/what-we-do/our-services/specialist-services/amplifying-voices.html>

Amplifying Voices (AV) is a 4 year initiative that aims to engage groups of young people aged between 10 – 15 years. AV seeks to target young people who are not actively engaged in existing participatory structures. Young people must reside within or access services within one of the three geographical catchment areas of Amplifying Voices, namely Finglas, Tallaght and Mulhuddart.

The AV initiative seeks to be inclusive of young people from a variety of circumstances. Where children have specialist needs, Amplifying Voices work in partnership with other agencies that have the specific skills required to engage meaningfully with the young person. The AV initiative also works with adults within the context of building their capacity to enable young people's participation.

The Amplifying Voices initiative defines participation in the following way:

Participation is a process wherein young people and adults work together to actively seek to understand views, experiences and ideas in order to bring about changes on issues that matter to the young people.

Recruitment of programme participants

Children and Young people are recruited in a number of ways. In one area, the participants are recruited from previous summer programmes and play days run by Barnardos. Other groups are identified through working in partnership with community based service providers. In addition, several open evenings for children/young people and parent/guardians/carers have been staged. It is vital that both the parent and young person give

informed consent to participate in this initiative and therefore this requires the Participation and Rights Coordinators to engage with parents through home visits. The support and understanding from parents/guardians is vital to ensure support for the young people when a topic of work is identified.

Amplifying Voices Participation Programme

AV is a young person-led initiative and decisions regarding all aspects of the group are taken by the young people with the support of the Participation and Rights Coordinators. The group are full partners in deciding the location, time and frequency of the group as well as snacks etc. Each session starts informally with a check in, where participants come in, relax and chat about their week. This informal approach allows for trust to build within the group and the Facilitator can record the recurring themes in conversation. These themes may form the basis of the project identified by the group. The participants are also facilitated to explore topics on *'how I experience my community'* and *'changes I would like to see in my community'*. Topics identified by AV groups have included *'positive mental wellbeing'*, *'power'*, *'having a voice'*, and *'having a safe space to play'*.

15 Smiles

This project was developed by two young people from Dublin 15 who wanted to change how they and their peers receive mental health information through school based workshops. Following several years of hearing the same message about suicide and depression, the young people felt that the information was focusing on the negatives of mental health and missing the element of promoting positive mental well-being. Following some research into the power of smiling and laughing the young people developed a website that encourages smiling through inspirational quotes and uplifting images. The website is interactive and allows users to submit images and quotes. The young people are also working with mental health professionals to help change what information is delivered to schools. <http://www.15smiles.ie>

Example of FORMAL participation structure for children and young people

Case Study

Youth Participation Advisory Committee (Foróige)

What is the Youth Participation Advisory Committee?

Foróige's Youth Participation Advisory Committee aims to plan, advise and evaluate children and young people's participation across the entire organisation. Children and young people's participation in Foróige is about young people actively influencing decisions and the direction of the organisation by voicing their opinions, attitudes, perspectives and values. The committee is made up of young people, volunteers, youth workers and members of senior management. The young people are all members of children and young people's participation structures in their local Foróige club, project or service, and are elected to the committee by their peers and represent their own views as well as the young people from their own local area. The committee meets 4-5 times per year on a Saturday or for a full day (11am-4pm) during the holidays. Support is given to the young people to travel to the meetings and to ensure they fully understand all information given or discussed at the meetings.

Structure of the committee

Young people outnumber the adults on the committee – there are 12 young people and 8 adults. The committee itself is not a decision-making body or action-led group. Rather, it influences others into taking action through committee members voicing their opinions, attitudes, perspectives and values. Young people and adults work in partnership, with equal weight being given to the opinions of both parties. The committee meets with various Foróige departments throughout the year (including Human Resources, Volunteer Management, Communications, Training and Programmes, and Fundraising) and works with them to develop best practice strategies to ensure young people are actively influencing decisions within their departments.

What impact has the committee had on the organisation?

The committee has actively influenced a number of major decisions within Foróige over the last number of years. These range from the very tangible, which can be written in reports and funding applications, to the sometimes intangible but equally valuable. The committee has:

- ◆ ensured that children and young people's participation is a key element of all Foróige plans;
- ◆ examined and influenced each specific annual children and young people's participation plan for Foróige;
- ◆ given input into and attended children and young people's participation training for staff, volunteers and young people;
- ◆ established best practice guidelines for children/young people and adults when children/young people are attending events on behalf of Foróige;
- ◆ designed the content and outline for Foróige Youth Participation Regional Seminars, events where representatives from children and young people's participation structures discuss issues that affect them, their friends and their community and make recommendations to Foróige on these issues;
- ◆ co-written funding applications;
- ◆ influenced the work of many Foróige departments to ensure children and young people's participation is a key priority.

The committee has also been crucial in ensuring that children and young people's participation is at the forefront of the minds of senior management in Foróige, who have openly and regularly commented that because of the committee, children and young people's participation is on their minds outside of meeting times when making day-to-day decisions and meeting with other members of Foróige's senior management, external organisations, politicians, funders and other decisions-makers.

How to bring a group to a close

Whether it is a long-term or short-term initiative, bringing a group to an effective close is an important aspect of participation work. Children and young people may end their participation in the group at different stages; some may only engage for a specific issue or a couple of sessions, some

may find it difficult to remain in a group whilst others may participate throughout the process. Regardless of when the child/young person leaves, leaving the group should be a positive and planned experience for each participant. There may be a mix of emotions for both the participants and the participation worker. When the person is leaving or when the group is ending;

Be open about talking to the participants about the approaching end: *"we only have four more sessions left"*;

- ◆ Ask the participants how they would like to end and say goodbye as a group and what this might look like for them;
- ◆ Acknowledge the children/young people's feelings and allow time in the session to talk these through;
- ◆ Ask the participants whether they would like to mark closure of the group with a celebration event of their choice e.g. public event where parents/guardians are invited, private celebration with the group only, presentation of certificates, an outing or any other ideas put forward by the group;
- ◆ Conduct a final evaluation with the group on the benefits, challenges and learning from participating in the group.

Some young people may have unmet needs at the end of the process. While it is important to remember that the service is not a therapeutic service, children and young people should be referred to an appropriate local service provider for further support (See 'Useful Contacts' on pages 61-63)

TOOLKIT TIP

'Consultation' and 'participation' can often be confused. Consulting children and young people gives them the opportunity to express their views and opinions on a particular matter on a once-off basis. Participation is a more long-term approach or strategy that gives young people the opportunity to express their views and opinions on an ongoing basis and to actually influence decision-making at all levels of an organisation.

Creating a safe and friendly
environment for seldom-heard
children and young people

Creating a safe environment for participation

Creating a safe environment in which seldom-heard children and young people can participate is of the utmost importance. Obligations to protect children are set out in *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (DCYA, 2011a)*. It is the Government's intention to place elements of Children First on a statutory footing. All organisations that work directly with children and young people should ensure that their policies and procedures are in keeping with 'Children First' guidance and legislation.



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: CHILD PROTECTION

- ◆ *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* (HSE, 2011)
<http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/Publications/ChildrenFirst.pdf>
- ◆ *Protecting our Children and Young People: An NYCI Toolkit for Youth Work Organisations to design, review and evaluate their child protection policy* (NYCI, 2012)
http://childprotection.ie/sites/childprotection.ie/files/Protecting_our_Children_and_Young_People_NYCI.pdf
- ◆ The Child Protection Programme (www.childprotection.ie), based in the National Youth Council of Ireland and funded by the DCYA:
 - builds the capacity of youth organisations to safeguard and protect children and young people;
 - develops and delivers child protection training to staff and volunteers at all levels of responsibility in a youth work organisation;
 - provides access for small youth work organisations to the Garda Vetting Unit through membership of the Youth Work Garda Vetting Consortium;
 - advocates on behalf of the youth work sector for measures that safeguard and protect children and young people.

In addition to Children First, the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, you can also help to create a safe environment for participation by:

- ◆ ensuring the building and organisation used to host your group is insured and covered for risk;
- ◆ displaying information and awareness-raising materials e.g. posters celebrating Traveller Pride week or 'Stand Up' against homophobic bullying posters;
- ◆ having information and lists of services to refer people to e.g. information on disability services or welfare services. Liaise with relevant agencies to get stocks of their materials (see pp. 61-63 for contact details);
- ◆ develop links with your local Children and Young Person's Services Committee to get information on local services and initiatives and to feed in the ideas of the children and young people you work with to their strategy. www.cypsc.ie
- ◆ forging links with organisations that can provide expert information on a particular cohort of children and young people e.g. organisations that support children and young people's mental health needs or that support children and young people in care (see pp. 61-63 for contact details);
- ◆ addressing stigma about participation in groups in a sensitive manner in the early stages of the group;
- ◆ addressing bullying, name-calling, homophobia, transphobia, sexism or any form of discrimination in a direct, but constructive manner as it arises. You will be greatly aided if your organisation or agency has a clear anti-bullying policy. If it does not, the NYCI's (2007) Let's Beat Bullying resource outlines clear steps on how to develop an anti-bullying policy as well as a framework for policy development;
- ◆ developing a safe strategy for the use of social media by accessing the most up to date available information and advice.



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: ADDRESSING BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

- ◆ *Let's Beat Bullying* (NYCI, 2007)
http://www.youthhealth.ie/sites/youthhealth.ie/files/NYCI_LETS_BEAT_BULLYING.pdf
- ◆ *Action Plan on Bullying: Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills* (Department of Education and Skills, 2013)
<http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf>
- ◆ *Addressing Homophobia: Homophobic Bullying Guidelines for the Youth Work Sector* (BeLonG To, 2009)
http://belongto.org/attachments/233_Homophobic_Bullying_Guidelines_for_the_Youth_Work_Sector.pdf



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY

- ◆ *Office for Internet Safety Ireland*
<http://www.internetsafety.ie/website/ois/oisweb.nsf/page/safety-guidechildren-en>
- ◆ *SpunOut.ie*
<http://spunout.ie/life/article/internet-safetyUK>
- ◆ *Safer Internet Centre*
<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/young-people/>
- ◆ *Think U Know, from the National Crime Agency UK*
<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- ◆ *NSPCC*
<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>

Meetings between seldom-heard children, young people and adults

Where a model of sharing power exists, you will also have meetings or events where children and young people as well as adults are involved.

The checklist on pages 42-44 will help you ensure that you prepare a safe and friendly environment and an accessible and inclusive event for the seldom-heard children and young people involved.



CREATING A SAFE AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT – CHECKLIST

CONSENT

ACTION COMPLETED

Secure consent from each child in attendance, ensuring that they realise they can withdraw from the event at any point if they are not happy or comfortable.	
Secure written consent from the child's parent/guardian/carer.	
Ensure consent includes written permission for the use of any photos or film generated as part of the event (and that children can opt out easily if they prefer).	
Additional consent may be required for particular trips, outings or activities (e.g. overnights)	

CHILD PROTECTION

Refer to your agency's child protection policies and 'Children First' for guidance	
Ensure that all adult participants are vetted and cleared to work alongside children and young people.	
Discuss confidentiality within the group and explain what is kept confidential and what cannot be kept confidential (e.g. if a disclosure is made that indicates someone is at risk of harm).	
Break out groups should be in small groups rather than pairs so that no child and adult are alone together.	

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INCLUSION

Ensure that all activities are understandable as well as child/youth-friendly.	
Ensure that all materials use accessible language and are appropriate to the age and capacities of the children involved.	
Use language that is easily understandable and avoids jargon – use the 'jargon jar' idea (see p. 29).	
Ensure that any transport costs are covered for each child and young person.	

LOCATION, VENUE AND REFRESHMENTS

Is the venue covered for risk and insured?	
Is the venue easy to get to on public transport for children and young people?	
Is the venue space comfortable, appropriately decorated, with child/youth-friendly materials, and safe?	
Is there enough room to conduct activities and stick outputs on the wall (e.g. flipcharts)?	
Are there child/youth-friendly refreshments available on arrival and at lunchtime?	

ACTIVITIES AND AGENDA ITEMS

Don't assume that you know what children and young people will say – be respectful and listen to what they actually say.	
Use methods and tools of facilitation that are child and youth-friendly.	
Explain how decisions will be followed up.	

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TOOLBOX

ALL
AGE
GROUPS

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PARTICIPATION OF ADULTS IN THE GROUP

Ensure all adults understand the nature and purpose of the meeting.	
Ensure adults are open to participate in two way dialogue and are open to challenge from seldom-heard children and young people.	
Support adults to be ready to share power with seldom-heard children and young people.	

Sensitivity and awareness of the needs of seldom-heard children and young people

Seldom-heard children and young people can often have a number of needs that you should be aware of, be sensitive to and have a plan of action for dealing with, including:

RISK	ACTIONS
Seldom-heard children and young people may be stigmatised or mocked by their peers and may not receive the support of their parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Acknowledge that it is courageous to get involved in the group. ◆ Be aware that you may need to keep their participation private (e.g. no photos on social media sites or in any promotional materials). ◆ Explore with each child/young person on a one-on-one basis whether there is anything the organisation can do to support their involvement.

<p>Seldom-heard children and young people may have literacy issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use simple and accessible language when talking with the group. ◆ Use simple and accessible language in any written materials. ◆ Ensure any activities or games do not demand literacy skills until you have assessed whether the participants are all able to read and write to a reasonable level. ◆ Continue with activities that do not demand literacy skills if one of the participants does not have good abilities in this area.
<p>When children and young people have significant issues and needs of their own, it is a challenge for them to be part of a group that requires listening to others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Spend considerable time at the beginning on team-building and listening games and activities. (See pp. 51-58) ◆ Conduct at least one 'listening game' per session. ◆ Openly state that while you really want to hear what each participant has to say, it is really important that everyone gets a chance to speak and that everyone is respected and listened to when they do speak.
<p>Young people may be open about their identity in your group, but not outside your group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Don't assume that the participants are open about their identity outside the group. ◆ Don't ask the child/young person to 'represent' any cohort of children and young people. Let them know you are interested in what <i>they</i> have to say for themselves.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ While you may want to highlight the success of the programme, it is essential to include the participants in the decision as to whether they want the outcomes of their programme to be made public. ◆ Consider whether children and young people wish to have their identity revealed outside the group and explore whether it is safe for them to be identified (e.g. one Amplifying Voices group presented their project using photographs that were taken in a way that allowed all participants to remain anonymous). ◆ Seek up to date guidance on the safe use of media/social media with children and young people and ensure you have appropriate consent from parent/guardian/your agency.
<p>Young people may not be ready to be involved in a participation process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assess whether child/young person is ready/able to participate in a group participation process. ◆ If not, refer child/young person to a service that can meet their current needs/priorities. ◆ Ensure they understand you will be happy to work with them in future when the time is right for them.

Sensitivity and awareness of the needs of the practitioner

It is also important to be aware of your own sensitivities and need for support when you are constantly listening to the stories of seldom-heard children and young people. Practitioners may experience stories from children and young people's lives that are difficult to hear.

How to deal with hearing difficult stories from seldom-heard children and young people

- ◆ Make your supervisor aware of the types of issues you are dealing with and stories you are hearing. Ensure that this is a topic for discussion at 'support and supervision'.
- ◆ Be aware that you may feel emotionally drained after some sessions with children and young people, particularly when they first reveal their 'story'.
- ◆ Stay within the limitation of your role. You do not have to take on responsibilities you are not trained for and that will likely lead to burnout.
- ◆ Ensure that your workload stays manageable.
- ◆ Recognise and reward the work of the team working on the programme.
- ◆ Allow for some unstructured time to talk to your programme colleagues to give and receive support.
- ◆ Hold regular social events.
- ◆ Make use of support external to your agency (e.g. staff counselling, critical incidences debriefing) if staff are seriously impacted by the situation of children and young people and the expertise does not exist in your agency.
- ◆ Ensure staff have the information and support to refer children and young people to other services including Tusla Child Protection and Welfare Services.
- ◆ Report any child protection concerns (see p. 38).

Tools you can use to help you deal with some of these sensitivities focus on 'really listening to a child and young person' and encouraging the children and young people in the group to 'listen to each other'.



REALLY LISTENING TO A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON

<p>PREPARE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consider what are the most effective listening tools/games, including alternative strategies such as art, drama and role play, to use with the group (see pp. 51-58) ◆ Think about what language you might feel comfortable using and how to make your conversation natural.
<p>LISTEN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Give the child/young person your full attention. Rather than thinking of things you can say when they stop or waiting for them to hesitate for a while so that you can say something, try to just listen. Give them room to tell their story – they may never have told it before, especially in a group. ◆ It is a very empowering experience for a child/young person to share their story and have another person truly hear it.
<p>RESPOND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Respond to the emotion, not the actual words. Angry words may conceal fear and guilt. Try to understand and respond to the underlying emotion. The child/young person will likely trust and open up more. ◆ You do not have to offer solutions. ◆ Do not react in an emotional or judgemental way. ◆ Reflect back what they say so they know that you heard them. Use the same language that the participant used. ◆ Empathise. ◆ Acknowledge the courage and trust it took for the child or young person to share their story. ◆ Record the themes and issues that children and young people bring up so that you can look back at the patterns that are coming up over a period of time.

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REMEMBER!

- ◆ You won't always get the response right.
- ◆ Make sure you are supported yourself so that you can continue to support children and young people.
- ◆ Respect their confidentiality, but be honest with them that you have to tell others who need to know if there is a risk to them or another person.
- ◆ You do not have to deal with this alone. You can refer the child/young person to a professional who can help. Talk to the child/young person about this first.
- ◆ Even if you do refer the child/young person to someone else, check in with them about the issue – remember, it was you they spoke with first.

WE ARE LISTENING!*Case
Study*

At a Barnardos project, the Facilitators recorded some of the key words that the participants used throughout their discussions on their project. After a number of weeks, these key words were collated and made into a wordle (www.wordle.net) to illustrate the main ideas that were emerging and to demonstrate that the voices of the participants had been heard. The children and young people involved were surprised, impressed and proud that what they said had really been heard and valued.

Emotion Language Remember
 Reflect Listen
 Empathise Respond Prepare









SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: LISTENING TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- ◆ Advice from Jigsaw on how to listen to a child or young person
<http://www.jigsaw.ie/page/listening-young-person>
- ◆ Advice from Jigsaw on how to deal with sensitive issues <http://www.jigsaw.ie/page/dealing-sensitive-issues>



LISTENING GAMES FOR ALL AGE GROUPS:

Games that help children and young people learn the skill of listening and encourage them to listen to each other

GAME	WHAT TO DO
<p>MY FRIEND WENT TO THE SHOP</p>	<p>Young people sit in an inward-facing circle. One child/young person begins by saying 'My friend went to the shop and bought...' and names an item such as 'chocolate biscuits'. The next child/young person repeats the sentence, including 'chocolate biscuits' and adding another item, e.g. 'a hoodie'. Each child/young person in turn repeats the sentence, all the previous items and adds a new item, until someone makes a mistake. The sentence then begins again.</p> <div style="float: right;">   </div>
<p>STORY ROUNDABOUT</p>	<p>The children and young people sit in an inward-facing circle. A child/young person or Facilitator begins a story which each person in turn continues by adding a sentence, e.g. 'There was once a person called Sam who loved music' 'I met a Sam on the bus yesterday' 'We chatted about her favourite band'</p> <div style="float: right;">   </div>
<p>SNOWFLAKE</p>	<p>Give each participant a blank A4 or A3 sheet of paper. Ask the participants to hold up their sheet of paper in front of them. Now ask them to close their eyes. Participants cannot open their eyes and cannot ask questions. They must follow the instructions they are given as they hear them. Do not repeat the instruction.</p> <div style="float: right;">   </div>

TOOLBOX

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GROUPS

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SNOWFLAKE

(CONT.)

Give the following directions and follow them yourself with your own piece of paper:

- ◆ Fold your sheet of paper in half.
- ◆ Now tear off the upper/top right-hand corner.
- ◆ Fold your paper in half again.
- ◆ Tear off the upper/top left-hand corner.
- ◆ Fold it in half again.
- ◆ Tear off the lower/bottom right-hand corner.
- ◆ Open your eyes and have a look at your sheet!

Show the group your sheet and what it should look like if they followed the instructions accurately. Have a look at everyone's sheet. Are they all the same? It is likely that all of the sheets will be different! You can lead a discussion with some of the following questions:

- 1 Why is it that even though everyone received the same directions, not everyone had the same outcome?
(Why do you think the sheets are all different?)
- 2 What would have changed if you could have asked questions?
- 3 Have you ever told someone one thing only to have the person hear and do something different? What happened, and how did you deal with it?

Explain that communication always works better if people listen AND if people are able to ask questions!

LISTEN AND LEARN

Ask each participant to pull a question (see *samples below*) from a jar in the centre of the table/floor. Ask each person to answer the question they have pulled out. Make sure everyone has had a go and answered one question. Now randomly ask each participant to paraphrase the answer given by another participant, e.g. Dylan, what is the best holiday that Anne ever had? Julia, what is Mary's favourite movie?

- ◆ What sport do you enjoy doing the most?
- ◆ What is one word to describe you?
- ◆ Who is your hero among famous athletes, singers, actors, etc?
- ◆ What animal would you be if you could be any one and why?
- ◆ What is your favourite month of the year and why?
- ◆ What is your favourite movie?
- ◆ What is your favourite toy or possession?
- ◆ What book would you recommend everyone to read?
- ◆ What is your favourite ice-cream flavour?
- ◆ What was the best holiday you ever had?
- ◆ If you could go anywhere today, where would you go and why?
- ◆ Who do you look up to most and why?
- ◆ What is (was) your favourite subject in school?
- ◆ What do you want to do when you grow up or in your future?
- ◆ Where is the farthest place that you have travelled?
- ◆ Where is your favourite place to be and why?



TOOLBOX

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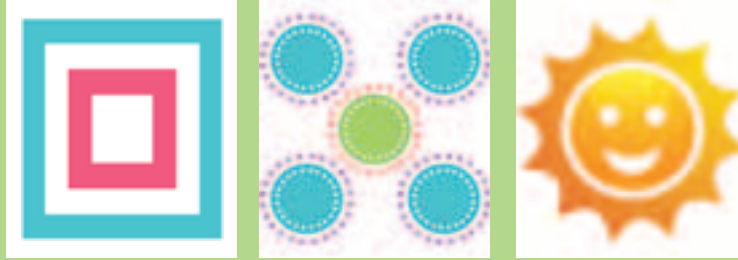
ALL
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**DRAW
WHAT YOUR
PARTNER
TELLS YOU
TO!**

(See Appendix
3 for resources
to use with this
activity)

Arrange participants in two lines of chairs, sitting back to back. People in one line have pens and paper, while those in the other line don't. A participant in the line without pen and paper is shown a drawing such as:



The person with the drawing has to describe what they see to the person sitting behind them who has a pen and paper, and they have to draw what is described. Nobody is allowed turn around during the exercise.

In the end, show all the work and see how well they did. You can give both lines a chance to draw something different. After the drawing exercise, you can ask questions like:

- ◆ Was it easy to explain what you were looking at?
- ◆ Was it easy to listen to your partner?
- ◆ What did you find difficult about listening/describing?
- ◆ Were you surprised by anything?
- ◆ What other situations might prevent you from really listening to people in everyday life?
- ◆ What can you do to try and change this?



LISTENING GAMES (YOUNG PEOPLE, AGE 13+)

GAME

WHAT TO DO

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

One person has to speak on any topic for a minute. One other person has to actively listen and repeat back what they said. Everyone else in the group has to listen too.

When the person has finished feeding back what was said, ask the group did they miss anything?

Ask what it was like to actively listen and to be listened to.

Topics could include:

- ◆ Sport
- ◆ Music
- ◆ TV
- ◆ Dance
- ◆ Friends

WALK IN MY SHOES

- ◆ Give each participant a role card with a character on it and ask them to play that character, e.g.
 - young man with depression;
 - pensioner with very bad medical condition – needs medication to survive;
 - young gay man;
 - 15-year-old caring for your very sick parents;
 - young woman with a brilliant job;
 - 17-year-old homeless woman;
 - ex-prisoner;
 - wheelchair user;
 - 15-year-old where one of your parents is in prison;
 - member of your local Comhairle;
 - head of your Student Council
 - victim of a crime that everyone knows about.



TOOLBOX

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13+



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TOOLBOX

AGE
13+
ONLY

13+

WALK
IN MY
SHOES
(CONT.)

- ◆ Ask the participants to keep the identity of their character a secret.
- ◆ Ask them to line up at one end of the room.
- ◆ Advise the participants that you are going to ask a number of questions. If they think the answer would be YES for their character, they should move one step or place forward. If they think the answer would be NO for their character, they should move one step. If they are not sure, they should not move. Sample questions to ask include:
 - Do people listen to you?
 - Are you respected in your local community?
 - Are you always able to pay your bills on time?
 - Are you welcome in the community you live in?
 - Do you feel you are able to make choices about how you live?
 - Did/do you enjoy your education?
 - Would you find it easy to get a job?
 - Do you feel safe where you live?
 - Can you make long-term plans?
 - Are you able to live where you like?
- ◆ Once all of the questions are complete, you can ask the participants to return to the group to discuss:
 - How did you feel when others moved ahead?
 - How did you make decisions about whether to move or not?
 - Were you honest throughout?
 - Were you aware of what was happening behind you?
 - What advice would you give to each other about the roles they are in?
 - Did anything surprise you?
 - How did you feel being in that role?



LISTENING GAMES (CHILDREN, UNDER 12)

GAME	WHAT TO DO
CLAPPING GAME	<p>The Facilitator tells the children that one clap means 'stand', two claps mean 'march' on the spot and three claps mean 'sit'. The Facilitator or a child/young person stands in the centre and claps instructions. The children and young people must listen very carefully to the clapped instructions each time so they follow them correctly.</p>  
CAR, BUS, LORRY	<p>The children and young people stand in an inward-facing circle. Each child says in turn 'car', 'bus' or 'lorry'. If any child gets the sequence wrong, he or she is out and sits down. Start by going in a circle and then mix it up by pointing at people randomly.</p>  
SAM SAYS	<p>Explain that participants have to listen carefully to the instructions. Where 'Sam says' is before an instruction, they should follow that instruction (e.g. Sam says 'sit down' – they should sit down). When 'Sam says' is NOT before an instruction, they should NOT follow that instruction and they should continue doing what they are already doing (e.g. 'STAND UP' – they should stay sitting and NOT stand up. Anyone who stands up is out).</p> 

TOOLBOX

UNDER
12
ONLY

-12

Learning to listen – Teenagers and Children Talking in Care (TACTIC)

Case Study

In 2010, the DCYA conducted consultations with 210 children and young people in care from all over Ireland. The report of the consultations was called Listen to Our Voices (DCYA, 2011b). The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs set up a group called Teenagers and Children Talking in Care (TACTIC) to drive forward the recommendations from the report. TACTIC comprises 13 children and young people who are currently in or who have been in care and who were at the Listen to Our Voices consultations.

When the group first got together, each child was very focused on their own story and circumstances. This is both to be expected and completely understandable. However, if the group was to work effectively together, they also needed to focus on something outside of their own immediate circumstances and to learn to listen to each other. The team of Facilitators took the following approach:

- ◆ providing a safe space for each child/young person to talk about themselves when they wanted (using the tools outlined in 'Really Listening to a Young Person', see pp. 48-49);
- ◆ encouraging 'one voice' at any one time;
- ◆ encouraging the participants to really listen to what other people are saying when they speak and not just wait for a chance to speak themselves;
- ◆ including at least one of the 'Listening Games' (see the list above) at every session.

TACTIC has now produced an information pack that is given to all children and young people *when they first go into care*. TACTIC has also made presentations to key stakeholders and decision-makers to great effect.

SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: LISTENING GAMES

- ◆ Drama Toolkit (Participation Works)
<http://www.dramatoolkit.co.uk/drama-games/category/listening>
- ◆ Buzzle
<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/active-listening-activities.html>

Further resources for working with and supporting particular groups of children and young people

Some children and young people have additional needs that you should be aware of, be sensitive to and have a plan of action for dealing with. The National Youth Council of Ireland has put together a fantastic resource called *Access All Areas: A Diversity Toolkit for the Youth Work Sector*, with advice on how to work with and support particular cohorts of children and young people (NYCI, 2012). The toolkit assists you to:

- ◆ **Assess** how well you are currently doing by proofing your work with specialised checklists.
- ◆ **Plan** by providing information about needs, demographics, resources and useful contacts.
- ◆ Provide better service to all groups by giving **practical advice**.
- ◆ Develop **policies** by providing guidelines.

The resource is freely available to download in full at <http://www.youth.ie/diversity> and there is also an accompanying video series (http://www.youth.ie/act_on_inclusion) that can be used as a standalone resource to raise discussions with youth groups or in conjunction with the Diversity Toolkit, which includes the following chapters:

SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: SUPPORTING PARTICULAR GROUPS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Access All Areas: A Diversity Toolkit for the Youth Work Sector (NYCI, 2012)

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Chapter 1 | Promoting inclusive youth work practice – Organisational support |
| Chapter 2 | Working with children and young people from a minority ethnic background |
| Chapter 3 | Working with young LGBT people |
| Chapter 4 | Working with young Travellers |

continued over

- Chapter 5 Working with children and young people with a physical disability, who have sight loss or who are deaf
- Chapter 6 Working with children and young people with a learning disability
- Chapter 7 Working with children and young people with mental health issues
- Chapter 8 Working with children and young people involved in juvenile justice
- Chapter 9 Working with young parents
- Chapter 10 Working with children and young people who have left school early
- Chapter 11 Working with young men and young women to challenge gender stereotypes
- Chapter 12 Working with young carers
- Chapter 13 Working across the generations

TOOLKIT TIP

Other cohorts of children and young people that might have additional needs that you should be sensitive to include:

- children and young people living in rural isolation;
- children and young people who live in homes where there is domestic violence;
- children and young people in hospital;
- children and young people living in a home where there is addiction;
- children and young people in care;
- homeless children and young people;
- refugees and asylum-seekers.

Useful contacts for working with and supporting particular groups of children and young people

It is not possible to be informed on the needs of such a diverse range of seldom-heard children and young people. Depending on the seldom-heard children and young people that your organisation attracts or wants to attract, it is important to develop relationships with and learn from the organisations that support children and young people from that background on an ongoing basis. Useful contacts for such organisations are outlined below.

COHORT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	ORGANISATION
Children and Young People whose wellbeing is under threat	Barnardos Tel: (01) 453 0355 Email: info@barnardos.ie Web: www.barnardos.ie
Children in hospital	YooBYoo (formerly Children in Hospital Ireland) Tel: 1890 25 26 82 E-mail: info@yoobyoo.ie Web: http://yoobyoo.ie
Early school leavers	YouthReach Tel: (01) 453 5487 E-mail: youthreachinfo@cdu.cdvec.ie Web: www.youthreach.ie
Homeless young people	Focus Ireland Tel: (01) 881 5900 E-mail: info@focusireland.ie Web: www.focusireland.ie
LGBT children and young people	BeLonG To Tel: (01) 670 6223 E-mail: info@belong.org Web: www.belongto.org
Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO)	Tel: 1800 20 20 40 E-mail: oco@oco.ie Web: www.oco.ie
Pregnant and Parenting Teenagers	Teenage Parent Support Programme Tel: (01) 670 0167 Email: tpsp@treoir.ie Web: www.tpsp.ie

<p>Refugees and asylum-seekers</p>	<p>Irish Refugee Council Tel: 1890 25 26 82 E-mail: info@irishrefugeecouncil.ie Web: www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie</p>
<p>Young carers</p>	<p>Young Carers Tel: (057) 932 2920 E-mail: info@youngcarers.ie Web: www.youngcarers.ie</p>
<p>Young parents</p>	<p>Teen Parents Support Programme Tel: (01) 670 0167 E-mail: tpsp@treoir.ie Web: www.tpsp.ie</p>
<p>Young people from an ethnic minority</p>	<p>Migrants Rights Centre Ireland Tel: (01) 889 7570 E-mail: info@mrci.ie Web: www.mrci.ie/our-work/young-people-education</p> <p>Immigrants Council Ireland Tel: (01) 674 0202 E-mail: admin@immigrantcouncil.ie Web: www.immigrantcouncil.ie</p>
<p>Young people in care</p>	<p>Tusla, Child and Family Agency Tel: (01) 635 2854 E-mail: info@tusla.ie Web: www.tusla.ie</p> <p>Empowering People in Care (EPIC) Tel: (01) 872 7661/(087) 903 6598 (for text messages) E-mail: info@epiconline.ie Web: www.epiconline.ie</p> <p>EXTERN Tel: (045) 878720 E-mail: externireland@extern.org Web: www.extern.org</p> <p>Youth Advocate Programme Tel: (01) 868 9180 or (087) 780 5905 E-mail: info@yapireland.ie Web: www.yapireland.ie</p>

Young people involved in juvenile justice	<p>Irish Youth Justice Service (DCYA) Tel: (01) 647 3000 E-mail: iyjs@justice.ie Web: www.iyjs.ie/en/IYJS/Pages/WP08000062</p>
Young people living in rural isolation	<p>Irish Rural Link Tel: (090) 648 2744 E-mail: info@irishrurallink.ie Web: www.irishrurallink.ie</p>
Young people with a learning disability	<p>Inclusion Ireland Tel: (01) 855 9891 E-mail: info@inclusionireland.ie Web: www.inclusionireland.ie</p>
Young people with a physical disability	<p>Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) Tel: (01) 818 6400 E-mail: info@iwa.ie Web: www.iwa.ie/services/youth-services</p> <p>The IWA deliver a Disability Awareness workshop to interested participants. They also have a number of DVD resources, one of which provides guidance on what young people with a physical disability want when people relate to them and another on how young people with physical disabilities are viewed in education settings by their teachers and peers without disabilities (see www.iwa.ie/services/youth-services/youth-dvds).</p>
Young people with mental health issues	<p>Headstrong & Jigsaw Tel: (01) 472 7010 E-mail: info@headstrong.ie Web: www.headstrong.ie</p> <p>REACHOUT Tel: (01) 764 5666 E-mail: info@inspireireland.ie Web: www.reachout.com</p>
Young Travellers	<p>Pavee Point Tel: (01) 878 0255 E-mail: info@paveepoint.ie Web: www.paveepoint.ie/resources/youth</p>

Ways to engage with
seldom-heard children
and young people

Capacity-building with groups of seldom-heard children and young people

There are multiple ways to engage with seldom-heard children and young people. However, it is important to realise that it takes **time to build trust and rapport** between practitioners and children and young people. It also takes time for the children and young people in the group to learn to trust each other. Any child/young person joining a group for the first time might feel wary, vulnerable or nervous. Seldom-heard children and young people can often be more vulnerable so ample time should be dedicated to building rapport and trust. This can often be done through **spending time with the group, hanging out and getting to know the child/young person**. In addition, it is likely to be an alien concept to many seldom-heard children and young people to be asked to be involved in a 'participation' initiative and to give their views. They will likely need some new skills in order to be able to participate in a meaningful way (as illustrated in the case study below).

AMPLIFYING VOICES SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Case Study

Early in the lifespan of Amplifying Voices, it was identified that not every young person who expressed an interest in the AV programme had the core skills to function in a group setting. Rather than exclude these young people from the initiative, a Skills Programme was developed to help young people develop the skills to better engage with AV and progress towards joining a group and working on a project. The Skills Programme was designed to enhance children and young people's capacity to engage in groups through increasing their:

- ◆ Skills;
- ◆ Ability to express their views effectively;
- ◆ Ability to listen to and consider the views of others;
- ◆ Ability to work cooperatively with peers and adults;
- ◆ Confidence and self esteem.

continued over

The programme runs for 6-8 sessions.

Session 1/2 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- ◆ Communication Skills – Tone of voice
- ◆ Body language – Verbal and non-verbal
- ◆ Assertiveness skills
- ◆ Empathy/understanding skills

Outcome Ability to express their views appropriately and effectively.

Session 3/4 LISTENING SKILLS

- ◆ Listening skills
- ◆ Taking turns/sharing
- ◆ Understanding and exploring feelings associated with groups

Outcome Young people will be able to gain new skills to listen and consider the views of others.

Session 5/6 COOPERATION SKILLS

- ◆ Team-building
- ◆ Group work
- ◆ Cooperation skills
- ◆ Trust games

Outcome To enhance young people's skills of working cooperatively with their peers.

Session 7/8 BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM

- ◆ Celebration of achievement
- ◆ Affirmation
- ◆ Display of work undertaken throughout the programme
- ◆ Confidence and self-esteem exercises will be a part of every session plan

Outcome To build confidence and self-esteem.


Team-building activities and games as well as **capacity-building** greatly aid the process of building trust, rapport, confidence and ability to participate for seldom-heard children and young people. Either way, it is essential to conduct a capacity-building programme at the outset and throughout the lifetime of the group so that the group members are empowered and enabled to participate meaningfully in the programme or service.

Tried and trusted means of building capacity, confidence, rapport and trust with groups of seldom-heard children and young people include ice-breaker games, team-building activities and confidence-building exercises. Activities for each are described from pages 69-87.

ICE-BREAKER GAMES



These games are often used at the beginning of an activity or session to help people to get to know each other better. They can also be used as energisers in between workshop sessions.

BALLOON GAME

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Balloons, string	
TIME	5-10 minutes, depending on the size of group	
NOTE	Balloons should be blown up and string cut in advance.	

Tie a balloon on a string (at least 2 feet long) to each person's ankle. Walking round in a circle, people try to burst each other's balloons while protecting their own. The objective of the game is to be the last person with an un-popped balloon around one's ankle.

COMMUNICATING CHALLENGE

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None	 
TIME	5-10 minutes. Round 2 will tend to be quicker since, at this stage, the best mode of communication will have been established.	

Give everyone a number. Now ask them to arrange themselves in numerical order, communicating with each other without speaking or holding up fingers. They make up their own sub-language or sign-language to communicate with each other.

Round 2: Have people arrange themselves in order of birth/month they were born, shoe size, height – using the same rules!

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TOOLBOX

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GROUPS

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TOOLBOX

ALL AGE GROUPS



NAME GAME

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None
TIME	5 minutes

Ask everyone to gather around in a circle. The first person says his or her name. Then the second person does the same, only they also have to introduce the first person. The third person has to introduce themselves, the second person and the first person. Continue to go around like this until the last person's turn and they say the name of every person. The game is very light-hearted, with everyone trying to help the last person.



MYSTERY WINKER

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None
TIME	10 minutes

Ask everyone to stand in a circle. Ask one person to stand out of the circle and be the 'leader', i.e. the person that makes sure everyone is playing by the rules! This person should change every round so everyone gets a chance to play. Rules include:

- Eyes must be kept closed when the leader is choosing the 'Mystery Winker'!
- No talking or communicating between players.

Ask all of the players to close their eyes. The 'leader' chooses one person to be the 'Mystery Winker' by tapping on their shoulder. Once the person gets the tap on the shoulder, they know they are the 'Mystery Winker'. Invite the group to open their eyes and mingle around the room, making sure to look at each other in the eyes. The 'Mystery Winker' is in the mix and tries to wink at other players without being detected by others. If a person is winked at, they must continue



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mingling for a few seconds and then 'drop out' of the game by falling to the floor. If one of the remaining players thinks they know who the 'Mystery Winker' is, they can stop the game and make a guess. If they guess right, the game is over. If they guess wrong, they must drop out of the game and the game continues. The game continues until the 'Mystery Winker' is found out or there is only one player left.

TOILET ROLL GAME

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Roll of toilet paper



TIME

5-10 minutes



The person leading the game takes the roll of toilet paper and pulls off several squares before handing the toilet paper to another person and asking them to do the same. Once everyone has taken some toilet paper, everyone counts the number of squares that they have and then tells everyone in the room that many things about themselves. For example, if someone has three squares, they share three things about themselves.

HUMAN BINGO

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Bingo Cards x each participant (*see samples in Appendix 4*), pens/pencils



TIME

5-10 minutes. You can stop the game at any time you need to – the winner will be the person with the most number of boxes filled in at that time.

Create a bingo card grid from a sheet of A4 paper by dividing it into a grid of fairly large squares using a thick pen/pencil and a ruler. In some of the squares, write a phrase such as 'Has climbed a mountain', 'Rides a bike', 'Has run a marathon', 'Likes Britney Spears', etc. The number of squares you fill in is up to you, but the more you create the more time it will take to complete. Photocopy enough copies for all participants.

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TOOLBOX

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At the start of the session/meeting, give each person a copy and tell them to find one person who has done each thing, i.e. ask the other players whether they have 'climbed a mountain', etc. If the player being asked has done that activity, they sign their name to that box. Players can only get a signature on one box at a time from each person.

Keep going until someone has all of the boxes filled in. You can offer a small prize (e.g. a bar of chocolate) for the person who gets all of the boxes filled in first. Get them to read out the name of the person for each box. You can invite some participants to demonstrate the truth of their claims to make it more interesting (e.g. 'Can do the splits')!

ICE-BREAKERS (YOUNG PEOPLE, AGE 13+)

WHAT WHITE LIE?

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None	
TIME	15 minutes	

This is a very basic 'getting to know you' exercise with a slight competitive twist. Start with everyone in your group writing down/ thinking of two truths about themselves and one lie. Go around the room and let each person give their three statements, one of which is a lie. Everyone (except the person making the statements!) should vote on which statement is the lie. The person who gets the fewest votes for their lie wins. It may sound like a game where you are encouraging lying, but you learn lots about each other!

TOOLBOX

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ICE-BREAKERS (CHILDREN, UNDER 12)

CHAIRS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Chairs for everyone in the group except one (i.e. minus one chair)



TIME

As long as you like!

This is a very simple game, but one that groups of children and young people ask to do again and again! It is especially useful at the very beginning of a group session, where people do not know each other at all. The leader of the game starts off in the middle without a chair. He or she gives an instruction that starts with 'Everyone who ... travelled by bus to get here/is wearing runners/has blue eyes/has hair/likes One Direction – MOVE CHAIRS!' Everyone who falls into the category must move chairs. The only rules are that you cannot move to the chair immediately to your left or right, and you cannot return to the same chair that you leave. Whoever ends up without a chair gives the instruction from the middle of the circle and the game continues until you bring it to an end.

DESIGN YOUR OWN NAME BADGE

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Name badges, Markers



TIME

10 minutes

Younger children often like to design their own name badge. It is a good way to calm a group down on arrival and allows people to settle into the group.

Provide name badges, markers and crayons, etc. Ask the participants to write or draw or doodle their first name only on their badge. Encourage them to be creative, but advise them that their name needs to be legible so that everyone can read it. Once everyone is finished, you can admire the different name badges and colours used. Ask the participants to stick/pin on their name badge where it can be seen. You could follow this game with the 'Name Game' (see above) which is made easier by the badges!

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SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: ICE-BREAKER GAMES

Games for children aged 8-12

- ◆ Activity Village – <http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/ice-breaker-games>
- ◆ <http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activities/ice-breakers.page-3.html>
- ◆ <http://www.group-games.com/games-by-age>

Games for children aged 13-18

- ◆ http://www.jubed.com/youth_ministry/search/ice-breaker
- ◆ <http://youthgroupgames.com.au/top-ten-icebreaker-games/>
- ◆ http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf
- ◆ <http://www.group-games.com/games-by-age>



TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Team-building activities are used when trying to build a connection or camaraderie between members of a group who are still getting to know each other.

HUMAN KNOT

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None	
TIME	5-10 minutes	
<p>Begin with your group standing in a circle facing each other. Have everyone reach in with their right hand to shake the hand of someone else in the circle. Keeping their right hands clasped, everyone reaches in with their left hand and shakes the hand of a different member of the circle. Without letting go of either hand, ask the group to 'unknot' themselves. It is quite difficult, but by stepping over, ducking under and turning around they will be able to unfold the mess they have created. It will take communication and, of course, team work. Ten is an ideal group size for this exercise. If your group is bigger, divide into teams and have the teams compete against each other to 'unknot' first!</p> <p>You can see it in action at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyM9k8vrMwY</p>		

TALKING IN CIRCLES

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Long piece of string, tied in circle	
TIME	10 minutes	
<p>This group exercise focuses on good communication. Place everyone in a circle around the string. Ask everyone to close their eyes and keep them shut. Have everyone grasp the string with both hands and hold the string waist high. Without letting go of the string, ask the team to form shapes with the string: a square, a triangle, a figure of 8, a rectangle, etc. But they will have to do this with their eyes shut! This will require everyone to communicate clearly and listen well. Make the shapes progressively harder and periodically have them stop and open their eyes to see their progress... or lack thereof.</p>		

HELIUM STICK

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Long, thin pole
TIME	5-10 minutes



Use a tent pole, stick of bamboo or any long thin pole that you call a 'Helium Stick'. Place your group in two lines facing each other. Have each person hold the index finger of their right hand chest high. Place the helium stick on top of the outstretched fingers. The challenge is to lower the stick to the ground while keeping everyone's fingers touching the stick. If anyone's finger loses contact with the helium stick, you must start again. At first, the stick will seem to rise (hence the name Helium Stick). In fact, it is simply the upwards pressure of everyone's fingers causing the stick to go up instead of down. Once everyone relaxes, they can easily lower the stick to the ground. This usually takes 10 minutes of laughter to complete.

MAROONED

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None
TIME	20 minutes



Divide the group into teams of 4 people. Each team has to come up with a name for themselves. Inform the teams that they have 10 minutes before they are dropped onto a desert island in the middle of the ocean. Give each team **10 MINUTES** to decide what **5 THINGS ONLY** they are going to bring to the island. They have to decide if they want to bring stuff that will help them to escape, help them survive or to have luxuries – totally up to each group. But the group has to **AGREE** on what those 5 things are – can be anything. Once the 10 minutes is up, each team tells the whole group what 5 things they chose and why!

You can play around with this and change the questions: What 3 CDs would you take? What one food would you want to have?...

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ALL AGE GROUPS



20-COUNT

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None
TIME	10 minutes



Explain that the group will try to count from 1 to 20 together, eyes closed, with only one person speaking at a time — but participants cannot give each other visual or verbal signals to indicate who will speak next. Everyone in the group must participate.

Everyone closes their eyes. One person starts, saying 'One', someone else must follow with 'Two', a different person with 'Three' and so on. If two people say the same number (speak at the same time), the group must start over. The same person cannot go twice in a row and every person in the group must say at least one number before the group gets to 20.

RACE FOR THE TRUTH



RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Reasonably sized room
TIME	10 minutes



The goal is to cross the finish line as quickly as possible by truthfully answering questions that are asked by the group leader. Ask each member of the group to line up on a 'starting line'. Explain that every time they hear a statement, they should take a step (or one chair movement) forward if it is true for them and take one step (or chair movement) back if it is NOT true. Make the first statement, e.g. 'I really like Maths' or 'I would like to be a pop or a sports star'. Make sure everyone either moves forward one step/chair move or takes one step/chair move back. (They can stay where they are when starting out at the 'starting line'.) Keep making statements until one runner reaches the finish line and completes the 'race for the truth'.

TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES (YOUNG PEOPLE, AGE 13+)

TOXIC WASTE

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Rope, small bucket x 2, water, balls, bungee cord	
TIME	It can take anywhere from half an hour to 50 minutes to play. This activity is quite difficult and coaching along the way is quite useful. If you have more than 8 in your group, divide the group in two.	

Set-up

- ◆ Use the rope to create a circle at least 8 feet in diameter on the ground to represent the toxic waste radiation zone. The larger the radiation zone, the more difficult the activity.
- ◆ Place the small bucket in the centre of the radiation zone and fill it with water or balls to represent the toxic waste.
- ◆ Place the neutralisation bucket approximately 30-50 feet away. The greater the distance, the more difficult the activity.
- ◆ Put the bungee cord in a pile near the circle.

Directions

- ◆ The challenge is for the group to work out how to transfer the toxic waste from the small bucket into the large bucket where it will be 'neutralised', using only the equipment provided and within a time-frame. The waste will destroy the world after 20 minutes if it is not neutralised.
- ◆ Anyone who ventures into the radiation zone will suffer injury and spillage will possibly lead to world destruction. Therefore, the group should aim to save the world and do so without injury to any group members.

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- ◆ The rope circle represents the radiation zone emanating from the toxic waste in the bucket. Participants cannot go into that zone. Emphasise that everyone must stay outside the rope and cannot touch the toxic waste.
- ◆ Give the group some planning time with no action (e.g. 5 minutes), then start the clock and indicate it is time for action.

Notes for you

- ◆ The solution involves attaching the cords to the bungee loop, then guiding the bungee with the strings to sit around and grab the toxic waste bucket. Then, with everyone pulling on their cord and with good coordination and care, the toxic waste bucket can be lifted, moved and tipped into the empty neutralising bucket.
- ◆ If someone breaches the toxic waste zone, indicated by the circle of rope, enforce an appropriate penalty, e.g. hand behind back or blindfolds that lasts for the rest of the game. If a whole person enters the zone, they die and must then sit out for the rest of the activity.
- ◆ If the group struggles to work out what to do, freeze the action and help them discuss.
- ◆ If the group spills the waste entirely, make a big deal about catastrophic failure, invite them to discuss what went wrong and how they can do better, then refill the container and let them have another go.
- ◆ Ideas for varying the level difficulty of the activity:
 - adjust timeframe;
 - adjust distance between the buckets;
 - include obstacles between the buckets.

TEAM-BUILDING GAMES (CHILDREN, UNDER 12)

BLINDFOLD SOCCER

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Obstacles (e.g. tables, chairs, boxes, flipchart sheets, sweeping brushes – whatever you have to hand) + 2 balls (e.g. soccer, tennis, beach balls)



TIME

As long as you like!

Pair off each child into a group of two. Give each group a ball and a blindfold. One person is blindfolded and his or her teammate is the guide. Ask the groups to choose who is going to lead and who is going to be blindfolded. Ask whoever is going to be blindfolded to put on their blindfold.

Use whatever you have in the room to create an obstacle course from one end of the room to the other. Materials such as chairs, tables, flipchart sheets, boxes, etc. will do perfectly. The obstacle course should be set up so the ball has to go around the flipchart sheets, through the legs of the table/chair, into the box and back out again, etc. Make it more complicated than just going around each object. The person who is the guide has to lead the blindfolded person through the obstacle course using verbal instructions only. If the blindfolded person fails to complete a task correctly (e.g. brings the ball through the legs of the chair), they need to attempt that part of the task again until they do it correctly. The team that reaches the end of the room having successfully navigated all of the obstacles is the winner.

You can let one pair go through the obstacle course at a time and have the rest of the group watch. Or if you have room, you can set up two identical courses and have one pair pitted against another while the rest of the group watch.

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FREEZE!

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Whistle (but you can just clap if you don't have one)



TIME

10 minutes

The Moderator blows a whistle/claps her hands and lets the children know that they can start moving. Encourage the children to make any kind of movement they want – the sillier, the better! They can make funny faces, wrap their arms into shapes or do jazz hands all over the place, dance, do the splits... After about 5-10 seconds of the children making shapes, the leader will tap one of the participants on the shoulder and that participant has to yell 'Freeze!' All of the other participants look at the child who yelled 'Freeze!' and have to make the shape that the child is making. The leader blows the whistle again and children begin making shapes again.

WHO SAID THAT?!

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Chairs



TIME

10 minutes



Set up as many rows of chairs as you need for the number of participants you have. Make sure the chairs are in rows and not one circle. Ask one of the children to come to the front of the group to be the 'guesser'. The guesser turns her back to the group. The Facilitator or designated leader then points to one person in the main group who should call out the 'guesser's' name. The guesser then turns around and has to guess who called out their name. This works best with groups who are just getting to know each other, but can be interesting to test with groups who know each other well.

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SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: TEAM-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Team-building activities for Kids Hub (ages 4-18) <http://www.teambuildingactivitiesforkidscentral.com>
- ◆ Team-building activities with video clips <http://www.active.com/parenting-and-family/articles/10-fun-team-building-activities-for-kids>
- ◆ Team-building games on Pinterest <http://www.pinterest.com/ncarrw/team-buildinggames>
- ◆ Team-building games (all ages) <http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk/freeteambuildingexercises.html>
<http://cooperativelearning.nuvvo.com/lesson/3843-10-teambuilding-activities-for-you-to-try>
<http://teambuildingactivitieshq.com/team-building-activities-for-kids>
<http://www.kidsplayandcreate.com/how-to-get-kids-to-work-together-games-for-kids>
- ◆ Reel Youth
Reel Youth was founded by the City of Dublin Youth Service Board and is a network of youth services operating in Dublin who come together to make and screen films. The project includes training in film-making, including shooting, recording sound, storyboarding, acting and directing; integration days between participating youth services; and a screening for all participants. See <https://www.youtube.com/user/ReelYouthDublin>
- ◆ Irish Wheelchair Association experience
The experience of youth workers in the Irish Wheelchair Association is that affording young people the responsibility to organise their own social activities is also a team-building experience in itself. For each social activity or outing in the year, all decisions on the type of activities and planning of these are given to the project participants. This involves the participants conducting their own informal consultation on what activity is preferred before sharing the tasks of booking the venue and transport, organising refreshments and collecting the contributions towards the cost of the activity. This process builds a team approach to the activity and helps people to identify what they are good at and to take responsibility.

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING

Although it may sometimes be necessary to offer one-on-one support to children and young people to help build their confidence and self-esteem, there are also a lot of exercises that you can do together as a group. In addition, children and young people often find it easier to engage with these activities and gain further confidence when surrounded by their peers in similar situations.

ENCOURAGE THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO:

- ◆ **Know who YOU are** – Know what is important to you, what you care about and what you value in life. If you put these values into action in your everyday life, you are being true to yourself and your self-esteem will improve. Ask the children and young people to make a list of everything that is important to them and then rank the list in order of importance.



NOTE: Be prepared to help those who are not able to/don't like writing.

- ◆ **Start a journal** – Ask the children and young people to 'write down all of the positive things about yourself – make it a BIG list, with at least 10 things on it. Concentrate on your strengths. It can be easy to focus on the negative things about yourself. It is braver and more courageous to concentrate on the positive things about yourself. So look at your BIG list and FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE.

- ◆ **Set 'boundaries'** – Setting boundaries means setting limits for what is OK and not OK for people to do. Encourage the children and young people to list 3 things under each of the following:
 - People may not...
 - I have the right to ask for...
 - It's OK to...

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YOU CAN ALSO ENCOURAGE THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO:

- ◆ **Remember a time when you were confident.** Have the image very clear in your head. Where were you exactly? What were you doing? When you have it clearly outlined in your head, think about:
 - What did you look like? What were you wearing?
 - What did it feel like?
 - What could you hear?

Think of that time as your 'Confident Coat' and put it on every time you need it!

- ◆ **Learn how to give and take.** Help others and don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it. We sometimes try to do everything ourselves when it would be easier to ask someone for help. Once you know what to do, you can help somebody else next time!

- ◆ **Reward yourself when you do something that makes you feel proud** or you achieved a goal you set for yourself. It's VERY OK to feel good about yourself!

- ◆ **Do better next time.** We all make mistakes and sometimes feel like we have 'failed'. But actually mistakes are just an opportunity to learn and make sure it is better next time.

- ◆ **Have fun!** Celebrate all the good people and things in your life. Enjoy them and HAVE FUN!

TOOLBOX

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CONFIDENCE-BUILDING GAMES (CHILDREN, UNDER 12)

THINGS I AM GOOD AT!

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Old newspapers and magazines, coloured card, glue, scissors



TIME

30 minutes

Clear an empty space on the floor. Scatter all the materials around the floor. Give each child a piece of coloured card. Before you start, go around the participants and ask each one for an example of something that they are good at. It might be soccer, helping to mind their baby brother, going to the shops to get milk, singing in the shower. Encourage the children to think of ALL of the things that they are good at, not just the big things that people notice. Now that they know that they should think about a wide variety of things, ask each person to make a collage of all of the things they are good at using the materials on the floor. The Facilitator should float around the group during the activity to make sure everyone can think of a few things. Encourage the children to name all of the things that they are good at and help them to identify those things. Make the list as long as possible. Once everyone is finished their collage, hang them on a wall and ask each child to tell the group about the things they are good at.

ME TREE

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

A3 white paper, coloured paper, crayons, markers, scissors, glue
(See Appendix 5)



TIME

30 minutes

Invite each child to draw a tree trunk with branches on a sheet of A3 white paper. Use the coloured paper to cut out leaves. The leaves should be big enough to write a few lines on. (Alternatively, you can use the tree and leaf drawings given in Appendix 5 – be sure to

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print/photocopy them on A3 paper so they are nice and big.) Invite the children to write 'something I like about myself' on each of the leaves on their tree. As in the exercise 'Things I am good at!' (above), encourage the children to think of lots and varied things that they like about themselves, e.g. I like my eyes, I like that I am kind to my friends, I like that I am good at dancing, I like that I look after my dog, I like that I help with the cooking, I like that I do my homework.

Once all of the writing is done, glue the leaves to the tree. Stick all of the trees on the wall and ask each child to tell the group about all of the things they like about themselves. Ask the group to think of one more thing that each participant should like about themselves, one that is not on their tree.

COMPLIMENT GAME

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Ball



TIME

15 minutes



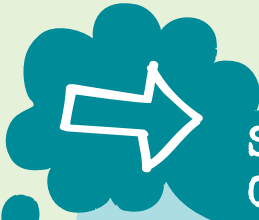
Sit down with the group in a circle of chairs or on the floor. Explain that you are going to throw the ball to someone. Whoever catches the ball has to say one positive or good thing about the person on their left AND the person on their right. Explain that the good thing should not be about how they look or the clothes they are wearing, but about them as a person, e.g. 'One good thing about Neil is that he always walks with his sister to school' or 'One good thing about Aoife is that she always makes sure nobody is sitting on their own on the bus' or 'One good thing about Caitlin is that she is usually in good humour and laughing'.

Throw the ball to the first person. When they have said one positive thing about the person on the left and the person on the right, they should throw the ball to another person in the group who does the same. Continue with the game until everyone has had a chance to say good things about others and hear good things about themselves.

TOOLBOX

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SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: CONFIDENCE BUILDING

- ◆ Confidence-building activities
<http://www.kidsplayandcreate.com/self-esteem-character-building-activities-for-kids/>
http://www.ehow.com/info_8009867_confidence-building-games-children.html
<http://resources.leavingcare.org/uploads/1d4e95e267a05d6b38a4107d441faf22.pdf>

ADDITIONAL SKILLS AND TRAINING

While ice-breakers, team-building activities and confidence-building exercises are important tools to use in the formation stages and throughout the lifetime of a group, once trust, confidence and rapport has been built, you may want to provide additional skills and training for your group members, including:

Communication skills

Seldom-heard children and young people may need your support with:

- ◆ how to articulate views;
- ◆ how to present views;
- ◆ how to communicate with other people.

Committee skills

It is quite possible that any group you establish for seldom-heard children and young people will not necessitate the use of a formalised committee. Should the children and young people request to operate in this manner, you should give advice on:

- ◆ how to elect a chairperson;
- ◆ what is the role of a chairperson;
- ◆ other committee positions, e.g. secretary;

- ◆ how to take minutes and why this is important;
- ◆ what is an agenda and why is it important?
- ◆ time management;
- ◆ attendance;
- ◆ games that are useful for a committee to play together in order to develop teamwork.

Peer support

Where it is anticipated that the inclusion of seldom-heard children and young people will be long-term and permanent, the children and young people should be trained to support each other and to adopt leadership roles within the group itself. This model of peer support is exemplified in BeLonG To.



EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE: PEER SUPPORT

BeLonG To have championed 'peer support' and 'peer leadership' throughout the history of the organisation. An example of how their peer leadership programme works can be demonstrated through The LadyBirds campaign for 'Positive recognition of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women'. (LadyBirds is a group of young lesbian, bisexual and transgender women in Dublin, aged 14-23, which meets each week on Thursdays.)

All the The LadyBirds campaigns are 100% peer-led. A large amount of time is spent developing the capacity of young lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) women to a stage where they have skills to apply for funding, plan strategically, deliver workshops and PowerPoint presentations, network with outside agencies and plan residential meetings.

The steps outlined in the 'Positive recognition of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women' campaign are outlined below:

- ◆ A needs assessment is completed with young women to identify needs, issues and concerns of lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) young women.

continued over

- ◆ Once the issue has been identified, the LBT young women start to look at ways in which this issue can be addressed, e.g. lack of recognition of LBT women, low sexual health awareness and mental health awareness specifically targetting LBT women.
- ◆ Discussion on what training young women will need to have a 100% peer-led campaign.
- ◆ Training package is developed on completing funding applications, strategic planning, PowerPoint and presentation skills.
- ◆ Young LBT women request staff with expertise to deliver training.
- ◆ Young women research what funding is available once they have strategic plan/analysis completed.
- ◆ Funding is applied for and acquired.
- ◆ Further training takes place.
- ◆ Young LBT women discuss plans with BeLonG To's Director, National Coordinator and Youth Work Manager.
- ◆ Presentation of strategic plan through PowerPoint presentation to all staff in BeLonG To.
- ◆ Young LBT women develop postcard with mental health and sexual health information for LBT women on it.
- ◆ Work with people outside of BeLonG To (e.g. graphic designer).
- ◆ Develop amazing postcard, which will be disseminated nationally.
- ◆ Request meeting with Management Committee of BeLonG To, to present their campaign.
- ◆ Young LBT women acquire Dental Dams and distribute with the postcard from Gay Mens Health Service.
- ◆ Young LBT women attend LBT events themselves and distribute postcards and Dental Dams at Dyke Night, PINK Training & Milk.

Briefings on external activities

If any of the seldom-heard children and young people in your group are asked to participate in external activities (e.g. Comhairle na nÓg AGM), they should be well prepared and briefed in advance. If the experience is to be a positive one for the child/young person, they should know what to expect and be acquainted with the topics that will be discussed and the methodologies that will be used. Where possible, you can role-play

discussions or workshops on the topics to be discussed so that the children and young people can determine whether it is something they are interested in and what points they might like to make on the day.



EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE: BRIEFING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Wexford County Comhairle na nÓg actually stage a 'mock' AGM for seldom-heard children and young people in advance of the actual AGM. This gives the children and young people an opportunity to get to grips with the processes and topics in advance of the day. It also allows the child/young person to decide for themselves whether they are interested in the event.



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: SKILLS AND CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMMES

- Common Purpose run a Leadership Programme for young people (aged 15-17) called 'Your Turn'
Your Turn challenges young people to think in new ways about the place where they live and the world around them, to examine how decisions are made and see how they can make change happen.
See <http://www.commonpurpose.ie/programmes/your-turn>

Engaging with children
and young people
through discussion

TOOLBOX



ALL AGE GROUPS




IDENTIFYING ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

You will likely have topics or issues that you would like the group of seldom-heard children and young people to work on to inform the work of your organisation or service. That's great! You might also like to consult with the group to see if there are any issues or areas of work that they would like to focus on. Tools to facilitate seldom-heard children and young people to identify these issues for discussion are outlined below.

VOX-POP


RESOURCES/EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Microphone and recorder	
TIME	As long as needed	
<p>A vox-pop is an informal way of interviewing people to get their views on a topic. It can be used to get the views and opinions of children and young people on a particular issue. With some guidance on what questions would be good to ask, it also works well if children and young people themselves conduct the vox-pop. You can then listen back to what they said to see if there are any recurring themes or ideas. Vox-pops can also be used as an informal method of evaluation.</p>		

GRAFFITI WALL


RESOURCES/EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Blank 'wall' space or blank board, post-its, markers, creative arts materials	
TIME	Ideally over a long period of time so that children and young people can come and go to the space as they like and as ideas come to them. Perhaps leave it up for a few meetings.	
<p>Create a 'wall' with paper or whiteboard or kappa board, and leave post-its/markers/creative arts materials for the children and young people to 'doodle' or 'graffiti'. Post whatever question you want to ask, e.g. 'What topics would you like to work on as a group?' or 'What types of things would you like the group to work on together?' Let the children and young people know that they can respond to the question in their own way, e.g. drawing/doodling/writing, etc.</p>		

IDENTIFYING ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

POST-ITS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Post-its, pens, space to post the post-its	
TIME	15 minutes	
NOTE	Requires literacy levels or provision of support with post-its.	
<p>Explain that you want to find out what topics they would like to discuss or what areas of work they would like to focus on. Ask every participant to write down any ideas they have on a post-it. Advise the group that they can come up with as many ideas as they like – the more the better – but they should put one idea only on each post-it. The ideas should be in one or two words. Leaders should mingle with the group and help any child/young person write their ideas on post-its, if necessary.</p> <p>When the children and young people have written down all their ideas on their post-its, they should stick the post-its on a wall or white board or anywhere you can see them all together. Ask for a couple of volunteers to help you group the post-its into a number of themes or topics. Put any similar topics together. These are your topics for discussion.</p>		

BUZZ GROUPS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Coloured card	
TIME	30 minutes	
<p>Buzz groups are essentially small groups of 3 or 4 children and young people working together to discuss and answer given questions. An adult Facilitator is not usually needed unless the question posed is a</p>		

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difficult or sensitive one – usually the group works on its own to answer a given question. For example, the question might be: ‘What topics would you like to work on as a group?’ or ‘What types of things would you like the group to work on together?’ The question that needs to be asked should be typed up, stuck onto coloured card and one card distributed to each group. Each group is asked to invent a name for themselves and this name is put at the top of the sheet of coloured card. The group then works together in a given timeframe (approximately 20 minutes) to come up with their ideas on the answer to the question posed. They record these ideas on the coloured card. If there are a number of questions to pose, the additional questions should be posted on different coloured cards. The cards with the answers are then posted on a wall and the children and young people can be invited to feedback the information to the wider group, as necessary. Once the coloured cards are on the wall, you can see if there are any recurring themes and work with the full group to decide which ones they would prefer to pursue (using ‘Prioritising preferences’, pp. 117-119).

ONLINE SURVEYS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Access to computer and Internet	
TIME	As short or as long as you make the survey. Short is better!	

You can also use free online surveys to ascertain what children and young people want to discuss. You need to create the survey online using the likes of www.surveymonkey.com or www.doodle.com and then send the link to the children and young people in your group. This has the advantage of including people who don't attend meetings. You need to check if the children and young people have access to a computer or a Smartphone, or else you need to make one available to them to complete the survey. You can find out how to use Survey Monkey or Doodle Poll at: http://help.surveymonkey.com/articles/en_US/kb/How-to-create-a-survey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nO21Ujn-peg>

COMMUNITY MAPPING BY SURVEY

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Training, copies of survey, ID badges/T-shirts
TIME	Over a longer period, e.g. number of weeks
NOTE	Requires literacy levels or provision of support with surveys.



Community mapping is a process where young people survey people in the community to get their views on a particular topic. It can be helpful to identify what people in the community want, as well as what participants in the group want. Steps include:

- ◆ Decide on the questions to be asked and draw up a simple survey.
- ◆ Advise and train the young people on typical survey skills, keeping safe, how to record answers and how to engage with members of the public.
- ◆ Conduct a trial run with the group members.
- ◆ Design or get ID badges and/or T-shirts, as well as an 'explanatory note' so that the young people feel 'official' conducting the survey.
- ◆ Allocate specific days for surveying so that a de-briefing session can take place after each round of surveying.
- ◆ Collate the information from the survey.
- ◆ Decide on what issues or actions to pursue based on the survey results.

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IDENTIFYING ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION OR IDEAS TO WORK ON (CHILDREN, UNDER 12)

WISH BOX

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Cardboard box, A3 coloured paper x 1, coloured paper (approx. A5) x each participant, crayons, markers



TIME

30 minutes

In advance, cover a cardboard box in coloured paper and put the words 'WISH BOX' on it. Set out the materials on the floor or table.

Make sure everyone has a number of pieces of coloured paper and crayons or markers. Depending on whether you want the children to identify things that they want to talk about or activities that they want to do, write the question down on the A3 coloured paper, e.g. *'What would you like to talk about in the group?'* or *'What ideas would you like to work on in the group?'* or *'What activities or games would you like to play in the group?'*

Ask each child to write down any ideas they have on a coloured piece of card. Advise the group that they can come up with as many ideas as they like – the more the better – but they should put one idea only on each piece of card. The ideas can be in one or two words, but they can also be longer. Leaders should mingle with the group and help any child/young person write their ideas on the card, if necessary. When the children and young people have written down all their ideas on their cards, they should post the cards into the 'wish box'. Once all the wishes are in, open the box and go through them. Put any similar wishes together. Depending on how many groups of wishes there are, you might need to vote to see which ones you do first (see *'Prioritising Preferences'* on pages 117-119).

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WORKSHOP TECHNIQUES

Workshops are an important means of engaging with all children and young people. Ensuring that workshops are short, interesting and engaging is especially important for seldom-heard children and young people. Seldom-heard children and young people are not always used to an atmosphere of 'considered debate' or 'sharing views' and they can lose interest relatively quickly. In light of that, it is important to use creative methods and to allow the participants to opt in and out as they are interested and have an idea that they want to share.

The typical structure of a workshop is:



- ◆ Brief ice-breaker to relax and get to know each other (where relevant). Use one of the ice-breakers on pages 69-74 or ask the participants for their suggestions.
- ◆ The Facilitator or leader then:
 - introduces the 'topic' or question for discussion;
 - explains the purpose of the workshop and what tasks the children and young people have to complete;
 - explains what outputs are needed at the end;
 - facilitates the children and young people to discuss the issue;
 - facilitates the children and young people to make a decision on the most important issues;
 - facilitates the children and young people to achieve the desired outputs.

No workshop should be longer than 40 minutes and most workshops will likely work better for seldom-heard children and young people when they are 30 minutes long. If that is not long enough to achieve the outputs you need, you should break up the workshops with games and other activities and use different methods for different parts of the process.




CREATIVE METHODOLOGIES

ARTS AND CRAFTS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Arts and crafts materials, e.g. markers, stickers, glue, glitter, magazines for collage, coloured paper, scissors	
TIME	40 minutes	
<p>Arts and crafts work really well with seldom-heard children and young people. They can have a calming effect on a group and it is sometimes useful to introduce them when you need the group to focus on a task. The method is also especially useful in groups where literacy levels are low. Even where literacy levels are good, it can sometimes be easier for a child/young person to draw or doodle over a period and to then talk about their drawing rather than give a direct 'opinion' or 'view'. Sometimes opinions and views are too hard to give, but can be teased out by talking through what their drawing, doodle or graffiti represents for them. You can use arts and crafts as the actual workshop process where you ask all of the participants to draw/doodle/graffiti/mix media their response to a particular question. You can also make arts and crafts materials available throughout other workshops. That way, if a person is not interested or able to contribute verbally, they can occupy themselves by doodling and the Facilitator can ask them about their output during the workshop.</p>		

BODY MAPS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Flipchart paper taped together vertically to form a long sheet, markers	
TIME	40 minutes	
<p>Body Maps are a particularly good tool to find out how children and young people are feeling about something. They are also a good way of making the workshop setting informal since children and young people have to work on the floor and use markers/crayons, etc.</p>		

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Ask one person to lie on a giant piece of paper and get another volunteer to draw all around them. The body can be used in different ways. You could ask the children and young people to use the top/right-hand side of the body to write down things that are important to them. These need only be one or two words. The Facilitator can also ask people to tell her their ideas, so that anybody who doesn't want to write does not have to. The other side of the body could be used for children and young people to note what they would like to change in the organisation. Alternatively a different part of the body (e.g. the legs or the heart) can be used for specific questions. The idea is to spark discussion in an informal way, while still getting the necessary information. At the end of the discussion, the children and young people can rank the issues by using sticky dots or markers on the Body Map. The Body Map is also a good visual tool to help with giving feedback to a larger group.

GRAPHIC FACILITATION

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Skilled Graphic Facilitators, big whiteboard/ space for flipcharts	
TIME	Can be full length of workshop or at appropriate times of workshop (e.g. when groups are feeding back their ideas).	

This method is particularly good for people with low literacy rates. It really helps to bring alive the ideas that are being generated at the workshop. While you can use graphic illustration at different stages of a workshop and for different purposes, essentially the role of the Graphic Facilitator is to draw/doodle/sketch the ideas and suggestions made by the young people in real time. This enables children to 'see' their thinking. It is very helpful when dealing with complex issues or explaining difficult or abstract concepts. The graphic recordings also provide a map and record of the 'journey' of the thinking process to reach a particular idea or outcome. This can really help to inspire children to keep going until they achieve their outcome.

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An example of Irish graphic illustrator Elfie Rocher (<http://elfiegraphicrecording.blogspot.ie/>) mapping the outcomes at a Coderdojo event (for adults) is depicted below:



Examples from the international graphic illustrator Julie Gieseke (who also conducts work in Ireland) can be found at www.mapthemind.org:



Consultation with children on development of new children's hospital

Case Study

In 2009, the DCYA supported a consultation day with children (aged 7-12) on the development of the new Children's Hospital. All of the children had experience of being in hospital, many over a long period. Over the course of the day, the children had the opportunity to:

- ◆ play ice-breaker games;
- ◆ discuss their ideas in small groups aided by Lifelines and drawing;
- ◆ meet and hear from the designers of the hospital;
- ◆ ask questions;
- ◆ draw, doodle and sketch their ideas on a graffiti wall;
- ◆ give their ideas in a diary room that was set up as a Santa's Grotto (it was December);
- ◆ hear from young people who were involved in designing the hospital in Glasgow;
- ◆ discuss ideas on specific topics such as 'treatment areas', 'rooms' and 'education'.

Graphic illustration

At that point, the graphic illustrators asked for some of the big ideas that came up during the day. They then sketched out what they might look like.

Body Map

One of the workshop groups was asked to explore what they would like the new Children's Hospital to 'look and feel like'. Using flipchart pages stuck together, the Facilitator asked one child to lie on the floor as the others drew around her. Using this as a Body Map, the Facilitator then gave the following instructions:

- ◆ Beside the ears, write what you hear.
- ◆ Beside the eyes, what do you see first?
- ◆ Beside the nose, how does it smell?
- ◆ In the head, what are you thinking?

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- ◆ At the mouth, how do people speak to you?
- ◆ In the heart/tummy, how are you feeling (physically and emotionally)?
- ◆ At the feet, where do you go? Can you find your way?
- ◆ Outside the body, write all the things that could make it easier or more friendly. If you don't like the sounds, what could be done to change that? How could you feel less scared? Could someone answer questions for you? Is there something to do that might help to pass the time?

This is a perfect example of using the Body Map to explore how young people are feeling about something.

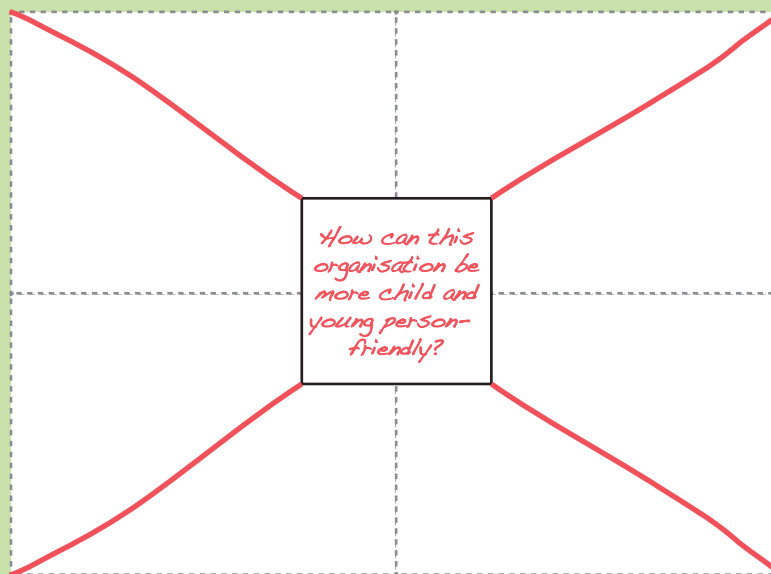
LIFELINES

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Lifelines (A sample Lifeline Template is provided in Appendix 6)	
TIME	40 minutes	
<p>Using Lifelines is a way of drawing out the important parts in people's lives. They might be especially useful for children and young people who would find it hard to contribute to a group. Use a sheet with clouds or speech bubbles and ask the children and young people to write in 'the most important things that have happened in their lives', starting from when they were born. Ask the children and young people to feed back what they have written down. The Facilitator can then note some of the common important things and use that to start discussion on what actually matters to children and young people.</p>		

PLACEMAT/FLOORMAT METHOD

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Table or floor space, placemat (can be made with 4 flipchart sheets taped together to form a square), markers	
TIME	40 minutes	

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The Placemat method allows big groups to split up and work in smaller groups while still remaining physically close together. It also creates an informal atmosphere. Four flipchart sheets are taped together to form a big sheet. You can work on the mat on a floor or on a table – whatever works better for your group. A square is drawn in the middle and the key question to be answered is written in the square, e.g. “How can this organisation be more child and young person friendly?” Four lines are then drawn from the square to each outer corner (or to however many spaces you need for each group). The participants are then split up into pairs or small groups. Each group works at one of the corners of the square, where they respond to the questions asked by:

- ◆ listing words;
- ◆ writing statements;
- ◆ writing an answer in the form of a narrative;
- ◆ making a sketch;
- ◆ providing an illustration or diagram;
- ◆ simply doodling.

At the end of an allocated amount of time, the placemat can be turned around and shared with other groups or groups can verbally feedback their answers to the question to the wider group. If the most important answers to the question need to be prioritised, sticky dots can be distributed and the children and young people asked to allocate these to what they consider the most important answers to the questions.

Placemats in action at 'Young Voices – Have Your Say'

Case Study

'Young Voices – Have Your Say' is a series of consultations (meetings) with young people aged 15-30 on how you can be more fully included in society. The consultations are part of a European programme called 'Structured Dialogue', which gives young people all over Europe a chance to 'have your say' about decisions affecting your life. The consultations in Ireland are conducted by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI).

In 2014, when the theme was on 'Jobs and Entrepreneurship', young people were facilitated to answer questions on jobs, internships, training, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. They worked in groups of approximately 10 people, using the 'Placemat' method. The placemats were large, colourful, 5-foot square pieces of paper, designed and printed professionally in a child/youth-friendly layout with the consultation questions written on them. The participants moved around the tables in pairs or small groups of 3 to answer each of the questions, before discussing the answers together in their group of 10. After this discussion, the group then prioritised the key issues in each section/under each question using sticky dots. These prioritised ideas were then put forward to the main group for an overall vote.

Pictures of workshops in action and an example of a completed Placemat are shown below.



POST-ITS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Post-its (in different colours), pens, flipchart paper
TIME	40 minutes
<p>Choose a particular question or topic, e.g. playing/hanging out in my area. Give each participant two different coloured post-its. On one coloured post-it, ask the participants to write, list or draw all of the good things about playing/hanging out in the area. Now, on another coloured post-it, ask the children and young people to write all of the things that are <i>not</i> good about playing/hanging out in the area. Ask each person to talk through their ideas as they stick them to a flipchart sheet on the floor/on the wall.</p>	

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Consultation with children on development of new children's hospital

Case Study

During the consultation with children with experience of hospitals on the development of the new Children's Hospital, the children were asked to write or draw all of the things that help them meet/play with others in the hospital. On another coloured post-it, they were asked to list or draw the things that made this difficult. Each person talked about their idea as they stuck their post-it onto a flipchart sheet.

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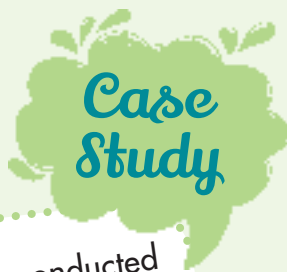
ALL AGE GROUPS



MOVING DEBATE

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Big room
TIME	20 minutes

NOTES



In 2012, the DCYA conducted consultations on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills on the 'Forum of Patronage and Pluralism'. The day included a Moving Debate, where the following two 'statements' for debate were posed:

- ◆ schools should have a uniform;
- ◆ school should be a place where everyone feels included.

- ◆ Gives you comprehensive feedback on particular questions posed.
- ◆ Be mindful not to use the words 'stand' or 'walk' if there are people in the group who do not have these abilities. Alternatively, use the words 'move' or 'take up a position' if there are wheelchair users.
- ◆ Excellent technique for breaking up workshops and re-energising the group.
- ◆ Ask all the participants in the room to situate themselves (standing if they can) in one line.
- ◆ Pose the question for debate.
- ◆ Ask the children and young people to move to the right of the room if they AGREE with the statement or to the left of the room if they DISAGREE. Alternatively, they can move to anywhere in between to represent their position.
- ◆ Ask one or two children and young people in each spot why they agree/disagree/don't know.
- ◆ Where possible, record the outcome of the Moving Debate either through video, photography or by simply noting the number of children and young people standing in each place for each question.

TOP 10 TIPS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Coloured paper, markers
TIME	30 minutes
<p>Ask the children and young people to come up with the 'Top 10 tips' or the 'Top 10 most important things' about whatever topic you are discussing. For example, during the consultation with children with experience of hospitals on the development of the new Children's Hospital, the children were asked to come up with the Top 10 things they would suggest to the designers about designing a hospital room for children.</p>	

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WORKSHOP TECHNIQUES

'OPEN SPACE'

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Blank space on wall, post-its
TIME	15 minutes for generating ideas, 10 minute break/game while post-its are being 'themed' and 30 minutes for workshop



This is a methodology that allows every person present to post as many ideas or suggestions as they like onto a board (e.g. using post-its). These post-its are then grouped to form a certain number of themes or topics (*as outlined on p. 95*). Facilitated workshops are then held on these topics and the children and young people can choose to go to whatever workshop they like – or move from one to another if they prefer.

WORLD CAFÉ

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Flipchart paper, markers, round tables and chairs
TIME	40 minutes



This is a methodology that facilitates people to sit in very small groups of 4 or 5 and have quite in-depth conversations – like you would do in a café – about the assigned topic. The children and young people are then asked to move to another group and another topic. At every move, a 'host' or Facilitator remains behind to explain the outcome of the previous conversation and to see what the new group would like to add. The process facilitates the sharing of ideas and the children and young people get to consider a number of ideas in a short space of time. At the end, all groups are asked to share their key ideas.

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World café in action – Roscommon Comhairle na nÓg

Case Study


Roscommon Comhairle na nÓg used a variation of the 'World Café' method to good effect at their AGM. They set up the room with three rows of tables covered in flipchart paper (acting like tablecloths). These 'tablecloths' facilitated children and young people to write down their thoughts and opinions and made writing up the report a lot easier. Each row of tables had a set of questions written on the tablecloth related to the theme being discussed. Participants discussed the question and then wrote their ideas on the tablecloth. Facilitators were moving round the hall during the proceedings to offer any assistance required. After a given time, a bell sounded and the participants moved from their table to the next table (with the group at the last table moving to the first table). They then considered what previous groups had written on the tablecloth and added their own views/opinions. This process continued until all the participants had been to all of the tables and ended with each group returning to the first table they were at to consider what had been added by all the other groups during the process. At the end of this process, the original group decided on the top recommendations to put forward from their table.

TOOLBOX

AGE
13+
ONLY

13+

BUZZ GROUPS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Coloured paper, markers	
TIME	40 minutes	
<p>Buzz groups can be used as a workshop technique as well as a way to identify issues for discussion (<i>as outlined on pp. 95-96</i>).</p>		

NARROW IT DOWN!

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Coloured card, flipchart paper,
markers



TIME

40 minutes

Sometimes you will need to narrow a topic down to identify key themes and actions to work on. This method should help:

- ◆ Identify one clear question to be discussed by all groups.
- ◆ Divide the group into pairs and allocate 5-10 minutes to discuss the question and produce a response on one sheet of coloured card.
- ◆ After the allocated 5-10 minutes, direct each pair to sit with another pair. Invite the new groups of 4 to discuss their responses to the question (on their coloured card) and now produce a joint response on a new piece of coloured card.
- ◆ Where numbers permit, ask each group of 4 to pair with another group of 4, to produce a group of 8. Again, invite them to discuss the question and their responses and come up with one more joint response.
- ◆ Invite the group of 8 to write their joint response and post it on the wall.
- ◆ Invite each group to feedback their response to the full group.
- ◆ Based on the recurring themes, the Facilitator should be able to identify themes and actions for the group.



TOOLBOX

AGE
13+
ONLY

13+

WORKSHOP TECHNIQUES

IDENTITY/WISH BOXES

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	1 big box, stickers, glitter pens, blank labels, shapes on card, markers, any material that can be stuck onto boxes easily	
TIME	30 minutes	

Get a giant cardboard box (approximately 1m square) and cover it in blank paper. Let the children know that they can use any of the materials available to draw and write their ideas on the box. Start the process by inviting the children to cover the top of the box with their names. Again, they can use any materials, so they can write their names straight on with glitter pens or put their name on a star, etc. The idea is that the box looks very fancy and glamorous by the end. Once the 'name' decoration is complete, use each side of the box to pose the questions you want to ask the group, e.g.

Side 1: *'What is good about...?'*

Side 2: *'What is not good about...?'*

Side 3: *'What could be better about...?'*

Side 4: *'What is the most important thing to change straight away?'*

You can also cut a hole in the box and invite the children to put their 'secret wishes' INSIDE the box. You will need to remind them that you will be looking at the 'secret wishes' so that you can use the information!

BODY ART

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Thin coloured card to cut out parts of the body, markers, crayons, scissors
TIME	45 minutes (sometimes longer)
This is a particularly good method to elicit how very young children are feeling about something.	

TOOLBOX

UNDER
12
ONLY

-12

continued over

TOOLBOX

UNDER
12
ONLY

-12

Use different coloured cards to cut out parts of the body (e.g. the legs, arms, head, heart, mouth, ears, eyes, etc). If you have time, you can get the children to help you with this. Make sure the body parts are big so that every group has room to write/draw on them.

Put each part of the body at different places or 'stations' around the room. Using a separate piece of card, write ONE question to go alongside each part of the body. For example, beside the hands, you could ask 'Who do you go to for a helping hand?' Or beside the mouth, you could ask 'Who would you talk to in the organisation if you had a problem?' Use each part of the body to pose a different question of relevance.

Divide the group of children up into smaller groups of 2 or 3. There should be a Facilitator/leader with each of the small groups. Start by sending each of the small groups to one of the 'body part stations'. The Facilitator reads out the question at each station and invites the children to draw/write/doodle their response to each question. Some of the information may not get recorded on the actual body parts, so it can be helpful to have a note-taker to record any additional information. An overall Facilitator should call time after 4-5 minutes at each station and invite the groups to rotate around the room onto the next station, until every group has had the opportunity to go to every 'body part station'.

Gather up all of the body parts and stick them to a wall or giant flipchart sheet to form a giant body. You can then go through all of the comments and drawings with the group as a whole, admiring drawings and doodles and eliciting further information on any of the inputs as you go.

This is a fun exercise that small children love. They really like moving from station to station, drawing on the body parts and forming the giant body at the end. The case study below illustrates how this method can be used to good effect.

Listen to Our Voices – consultation with children living in care

Case Study

In 2010, the DCYA consulted with 211 children and young people living in care from all over Ireland. The report of the consultations was called *Listen to Our Voices*. The consultations focused on what was good and not good about living in care, what needed to be done to make it better and how the voice of children and young people in care is/should be heard. The DCYA consulted with children and young people ranging in age from 7 to 23. A separate methodology was used for the children aged 7-12, which included both the 'Identity Boxes' (see p. 113) and 'Body Art' (see pp. 113-114) methodologies.

Using the methodology for 'Body Art', the Facilitators created body part stations where the following questions were posed:

Legs: What do you like to do (hobbies/interests/spare time)?

Arms: What helps you feel safe in your life in care?

Hands: Who do you go to for a helping hand?

Head: What are your dreams?

Heart: What makes you feel happy?

Mouth: Who are all the people you talk to if you want help with a problem?

Ears: Who listens to you?

The information gathered during this session really helped to elicit the views of the children on their lives in care, but in a safe and informal manner. While the children really engaged with the activity, a lot of the really important information and 'stories' were not recorded on the body parts. To ensure this information was captured, one Facilitator posed the questions and facilitated the group to participate and engage with the activity, while another Facilitator recorded the vital information and stories that were shared while the activity was taking place.

continued over

TOOLBOX

UNDER
12
ONLY

-12

Using the methodology for 'Identity Boxes', the DCYA posed the following questions on each side of the box:

On the outside – things that people see

Top: Names

Side 1: What is good about being in care?

Side 2: Who looks after us?

Side 3: Are there things that you can't do because you are in care?

Side 4: Wishes for the future/things you would like to change about being in care.

When the children were working on Side 4, the Facilitator asked them to create a wish list of things that are helpful when they are listening to people and when people are listening to them. They also used a number of prompt questions e.g.

- ✓ What would need to happen to make adults listen to you better?
- ✓ What would you like to change about being in care?
- ✓ What would make it easier to chat about what you think and feel about living in care?

The Facilitators also invited the participants to post things inside the box if they did not want anyone else to see or hear them. *(In doing this, the Facilitator did remind the participants that anything posted anonymously could still be used in the report. In order to protect the children, the Facilitator also explained that if anything inside the box indicated that the child or anyone else was at risk, the DCYA would have to follow-up on that.)* Specifically, the children were invited to post their ideas and views on:

- ◆ What do you not like/What is not good about being in care?
- ◆ What are your worries about being in care?

Again, while this is an activity that children really enjoy (stickers, glue, glitter pens) and really engage with, there can often be lots of information that is not recorded on the Identity Box. **To that end, it is useful to have a note-taker to capture the information and stories that are not recorded on the box.**

PRIORITISING PREFERENCES

Workshops obviously generate lots of ideas and suggestions from the participants. Usually, it is necessary to prioritise these ideas to produce an achievable set of goals or simply to know what is actually most important to the group. Before asking the children and young people to vote, you should ask them to vote for what **THEY REALLY WANT** and not what is popular or what their friends want. They should also be encouraged to vote for things that are realistically achievable. Simple mechanisms to help prioritise preferences are listed in the Toolboxes below.

TOOLBOX
**ALL
AGE
GROUPS**



SHOW OF HANDS/STAND UP VOTE

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None	
TIME	Instant results!	
NOTE	Use alternative methods if the group includes people who cannot stand or raise their hands.	
<p>This method works well if the overall group is not too big and/or if you need to do the voting really quickly. It simply involves reading out the main ideas from the workshops and asking the children and young people to put up their hand or stand up for what they think is the most important idea. Most votes win!</p>		

STICKY DOT VOTING

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None	
TIME	15 minutes	
NOTE	Since this voting method is not anonymous, sometimes young people are swayed by the votes of their peers. Encourage children and young people to vote for what they really want themselves.	

continued over



TOOLBOX

ALL AGE GROUPS



This is a slightly more elaborate method of voting than the ‘show of hands’ method above. Here, the children and young people are given a set number of ‘sticky dots’ to distribute as their votes. Each recommendation should be written up on a large piece of paper with plenty of space beneath it. The children and young people are then asked to vote on what they think are the most important ideas by distributing their sticky dots however they like. For example, each person is allocated 10 sticky dots to allocate between 10 ideas from the workshops. They can choose to put all 10 of their dots on one idea if that is the most important issue for them. They can also put one dot on each idea if they think they are all equally important. Or they can distribute their dots however they like across a number of ideas. At the end, the ideas with the most dots are the ones that the group as a whole think are the most important.

VOTING CARDS

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	None	 
TIME	Instant results!	

This method has the same principle as the ‘show of hands’ method (see above). Distribute small A5 cards with ‘YES’ (green card) or ‘NO’ (red card) to each of the children and young people in the group. Read out each idea or thing to vote on. Make sure you ask the question using a YES/NO answer, e.g. Read statement and then ask ‘Do you think this is a good idea?’ or ‘Would you like this to be one of the things this group works on?’ The people then vote on the issue by raising up either the YES or the NO card, and the votes are counted and recorded.

BALLOT BOX VOTING

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED

None



TIME

15 minutes



Each young person is given a ballot paper and asked to vote for the idea that is most important to them or perhaps to rank the Top 3 most important issues with 3 votes in order of preference (1, 2 and 3). The completed ballot papers are then cast into a ballot box before they are counted. The ideas with the most amounts of votes are deemed most important. The ballot box has the advantage of being anonymous and encouraging the children and young people to vote for and prioritise what is really important to them.

TOOLBOX

AGE
13+
ONLY

13+

Additional workshop tools

Depending on how formal your organisation or your group of seldom-heard children and young people would like things to become, there are additional workshop tools for more formal groups. These tools can be accessed in the Comhairle na nÓg Toolkit and include:

- ◆ Developing an Action Plan <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/CNNevelop-action-plan.doc>
- ◆ Setting a meeting agenda http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/CNN_Toolkit_GUIDE.pdf
- ◆ How to progress an issue or idea from beginning to end http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/CNN_Toolkit_Topic_Summary.pdf
- ◆ Ensuring meetings are child/youth-led http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/CNN_Toolkit_GUIDE.pdf



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: WORKSHOP TOOLS

Participation – Spice it up! Manual providing 40 activities and games to get children and young people involved in the decision-making process (cost £19.95) <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/participation--spice-it>

Putting it all in action

Involving children and young people in the development of an international survey

Case Study

The Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey is a cross-national research study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). The HBSC is run on a 4-year academic cycle with over 43 participating countries and regions. It is a key dataset in gaining new insight into and increasing our understanding of children and young people's health and well-being, health behaviours and their social context. The HBSC survey instrument is a standardised questionnaire, but also allows for individual country differences in question areas.

The HBSC Ireland Survey is conducted every 4 years by the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG), and funded by the Department of Health.

Children and young people have never been involved in the development of domains or questions for the HBSC Survey in any participating country.

Methodology for involving children and young people in identifying domains and questions for the HBSC Survey (2014)

A three-stage process was agreed for involving children and young people in the development of domains and questions:

- ◆ identification of domains that are important to children and young people;
- ◆ development of questions under the domains identified by children and young people;
- ◆ testing the questions.

In identifying children aged 8-12, the DCYA partnered with the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) to ensure a good demographic, socio-economic, ethnic and gender spread. In identifying young people aged 13-18, organisers of Comhairle na nÓg in the 34 local authority areas of the country were asked to invite interested young people. Both the IPPN and the 34 Comhairle na nÓg responded enthusiastically to involving children and young people in this process.

Stage 1: Identification of domains that are important to children and young people

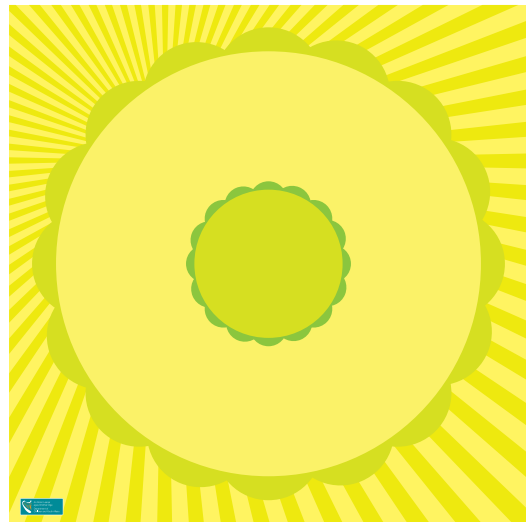
The opening question put to the young people (aged 13-18) was: 'What would someone need to know to understand what life is like for young people in Ireland?' An **Open Space exercise** was used to explore this question, during which young people identified topics, grouped them and voted on those of most importance to them. The domain areas that were prioritised as those of most importance were:

- ◆ mental health;
- ◆ cyber-bullying;
- ◆ independence;
- ◆ diversity and individuality.

The domains on 'cyber-bullying', 'independence' and 'diversity and individuality' have never been included to date in the HBSC survey. A domain area on 'mental health (incorporating 'bullying')' has been included in previous HBSC surveys, but the questions do not include aspects of mental health identified by the young people in this workshop.

The young people then discussed and wrote notes and comments on important aspects of these domain areas on customised 5-foot square **Floormats (Placemat method on the floor)**.

The opening question put to the children (aged 8-12) was: 'What would an alien from Mars need to know to understand what life is like for children in Ireland?'



Again, an **Open Space exercise** was used to explore this question, during which children identified topics, grouped them and voted on those of most importance to them. The domain areas that were prioritised as those of most importance were:

- ◆ having fun;
- ◆ parents, family and well-being;
- ◆ safety.

The children then discussed and wrote notes and comments on important aspects of these domain areas on customised 5-foot square Floormats.

Domains on 'having fun' and 'parents, family and well-being' have never been included to date in the HBSC Survey. In addition, questions under the 'safety' domain in previous HBSC surveys do not include some aspects of safety identified by the children in this workshop.



Stage 2: Development of questions

The next stage of the process involved children and young people developing questions under the domains identified at the 'Open Space' workshops. The young people (aged 13-18) worked in 4 groups on 4 customised 5-foot square Floormats with the title of the domain in the centre:

- ◆ mental health;
- ◆ cyber-bullying;
- ◆ independence;
- ◆ diversity and individuality.

The young people used the data (recorded on coloured cards) from the 'Open Space' workshop. They grouped the cards and assigned categories to each group. Up to 9-10 categories were created in each domain area. They visited the other 3 Floormats, reviewed the work done by other groups, made proposed additions, changes and new categories. The young people voted on their Top 3 categories under each domain using sticky dot voting, the results of which are outlined below:

Diversity and individuality	Independence	Mental health	Cyber-bullying
◆ Sexuality	◆ Stereotypes	◆ Solutions	◆ Causes
◆ Stereotypes	◆ Gaining independence	◆ Social media	◆ Types
◆ Finding yourself	◆ Trust	◆ Causes	◆ Coping

The next step was to work on developing questions under the Top 3 categories in each of the 4 domains. A **short presentation** was given by the NUIG researchers on the factors that make for good questions. Each group was also provided with a **checklist** for development of good questions.

They worked on 4 **Floormats** depicting the domains and categories, discussed their question ideas and agreed 2-5 questions under each category. When they had completed their questions, each group **visited the other 3 Floormats**. They had the opportunity to review the work done, make additions, changes and even add new questions. The young people then voted on their Top 3 questions under each domain using **sticky dots**.

The same methodology was used for children aged 8-12, but the children worked in smaller groups.

Stage 3: Testing the questions

The final stage of the identification of domains and questions for the HBSC Survey was testing the questions with children and young people who were not involved in their development. The workshop with young people (aged 13-18) was intensive, with a total of 36 questions to be tested under the 4 domains of 'mental health', 'cyber-bullying', 'independence' and 'diversity and individuality'. Each question was written on an **A1 card** with **spaces for the young people to assign scores and comments** under the following question criteria:

- ◆ Is the question appropriate?
- ◆ Is the question understandable?
- ◆ Is the question fair/unbiased?

A further space was provided for each group to select the best response to the question from a list of 10 response options. A **moving debate** was held before working on the question cards, to help in explaining the concept of 'question criteria'.

The young people worked in 3 groups on 12 questions per group. They discussed each question and cast their individual vote from 1-10 under each of the 3 criteria (appropriate, understandable and fair). If they considered it to be a good question with poor wording, the group proposed a re-worded question and voted again. They then assigned a response

option to each question from a list of 10 options provided. Once finished working on all 12 questions, they **moved table and repeated the above process** with another set of 12 questions, marking, commenting and proposing changes or agreeing with changes proposed by the previous group.

This workshop was very intensive and required enormous concentration by the young people. The evaluations completed afterwards by the young people noted that they greatly valued the opportunity to be involved in this important work, but that there was too much to be done in too little time.

In the de-briefing session following the young people's workshop and based on their evaluations, the Facilitators decided to adopt a less intensive approach for the workshop with the 8-12 year-old children. During the children's workshop, they worked in groups of 5 on a mix of questions from each of the 3 domains of 'fun', 'family' and 'safety'. In recognition of their stage of development, each domain was divided into 3 sub-categories to make the work more concrete. The sub-categories used were those named by the children in the previous workshop.

- ◆ FUN: Sub-categories – friends, sport, hobbies;
- ◆ FAMILY: Sub-categories – love, fun, friends and family;
- ◆ SAFETY: Sub-categories – fire, road, caring.

The children explored each question under the following criteria:

- ◆ Do you understand the question?
- ◆ Is it fair?

During this session, the children were given the opportunity to propose changes to the wording of the questions. They then selected the best response option for each question (from a list of 5 choices). Voting on the question criteria and on response options was conducted in the same way as in the workshop with the 13-18 year-olds.

Evaluation

All stages of the process to date were evaluated by children, young people, adult Facilitators and researchers.

Finalising the questions

The NUIG HBSC Team considered and reviewed the final questions developed by the children and young people against other research criteria for inclusion in the HBSC Survey and further tested them with groups of children and

young people in schools. The final proposed list of questions for primary and post-primary schools were submitted for approval to the Department of Health, which oversees and funds the study. All proposed questions were accepted by the Department of Health. Thus, HBSC Survey Ireland 2014 becomes the first country to include domains and questions developed by children and young people.

Below are the domains and questions developed by the children and young people in the workshops described above. These are included in the HBSC Ireland Survey 2014, marking a milestone in this international instrument.

Primary school questions

Question	Response	Domain
Do you play sports?	Yes, No	Fun
Do you play with a club?	Yes, No	Fun
Do you prefer to play...	Indoors, Outdoors?	Fun
How often do you do your hobbies?	Every day, Every week, Every month, Rarely, Never	Fun
Does your family play with you?	Always, Often, Sometimes, Never	Family
Do you love your family?	Always, Often, Sometimes, Never	Family

Post-primary school questions

Question	Response	Domain
Are you comfortable talking about your sexuality?	Yes, No, Don't know	Diversity/individuality
Do you feel comfortable being yourself with your friends?	Always, Often, Sometimes, Never	Diversity/individuality
At what age should young people be allowed to work?		Independence
How often do you do your hobbies?		Independence
Does your family play with you?	Always, Often, Sometimes, Never	Mental health
Do you love your family?	A lot, Some, A little, Not very much, Not at all	Bullying

Conclusion

The journey described above represents a radically different approach to development of a national survey than is normally used. The inclusion of new domains and questions in the HBSC Ireland Survey in 2014 will provide valuable information on aspects of the lives of children and young people never before explored in the study. This information will assist in the development of policies and services that meet the needs of children and young people in aspects of their lives that are important to *them*.

The outcomes from the consultation process confirm the value of involving children and young people as stakeholders in the HBSC Survey and challenges researchers and policy-makers to consider involving children and young people in the development and design of other research into their lives and behaviour. There is considerable interest across Europe in exploring the Irish process with a view to adapting it for use in other participating countries.

Review and Evaluation
of how participation of
seldom-heard children
and young people is
going and taking action
to change practice

What is evaluation?

Evaluation is the process used to find out what your participation project has achieved, most notably **what has worked well** and **what could potentially work better**.

Set & record goals

It is important to set and record goals at the start of the work. If necessary, review and update these goals during the process, keeping records of these changes so you can track the journey and the issues and themes arising.

Why review and evaluate?

It is necessary to review and evaluate so that you can establish:

- ◆ If your participation project is **achieving the original aims** and objectives;
- ◆ What **impact** the participation project has/had (including any unintentional impact) on the participants, your organisation or any other relevant stakeholders;
- ◆ **Learning for the future.**

When should you review and evaluate?

Review and evaluation should be an **ongoing practice throughout the programme** rather than a once-off activity at the end. You should solicit feedback from the participants and any other key stakeholders throughout the project and not just at the end. This allows you to change the project completely or tweak it in small ways to make it better as soon as you need to and without having to wait until the end of a year.

Who should conduct the evaluation?

If you have the funds, you can employ an independent evaluator to conduct the evaluation. If you do not have the funds, it is absolutely fine to conduct the evaluation yourself.

Putting together an evaluation plan

An Evaluation plan specifies what will be evaluated, how and when. The evaluation plan should include information about what the evaluation is trying to do (e.g. what is to be evaluated, the purposes of the evaluation and the key evaluation questions) and how it will be done (e.g. what data will be collected, how, when and from whom, how data will be analysed, and how and when results will be reported). An template for an Evaluation Plan is provided in Appendix 7.

Evaluation results and taking action

Having devised an evaluation plan and conducted an evaluation, the **most important next step** is to review and reflect on the outcomes and take the relevant feedback on board in the next stages of the project. Steps to move from your evaluation results to 'taking action' might include:

- ◆ review and reflect on the outcomes of the evaluation process;
- ◆ measure the outcomes against the original goals of the programme;
- ◆ celebrate the successes of the programme and the aspects that are working well;
- ◆ establish the key shortcomings and what could be done better;
- ◆ establish how to best change your practices to address these shortcomings;
- ◆ share the feedback and evaluation outcomes with those who participated in the review, especially the children and young people on the programme;
- ◆ discuss with the key stakeholders what specific actions you will take and specific changes you will make to the programme;
- ◆ revise your goals accordingly and go again!

TOOLS FOR EVALUATION

Creative tools to elicit feedback from seldom-heard children and young people are outlined below.

BULLSEYE

RESOURCES/EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Blank space on wall, 4 flipchart pages stuck together in a square or blank archery target, sticky dots
TIME	10 minutes <i>(best used in groups where there are less than 30 people in attendance, otherwise it is too unwieldy)</i>
NOTE	Good method where there are literacy problems since you can read out the headings and the participants do not have to write.

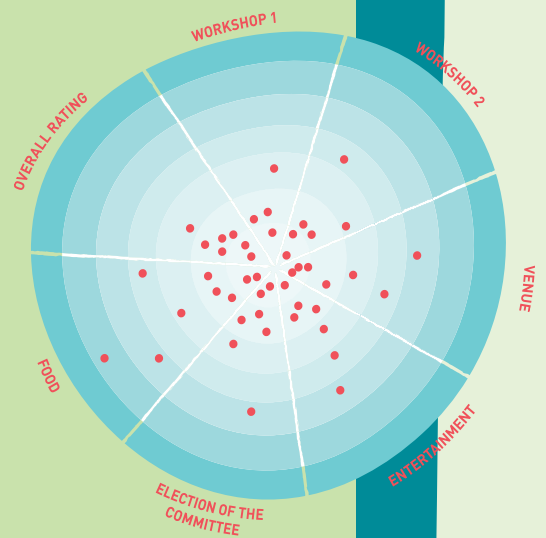


Decide on what elements of the participation programme or particular meeting you want to seek feedback on, e.g.

- ◆ Listening Game: Sam says
- ◆ Focus Group: How can we (children and young people) make a difference in the organisation?
- ◆ Body Map: What specific things do we (children and young people) want to change in the organisation?
- ◆ Meeting Room
- ◆ Food
- ◆ Team-building activity: Toxic Waste

Prepare the following in advance:

- ◆ Use a giant piece of paper (4 flipchart pages taped together or a blank archery sheet) and draw a gigantic circle with a bulls eye in the middle.
- ◆ Divide the circle into the number of segments you need to cover each aspect *(based on the examples given above, there would be 6 segments)*.
- ◆ Write the name of each aspect beside the segment.



continued over



On the day:

- ◆ Distribute a sticky dot to each participant for placing on each segment of the circle.
- ◆ Ask the participants to rank each element by placing their sticky dot close to the 'bulls eye' if they thought it was GREAT/SUPERFAB and at the far end of the 'bulls eye' if they thought it was NOT GOOD AT ALL. They can also place the sticky dot anywhere in between.

DISTANCE STAR TRAVELLER

<p>RESOURCES/EQUIPMENT NEEDED</p>	<p>Blank 'Distance Star Traveller' hand-out (see Appendix 8), pens/markers</p>	
<p>TIME</p>	<p>10 minutes</p>	
<p>NOTE</p>	<p>This methodology is used to measure change in the participants' views or appreciation of stated aspects of the programme over time.</p>	
<p>Because this methodology is used to measure change over time, it is a good idea to use it at the outset of the programme and again at the end of a particular period (e.g. one year). You can measure the change in views on whatever programme aspects you want. Examples of things to measure change on are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I think it is important that children and young people are listened to; ◆ I want to help change my community; ◆ I think children and young people have a say in how this organisation is being run; ◆ I understand what this group is for; ◆ I am willing to speak in front of people; ◆ I am interested in having my own voice heard; ◆ I would ask my friends to get involved in this group; ◆ I am having a good time. 		

continued over

TOOLBOX

ALL
AGE
GROUPS

At the beginning of the programme:

- ◆ Explain that you want to learn what they think about some things at the very beginning of the programme.
- ◆ Ask the participants to be completely honest – you really want to know what they think, whether it is good or bad.
- ◆ Explain that you are going to give each participant a sheet and you want to know what they think now in relation to each question by marking the star with a number from 1 to 5. Explain that 1 = lowest mark (i.e. very bad idea) and 5 = highest mark (i.e. excellent idea).
- ◆ Ask the participants to put their names on the sheets since they will be returned to them at a later date.

At the end of Year 1 (or some other milestone or timeframe) of the programme:

- ◆ Remind participants of the 'Distance Star Traveller' exercise by showing them the sheets they marked up before. Explain that you want to learn what they think NOW about the same things you asked before, now that they been involved in the programme for a year.
- ◆ Ask them to be completely honest – you really want to know what they think, whether it is good or bad.
- ◆ Explain that you are going to give them back the sheets that they filled out previously, but now you want them to PUT A BIG RING around the number that represents what they think NOW in relation to each question. As before, 1 = lowest and 5 = highest.
- ◆ Hand out the sheets to their individual owners.
- ◆ Hand out RED pens (or different coloured pens) so that the new mark is obvious.
- ◆ Collect the sheets and see what changes have occurred, both individually and as a group.

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EVALUATION PERSON

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Flipchart paper, pens, post-its, sticky-tape
Time	20 minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Tape two pieces of flipchart paper together and draw a person on the paper. ◆ In the picture, include a person's heart, a thought bubble coming out of their head, a bag or satchel in one hand, and a rubbish bin beside the person. ◆ Hand out 4 post-its to each participant. ◆ Pose Question 1 and ask them to write the answer on ONE of their post-its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What did you like about the day?</i> ◆ Ask them to post their post-it on the heart of the person. ◆ Pose Question 2 and ask them to write the answer on ONE of their post-its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What will you take away from the day and use again in your life?</i> ◆ Ask them to post their post-it on the bag or satchel. ◆ Pose Question 3 and ask them to write the answer on ONE of their post-its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What did today make you think about?</i> ◆ Ask them to post their post-it on the head. ◆ Pose Question 4 and ask them to write the answer on ONE of their post-its: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What did you not like about today?</i> ◆ Ask them to put their post-it in the rubbish bin. 	



TOOLBOX
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GROUPS**



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RANKING AGENDA

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Flipchart paper, coloured card x 1, marker, sticky dots x 3 (different colours)
TIME	10 minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ List the day's agenda on a flipchart page and leave space at the side for participants to post their sticky dots. ◆ Give each participant enough sticky dots for each agenda item in 3 different colours (e.g. red, yellow, green). ◆ Put the following key code on coloured card beside the flipchart page: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red: NOT GOOD – DID NOT LIKE • Yellow: OK • Green: EXCELLENT – REALLY LIKED IT ◆ Explain the key system to the participants, i.e. that they should put a red dot beside any agenda item that they really did NOT like, a yellow dot beside anything they thought was OK and acceptable but not amazing, and a green dot beside anything that they really enjoyed. 	



VIDEO DIARIES

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Camera, cordoned-off space, sign indicating what issue or question the children and young people should address
TIME	Over period of time (e.g. during lunch break)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Cordon off an area to create a 'booth' or Big Brother Diary Room experience. ◆ Leave a camera rolling or draw a big arrow pointing to the button that the participants should press to start the camera recording. ◆ Write a question on a piece of coloured card and leave it in the booth for all to see. The question could be 'What was your favourite thing about this group?' or 'What did this group 	

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ALL AGE GROUPS



actually achieve?’ Alternatively, you could let participants know in advance what ONE question they should address in the booth.

- Ensure access to the diary room/booth over a long period of time so people can pop in individually or in groups during breaks/lunch time and record their message and opinions.

VOX-POP


RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Microphone and recorder
TIME	Over period of time (e.g. during lunch break)



A vox-pop is an informal method of evaluation. You can use any questions of relevance to interview the participants using a microphone and recorder. Ideally, one or two of the participants will conduct the interviews.

TOOLS FOR EVALUATION


FEEDBACK FORM/QUESTIONNAIRE

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Blank feedback forms (see <i>Appendix 9</i>), pens/pencils	
TIME	10 minutes	
NOTE	Should mostly be used with groups with good literacy levels. Symbols and emoticons should be used where possible. Leaders should be on hand to help anybody who needs help completing the form.	

A feedback form is an efficient way to conduct a comprehensive evaluation very quickly. The form should be very short and use child/youth-friendly language.

- ◆ Explain that you want to get feedback on the meeting/group/any other issue.
- ◆ Ask the participants to be completely honest – you really want to know what they think, whether it is good or bad.
- ◆ Explain clearly what you want participants to do on the form, e.g. should they ring the answer or put an 'X' in a box. Make sure the instruction is clear!
- ◆ Give each participant a form, pen or pencil.
- ◆ Give the participants 5-10 minutes to complete the form. Be aware that some people will finish quickly, while others may take more time. Make sure people are given the time they need.

LOG BOOK

RESOURCES/ EQUIPMENT NEEDED	Notebook for each participant or giant notebook for group as a whole	
TIME	Time dedicated at each meeting or every quarter	

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NOTES

- ◆ Notebooks are unpredictable; some participants will input lots of information and others will not input very much at all.
- ◆ Ask the participants to be truthful. Explain that the logs are confidential. It is up to them if they want to share their thoughts, feelings and progress with others. Name the people that will see them. Commit to keeping them confidential **unless** you ask permission to use the content and **unless** a participant writes something that indicates they (or another person) is/are at risk. Explain this in advance to the participants.
- ◆ It takes a lot of time to analyse the data in the notebooks. Build this into your time allocation for the evaluation.
- ◆ Participants can draw or doodle rather than write, so the exercise does not demand literacy skills.

This method requires the participant to record their personal experience of any activities, development, thoughts and feelings throughout the programme. The structure can be very open-ended, where you give each participant a notebook and ask them to record what they think or feel at the end of each session in their own words or by drawing/doodling/sticking in photographs, etc. Alternatively, you can set a different task or pose a different question at the end of each session and give the participants 10 minutes to answer the question in their own way. You can also combine both methods.

- ◆ Set aside 'log book' or 'notebook' time at the end of each session.
- ◆ Ask the children and young people to record their thoughts and feelings on 'X' in that time. Examples of set questions to pose are:
 - What did you learn about yourself today?
 - What did you learn about others today?
 - How good do you think you are at listening?

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- What makes somebody good at listening? What is this group actually for?
- What difference can this group make to my life?
- What difference can this group make to the lives of other children and young people?
- What difference can this group make to my community?
- What do you like about this group/today?
- What do you NOT like about this group/today?
- What have you learned from this programme?
- What would you tell your friends about this programme?



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:
REVIEW AND EVALUATION TOOLS

- ◆ *Child Participation Assessment Tool* (Council of Europe, 2013)
Indicators for measuring progress in promoting the rights of children and young people under the age of 18 to participate in matters of concern to them. [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/participation/Child participation AssesmentTool_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/participation/Child%20participation%20AssesmentTool_en.pdf)
- ◆ *Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit* (NYCI, 2011)
<http://www.youthdeved.ie/sites/youthdeved.ie/files/MonitoringToolkit.pdf>
- ◆ *How are we doing?* (Foróige, 2011)
The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre in NUI Galway in partnership with Foróige have developed an evaluation resource to support staff in carrying out qualitative and quantitative evaluations in their projects. http://www.foroige.ie/sites/default/files/evaluation_resource_0.pdf
- ◆ *What's Changed* tool (National Youth Agency (UK), 2010)
The *What's Changed* tool is a downloadable template you can use for capturing stories of change in the lives of children and young people. <http://www.nya.org.uk/catalogue/hear-by-right-2/whats-changed-tool-2010>

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The following tools are from Participation Works in the UK, some of which have an associated cost:

- ◆ *Evaluating Participation Work: The Toolkit & The Guide*
 The toolkit is a compilation of sample forms and activities that you can adapt or copy to collect information during your evaluation. The Guide is a guide to evaluating participation work. http://www.participationworks.org.uk/files/webfm/files/resources/k-items/participationworks/diy_evaluation_toolkit/diy_evaluation_toolkit.pdf
- ◆ *Action Impact*
 This is a tailored programme that will enable you to measure and track your organisation's impact. <http://www.participationworks.org.uk/events-training/products/action-impact>
- ◆ *Evaluating Participation Work – Evaluation in a Nutshell*
 This simple guide breaks down the evaluation process into simple, easy-to-follow steps. <http://www.participationworks.org.uk/resources/evaluating-participation-work-evaluation-in-a-nutshell>
- ◆ *Measuring the Magic*
 This report examines the different ways in which involving children and young people in decision-making could be measured and evaluated. <http://www.participationworks.org.uk/resources/measuring-the-magic>
- ◆ *Involving children and young people in evaluation*
 Evaluation training activities for 8 to 12-year-olds. <http://www.participationworks.org.uk/resources/taking-part-in-making-decisions-training-for-8-to-12-year-olds-all-six-parts>

Rewarding participation

It is most important that you verbally acknowledge the children and young people's participation and voluntary time at each and every meeting. Where at all possible, it is also important to provide some refreshments for the participants (e.g. pizza, tea, coffee, juices, waters and some treat items). This demonstrates an appreciation of their time and commitment and ensures that they feel valued. At various milestones of importance, you may also consider:

- ◆ a food party;
- ◆ a day/evening out at the cinema/bowling/paintballing/go-karting, etc. The seldom-heard children and young people should be key drivers in choosing the activity, subject to budget availability. Let them know if/what budget is available – they will happily work within it once they know what it is. Ensure that the activities chosen cater for everyone and, most importantly, do not isolate any participant (e.g. a paintball venue that does not have wheelchair access);
- ◆ celebratory public event where members of the public/families/peers are invited to hear a presentation on their progress and work;
- ◆ presenting gift tokens for local shops or that can be used in a variety of outlets (e.g. One4All);
- ◆ awarding a 'Certificate of Participation' after a year's participation or a milestone juncture for the group (e.g. achieving one key aim). A sample of a Certificate of Participation is given in Appendix 10.

In all instances, you should ensure that:

- ◆ the children and young people are consulted about whether they think the idea is a good one, whether they want to pursue it and the details;
- ◆ appropriate guardian/parental consent is secured;
- ◆ pursuing the idea does not isolate any member of the group (e.g. where a participant chooses to abstain from a public activity because they do not want their involvement in the group made known).

Top Tips

Tips from practitioners for practitioners

- ◆ Be realistic in your aims at the outset of your project – set achievable goals.
- ◆ When something is child/youth-led and participative, don't be afraid to go off topic for a while before coming back to the issue that you need to discuss.
- ◆ In light of the above, don't underestimate the time it will take to make progress in a participation project.
- ◆ It is important to get a few easy 'wins' at the beginning. Start with an easy target that can be easily achieved (e.g. making a poster to advertise the group).

Getting an easy 'WIN'

Case Study

Irish Wheelchair Association

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) involved its members in the establishment of the children and young people's section of its website. While this was quite a big project in itself, they staged the project with milestone events so that the participants felt a sense of achievement throughout the process. Steps in the process included:

- ◆ Agreeing a plan of action together.
- ◆ Consultation with peers on what they wanted from a 'youth microsite'.
- ◆ Designing a consultation poster inviting young people to send in their views.
- ◆ Creating an online survey.
- ◆ Creation of website mock-ups by a designer.
- ◆ 'Soft' launch, including peers who had participated in the consultation process so that further feedback could be solicited.
- ◆ Final analysis and final changes.
- ◆ Formal launch.
- ◆ Continued involvement in development and updating of site.

While this is a very significant participation project, the IWA members felt that they had a number of 'wins' along the way that inspired the young people to continue their work.

- ◆ You don't need to know everything – use the expertise of other agencies and organisations.

Working in partnership with other organisations

Case Study

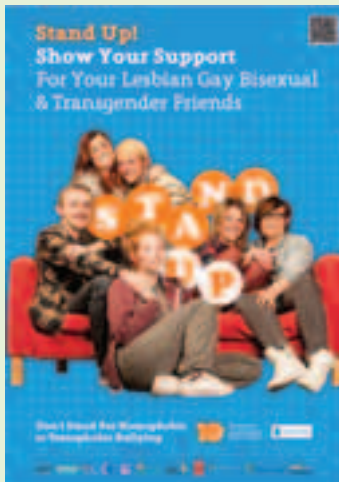
Empowering People in Care (EPIC) and Focus Ireland

Pathways is a guide or handbook on 'leaving care' that was created for young people who are preparing to leave care by young people who have left care. It is a perfect example of how to use the expertise of other agencies and organisations and work in partnership. Empowering Young People in Care (EPIC) worked in partnership with Focus Ireland on the *Pathways* handbook. Using focus groups and storyboards, both EPIC and Focus Ireland consulted with young people in their services before drafting the information and experiences that the young people felt were important to know about leaving care. Drafts of the guidebook were then presented to the young people for consideration and further input. The participants were also involved in and spoke at the launch of the official publication (2013). The final publication is available at: <http://www.epiconline.ie/pathways---guide-to-leaving-care.html>

Irish Wheelchair Association and South Dublin County Comhairle

The IWA invited South Dublin County Comhairle (SDCC) to give a presentation to the Clondalkin youth club. This resulted in one member of the IWA joining the SDCC. The Comhairle co-ordinator was proactive in supporting the member to get involved and the IWA Youth worker attended the first five Comhairle meetings with the participant before they felt comfortable enough to attend alone. The Comhairle provided the taxi to enable the participant to attend independently and the IWA provide personal day care on any trips away or excursions. In addition, the IWA delivered a 'Disability Awareness Workshop' to all Comhairle members. This facilitated discussion and understanding about disability and ensured that the IWA member felt more included in the group.

- ◆ It can sometimes be helpful to have a **Partnership or Co-working Agreement** in place with the organisations you are working with. (Sample headings for inclusion in a co-working agreement are provided in Appendix 11)
- ◆ **Use materials from other organisations** to decorate your meeting spaces so that children and young people understand that this is a place where diversity is celebrated.
- ◆ If the space is shared with adult groups, **ensure that all of the materials in the room are appropriate** for the age of the children and young people in your group (e.g. posters on sexual health, hard-hitting campaigns on child poverty, etc).



- ◆ **Don't assume you know what is going on in someone's life.** The lives of seldom-heard children and young people are often complex and complicated.
- ◆ **You will need to deal with adults and management who are reluctant to share power.** Useful exercises to conduct are:

- ◆ Ask the adults in question to list how the organisation would benefit from the inclusion of seldom-heard children and young people. Ask them what it could bring to their own area of work.
- ◆ Show examples of how the inclusion of children and young people in the decision-making process has benefited other organisations (see *case studies from Foróige and Barnardos on pages 31-34*).
- ◆ Ensure that the adults make an emotional connection with the impact and importance of children and young people's participation, as well as with the participants themselves. To that end, you should consider:

- Arrange for the participants to engage with the wider staff body of the organisation. This could take the format of an informal gathering so that staff and project participants can mingle and get to know each other.
- Hold an information-sharing event where staff share information on their role/project in the organisation and project participants share information on their own project/stories (if they have the capacity and feel comfortable doing so).
- Conduct an exercise with the adults who are reluctant to share power, preferably alongside the children and young people. (It could be part of the events outlined above.) Invite everyone to remember a time when they were listened to. Go around the room and ask each person to share their example, the impact it had, how it made them feel, what happened as a result. Invite them to remember a time when they were NOT listened to. Again, go around the room and ask each person to share their example and the impact it had on them. Hearing the stories of the children and young people should have an impact on the adults. Remembering the importance of being listened to and included themselves is also hugely impactful and can really help inspire power-sharing.

It is also beneficial to have a model of working that embraces and promotes the idea of 'sharing power'. BeLonG To operates an **Equal Partnership model** that underlies all of its work with young people. The principles of this model are:

- 1 Different people have different roles, but all roles are respected equally.
- 2 Responsibilities should be shared as much as possible.
- 3 We are all equal, but we are not the same (different areas of expertise and life experiences).
- 4 We are all working for the same goal and are equal in the process.

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- 5 Youth workers have a responsibility to develop young people.
- 6 Young people have a responsibility to engage youth workers.
- 7 There is an open dialogue between youth workers, volunteers, students and young people without fear or consequences.
- 8 There must be honest recognition of work that is not equal partnership-based.

Tips from young people in a participation group

Based on their experience in setting up their Youth Advisory Group, young people from Foróige had the following tips and advice:

- ◆ Be open, honest and willing to change – know your limitations and what can realistically be achieved.
- ◆ Make sure everyone understands what ‘participation’ is and what it is not – this ensures people have a better understanding of what they are trying to achieve.
- ◆ Strive for ‘quality’ participation, where children and young people have a real say and influence over decisions. It should not be just about having young people present.
- ◆ Support young people to participate. This includes having meetings at times suitable for children and young people, making sure participants understand what is going on, training participants in the skills needed to participate in a meaningful way, and training adults to support young people to participate.
- ◆ Be mindful of how much time it can take to make small gains – for both the participants and the organisation.
- ◆ Having a dedicated Youth Participation Officer is really helpful.
- ◆ Have a clear step-by-step process of influence that children and young people understand.

- ◆ Provide training, consultancy and support to adults involved in the participation project.
- ◆ Involve young people every step of the way. As one young person from Foróige's Youth Advisory Group observed: 'Sometimes you hear the excuse that "young people don't want to participate in this bit because it is too boring or complicated". Don't fall into this trap. Allow children and young people to participate at all levels – don't assume they won't be interested'.
- ◆ Invest in participation – time, commitment, expertise, staff, belief and money.



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: MATERIALS TO DECORATE MEETING SPACE

- ◆ BeLonG To's Stand Up Awareness Week (full pack and posters freely available) <http://www.belongto.org/campaign.aspx>
- ◆ Foróige's Charter of Rights for Young People <http://www.foroige.ie/sites/default/files/Charter%20of%20Rights%20Poster.jpg>

Further resources
on 'participation'



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPATION

- ◆ *Have Your Say* (Council of Europe, 2008)
- ◆ Manual on the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. The revised charter is designed as a tool to support young people, youth workers, organisations and local authorities in promoting and enhancing meaningful children and young people's participation at local level. It offers guidance on managing children and young people's participation projects and a practical toolkit to help increase practitioners' understanding of children and young people's participation. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/Have_your_say_en.pdf
- ◆ *Why Don't We? Youth Participation Resource Pack* (NYCI, 2007) <http://www.youth.ie/nyci/why-dont-we-youth-participation-resource-pack>
- ◆ *Young Voices: Guidelines on how to involve children and young people in your work* (National Children's Office, Children's Rights Alliance and NYCI, 2005) http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/31267_Young_Voices_.pdf
- ◆ *Working with Hard to Reach Young People – A Practical Guide* (Scottish Government, 2007) <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/206127/0054786.pdf>
- ◆ *Participation in the Second Decade of Life: What and Why?* (Commonwealth, 2005) <http://www.unicef.org/adolescence/cypguide/files/CS-Book1-What-and-Why.pdf>
- ◆ *Adolescent and Youth Participation: Adults, Get Ready!* (Commonwealth, 2005) http://secretariat.thecommonwealth.org/Document/152816/154211/162033/youth_participation_toolkits/
- ◆ *Core principles for children and young people's participation in the planning, delivery and evaluation of government policies and services* (UK Government, 2001) <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CYPUCP1-PDF1.pdf>



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: 'HOW TO' GUIDES ON PARTICIPATION

- ◆ *Young Voices: Guidelines on how to involve children and young people in your work* (National Children's Office, Children's Rights Alliance and NYCI, 2005) http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/31267_Young_Voices_.pdf
- ◆ *Involving Young People in Conference Planning: A model for action* (HSE, 2006) <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/yourhealthservice/SUI/Library/Guides/ConferencePlanning.pdf>
- ◆ *Tools for Adolescent and Youth Participation* (Commonwealth, 2005) http://secretariat.thecommonwealth.org/Shared_ASP_Files/UploadedFiles/983621CB-D789-48B3-A84C-F2CB6023E458_Four-ToolsforAdolescentandYouthParticipation.pdf
- ◆ *Working with Children and Young People: A Quick Guide for Frontline Staff* (HSE, 2010) <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/yourhealthservice/SUI/Library/Guides/wwc.pdf>
- ◆ *How to involve children and young people in governance* (Participation Works, 2009) http://www.participationworks.org.uk/files/webfm/shop_files/how_to_guide%20governance.pdf
- ◆ *How To Guides* (Participation Works, various years) <http://www.participationworks.org.uk/resources?filter1=HowtoGuide>
- ◆ *The New South Wales Government in Australia has produced a series of resources with practical advice on how to involve children and young people in activities, events and decision-making about issues that affect their lives. The series is free to download at* <http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/Publications---resources/Participation-resources/Taking-PARTicipation-seriously> and includes:
 - **Sharing the stage:** Explores the idea of participation and looks at the five key elements that need to be in place for children and young people to participate effectively in decision-making. You'll find lots of practical ideas and examples of what's worked for other organisations.

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- **All aBoard!** Looks at why and how organisations can involve children and young people on boards and committees, and has tips about recruitment, roles and responsibilities, induction, supporting young people before and between meetings, making meetings fun, keeping young people interested, dealing with turnover and reviewing how things are working. *All aBoard!* also has practical templates for relevant forms and materials.
- **Count me in:** Looks at how organisations can involve children and young people in research and has tips on how to get children and young people participating in all stages of the research process.
- **Checking the scoreboard:** Helps you get feedback from both staff and children and young people involved with your organisation and to come up with an action plan to breathe new life into your participation activities.
- **Conferences and events:** Helps you to run events that make space for children and young people's participation. There are stories from young people about their experiences and more than 90 activities and games you can use to help both you and the young people get the most out of their participation.
- **Meeting together – Deciding together:** Is all about involving children and young people in meetings where decisions are made that affect their lives, such as case-planning meetings. It also has 'kid-friendly' templates for invitations, agendas and minutes, and lots of other useful information.
- **Sharing our journey:** Together with the views of children and young people, the module discusses the success and challenges of children's participation, why it works and is good for kids, and how organisations benefit when they promote and practise effective participation.



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: EXAMPLES OF PARTICIPATION PROJECTS ON PARTICULAR ISSUES

- ◆ *Minding the Gap* is an animated short film created by the young members of the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) campaign in order to tell their stories and highlight the barriers they face. <http://www.mrci.ie/our-work/young-people-education/>
- ◆ *Do children's rights matter?*
The Children's Rights Alliance assembled a group of 23 children and young people (aged 15-18) to make a short film about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Over the course of 4 workshops, the children and young people identified 3 key issues facing children and young people in Ireland today – poverty, bullying and lack of recreational spaces. <http://www.childrensrights.ie/campaign/do-childrens-rights-matter>
- ◆ *Can You Hear Me? The right of young children to participate in decisions affecting them* (Lansdown, 2005)
This paper argues that there is an urgent need to explore the active participation of children younger than 8 in decisions that affect them. It offers suggestions on how this can be achieved. http://issuu.com/bernardvanleerfoundation/docs/can_you_hear_me_the_right_of_young_children_to_par



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: CONCEPTS OF PARTICIPATION

- ◆ *Participation Models: Citizens, Youth, Online* (Creative Commons, 2012) This publication provides a very accessible introduction to 30 different models of participation dating from 1969 to 2010. It also includes references to the original texts for further reading. <http://plataformadeinfancia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Participation-models-Andreas-Karsten-1c07.pdf>
- ◆ *General Comment No 12: The Right to Be Heard* (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009) This document is aimed at strengthening the understanding of the meaning of Article 12 and its implications for governments, stakeholders, NGOs and society at large. <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC-C-GC-12.pdf>



SIGNPOST TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: INCLUDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN ADULT ORGANISATIONS

- ◆ *The Power of an Untapped Resource: Exploring youth representation on your board or committee* (Bernard, 2001) This handbook provides a list of basic criteria for creating an effective Board that includes youth representation. It also includes a checklist for adults and youth. www.atthetable.org/images/Details/03130215570525_The%20Power%20of%20an%20Untapped%20Resource.pdf
- ◆ *The Recruitment Pack* (Save the Children, 2008) This pack was designed to support organisations wishing to involve children and young people in the recruitment and selection of staff. <http://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/pdfs/The%20Recruitment%20Pack%202008.pdf>
- ◆ *Easier to Say than to Do: Children's Participation in Events with Adults* (Save the Children, 2007). This guide provides a theoretical background as well as practical advice on enhancing the relationships between adults and children when they participate in activities together. http://mena.savethechildren.se/Global/scs/MENA/Celebrating_90years/easertosaythantodo.pdf

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Appendices

NOTE: All Appendices are available in soft copy on www.dcy.a.ie

Appendix 1: Incident and Accident Report Form

Insert agency branding here

INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name of event/meeting where the incident/accident occurred.

.....

Date Location

Briefly describe what happened

.....

.....

Who was involved?

.....

.....

Any injury sustained?

.....

.....

Who dealt with the situation?

.....

How was it resolved/dealt with?

.....

Please attach any additional information if required

.....

Signature:

Name:

Any follow up required?

.....

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Appendix 2: Assent Form for children and young people

(See details about this form on page 42)

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Insert agency branding here </div>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">ASSENT FORM</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">For participation in [insert name of organisation/programme]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p> <p style="margin: 0;">This assent form covers meetings being held on: [insert date(s) of meetings to be held]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p>
<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> <h3 style="margin: 0;">DETAILS FOR CHILD/YOUNG PERSON</h3>	
<p>Name of child/young person</p> <p>Address of child/young person</p> <p>Date of birth of child/young person Age</p> <p>Contact phone number for child/young person</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Other relevant information (<i>please mention any medical conditions, special needs or dietary requirements</i>)</p> <p>.....</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> I agree or assent to take part in this INSERT NAME OF EVENT/MEETING/CONSULTATION/PROGRAMME.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I agree that photographs, digital images and/or video recordings of me can be used in news releases and/or educational materials as follows: printed publications or materials, posters, brochures, greeting cards, calendars, electronic publications or websites.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I agree that my name and identity may be used in media image(s).</p>	
<p>Signed Date</p>	

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Appendix 2a: Consent Form for parents/ guardians/care workers

(See details about this form on page 42)

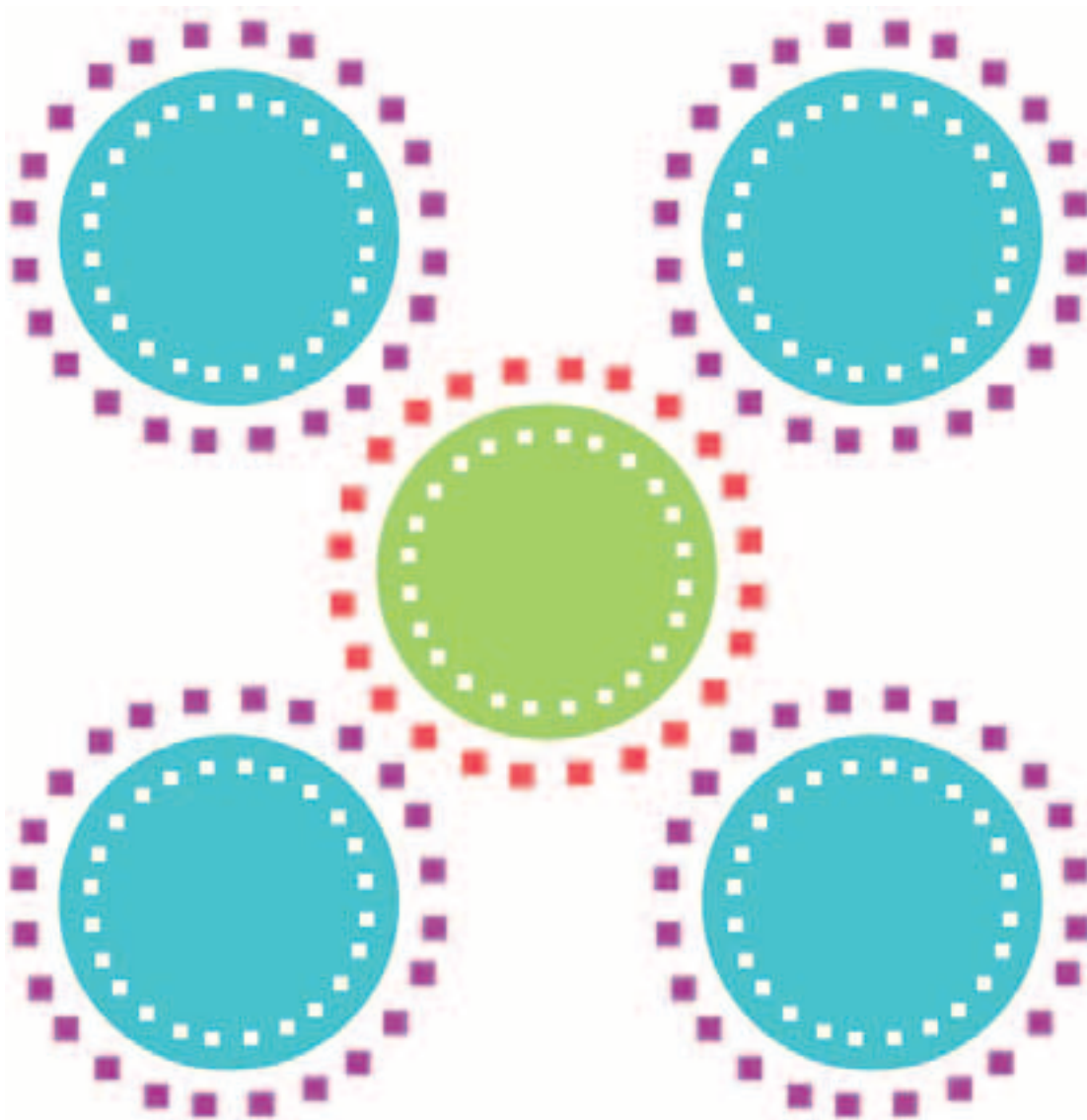
Insert agency branding here	<h3>CONSENT FORM</h3> <p>For participation in [insert name of organisation/programme]</p> <p>.....</p> <p>This consent form covers meetings being held on: [insert date(s) of meetings to be held]</p> <p>.....</p> <hr/> <h3>DETAILS FOR CHILD/YOUNG PERSON</h3> <p>Name of child/young person</p> <p>Address of child/young person</p> <p>Date of birth of child/young person Age</p> <p>Contact phone number for child/young person</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Other relevant information (<i>please mention any medical conditions, special needs or dietary requirements</i>)</p> <hr/> <h3>DETAILS FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN/CARE WORKER</h3> <p>Name of Parent/Guardian/Care Worker</p> <p>Relationship to young person</p> <p>Address Contact telephone number</p> <p>In case of emergency, please contact (if different from above)</p> <p>If the child and young person can be collected by somebody different than above, please give details:.....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I agree to allow the person named above to attend INSERT NAME OF PROGRAMME AND MEETING, which is being hosted by INSERT NAME OF HOST ORGANISATION. The meeting will take place in INSERT LOCATION OF MEETING. I understand that there will be suitable supervision for the event and that those attending will not have permission to leave the premises during the event.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I understand that INSERT NAME OF ORGANISATION will only take responsibility for the child and young person named above from the time of arrival at the meeting only, up to the time of departure from the meeting only.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I agree that any photographs, digital images and/or video recordings of my child can be used in news releases and/or educational materials as follows: printed publications or materials, posters, brochures, greeting cards, calendars, electronic publications or websites or for any purpose related to the INSERT NAME OF PROGRAMME.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I agree that my child's name and identity may be revealed in descriptive text or commentary in connection with the image(s). I authorise the use of these images without compensation to me. All negatives, prints, and digital reproductions shall be the property of INSERT NAME OF ORGANISATION. I agree that INSERT NAME OF ORGANISATION may use, edit or reproduce such photographs and videos or share them with others for any purposes related to the INSERT NAME OF PROGRAMME.</p> <p>Signed..... Signed..... (Parent/Guardian/Care Worker) (Child/Young Person)</p> <p>Date:</p>
-----------------------------	---

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Appendix 3: Draw what your partner tells you to!

(See instructions for this activity on page 54)

Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



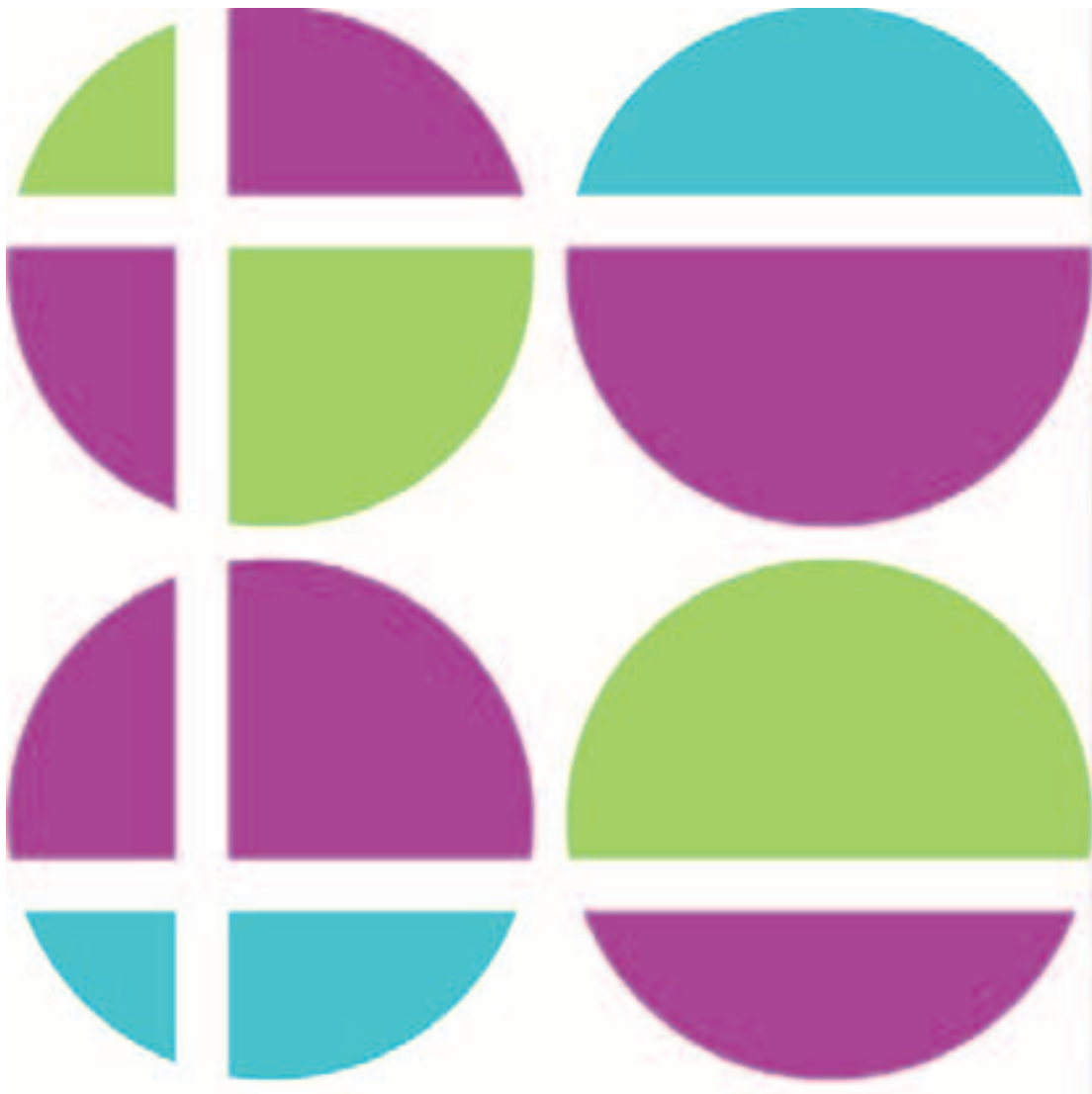
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Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



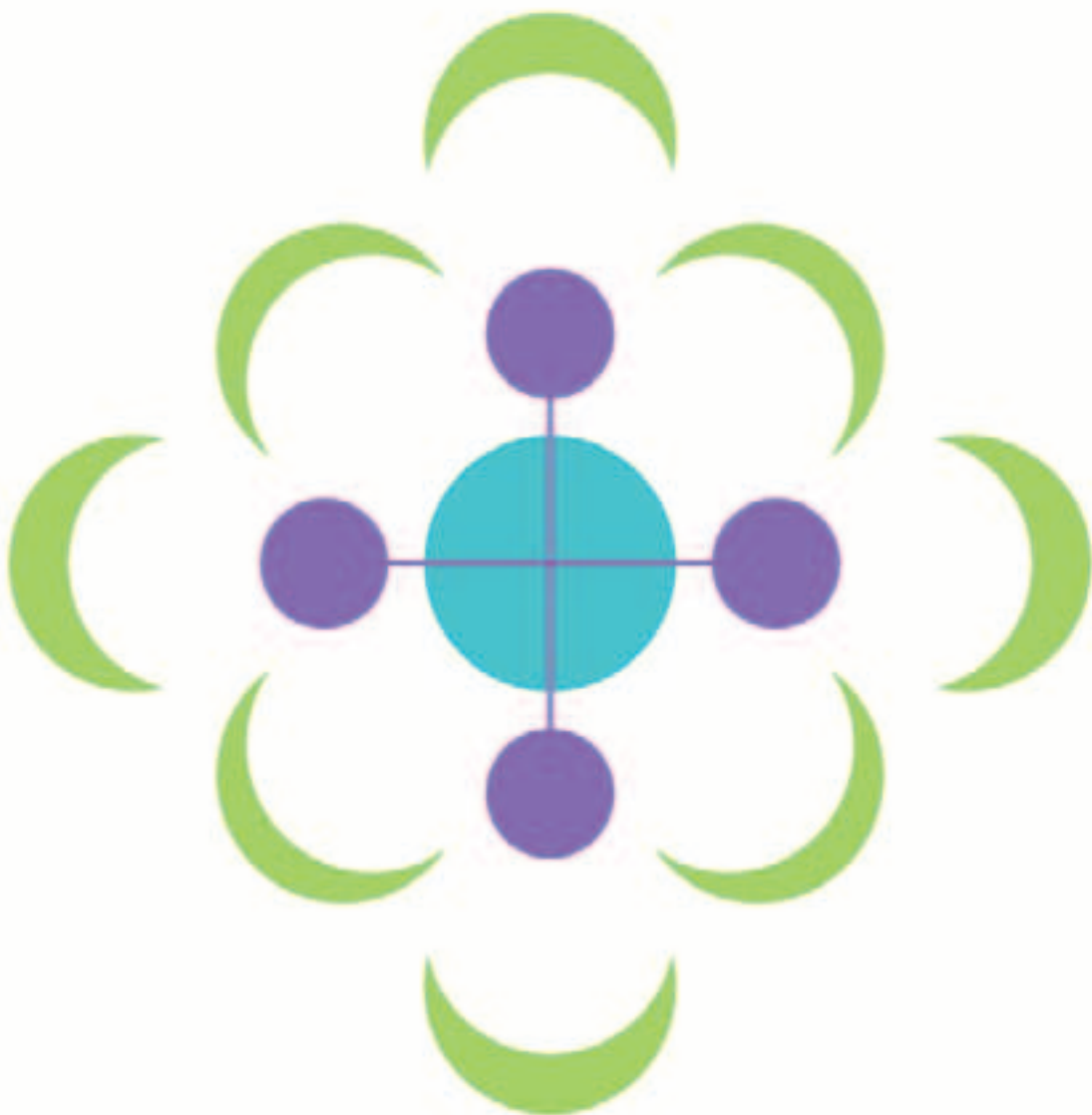
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Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



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Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



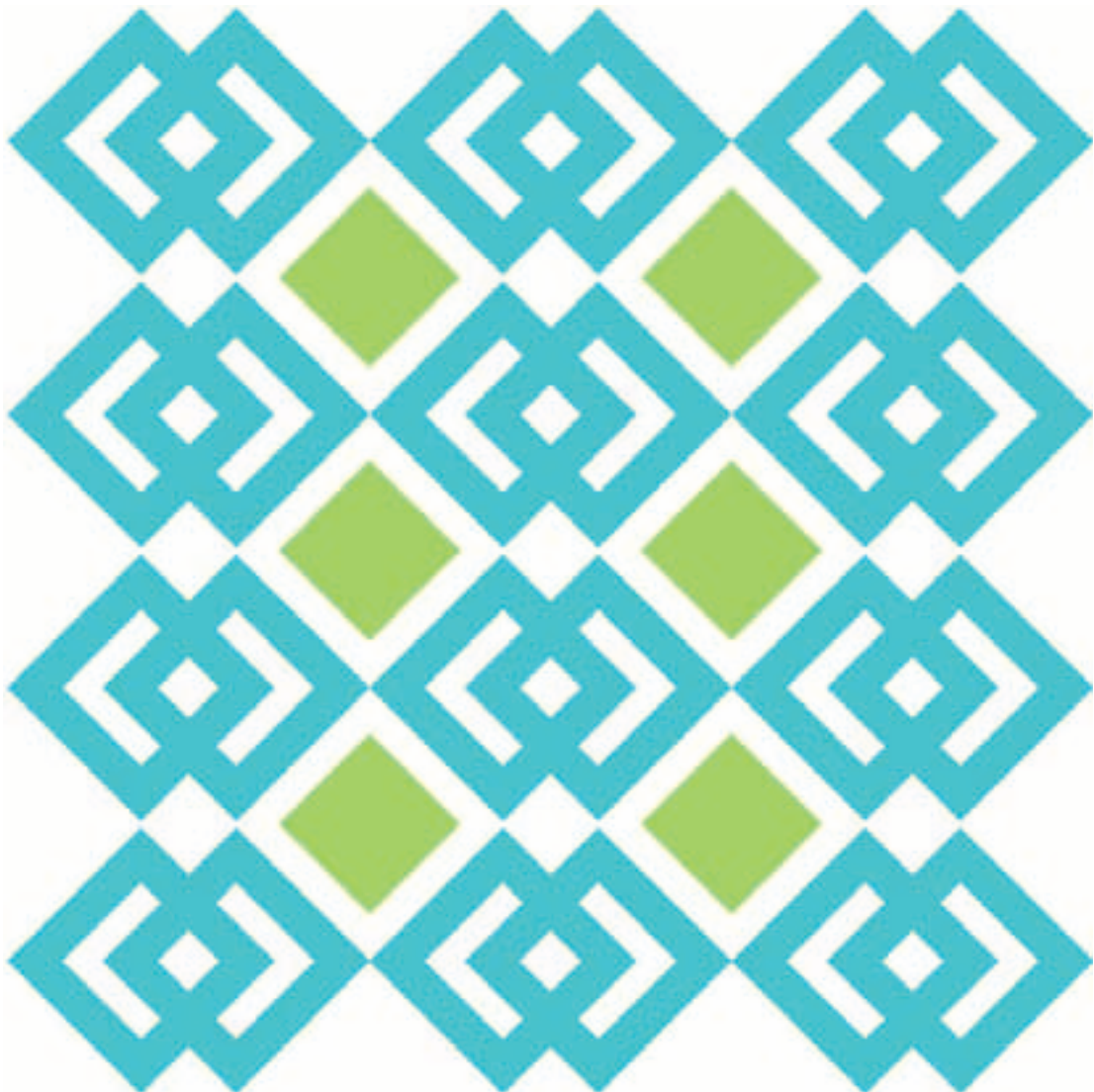
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Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



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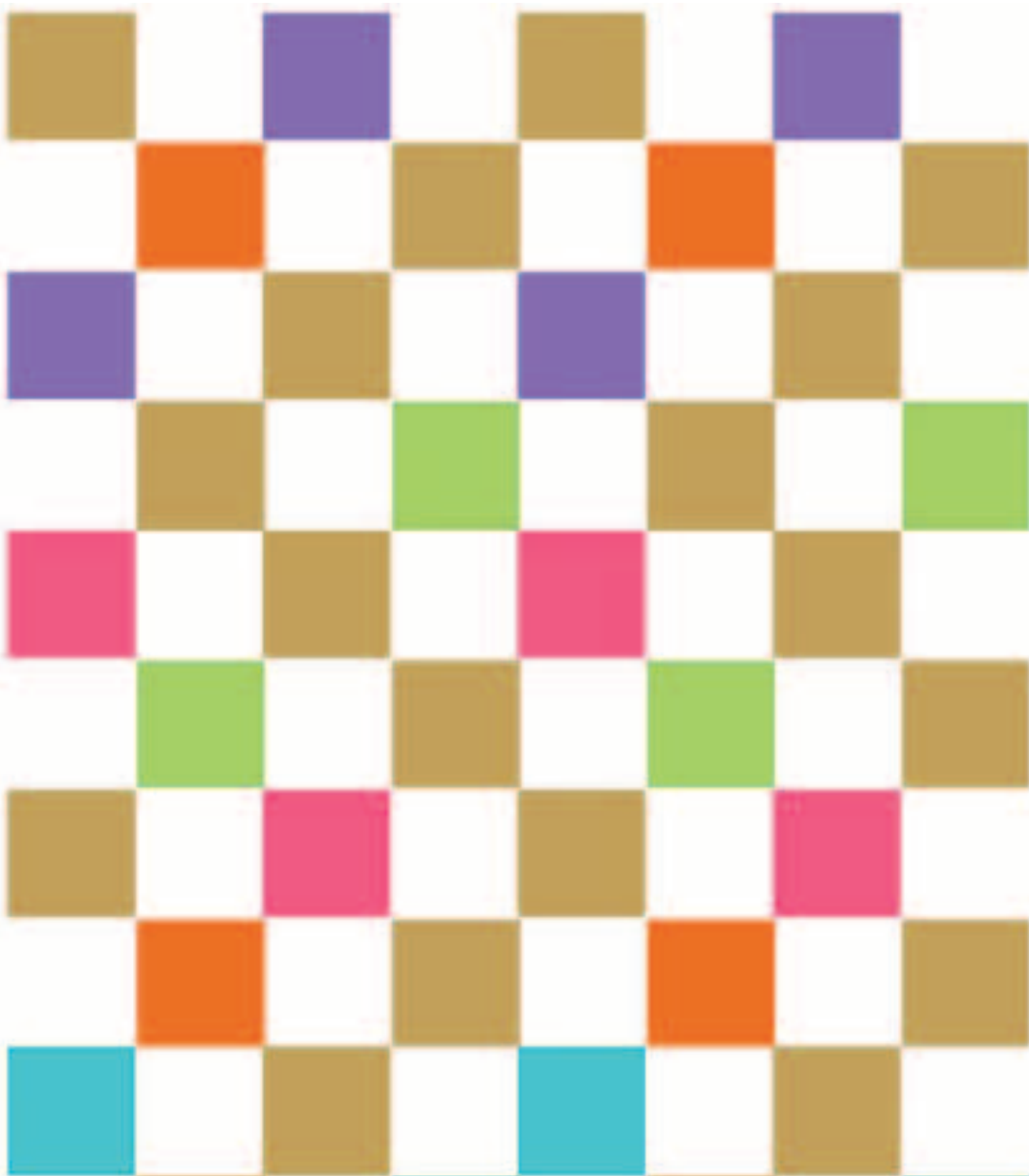
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Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



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Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



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Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



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Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



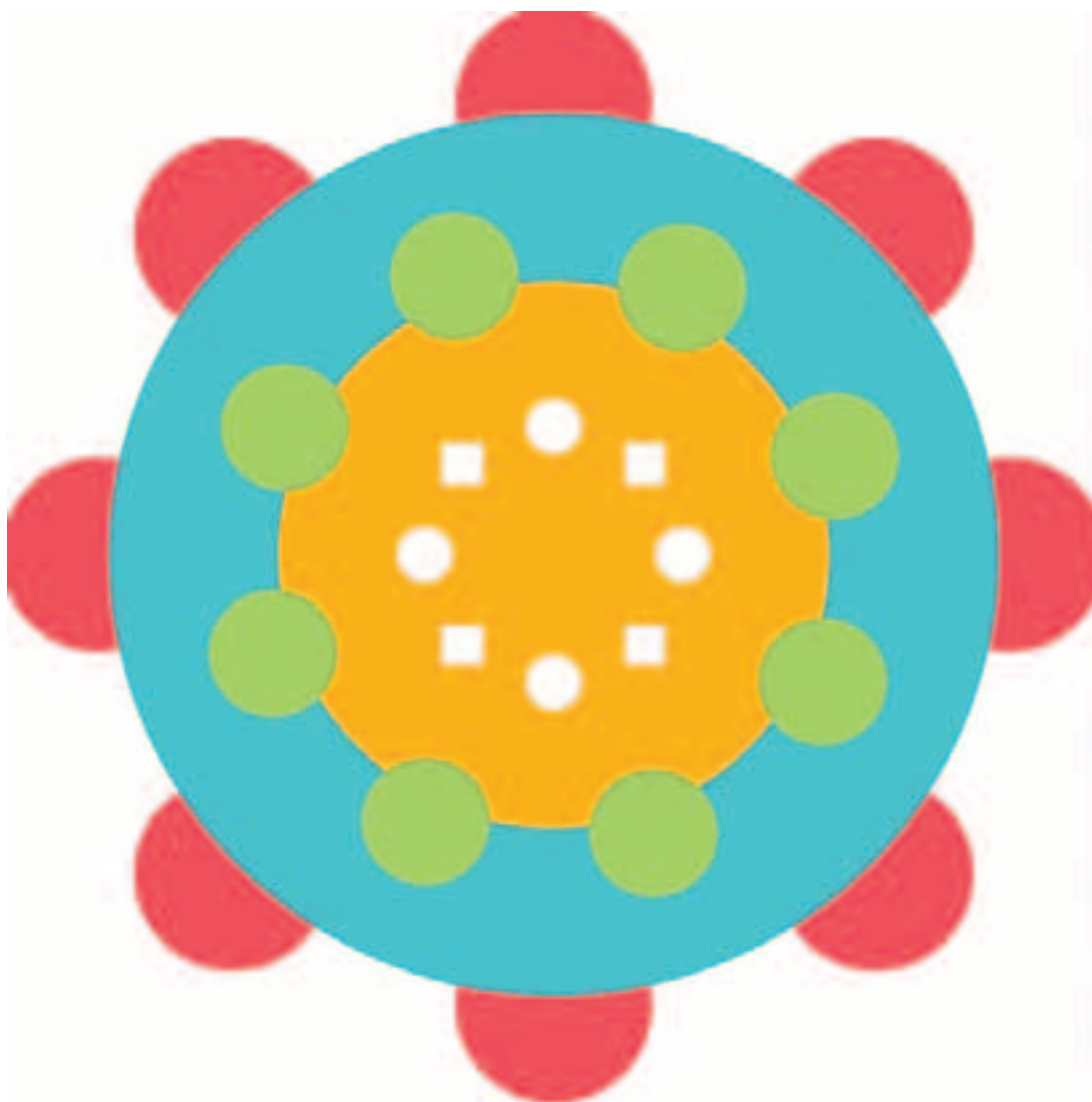
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Describe what you see to your partner behind you. Be as specific as you can – remember they can't see, so you have to give them as much detail as you can!



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Appendix 4: Human Bingo

(See instructions for this activity on page 71-72)

HUMAN BINGO: 8-12

Has a pet	Likes One Direction	Plays 'Angry Birds'	Supports Liverpool
Can draw a cat	Can ride a bike	Loves swimming	Loves music
Likes basketball	Plays guitar	Watches soap operas	Likes chips!
Has blond hair	Loves popcorn	Can do the splits	Is an only child
Born same month as you	Can skip	Can touch tongue to nose	Has performed on stage
Has been to a library	Pepperoni pizza is favourite	Likes comics	Has been ice-skating
Likes Art	Has been on a farm	Broken an arm or leg	Milked a cow
Has been on a train	Likes school	Has read a Harry Potter book	Has run a race

HUMAN BINGO: 13-18

Can juggle	Has been camping	Has a part-time job	Would like to go snow boarding
Is in a youth group	Loves popcorn	Pepperoni pizza is favourite	Loves music
Sings in the shower	Plays guitar	Watches soap operas	Likes chips!
Prefers Vans to Converse	Watches X-Factor	Has read a Harry Potter book	Is an only child
Born same month as you	Can name two characters from 'Lost'	Would like to drive	Has performed on stage
Likes animals	Knows the winner of X-Factor	Likes comics	Wears nail polish
Likes Art	Has been on a farm	Broken an arm or leg	Milked a cow
Knows a celebrity	Likes school	Is on Instagram	Has run a race

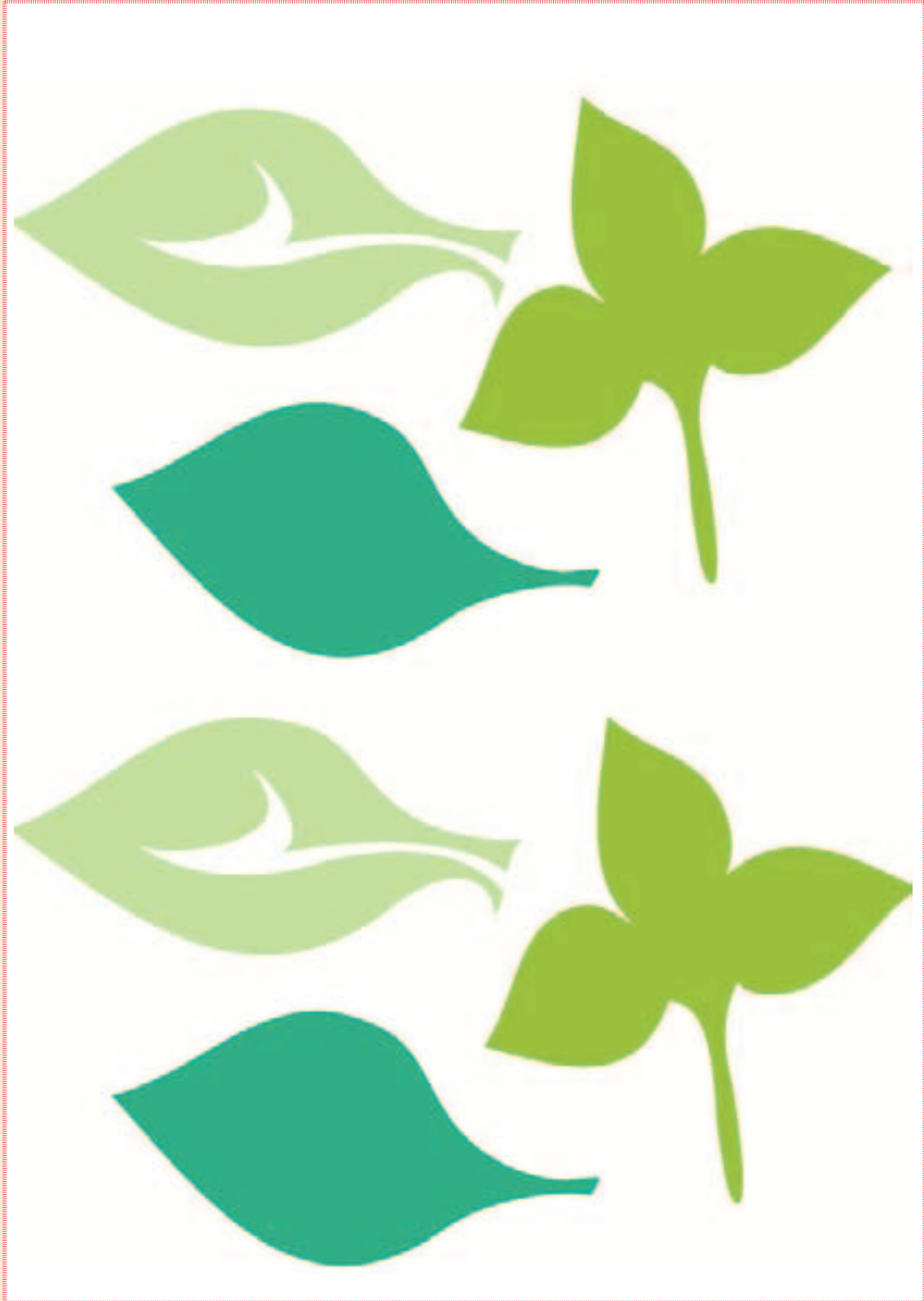
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Appendix 5: Me Tree

(See instructions for this activity on page 86-87)



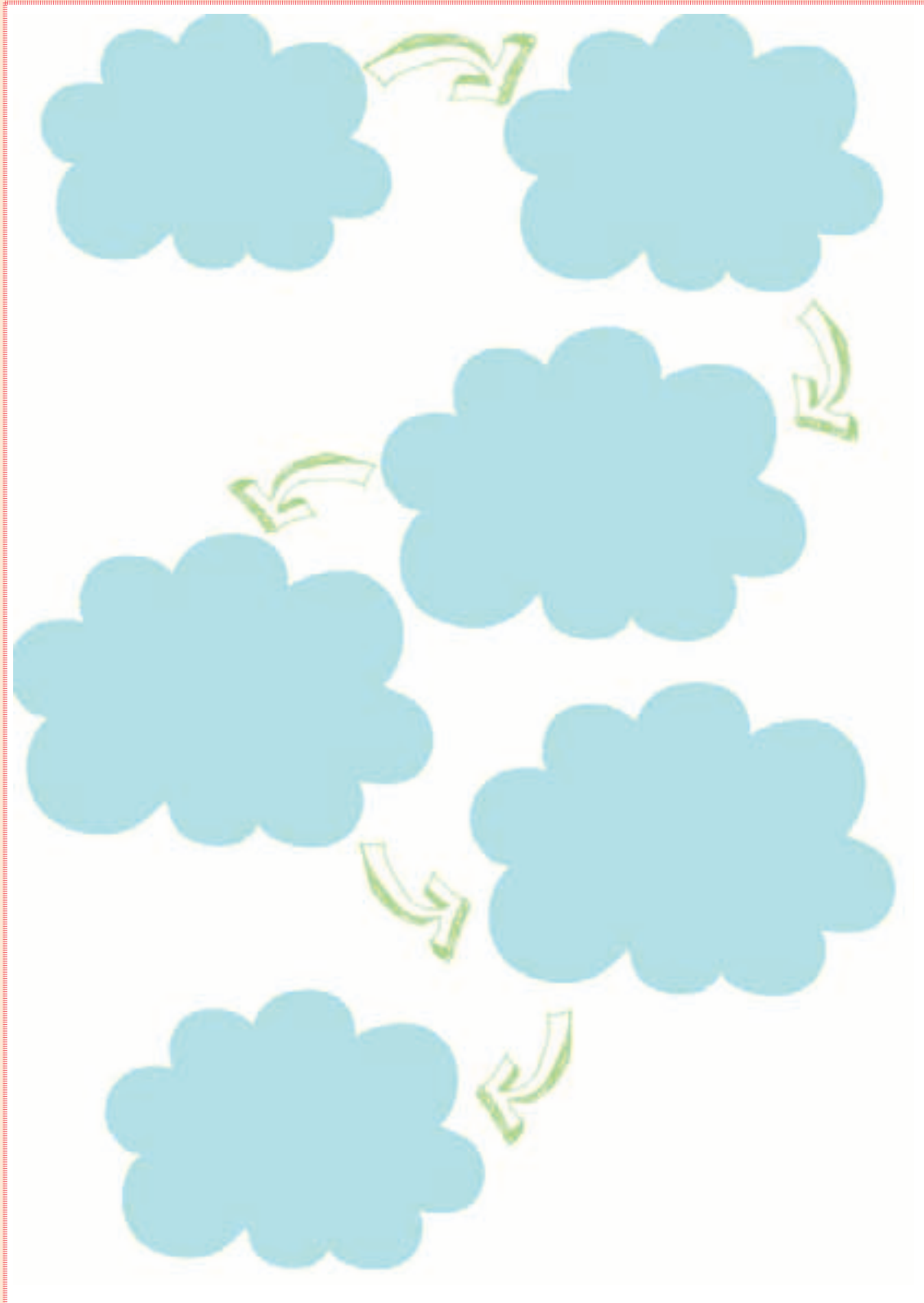
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NOTE: All Appendices are available in soft copy on www.dcy.a.ie

Appendix 6: Lifeline Template

(See instructions for this activity on page 104)



Appendix 7: Evaluation Plan Template

(See instructions for this activity on page 129)

PROJECT

<p>PROJECT OUTCOMES <i>What are your short/medium/long-term goals?</i></p>	
<p>KEY MILESTONES <i>What should have happened? By when?</i></p>	
<p>PERFORMANCE MEASURES <i>How will you know that this has happened/ project is complete?</i></p>	

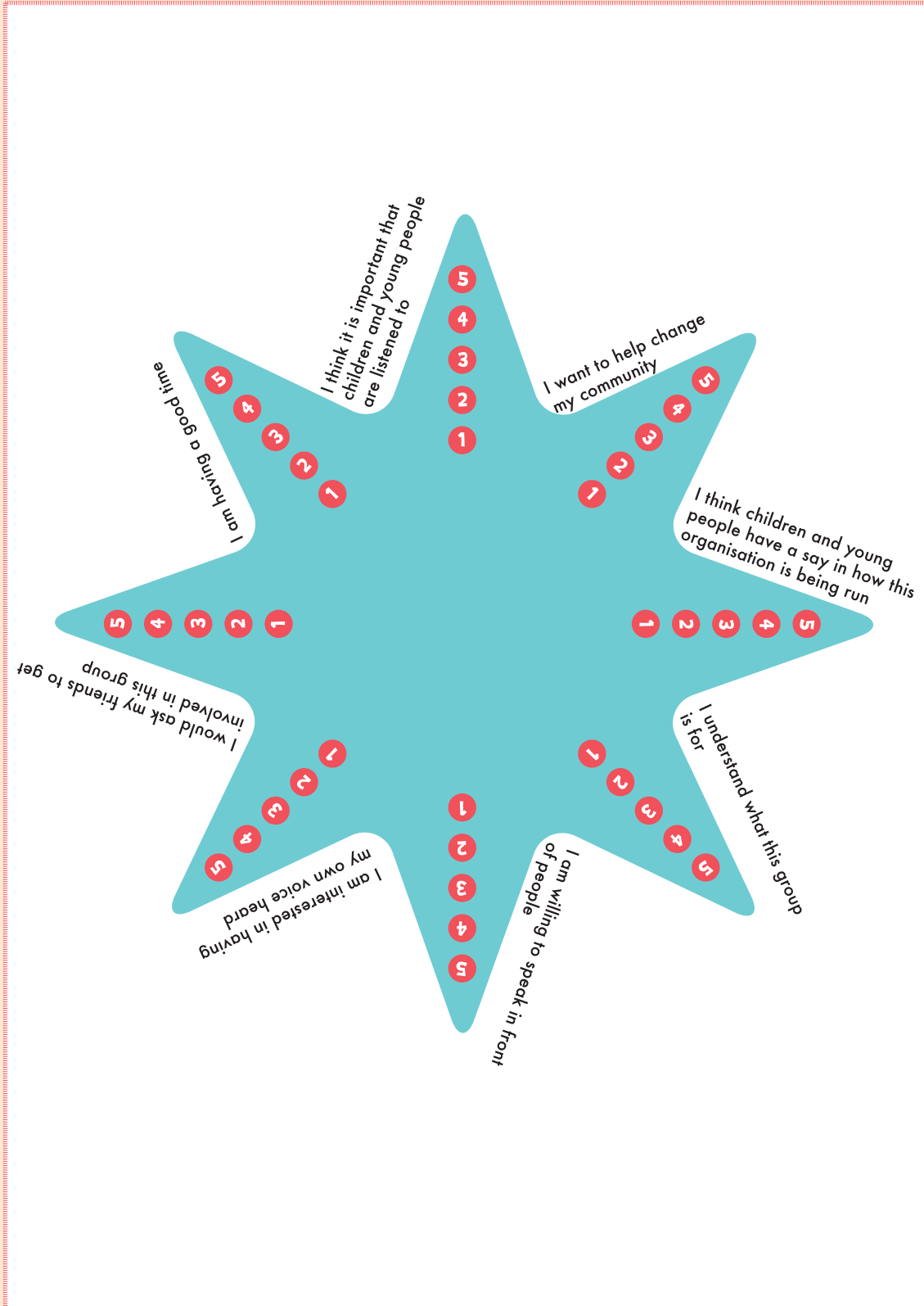
EVALUATION

<p>EVALUATION AIM <i>Why are you doing the evaluation?</i></p>	
<p>EVALUATION QUESTIONS <i>Questions for participants (using child/ young person friendly language)</i> <i>Questions for participants</i> <i>Sample Questions:</i> - <i>What did we set out to do?</i> - <i>What went well?</i> - <i>What did not go well?</i> - <i>What did we achieve?</i> - <i>What did we learn along the way?</i> - <i>What would we do differently next time?</i></p>	
<p>KEY STAKEHOLDERS <i>Who are your stakeholders? Participants? Staff? Management?</i></p>	
<p>RESOURCES <i>What resources do I have for the evaluation? Will I conduct the evaluation myself? Will I contract an independent evaluator?</i></p>	
<p>ETHICAL ISSUES, e.g. <i>consent to participate, use of materials/direct quotations produced by the participants</i></p>	
<p>METHODOLOGY <i>How will you do it? What methods or tools will you use?</i></p>	
<p>DATA ANALYSIS <i>What will you do with the data and results of the evaluation?</i></p>	
<p>TIMESCALE <i>When will you start your evaluation? Will you collect information throughout the project?</i></p>	

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Appendix 8: Distance Star Traveller

(See instructions for this activity on page 131)



NOTE: All Appendices are available in soft copy on www.dcyu.ie

Appendix 9: Feedback Form

(See instructions for this activity on page 136)

We really want to know what you think about things. Please draw a circle around whatever word describes what you think about each question, e.g. if you really like something or you agree with what is said, draw a circle around **YAY!**



If you really don't like something or you disagree with what is said, draw a circle around **BOO!**



If you are somewhere in between, draw a circle around **KINDOF!**



- | | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| ◆ I think it is important that children and young people are listened to. | Yay! | Kind of! | Boo! |
| ◆ I want to help change my community. | Yay! | Kind of! | Boo! |
| ◆ I think children and young people have a say in how this organisation is being run. | Yay! | Kind of! | Boo! |
| ◆ I understand what this group is for. | Yay! | Kind of! | Boo! |
| ◆ I am willing to speak in front of people. | Yay! | Kind of! | Boo! |
| ◆ I am interested in having my own voice heard. | Yay! | Kind of! | Boo! |
| ◆ I would ask my friends to get involved in this group. | Yay! | Kind of! | Boo! |
| ◆ I am having a good time. | Yay! | Kind of! | Boo! |

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Appendix 10: Certificate of Participation

(See details about this form on page 140)

Certificate of Participation

Insert agency branding here

This Certificate of
Participation is awarded to:

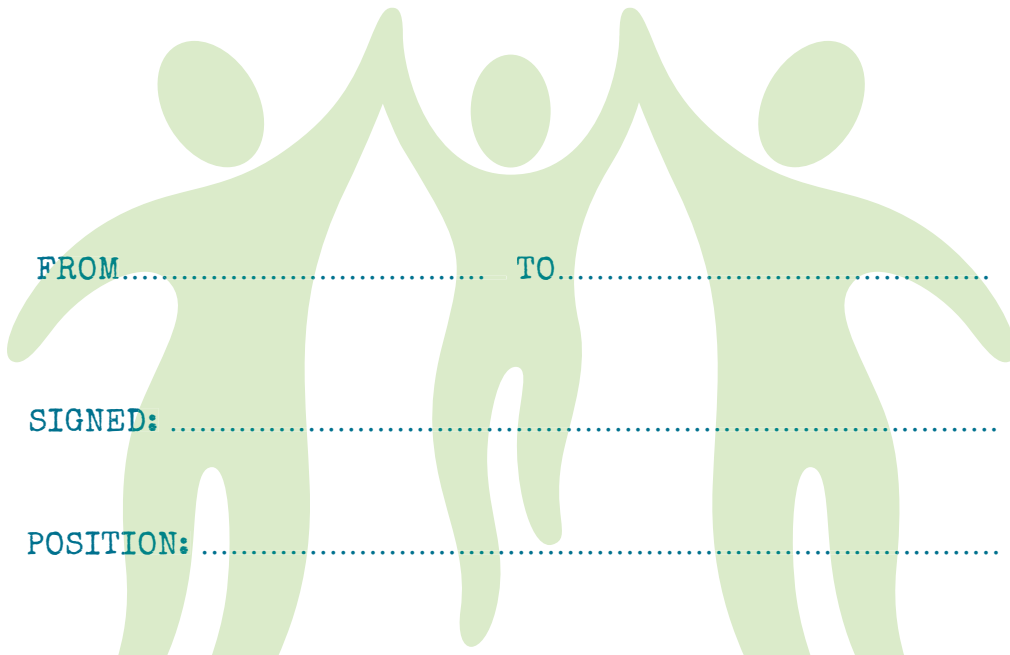
For membership of the

FROM

TO

SIGNED:

POSITION:



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Appendix 11: Co-working Agreement

(See details about this form on page 144-145)

Co-working agreements

When staff members from two or more agencies are working together with the same group of children and young people, it is important to put a 'co-working agreement' in place. Co-working agreements define how the agencies work together and outline key roles and responsibilities so everyone is clear about who is responsible for what task. As each working arrangement is different, it is best to draw up your own co-working agreement which might include some of the following headings:

Overview

- ◆ Title
- ◆ Start and End dates
- ◆ Aims & Objectives of the work

Roles & Responsibilities

- ◆ What is the role of each agency in delivering the work?
- ◆ Is leadership shared or does it rest with one worker/agency?
- ◆ Who are the responsible managers in each agency?
- ◆ Who are the responsible staff in each agency?
- ◆ Who are the alternative staff members if someone is sick or unavailable?
- ◆ Who is responsible for materials, food, resources, budget, booking space, transport etc?

Child Protection and Welfare

- ◆ What is the agreed policy on child protection?
- ◆ Who is the designated Child Protection officer?
- ◆ What is the agreed policy on behaviour management?
- ◆ What is the agreed procedure in the event of an emergency?
- ◆ How will risk be assessed and managed?

Work Plan & Evaluation

- ◆ When and how will each session be planned?
- ◆ How will each session be reviewed?
- ◆ How will the work be recorded? Who will hold the records?
For how long?
- ◆ How will the overall piece of work be reviewed and evaluated?

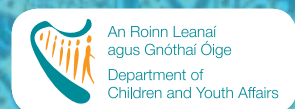
Communication

- ◆ How will the workers share important information?
- ◆ How will the workers ensure effective communication?
- ◆ What happens if there is a difference of opinion?
- ◆ How will the agencies be jointly referenced in promotional material/
reports/media?
- ◆ How will complaints be addressed?

Ensure that your co-working agreement is signed by the persons with overall responsibility for the project from each agency.

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
ARNA FHOILSIÚ AG OIFIG AN tSOLÁTHAIR
Le ceannach díreach ó
FOILSEACHÁIN RIALTAIS,
52 FAICHE STIABHNA, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2
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