

PANDA Training Toolkit

Part 3 – Group Participation: processes and skills



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Content

GENERAL INTRODUCTION	2
1 COMMENCING PART 3 SOCIAL/GROUP PARTICIPATION: PROCESSES AND SKILLS	3
2 GROUP RULES	3
3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING SESSION.....	3
SECTION A: GROUP PARTICIPATION/SOCIAL PARTICIPATION: WHAT IS IT?	3
SECTION B: SOCIAL/GROUP PARTICIPATION: THE UNDERPINNING PROCESSES AND SKILLS	5
SECTION C: APPLYING GROUP/SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE	6
SECTION D: ENDING THE SESSION	7
APPENDIX ONE	9
INFORMATION SHEET ON SOCIAL/GROUP PARTICIPATION.....	9
APPENDIX TWO: TEMPLATE FOR EXERCISES IN SECTION B	11
REFERENCES	18
ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY	19

General Introduction

The training toolkit has been designed as part of the Erasmus+ PANDA project. It comprises four component parts as follows:

- Part One focuses on the law, UNCRC, General Comments
- Part Two focuses on challenges and opportunities
- Part Three focuses on social/group participation
- Part Four focuses on methods

Each Part can be delivered as a stand-alone training exercise or delivered sequentially. The training toolkit complements the web-based resources designed as part of the Erasmus+ project. Facilitators and participants are strongly advised to engage with these alongside the toolkit.

1 Commencing part 3 social/group participation: processes and skills

The facilitator invites participants to say who they are, where they work, and one talent they have.

2 Group rules

The facilitator invites participants to identify some group rules by which the group will operate and which could include:

- What is said in the group stays in the group
- Ensuring space for all to contribute
- Valuing the contributions of everyone whether or not they are agreed with
- Giving constructive feedback only.

3 Aims and objectives of the training session

The facilitator outlines the aims and objectives of the training session. This element of the training toolkit focuses on social/group participation and the underpinning processes and skills which enable the participation rights of children and young people. The aims are to:

- Increase participants knowledge regarding group participation (social participation) projects
- Highlight the principles and processes required
- Highlight the skills required
- Inspire professionals, through the real-life examples provided by project partners Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), Trondheim Kommune, VOYPIC and the Flemish Agency Growing Up to make changes in their own organisations.

Section A: Group participation/social participation: what is it?

Purpose of exercise:

The purpose of the following exercise is for participants to begin to think about what social participation is, its underlying principles and to identify the links with children's participation rights as defined in the UNCRC.

Instructions:

- Divide people into groups of 2-3
- Invite participants to identify their understanding of group/social participation and to list any examples
- Invite participants to identify core principles and their alignment to UNCRC
- Bring the group back together and share definitions
- The facilitator adds keywords to a flip chart/word cloud and shares the group understanding
- The facilitator provides participants with the information sheet on social/group participation [see Appendix One] and asks them to read it
- By the end of the exercise, participants will have a clear idea as to what group participation/social participation is and where it comes from.

Section B: Social/group participation: the underpinning processes and skills

Purpose of exercise:

The purpose of this exercise is for participants to identify the processes and skills that underpin social participation projects and to identify the links to children's participation rights as defined in the UNCRC.

Instructions:

- The facilitator invites people to get back into their groups of 2-3
- Each group is given a case study (see Appendix One for the case study)
- Each group will be asked to consider how and in what ways they would work with a group of children on a proposal to change an aspect of a service.
- Using three headings: stages in the process; challenges/opportunities with each stage; skills required at each stage, the groups are asked to identify the stages in the process and the skills required [a completed template is available in Appendix Two to help the facilitator guide the discussion].

The facilitator brings the group together to share their ideas. At the end of this exercise the facilitator asks each participant to identify one thing they can do differently in their organisation or that their organisation can do differently.

Section C: Applying group/social participation in practice

Purpose of exercise

The purpose of this exercise is for participants to hear about some successful social participation projects.

The facilitator will divide the group into smaller groups (up to 4 in each group) and invite group members to view a selection of the resources below which highlight successful group/ social participation projects in various countries.

For videos and podcasts, click on the links below

VIDEOS IN ENGLISH

[Child participation: from voice to choice](#)

[Why is children's participation important](#)

[Child participation](#)

[The Right of Children to Participate in Public Decision-Making Processes](#)

[Webinar - Child participation from Global Child Forum](#)

VIDEOS IN SPANISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

[COPIA](#)

VIDEOS IN SPANISH

[Participación Infancia y Adolescencia Madrid](#)

[¿Para qué participamos en la COPIA?](#)

FSG VIDEOS

Samuel's question

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=924rxYJ9CF8>

Fundación Secretariado Gitano - #LeonorDropsOutOfSchool

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veyc0MgXfbA>

I am not a thief/robber /

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqBvpWbmdkQ>

Roma video - Equal opportunities

<https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/l-182046?lg=EN>

VIMEOS

Children's voices through the participation points from REACCH

Implementation of a participatory approach from REACCH

PODCASTS

Challenges of Participation from REACCH

Instructions

- The facilitator invites participants to get into four groups
- Each of the four groups will view the material from one country keep a note of the processes and skills involved. Questions that participants might wish to consider include:
 - How did the social participation begin? What happened? And then what happened next and so on
 - How were children given a voice in a group context? What skills were needed?
 - How long does the process take?
 - Was the wider community (parents and community) involved? How?
 - What helps make a proposal successful?
 - What obstacles prevent social participation being successful?
 - What works? What tools/methods are used/ are helpful?
 - If we were to ask the child what made a difference regarding their participation rights, what would they say now and in the longer term?
- The facilitator brings participants together and asks them to share their feedback.

Section D: Ending the session

The facilitator brings the group together and asks the group to reflect on:

- One new thing they found inspiring
- One new thing they will do differently in practice
- One new thing they will ask their team, organisation to consider in terms of policy/practice changes

Appendix One

Information sheet on social/group participation

The creation of Local Child and Adolescent Participation Committees are participatory bodies and are attached to the Local Councils for Child and Adolescent Care.

They are constituted as spaces for coordination that facilitate the exchange between public administrations, state, regional and local, as well as social entities involved in the welfare of children and adolescents, to inspire and enrich the actions developed by the public authorities.

Following the recommendations of UNICEF Child Friendly Cities, it is recommended that the methodology implemented for the creation of the Local Committees be participatory and active. It is necessary that the professionals involved in this process play the role of companions and facilitators rather than monitors of the activities and actions to be carried out (Aranda y Malagón, 2013; Cabrerizo et al., 2018).

According to Hart: “A nation is democratic to the extent that its citizens are involved, particularly at the community level. The confidence and competence to be involved must be gradually acquired through practice. It is for this reason that there should be gradually increasing opportunities for children to participate in any aspiring democracy, and particularly in those nations already convinced that they are democratic. With the growth of children’s rights, we are beginning to see an increasing recognition of children’s abilities to speak for themselves. Regrettably, while children’s and youths’ participation does occur in different degrees around the world, it is often exploitative or frivolous. This Essay is written for people who know that young people have something to say but who would like to reflect further on the process. It is also written for those people who have it in their power to assist children in having a voice, but who, unwittingly or not, trivialize their involvement” (1992).

The aim is to promote citizen participation from early childhood under the responsibility of the local administration in collaboration with social entities.

The working sessions between children and professionals must consider the particularities of each child as well as their own views.

In this sense, the professionals jointly plan and create their participation activities for the creation of the Local Committees and the election of representatives.

This activity will reinforce citizenship status and the process of building democracy, from predefined roles (by adults) to decision-making (by children and adolescents) through concrete projects that will help adults evaluate their attitude towards children and their advocacy (Hart, 1992).

It will also encourage the levels of participation considered by Shier (2001):

Level 4. Children are involved in decision-making processes reflect on:

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

Level 5. Children share power and responsibility for decision-making reflect on:

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

This activity will have an impact on the development of different social skills as well as values. Regarding children, in terms of basic social skills, both group awareness and the feeling of belonging to a group are developed. In terms of complex social skills, empathy, emotional intelligence, assertiveness, listening skills, the ability to communicate feelings and emotions, the ability to define a problem and evaluate solutions, negotiation, recognition, decision making and the defence of one's own and others' rights are developed.

This is why the impact is materialised in values, in their socialisation, decision-making, citizenship, leadership, training towards the future for their participation as adult citizens. Also, taking into account intersectional approaches favours a much more inclusive and holistic approach, addressing issues such as gender equality, age, diversity/disability, sexual identity, environment, etc.

Concerning professional level, the professional skills that stand out from this activity would be the following: creativity and curiosity; empathy; assertiveness; active listening; unconditional acceptance; congruence; authenticity and knowledge of child participation.

Appendix Two: Template for exercises in Section B

Stages in the process	Challenges/opportunities	Skills
<p>Intake and Engagement Context and framework Previous meeting with children (to encourage participation)</p>	<p>Context and framework</p> <p>Previous meeting with children (to encourage participation)</p> <p>To promote children's participation must be to raise awareness among children themselves, as well as among adults, that participation should be natural and frequent in all areas.</p> <p>In the first encounter with children, it is essential that professionals explain to them that they are subjects and citizens. Therefore, respecting them and listening to their opinions are key aspects in this first moment, guaranteeing clear information appropriate to the age of the protagonists.</p>	<p>Ask my team/organisation for an explicit policy that expects me to record children's communication including what was communicated, how, by which methods/mediums, when, and where, why and also to record children's non communication.</p> <p>Ask my team/organisation for specific forms that require me to record children's communication including what was communicated, how it was communicated, by which methods/mediums, when, and where, why and also to record children's non communication.</p>
<p>Group meeting with parents Explanation about the activities (emphasizing in children participation and their implications for the future)</p>	<p>The involvement of families is essential at this point.</p> <p>Once children and adolescents decide to participate in this process, the meeting with their families should aim to emphasise the children's right to participation and the very implications it may have for their future.</p>	<p>Ask my team/organization for an explicit form that require me to record parent's communication including what was communicated, how, by, which methods/mediums, when and where.</p> <p>Ask my team/organization for identifying and defining parent's concerns.</p>
<p>Data collection and Assessment</p>	<p>An individual meeting is held with each child and their family to clarify their doubts and concerns about this process. They are asked to authorise and sign informed consent forms.</p>	<p>Ask my team/organization for an explicit form that require me to record parent's and children's communication including what</p>

<p>Individual meeting with family and child Informed consent</p>		<p>was communicated, how, by, which methods/mediums, when and where, why and also to record children's non communication.</p> <p>Ask my team/organization for identifying and defining parent's and children's concerns.</p>
<p>Planning, Intervention and Monitoring with children</p>	<p>Working together professionals and children to develop of activities related to participation.</p> <p>Techniques (some proposals):</p> <p>Dynamization techniques / icebreaker activities (see Orlik, 1979, 1986)</p> <p>This is an activity designed to help people get to know each other and usually involves the exchange of names and other personal details. It is a team-building activity designed to help groups bond and become a team.</p> <p>Some questions to guide practitioners in this introduction might be:</p> <p>- Say your name - How old are you? - Where do you live? - Where do you go to school? - What are your likes, your hobbies? - What else do you want to share with the group?</p> <p>Brainstorming (see Osborn, 1953)</p> <p>This technique allows to capture opinions or positive attitudes in order to collect concerns in order to formulate concrete work proposals according to children's perceptions (Osborn, 1953).</p> <p>Some questions could be:</p>	<p>Ask my team/organization for formulating objectives, evaluation possible strategies, articulation of resources and timing.</p> <p>Ask my team for carrying out plan, monitoring progress and revising plan.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What issues would you like to discuss in the commissions? - What would you ask of policy makers? - What would you like your city to be like? (Orlik 1979, 1986). <p>Phillips 66 (see Dabell, 2020)</p> <p>The group is subdivided into subgroups of six children and these groups spend six minutes (hence Phillips 66) discussing possible solutions to an identified problem and then report back to the larger group with a proposed solution.</p> <p>This method is particularly suited to helping large groups generate ideas more effectively and gives participants the space and freedom to express themselves equally, thus ensuring that as many creative voices as possible contribute to solving the problem at hand.</p> <p>Some questions to guide you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What would you like your city to look like? - Why do you think this issue is important to you and to all the people who live in your city? - What do you like least about your neighbourhood? - What do you like most about your neighbourhood? - Do you have any ideas about how to fix what you would like to change? 	
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	<p>Once the groups are subdivided, a representative is chosen to record and present the team's ideas.</p> <p>Each group evaluates their ideas and presents them to the facilitator. The ideas are then discussed and can be displayed in the form of a poster or other material in the room or place where the meeting was held.</p> <p>Statue technique (see Moreno, 1946, 1959, 1969)</p> <p>It seeks spontaneous expression and awareness of thoughts, feelings, emotions, attitudes, etc. that favour understanding and the ability to make decisions, as well as to rehearse them. It is an action technique that prevents children from blocking themselves and rejecting anything that goes outside their comfort zone.</p> <p>The children experience the action as a game of representation in a natural way that also allows them to learn socially, in which empathy, respect and limits are the basis of the activity.</p> <p>We work in small groups (no more than eight) and individually. If we have a workshop of 15 people, we ask them to divide into three groups, each group is asked to build, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Neighbourhood representation.- Representation of union.- Representation of participation.- Representation of a situation in the neighbourhood.	
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	<p>- Representation of how they feel, etc.</p> <p>To represent it, they must agree on it. Once the representation has been made, they have to explain it and the rest of the classmates can ask questions. This is done with the other groups and the idea, thought, proposal, feeling that the group decides on is brought out.</p> <p>The same can be done individually.</p> <p>Scrum technique (post-it) (see Herranz, Silva and Herranz, 2014; Aichinguez and Holl, 2017)</p> <p>It involves breaking down the children's ideas and proposals into smaller, more manageable modules, allowing each task to be tracked. It also helps to turn ideas into actions and actions into achievements.</p> <p>This technique starts by providing a space on the wall or whiteboard that is accessible to all children. Tasks and actions are subdivided into 1) activity, 2) to do, 3) in progress, 4) to check and 5) done. A list of all the functions and features to be incorporated into each of the specified proposals is also drawn up.</p> <p>Once all these techniques have been carried out, the group chooses its representative who will form part of the LOCAL COMMITTEE whose purpose is to compose a working team to develop the actions through a democratic organisational model, but which also foresees that one of the persons composing it will be the reference person.</p>	
Final Evaluation and Termination	<p>Commission feedback</p> <p>Children Assembly agreements</p> <p>Group evaluation</p>	<p>Ask for my team/organization for evaluating overall progress, bringing relationship to an end, and giving feedback to agency about how services, programs and professionals.</p>

	<p>The evaluation comprises two axes: firstly, with the programme participants and, secondly, with the organisation itself (Cussiánovich y Martínez, 2014; Martínez y Cabrerizo, 2015; MEPSYD, 2008; UNICEF, 2008, 2018; Verhellen, 1997).</p> <p>References with the participants in the programme¹:</p> <p>(a) The first one is carried out with the girls and boys participating in the project actions. It takes place at the end of each activity. It is very simple; questions are asked about the development of the activity and its degree of acceptance and participation. In addition, at the end of the participation periods, an assembly meeting is called to evaluate the activities and the process up to the final decision on the proposal to be taken to the children's municipal assemblies and to the plenary sessions with the attendance of the municipal political representatives.</p> <p>Some aspects to consider to evaluate with the group could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did you feel with the group? - What did you like about the activity? - What did you like the most? - What did you like the least? - What would you suggest to improve it? - What other activities would you suggest? - What did you get out of the group? - Has the support received by the group and by the professionals been adequate? In what way? And if it was not adequate, indicate what could be improved. 	
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¹ For more information on this stage see: Cussiánovich y Martínez (2014; Martínez y Cabrerizo (2015); Lansdown (2011). MEPSYD (2008); Poudyal (2006); Save the Children; UNICEF (2008, 2018); Verhellen (1997)

	<p>b) The second one involves the professionals. It is carried out at the end of each cycle of activities and at the end of the process which coincides with the school year. This evaluation is used to plan the next school year.</p> <p>Some aspects to be evaluated by the professionals can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were the children's attitudes? - To what extent did they participate in the sessions? - Was the methodology effective? - Were they encouraged to develop their confidence to contribute effectively? - Was an atmosphere created in which they felt welcome, accepted and encouraged? - Did all children in the advisory group feel equally valued and included? - Was information accessible to all children? - Was there an opportunity to raise concerns if anyone felt excluded or marginalised? - What outcomes did children themselves experience as a result of their participation in the children's advisory group? - In terms of the children's advisory group: For example: Did they feel more confident? Are they more aware of their rights? Do they feel more able to speak in public? Do they feel more valued in their community? Have they made new friends? Have they had the opportunity to meet people they would not otherwise have met? <p>From the point of view of the organisation, in this case managers and policy makers, some aspects to evaluate could be related to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did the children have enough information to make a positive decision about their participation in the group? 	
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