Local Participation Practice Guidelines

SLIGO LEITRIM CYPSC
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION LAB

TÚSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

CYPSC
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES
Sligo Leitrim

Foreword

As Chairperson of Sligo Leitrim CYPSC I am delighted to present the result of the Sligo Leitrim CYPSC 'Participation Lab' Local Practice Guidelines which have been in development under our CYPSC since 2016. As with TUSLA's National Child Development Strategy and Toolkit the Sligo Leitrim CYPSC 'Participation Lab' Local Practice Guidelines are underpinned by the Lundy Model of Participation.

The guidelines present all of us who have responsibility to provide services for children and young people with an opportunity to consider individually and collectively how our practice actively facilitates and supports children and young people to participate and engage with us.

I am particularly proud from a TUSLA perspective that the work undertaken by the project groups, the local services, and the children and young people who participate in them daily, compliments existing work being carried out day in, day out by members of Sligo Leitrim CYPSC.

I look forward now to the next steps in this initiative which will be developed and overseen by the 'Connected, Respected and Contributing To Their World' CYPSC Sub Committee in partnership with children and young people throughout both Sligo and Leitrim. Sligo Leitrim CYPSC is committed to bringing these local practice guidelines into life in all parts of the region regardless of how big or small an organisation or group is.

Finally my thanks to the members of Sligo Leitrim CYPSC Participation Lab Project Working Group;

- Tommy Lavelle, Leitrim County Childcare Committee
- Maeve Whittington, Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee
- Anne Marie Regan, Foróige
- Trish Mc Laughlin, Sligo Family Support
- Sandra Hora, Formerly of The Avalon Centre
- Joan Mc Grath, Sligo County Childcare Committee
- Nicola Mc Cormack, Formerly of Sligo County Childcare Committee
- Anne Marie Kelly, Formerly of Springboard Resource House
- Mick Hedigan, Home Youth Liaison Services

Mary Kellegher
Area Manager (Interim) Sligo Leitrim West Cavan
Child and Family Agency

Foreword

It is a bit strange to be sitting to write a foreword about a process and a project that has its foundation in so much real activity and interaction which happens day to day for Children, Young People and the services they are linked with. No document in itself could come close to capturing the energy, the challenge, the frustration and the opportunity that created when children, young people and adults work together to make a positive impact in our society.

Through our involvement in discussing Child and Youth Participation in the early stages of CYPSCs development in the counties of Leitrim and Sligo to putting the first and subsequent applications together for TUSLA Child & Youth Participation Seed Funding one key trait remained constant throughout, commitment. The commitment shown by Sligo Leitrim CYPSC in giving priority to the development of a project like this, to individual representatives connected to Sligo Leitrim CYPSC, who lent not only their expertise but their passion for participatory work in developing the project. Commitment as well and most importantly from the children and young people who lent their experience and expertise in this project that not only were they actively consulted for their views but how they also heavily influenced the content of these local guidelines now ready for use.

There is much to be proud of in the way we continue to create audience and space and voice for children and young people in both Sligo and Leitrim over many years. Through so many initiatives from dedicated voluntary groups to large scale state agencies, there is more active engagement and opportunity for children and young people to lend their opinion, perspective, ideas and creativity to the society that they live in.

It is exciting to see the inspiration and creation of the future in both counties. The services that engage with children and young people will be guided to how they can realise their contribution to evidence that where children and young people engage as part of community and society in influencing decisions, outcomes for everyone are inherently better.

Tommy Lavelle
Chairperson of 'Connected, Respected and Contributing To Their World': A Sub Committee of Sligo Leitrim CYPSC

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank and acknowledge the children, young people, individuals and organisations who gave their time and contributions to the development of this resource (Phase 2). Particular thanks to children, young people and staff from;

- Eiver's Lane Preschool Group, Mohill, Co Leitrim
- Lollipop Lane Preschool Group, Tubbercurry, Co Sligo
- Kiltubrid After-School Group, Drumcong, Co Leitrim
- Springboard Resource House After-School Group, Cranmore, Sligo
- Youth Group, Foróige The CRIB Youth Project & Health Café, Sligo
- Residents of Lois na nÓg (HSE) Sligo

Thank you also to members of the Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) Participation Lab Working Group who supported and facilitated the inception and development of this resource.

Members:
- Tommy Lavelle, Leitrim County Childcare Committee
- Trish Mc Laughlin, Sligo Family Support
- Sandra Hora, Formerly of The Avalon Centre
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- Nicola Mc Cormack, Formerly of Sligo County Childcare Committee
- Anne Marie Kelly, Formerly of Springboard Resource House
- Anne Marie Regan, Foróige
- Mick Hedigan, Home Youth Liaison Services
- Maeve Whittington, Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee

Thank you also to the organisations who took part in Phase 1 of this project. These include;
- Sligo County Council
- Carrick on Shannon Community School
- Lifestart Leitrim Sligo and West Cavan
- Leitirm County Childcare Committee
- Sligo County Childcare Committee
- Sligo Social Services Council
- North Connaught Youth Services
- Foróige
- Carrick-on-Shannon Education Centre
- HSE

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Contents

Introduction

Policy Context – A National View

In 1992, Ireland ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In doing so, it committed itself to implementing the Convention in Ireland and to safeguarding the rights of children and young people in this country. Since then, there have been a number of significant public policy developments concerning children and young people. Many of these policy developments relate to Article 12 of the Convention, which acknowledges that children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them and, in light of this, the Irish Government has made numerous commitments to give confidence to the voice of the child and to include children's views in policy-making processes.

These developments include the publication of the first National Children's Strategy (2000), which identified three specific goals:

- Goal 1: Children will have a voice in matters that affect them.
- Goal 2: Children's lives will be better understood.
- Goal 3: Children will receive quality supports and services.

Since 2000, a number of initiatives have been undertaken under Goal 1 of the National Children's Strategy:

- The establishment of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (now the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).
- The appointment of the Ombudsman for Children (2003).
- The establishment of the Children and Young People's Forum and the national and local youth councils, Dáil na nÓg and Comhairle na nÓg.
- National consultations on a range of issues concerning children and young people.
- The establishment of the DCYA Children and Young People's Participation Support Team in 2009.
- The appointment of the first Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in 2011.
- The establishment of TUSLA, Child and Family Agency in 2014.
- The launch of Tusla's strategy guidance document; Toward the Development of a Participation Strategy for Children and Young People 2015.
- The launch and implementation of Tusla's Child and Youth Participation Toolkit 2016.
- The establishment of a national Hub na nÓg to support the implementation of the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making (2015-2020)*; Ireland is the first country in Europe to develop such a strategy.

These initiatives offer children and young people exceptional levels of participation in and access to decision-making at local and national levels.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020. (2014) identifies five national outcomes which aim to make Ireland a country where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.

One of the identified outcomes – **Connected, Respected and Contributing** aims to support and encourage children and young people to participate in decision making and play a full role in society. It recognises the importance and benefits of encouraging active participation and citizenship towards fulfilling the five national outcomes for children and young people to fully engage in society.

Identified lead Government departments and agencies for delivery of this outcome.

A Local View in Sligo and Leitrim

The development of Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) has been evolving since 2007 and continues to be informed by major government policies. Chief among those is Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020 which outlines with government's agenda and priorities in relation to children and young people 0 – 24 years.

Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC)

CYPSC was established in 2014 and has a wide membership of statutory, community and voluntary organisations. Its primary objective is to oversee and direct the series of priority actions outlined in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) aimed at achieving better outcomes for children and young people. A number of working groups were set up to ensure this. The Education/School Age Childcare Working Group and the Early Years Working Group of the Sligo Leitrim CYPSC came together to develop an application under Tusla Seed Funding for Participatory Practice Initiatives in 2016 for the creation of a "Youth Participation Lab".

Following the success of the application Phase 1 of the project commenced. The aim of the participation lab was to enable consultation with Children and Young People in Sligo and Leitrim to ensure their voices are heard in relation to the quality of services they receive and their involvement in planning of services and decision making in relation to the development of those services.

Definitions and Models of Youth Participation

Definitions of youth participation have evolved over the years as more emphasis and weight has been given to its benefits. *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020* describes participation as a process; *"Participation is a process, a way of working that engages children and young people on matters that concern them, individually and collectively. The process itself is respectful of the dignity of children and young people and the contribution they have to make, based on their unique experiences and perspectives.'*

Well known models include **Harts Ladder of Participation (1992)** which moves away from tokenistic listening by adults into consultation and furthers that into shared decision making by children, young people and adults. **Shier's model (200**1) *Pathways to participation* focuses more on the role of the adult in facilitating the "participation" rather than the position of children and young people.

Professor Laura Lundy's **Model of Participation (2007)**, which aims to conceptualise Article 12 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) underpins *The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making, 2015 – 2020*. This Youth Participation Lab is committed to embedding the principles and practice of the Lundy Model throughout its work and in the development of this resource.

The Lundy Model is a rights based model which aims to focus decision makers and service providers on what is needed to ensure more meaningful participation by children and young people. Professor Lundy further developed the model to highlight that alone "voice is not enough". She aimed to stress that children and young people must also have the right to an audience – one that has the ability and responsibility to make decisions and that the audience must be in a position to influence the outcome.

Lundy Model of Participation, 2007 "Voice is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child".

SPACE: Children must be given safe inclusive opportunities to form and express their view

VOICE: Children must be facilitated to express their view

AUDIENCE: The view must be listened to

INFLUENCE: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate

Background:

Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Participation Lab

Phase One

Aims

- Conduct an audit of existing tools and practises in Sligo and Leitrim for children and young people's participation using the Lundy Model Framework.
- Establish consultation channels with project target groups via the Project Implementation Group and relevant stakeholders.
- Convene, facilitate and document consultation events with target groups.

Recommendations made following the work of Phase One

- The need for additional consultation with children and young people as well as key organisations and staff. Needed particularly in relation to the latter two quadrants of the Lundy Model – Audience and Influence.
- The next phase must consider and address the real blocks in place to meaningful participation by children and young people. Phase 1 suggests that at times the blocks have been at an organisational level - culture, ethos and lack of know how.
- The right of children and young people to have their voices heard must be more greatly recognised by organisations and by the children and young people themselves.

Phase Two

Phase two of this project began in February 2018. The main objectives of Phase 2 are to (1) develop common tools and practise into the **"Youth Participation Lab Model"** under the four quadrants of the Lundy Model to support engagement with children and young people in Sligo and Leitrim by the organisations, agencies and groups they are part of and (2) Launch the Toolkit and include relevant support for organisations wishing to access the Participation Lab.

This phase of the project aims to analyse the current practise and tools used to support children and young people to have their voice heard across the age range 3 – 18 years in Sligo and Leitrim.

Methodology and Participants

Six groups participated in this phase of the project. Three in County Sligo and three in County Leitrim. The groups included one from each age cohort in each of the Counties- preschool age, primary school age and post primary age. The following groups participated:

- **Eiver's Lane Preschool Group, Mohill, Co Leitrim**
- **Lollipop Lane Preschool Group, Tubbercurry, Co Sligo**
- **Kiltubrid After-School Group, Drumcong, Co Leitrim**
- **Springboard Resource House After-School Group, Cranmore, Sligo**
- **Youth Group, Foróige The CRIB Youth Project & Health Café, Sligo**
- **Residents of Lois na nÓg (HSE) Sligo**

Each group was visited twice by the project to enable the development of this document. The initial visit was to meet the children and young people using the service and the staff delivering the service. It involved a combination of information sharing, consultation, observation and interaction with the children and young people; giving an opportunity to fully engage with and join in the children's everyday experience of their surroundings.

This approach facilitated the children and young people to play and interact as they would normally, giving the project staff person a sense of how the children perceive the space and service. This was especially important with the younger children. They communicated through circle time, play, songs and group activities.

The initial meetings with the older age groups, 12 – 18 year olds involved more informal conversations about how they are involved in the delivery of the service they are currently engaged with.

The follow up meeting with all age groups was to enable the piloting of and further discussion of the ideas for the toolkit. The follow up meeting allowed time for the staff person to further embed the importance of youth participation among the children and young people themselves. They understood the aim of the project more as they participated in the group discussions and activities. This approach was decided as the most appropriate as the report from phase one stated that current practise was not captured adequately and more time would need to be spent with organisations/services and with children and young people as service users.

Youth Participation

Youth participation has grown in importance over the last decade with more and more recognition and emphasis being put on the views of children and young people. But why? And what exactly does meaningful "youth participation" mean – for both the young person and for an organisation? Children and young people's participation is not just about them using the services provided to them. It is the process in which they are asked what works, what does not, what could work better and how they want to be involved in the solution so that their voice can influence decision making and bring about change.

Why involve children and young people in decision making?

'Listening to and involving children and young people' is one of six transformational goals set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020*. This is a whole-of-government policy which is overseen by The Children and Young People's Policy Consortium which has high-level representation from government departments and agencies working with children and young people. Young people from Comhairle na nÓg and the EU Structured Dialogue Working Group have links with this consortium also.

Benefits to children and young people

Empowers young people

Gives a sense of belonging

Greater ownership of service

Increases confidence & self-esteem

Improves decision making skills

Benefits to the organisation/service

Direct link to true stake holders

More responsive to the needs of service users

Ensures relevancy of service

Reduces the risk of "getting it wrong"

Increases the integrity of the organisation
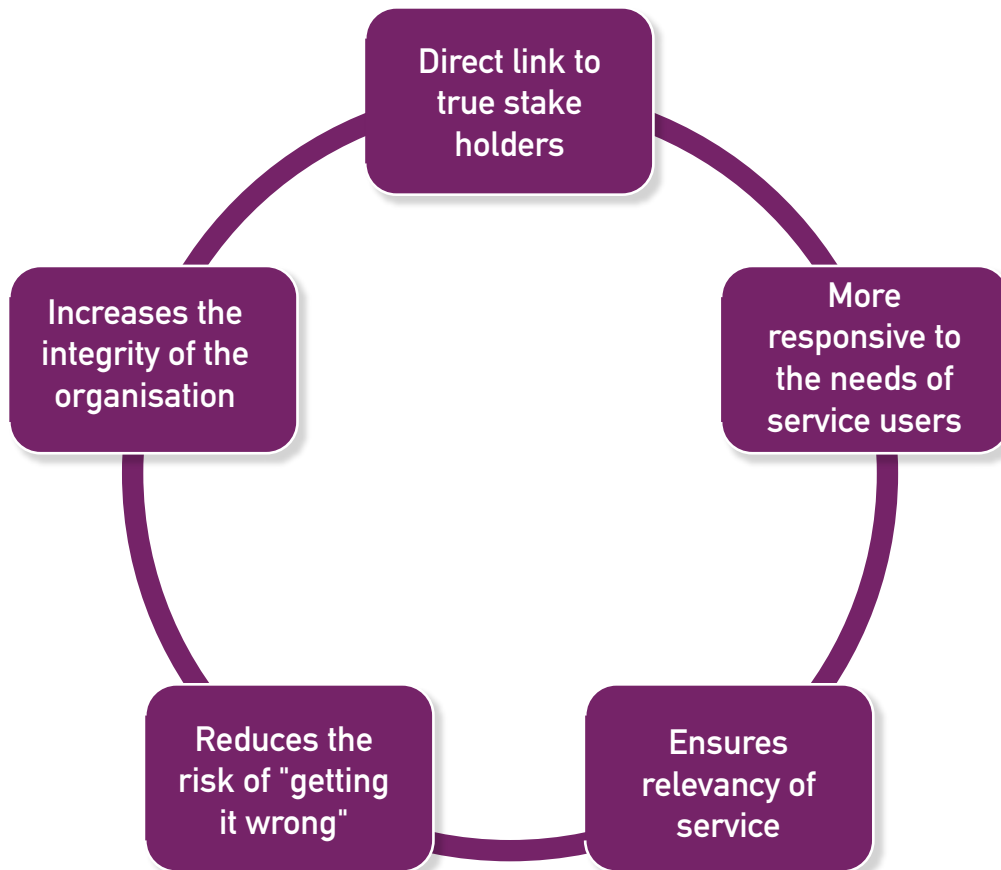
Challenges of meaningful child and youth participation

The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making, 2015 – 2020 recognises and states that organisational change is essential to ensuring meaningful participation by children and young people. Participation must be embedded within the infrastructure and ethos of an organisation and go beyond tokenistic one off activities or events. As stated in earlier definitions, participation must be treated as a process involving a whole-system approach.
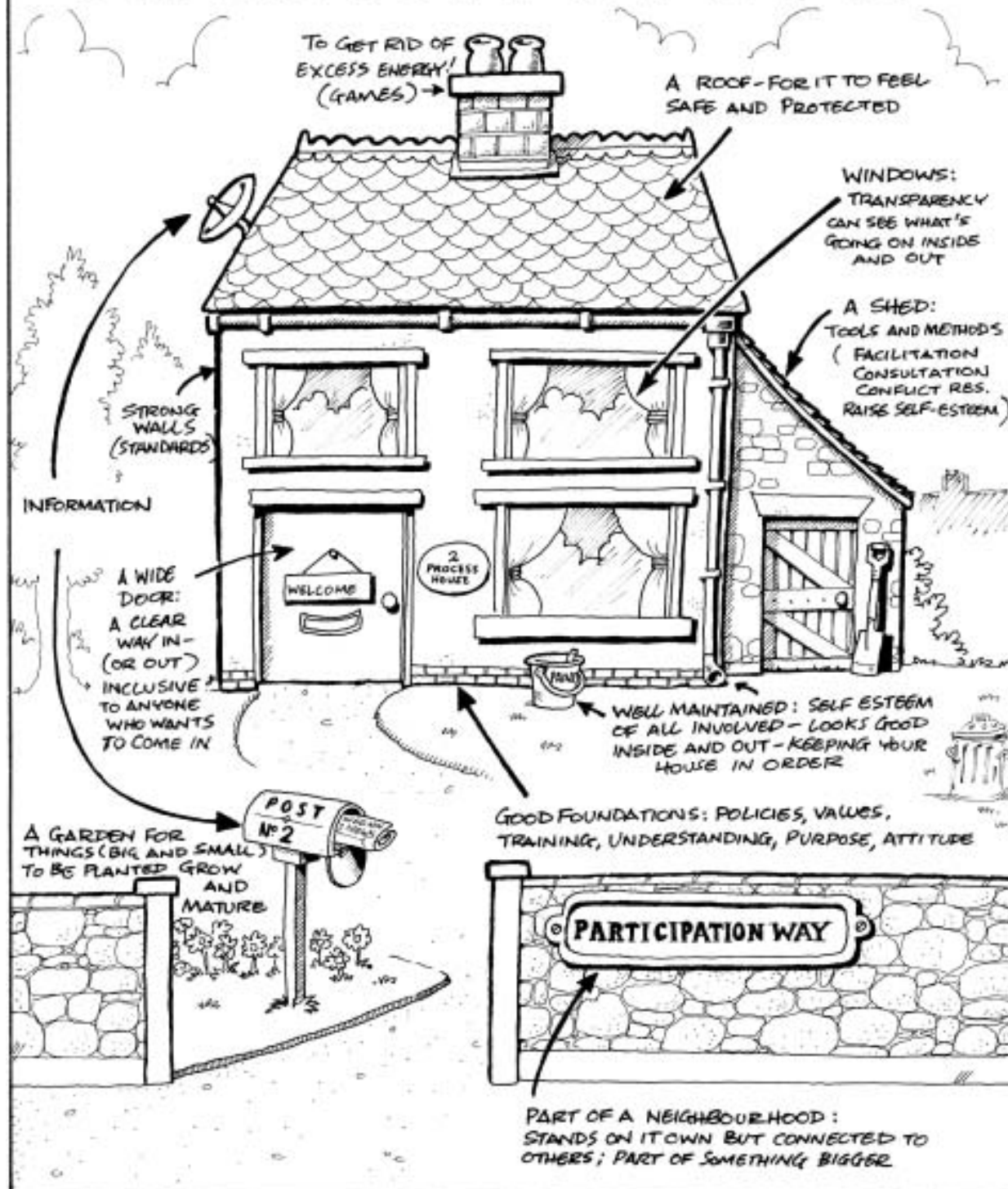
The National Strategy suggests a combination of four key elements in order to achieve this:
- **Culture:** The ethos of an organisation, shared by all staff and services users, which demonstrates a commitment to participation.
- **Structure:** Planning, development and resourcing of participation within the infrastructure of an organisation.
- **Practice:** The ways of working, methods for involvement, skills and knowledge that enable children and young people to become involved.
- **Review**: Ongoing monitoring and evaluation to support an organisation to evidence changes as a result of participation by children and young people.

It must be noted that the role of management is vitally important to the success and efficiency with which an organisation involves children and young people in decision-making.

BUILDING PARTICIPATION

To get rid of excess energy! (Games) →

A roof – for it to feel safe and protected

Windows: Transparency can see what's going on inside and out

A shed: Tools and methods (Facilitation Consultation Conflict res. Raise self-esteem)

Strong walls (Standards)

Information

A wide door: A clear way in – (or out) Inclusive to anyone who wants to come in

WELCOME

2 Process House

Well maintained: Self esteem of all involved – looks good inside and out – keeping your house in order

Good foundations: Policies, values, training, understanding, purpose, attitude

A garden for things (big and small) to be planted grow and mature

POST №2

PARTICIPATION WAY

Part of a neighbourhood: Stands on it own but connected to others; part of something bigger

Adapted from Participation: Young Spice Burton, Phill and Stephens, Jo and Dow, Chris, Welsh Assembly Government (Wales) Dynamix, corp creators. (2010).

The Aim of these Guidelines

Aims and purpose;

- To support organisations who impact or serve children and young people to fully involve them in the process of decision-making.
- Provide a collection of useful and user friendly activities designed to empower organisations to ensure that children and young people are not just being consulted with but are fully immersed and involved in the participation process as the key stakeholders.
- To provide a simple variety of tools that can be used to ensure youth participation is on everyone's agenda.
- To assist organisations/groups/agencies of all sizes identify and highlight youth participation work already taking place within their service.

This resource is NOT a definitive and fully comprehensive list of participation activities. It is NOT about reinventing how children and young people are involved in decision-making but rather aims to bring youth participation to the fore and build on structures and policies that are already in place.

Who is this resource aimed at?

This resource is aimed at management, staff and/or organisations whose work has an impact on the lives of children and young people and who want to assess, increase and ensure they are incorporating meaningful youth participation in their work. It can also be used by organisations who do not regularly engage and consult with children and young people but have a responsibility and remit in their work to provide a service to them – this may include County Council departments such as Community and Economic Development or the Library Service. The toolkit is suitable when working with children and young people from the ages of 3 years up to 18 years old. It has been divided into age related sections – Preschool age (3 – 5), primary school going age (5 – 12) and post primary school going age (12 – 18).

SPACE

Ensuring that children and young people **feel comfortable** and safe in their surroundings is an important consideration and is the first part of the Lundy Model to reflect on – this pertains to the **physical environment** and the **emotional space**. Feeling secure and safe in their environment supports children and young people to speak out and/or demonstrate their views. Physical spaces need to be youth friendly, age appropriate and safe. It is important to involve children and young people in creating a space that feels welcoming and reflects what is important to them. According to Lundy (2007) *"Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view"*.

Facilitators and staff with a positive friendly attitude support a safe emotional space for children and young people. Good facilitation skills and the ability to build a connection with the participants is essential in order to create an environment that promotes participation – this is particularly important if you are coming into meet a group for the first time. Committed, friendly and skilled facilitators and staff members who believe in the principle and support the practise of participation in an organisation can make a difference to the success of the process. Staff involved in promoting participation should have the following skills and qualities:
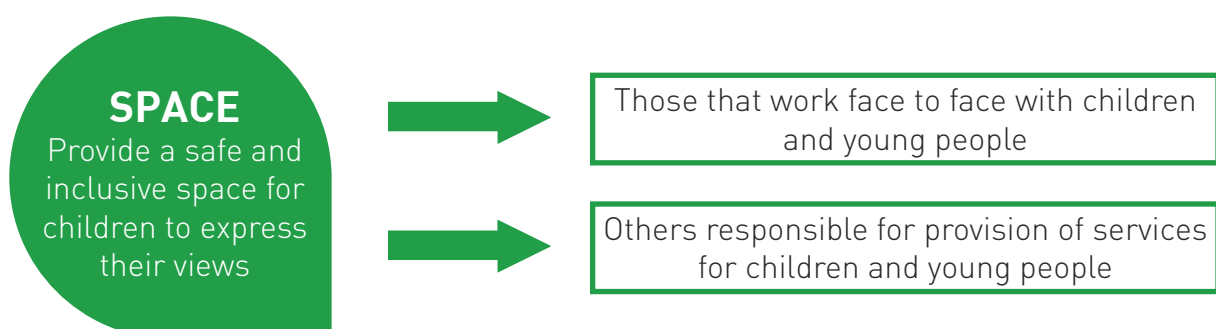
- Skills: Active listening, facilitation, communication, good observation.
- Qualities: An ability to connect well with the children and young people, a good sense of humour, energy and enthusiasm, understanding.

Fun is also important when considering space for child and youth participation. It is high on the agenda and should be incorporated throughout the participatory process.

When considering SPACE you must also look at it from the viewpoint of the child and young person:
- Is the space age appropriate and safe?
- Is it accessible and inclusive to all children and young people?
- Is there an outside space as well as the inside space that could be utilised?
- Does the space FEEL welcoming to the child and young person – surroundings and staff?

When thinking of the SPACE element of the Lundy Model, think of it as setting the stage for the work that you want to carry out. It is very important to get it right from the start; doing this will support and empower your participants to engage more confidently in the process of participation. Getting the SPACE right is not enough – it must be continued and linked to VOICE AUDIENCE and INFLUENCE.

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

→ Those that work face to face with children and young people

→ Others responsible for provision of services for children and young people
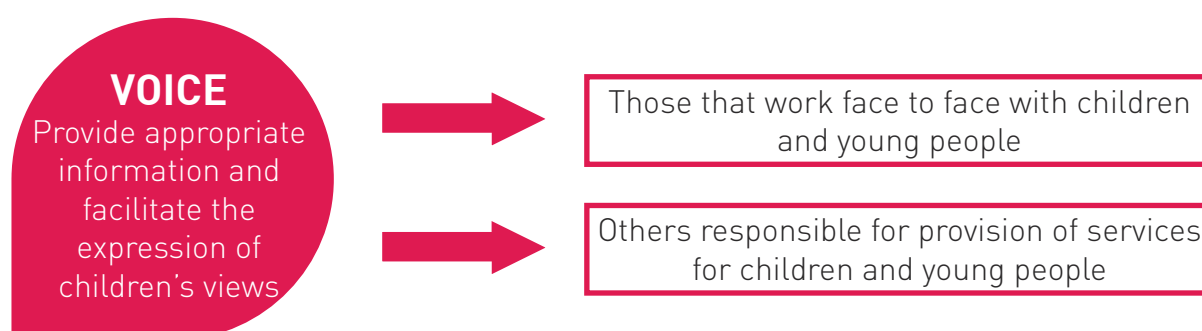
VOICE

Professor Lundy (2007) states that *"voice is not enough"* to ensure meaningful participation. Her model checklist recommends that children and young people must be provided with appropriate information and facilitated to enable them to express their views. Giving children and young people the support to express their views may seem like perhaps the most straight forward part of the process, however, there are still things to consider:

- Have children been given the information they need to form a view? Do they fully understand the information?
- Has it been explained that they do not have to take part?
- Is there a variety options for them to express their views? Many children and young people may not express their views in words – this may be due to a variety of reasons that can happen at any age. Therefore it is important to be mindful of this and plan accordingly.

If you are in a group setting:

- Give the group the information they need in a way that they will understand – avoid over complicating the facts, keep things simple and ask the participants if they understand what you are telling them – allow time for questions. It is very hard to give your view on something that you do not know anything about.
- Ensure every participant in the group has an equal opportunity to get their view across in whatever way they feel most comfortable - written, verbal, visual or by doing (kinaesthetic).
- Ensure all views are listened to and recorded. Active listening by the facilitator is very important at this stage. It is also important that the rest of the group listens to the person speaking. Refer to the groups previously established ground rules if required.
- Ensure you have enough time so that you CAN listen to all the points/ideas/views.
- Remain unbiased in your own views and do not lead the discussion. A good facilitator will keep the discussion on track without influencing the outcome.
- With younger children it is important that staff are able to interpret actions, play, body language and expressions.

Remember Secure Safe Space + Facilitating and hearing the views of children and young people means you are half way there! Listening to children and young people is a process that you can build into your everyday interactions – it does not always have to be formal, the right space and openness will led to children and young people speaking out?

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

Those that work face to face with children and young people

Others responsible for provision of services for children and young people

AUDIENCE

Work carried out in phase one of this project stated that many organisations do involve children and young people in participatory activities – however the report found that further support was needed in relation to AUDIENCE and INFLUENCE.

Providing an audience for the views of children and young people is of vital importance to ensure they really feel listened to. It reduces tokenism and shows commitment to the participation process. It may be the case that you are the person who has the responsibility to listen to the children and young people but there must also be a commitment to act on the information received.

Questions asked in the checklist for the Lundy Model include:

- Is there a process for communicating the views?
- Do the children and young people know who their views are being communicated to?
- Does that person have the power to make decisions?

Points to consider:

Think about who the person with responsibility might be – is it you or someone else in the organisation, management, are they external to your organisation, are they used to engaging with children and young people as part of their work, how will you communicate the information from your participants to them?

> **TOP TIP**
> *With older groups you can involve the young people in identifying who makes the decisions relevant to their issues. You could then invite the decision makers to come along and meet the group to hear their ideas first hand. You may need to do some additional preparation work with the group such as explaining the process to build their confidence in voicing their ideas, the meeting process and agenda.*

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

→ Those that work face to face with children and young people

→ Others responsible for provision of services for children and young people

INFLUENCE

As the final quadrant of the Lundy Model of Participation (2007), influence must be seen as no less important than the first three quadrants. If anything it is the most important in ensuring that participation comes full circle and has been as effective as possible. Organisations must ensure they move through each quadrant and give each one attention and time.

If you have given children and young people a voice within your organisation/service you should then ask yourself *"what have I done with the information that was recorded via that consultation/ conversation?"* "The views must be acted upon as appropriate" *(Lundy Model of Participation)*, *2007*. Audience and Influence are greatly interconnected – AUDIENCE asks if there is someone with the responsibility to listen, the power to make decisions – INFLUENCE asks if that person with responsibility and power has considered and taken the views seriously.

Research carried out on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) on young people's experiences of participation in decision-making in various settings reported *"what they (children and young people) found frustrating and unfair was the low status adults often accord-ed to their opinions and the lack of explanation on how their opinions had been taken into ac-count"*
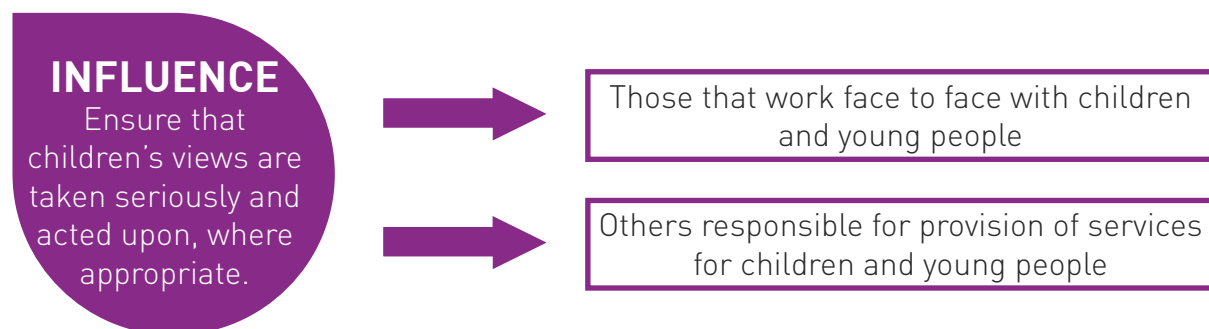
Phase One of this work also found that children and young people do not always feel they are listened to echoing the need for greater emphasis being put on all elements of Lundy's Model.

Ensuring influence:

- As facilitator it is your role to ensure the necessary connections and dialogues are established and supported so that participants feel their views have been listened to, considered and taken seriously.
- It is important to keep the lines of communication open so that children and young people know what is happening and are fully informed of the outcomes.
- Feedback is vital to the integrity of the participatory process and to build continued confidence in the participants and the weight put on their views.

TOP TIP
Remember to feedback and discuss why certain decisions were made. Manage expectations as they arise during the process. Celebrate successes.

INFLUENCE
Ensure that children's views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate.

→ Those that work face to face with children and young people

→ Others responsible for provision of services for children and young people

Getting Started

Information

It is important to ensure from the start that your participants and their parents/guardians have all the relevant information they need to participate. Information should clearly outline the details of why, when and where you will be carrying out your consultation event or programme of activities.

Safeguarding statement

Children First: National Guidance outlines that all organisations working with children and young people should create a culture of safety that promotes the welfare of children and young people availing of their services. Children First Act 2015 places specific obligations on organisations, one of which is the development of a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified. You should be familiar with your organisation's Child Protection Policy.
For more information visit **www.tusla.ie/children-first**

Before you meet with the children and young people remember to:

- Provide clear information about what is expected of participants; ensure that know they do not have to take part if they do not wish to.
- Secure written consent from each child's parent/guardian, stating that the child can withdraw from the event/programme at any time
- Ensure consent forms include written permission for children and young people to be included in photographs and/or recordings of the event.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for sample consent and information sheets.

At the start of the meeting/consultation establish a group contract that includes a set of ground rules. Ask the participants to suggest some ideas, examples include:

- Listen to and respect each other's views.
- The importance of confidentiality.
- No use of discriminatory language.
- Have fun.
- Work together.

Remember to be mindful of the group expectations at this point and aim to manage them in a positive way.

Reflection Checklist for Participation

When setting out it is important to be able to determine and understand your current practise in relation to involving children and young people. Phase 1 of this project reported that the organisations who took part were more confident under the first two quadrants of the Lundy Model – Space and Voice, suggesting that many were unsure how to move through the entire model to incorporate Audience and Influence.

Professor Lundy developed a checklist to support and assist organisations working with children and young people to comply with Article 12 of the UNCRC.

It is useful to consider staff and your organisations starting point in relation to youth participation. The checklist asks questions under each quadrant which will help determine where you/ your staff/organisation is and what you may need to do to reach a stage where youth participation is more meaningful.

SPACE
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
Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children's view

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

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

INFLUENCE
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 changes?
- 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?

Using this Resource

This resource is broken down into age categories: Preschool Aged Children 3 – 5 years, Primary School Aged Children 5 – 12 years and Post Primary School Aged Children and Young People 12 – 18 years.

<div align="center">

Each section is colour coded:
Preschool aged children
Primary school aged children
Post Primary school aged children and young people

</div>

Each category will provide examples of age appropriate activities and good practise under each of the four quadrants of the Lundy Model of Participation (2007) SPACE, VOICE, AUDIENCE and INFLUENCE.

You do not need to do every activity with your group. The important thing is to ensure you choose at least one from each of quadrant – space, voice, audience and influence. This is to ensure that you engage in the full process of participation which will support the best outcome.

All the activities are aimed for use in a group setting, however, they will also work on an individual basis. It is important to be mindful of the make-up and dynamics of your group and to adapt any activities to suit their needs if required.

> **TOP TIP**
> *As discussed, space also refers to an emotional safety and connection for children and young people. The activities in the Icebreaker section are an important lead-in to the activities in the next section and it is recommended that you do at least one icebreaker with your group before moving on.*

Section One
ICE BREAKER ACTIVITIES

These activities are the perfect way to start and can be used across all age groups!

Ice Breakers

Why they are so important?

As adults we sometimes shy away from doing a group ice breaker at a team meeting or training session - but we all know they DO work. Children and young people love to get involved and ice breakers are the perfect way to get your group off to a positive start.

Icebreakers:

- Create a positive atmosphere
- Help people relax
- Break down barriers
- Energise and motivate people
- Help people to get to know each other
- Are FUN

> **TOP TIP**
> *Ice breakers should ideally be used at the beginning of each meeting or session. Ensure that they form part of the consultation especially when an external facilitator or additional member of staff, for example a member of management or a key stakeholder, is attending the meeting. This can create a more relaxed feeling and encourage the children and young people to participate more.*

No Time Limit

General Post

Equipment/resources needed:

Chairs for everyone in the group (minus one chair) arranged in a circle with chairs facing inwards.

Method:

The leader starts out standing in the centre. He/she gives the instruction that starts with "Everyone who.......MOVE CHAIRS"

For example. Everyone who had cornflakes for breakfast this morning/who has blue eyes/who doesn't drink tea.........MOVE. Everyone who the instruction applies to must move chairs. There are a few rules!! You cannot move to a chair directly beside the one you leave. Whoever ends up without a chair must stand in the middle and give the next instruction.

This is a fun and easy game that can be used as an ice-breaker or an energiser with all age groups

The Toilet Roll Game

Equipment/resources needed: Rolls of toilet paper

Method:
Pass the roll of toilet roll around the group asking each person to take as many squares off as they like. For each square of toilet roll taken, each person must share something about themselves. For example, if someone has two squares, they share two things about themselves and so on.

This is a quick and fun icebreaker that is useful when a group is getting to know each other.

Line up!

Equipment/resources needed: None

Method:
Ask everyone to arrange themselves in a line in order of their shoe size. No one is permitted to speak to each other so they must work together to communicate. This can also be done using birthdays/ages/height.

Fun, quick game suitable as an ice breaker

Simon Says

Equipment/resources needed: None

Method: When the facilitator says "SIMON SAYS" before an instruction, everyone should follow the instruction. For example, Simon says Stand Up – everyone should stand up. When "SIMON SAYS" is not before the instruction, they should not follow the instruction.

M & M Game

Equipment/resources needed: A large packet of M&Ms

Method: When the facilitator says "SIMON SAYS" before an instruction, everyone should follow the instruction. For example, Simon says Stand Up – everyone should stand up. When "SIMON SAYS" is not before the instruction, they should not follow the instruction.

Section Two
PRESCHOOL AGED CHILDREN (3 - 5 YEARS)

SPACE ACTIVITIES

Our Space, Our Place!

Time Needed:
30 Mins

Purpose: To enable the exploration of the physical space within a service with children and young people showing what they are happy with and what needs to be improved.

Resources needed: An assortment of happy smiley face, sad face and unsure face stickers. (Appendix 2)

Method: Ask participants to move around the space (include the entrance to the building also) and use the stickers provided to show what they are happy with (smiley face) what they think is working ok (unsure face) and what they think could be changed or improved (sad face)

Group Discussion: As a group discuss the feedback. Explore what is working well, okay and what changes have been suggested. Record feedback.

Facilitator Note: Different coloured post it notes could be used instead of the stickers.

Draw It Out!

Time Needed:
30 minutes – can be longer if required

Purpose: To explore what the participants currently enjoy about the space/service they are using.

Resources needed: Arts and craft supplies of your choice (remember to take the time you have for this activity into account when choosing your materials)

Method:
- Ask participants to think about the space/service/facility they are in.
- Invite them to use the materials provided to make a picture of what they enjoy most about it.
- Prompt them if need be to think about the physical space as well as the people in the space.

Group Discussion: Ask each person to tell you and the rest of the group what they have chosen and why.

> **TOP TIP**
> *Place the art work on the wall so it can been seen by the participants, parents and management. Photograph the work and keep for future reference.*

Flower Power

Purpose: To enable participant's to share their positive qualities and hobbies with the rest of the group.

Resources needed: A4 sheet of paper for each participant, assorted markers or crayons.

Method:
- Ask each participant to draw a flower.
- Ask them to draw or write something they are good at, something that is important to them or something they like to do in each of the petals.

Group discussion: Ask each participant to share their picture with the group (only if they wish to) Draw positive attention to the similarities that people within the group may share with others.

> **TOP TIP:** *To save time you can use the printed flower in Appendix 3.*

VOICE ACTIVITIES

Sticky Dot Moving Debate

Time Needed:
10 Mins

Purpose: To enable the participants to give their opinion on a certain question or topic.

Resources needed: 3 sheets of flipchart paper. Coloured sticky dots – enough for each participant.

Method:
- Stick each of the sheets of flipchart paper on the wall at a height that the participants can reach.

- Put a smiley face emoji on the top of the first one, 😊 an unsure face emoji on top of the second one 😕 and a sad face emoji on the third one. 😫

- Have statements prepared and assign a colour to each statement.

- Give each participant a coloured sticky dot and ask them to place their sticky dot on the flip chart that best describes how they feel about the statement.

- Explain that the smiley face indicates that they understand the statement and agree, the unsure face means they do not know how they feel about it and the sad face means they are not happy or disagree with the statement.

For example, Statement 1 is purple so give out 1 purple sticky dot to each participant. Read out your statement and ask the participants to go to the chart with the face that best describes what they think and put their dot on it. You can start out with a few fun statements and then move onto the more serious ones once the participants get used to the activity. *E.g. Everyone knows how to be nice to each other in our room here at _____.*

Dress up and art activities

Dress up, arts and crafts is fun way for children to express their views and identify important people, places and services in their lives and community. Children learn the value of self-expression, freedom of choice, creativity and role-play.

Who's Said That??

Purpose: To build participants confidence in using their voice.

Resources needed: Chairs

Method:
- Set up the chairs in rows.

- Each participant should have a chair.

- Ask one person to volunteer to be the "guesser". They must position them selves with their back to the group.

- When you (the facilitator) point to one of the participants they call out the guesser's name. The guesser then turns around and guesses who called out their name.

- Whoever called out the name then becomes the guesser.

Circle Time

I learned on my very enjoyable visits to two preschools how valuable circle time is in the participation of preschool aged children. Circle time is a way for pre-schoolers to get a sense of community with other children their age. It enhances their social skills and improves attention span. Preschool use it to introduce topics and plans for the day ahead. It also makes up a big part of a pre-schoolers participation journey. It involves songs, stories, the weather and news from home. It is the foundation for children of this age to have their say and express their views. It is during this time that observations and notes are made that shape the activities for the day or week. Ideas are made a reality giving life to the children's voice.

AUDIENCE & INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

Example of Good Practice

**Lollipop Lane Crèche, Montessori and Afterschool, Tubbercurry, Co Sligo
& Eivers Lane Childcare Centre, Mohill**

Circle time plays a big role in ensuring that the children in the above preschools have their voices heard. The environment created is welcoming, caring and friendly. During circle time the children sing songs, tell their news and talk about the weather and new interests they have. The children are listened to and their ideas are explored and interpreted through
additional linked activities. For example, the group had been talking about Africa and had taken an interest in all things to do with Africa so the staff were planning an African themed showcase that involved an input by all the children in the group.

In both centres child led play was important with the staff observing and facilitating the children to explore the world through play.

Section Three
PRIMARY SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN (5-12 YEARS)

SPACE ACTIVITIES

This is me!

Time Needed:
20 Mins

Purpose: To build confidence and create a space for participants to interact with each other.

Resources needed: Old newspapers and magazines, coloured card, glue, scissors.

Method:
- Give each participant a piece of coloured card.

- Ask each one to give an example of something they are good at – football, dancing, singing……

- Clear a suitable space on the floor and scatter out all the materials.

- Encourage participants to think of all the things that they are good at.

- Ask each person to make a collage of all the things they are good at using the materials on the floor.

Group Discussion: Once everyone has completed their collage, hang them on the wall (or ask each participant to hold theirs up). Ask each participant to tell the rest of the group about the things they are good at. Draw on similarities and discuss new activities/interests.

If I was……..

Purpose: To explore and discuss the participants views on the physical space they are using.

Resources needed: Large sheets of flip chart paper taped on the wall to create a graffiti wall. This can also be done on the floor. Coloured markers. Tape or blue tack.

Method:
- Finish the sentence - If I was……..manager of this centre for a day/staff person in this service for the day.
- Invite participants to think about what they might change, do, progress or change in the service if they were in charge for a day/week/month.
- You can use whatever scenario best suits the age group and the service.
- Ask them to write or draw on the paper provided.

Group Discussion: Ask for feedback from the group as you read back over the flip chart paper. Discuss what has been written/drawn and explore how this might happen, asking the group for ideas on how to progress their ideas.

Story Time

Purpose: To create a safe space for speaking out and practising listening skills

Resources needed: None

Method:
- Ask all participants to sit in a circle facing inward.
- The facilitator starts a story with one sentence.
- Each participant then continues with the story by adding one sentence to it when it is their turn.

For example Once upon a time there was a girl who loved to dance……..
her name was Sarah………
She was going to her first dance competition…..*and so on.*

> **TOP TIP**
> *It is important to manage expectations during this activity and give realistic feedback on ideas. It can also act as a good planning activity for groups.*

VOICE ACTIVITIES

My Voice

Time Needed:
20 Mins

Purpose: To enable participants to develop their voice and the skill to speak out.

Resources Needed: Blindfolds (1 per team of 3), phone/watch for timing.

Method:
- Create an obstacle course around your meeting place (inside or out depending on space available) – you could use chairs/tables/cushions.

- Divide the group into teams of three.

- One in each team is blindfolded and the other two on the team must guide them with their voices only – they cannot touch the person with the blindfold on.

- The winning team is the one who gets round the course in the fastest time.

- You can change who is blindfolded and who is guiding to ensure everyone gets to experience the activity. Emphasis safety at all times.

Group Discussion: Ask those who were guides to share how it felt to have to use their voice to direct the blindfolded person. Then ask those who were blindfolded how it felt to be reliant on only the voice of the guide.

> **TOP TIP**
> *Safety is very important for this activity. Ensure you have a suitable space and keep the obstacle course suited to the capabilities of your group.*

Make It Count

Time Needed:
10 Mins

Purpose: To build confidence in the group, teamwork and when using voice.

Resources needed: None

Method:
- The aim of the game is for the group to count from 1 – 20, eyes closed, with only one person speaking at a time.

- If two people say the same number together (speak at the same time) the group must start again.

- The same person cannot go twice in a row and every person must have a go if possible before they get to 20.

Facilitator Note: Ensure the participants do not give verbal or visual signals to each other indicating who will speak next.

Balloon Activity

Time Needed:
20 Mins

Purpose: To build confidence and skills for planning a project or programme of activities.

Resources needed: Flip chart paper with a hot air balloon (see Appendix 4) drawn on it, pens/markers, post-it notes

Method:
- Explain the aim of the activity to the group – to practise planning a project. The balloon represents the project.

- Give out the post-it notes and pens to everyone.

- Ask participants to write or draw ideas on post-it notes and stick them on the relevant part of the flip chart paper.

Group Discussion: As a group, clarify ideas and discuss what has been put forward. Look at what could help and hinder the project aiming to come to an agreed plan for the project.

Facilitator Note: The diagram explained

The Balloon: factors that will be needed for the project/idea to fly. What needs to be in place for the project to take off?

The Basket: people/organisations/decision makers who can help and support the aims of your project. Who needs to be on board?

The Ropes: what will hold back the project – before it has even started?

The Clouds: what could push the balloon off course? (once the project has started)

Making it fly: above the balloon write factors that will make things happen (commitment, enthusiasm)

AUDIENCE & INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

Making a difference

Purpose: To get participants to consider people who have made a positive difference to their lives or the lives of others. And to encourage participants to feel that they can make positive changes.

Resources needed: Flip chart paper

Method:
- Ask participants to close their eyes and try to think of a person or a group of people who have made a difference to their life or to the lives of others. It could be a person they have seen on TV or read about. It doesn't matter what size the difference or change is that the person or group have made happen.

- Ask the group to share who they were thinking of and what that person or group has done.

- Record these on the flip chart and get the group to discuss the different ways in which change can happen – small scale v big scale, different outcomes and team co-operation.

> **TOP TIP**
> *End the activity by explaining that everyone is capable of making change – no matter how big or small each positive change should be recognised.*

Making things happen

Purpose: To explore which people might help children and young people put their ideas into action.

Resources needed: Flip chart paper, markers, Who can help resource (Appendix 5)

Method:
- Divide the group into small groups of 3 or 4.

- Give each group a copy of handout in appendix 5.

- Ask each group to look at the diagram of people who could help.

- Ask them to circle the people or organisations that they think would be most helpful and with whom it would be good to contact or develop a partnership with.

- Explore with the group what other people or organisations may be important to link with in relation to their project/programme.

- Ask each group to feed back to the rest of the group about the people and organisations they have listed.

Facilitator note:

Some examples you could add to the list include – posters, leaflets, meetings, letters, a video piece, social media, attending an event to get your message across.

> **TOP TIP**
> *This activity works best when your group is hoping to link with and create an audience with people/ organisations outside of your service. However, it can also be adapted for use when exploring who could bring about change within your service.*

Examples of good practise in after school settings

**Springboard Resource House, Cranmore, Sligo
and Kiltubrid After School, Drumcong, Co Leitrim.**

Planning meetings

Children were involved in the planning of programme activities. This was done by way of group meetings involving staff and children in the afterschool centre. During the meetings staff asked the children what they would like to see included in the programme of activities for the centre. Staff recorded ideas and views, then planned the activities accordingly.

Note: Staff communicated back to the children why some activities were not included in the programme. In most cases this was due to staffing or funding limitations.

This shows a simple yet effective way of involving children in the planning and delivery of their service. It moves through each stage of the Lundy Model of Participation, 2007.

The meetings are carried out in the afterschool centre, providing a familiar safe SPACE for the children.

The children are asked to VOICE their opinions and give their ideas – all views are recorded by staff.

The staff provide an AUDIENCE, listening to and acting on the views and ideas of the children.

The staff plan a schedule of activities INFLUENCEd by the views and ideas put forward. They provide feedback to the children on why some activities were not included in the programme.

The Use of Visual Aids to Make Decisions

The centre was awarded funding to purchase new equipment for their afterschool. They decided to ask the children using the centre how to spend the funding. They held a meeting with children asking for some ideas on what they would like to spend the funding on. When they had narrowed it down to a small number of items the staff printed pictures of each item. They then asked each child to vote on what they would like to purchase with the funding.

This is another simple but effective way of involving children in the planning and shaping of their service. The SPACE, VOICE, AUDIENCE and INFLUENCE quadrants of the Lundy Model were used and the outcome was clear for the staff and the children.

They were very proud of the new equipment and it was clear to see they felt a real sense of ownership as they were involved in the planning from start to finish.

Section Four
POST PRIMARY SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (12-18 YEARS)

SPACE ACTIVITIES

Are you listening?

Time Needed: **15 Mins**

Purpose: To enable young people to practise communication skills.

Resources needed: Blank sheets of paper, pens/markers, handout in appendix 6.

Method:
- Ask the group to sit on chairs arranged in two lines, back to back.

- The people sitting in one line have pens/markers and 1 sheet of paper each.

- Give each person in the other line a handout from Appendix 6.

- The person with the handout has to describe what they see to the person sitting with their back to them and that person has to draw what is described. No one is allowed to turn around during the exercise.

- Ask each person to show their drawing.

- Swap around to give the other line a chance to draw.

Group discussion: As a group discuss the following questions.

Was it easy to explain what you wanted the other person to draw?

Was it easy to listen to your partner?

What did you find most challenging about the activity?
(from each perspective)

Were you surprised by anything?

What situations might prevent you from really listening to people in everyday life?

What could you do to try to change this?

TOP TIP
You do not have to use the handouts provided. You can create your own to best suit the group you have.

Speed Chat

Purpose: To build confidence when speaking out, to have fun and create a fun environment.

Resources needed: None

Method:
- Set up the chairs in two circles, a small circle and a larger circle outside of that. If you do not have the space for this you can ask the participants to make two lines, sitting on the floor facing each other.

  Make sure that the chairs are facing each other and there are an equal amount of chairs in the inside circle as well as the outside circle.

The format or idea of how the game is played is like speed dating.

- Every participant will sit across from another person.
- When you ask a question from the list below, each facing pair answer the question. (Each person answers each question)
- Allow 30 seconds per question. After each question ask the people sitting in the outer circle to move to the right. The people sitting in the inner circle do not move.
- Each person should be talking to a new person after each question.

Question ideas:
- What is your favourite food?
- What do you want to be when you grow up?
- Who is your favourite celebrity and why?
- What is your dream holiday destination?
- If you could have any superpower what would it be and why?
- Would you rather go to the dentist or the doctor?
- If you won the lottery what would you do?
- If you could invite anyone (living or deceased) to dinner who would it be and why?
- What is your favourite movie and why?
- What is your favourite music/band/singer?

TOP TIP

You could create your own questions for the group. They could be focussed on your service/topic/programme. For example what hours should service X be available? What would be the best local bus times for young people at the weekend? What changes would you make to service X? The questions could be discussed in pairs and then fed back to the larger group for discussion.

If I was........

This activity was also in the primary school aged category. It is a simple and easy activity to do with both age groups as it gives the young people a sense of ownership and supports them to think about what they would like to see in the service.

Purpose: To explore and discuss the participants views on the physical space they are using.

Resources needed: Large sheets of flip chart paper taped on the wall to create a graffiti wall. This can also be done on the floor. Coloured markers. Tape or blue tack.

Method:
- Finish the sentence - If I was........manager of this centre for a day/staff person in this service for the day.

- Invite participants to think about what they might change, do, progress or change in the service if they were in charge for a day/week/month.

- You can use whatever scenario best suits the age group and the service.

- Ask them to write or draw on the paper provided.

Group Discussion: Ask for feedback from the group as you read back over the flip chart paper. Discuss what has been written/drawn and explore how this might happen, asking the group for ideas on how to progress their ideas.

TOP TIP
It is important to manage expectations during this activity and give realistic feedback on ideas. It can also act as a good planning activity for groups.

VOICE ACTIVITIES

Moving Debate

Purpose: To provide a creative means to get the views of young people

Resources needed: Printouts with Agree, Disagree and Not Sure on them, relatively spacious room.

Method:
- Prepare the questions/statements you want to ask your group – they could be in relation to the service currently being provided or asking about the type of service they would like to see in place.

- Put the prepared "agree", "disagree" and "not sure" print outs on the ground or on the wall leaving a good distance between them.

- Ask all participants in the room to situate themselves in a line.

- Read out each statement and ask the group to move to the AGREE, DISAGREE or NOT SURE printout.

- Ask participants to share why they have chosen to move to that particular spot and generate a group discussion/debate based on the reasons given.

> **TOP TIP**
> *Encourage participants to think for themselves and not be tempted to follow the other people in the group.*

Graffiti Wall

Purpose: To encourage young people to share their views in a creative way

Resources needed: A prepared statement or question you want to get the views of participants on. Large blank sheet of paper stuck to a wall that can be accessed easily (a few sheets of flip chart paper would work for this)

Time: The graffiti wall can be left in position for a number of weeks/days to give young people time to give their input.

Method:
- Explain to the group what you would like them to do – give their views on a particular topic.

- Explain that is it anonymous.

- Set the context for the question or statement you would like their views on.

- Invite the young people to add their opinions on the graffiti wall.

> **TOP TIP**
> *Stress to the participants that their views do have to necessarily be in words, they can draw or sketch ideas also.*

Through the lens

Purpose: To explore the views of young people using photography

Resources needed: Disposable camera (1 between two), alternatively young people could use the camera on their phones (if they have one), flip chart paper, laptop and overhead screen.

Time: This is a take home activity. Allow whatever time suits your group to complete the task.

This activity is particularly useful if you are seeking views on youth centres, outside youth spaces, playgrounds or community shared spaces. If you are using disposable cameras allow time for printing of photos.

Method:
- Using either their smartphones or disposable cameras, ask participants to photograph things/places/services/parks/equipment they like, find useful or think would benefit your service (base this on the information you are seeking from the group).

- Ask participants not to photograph people.

  After collection, stick all the photographs to a flip chart and invite the person who took the photograph to explain why they chose to take it.

- Invite feedback from the wider group.

- If the participants are using their phones to take pictures ask them to email the photographs to you. Using a laptop and an overhead screen display the photographs in a presentation to the group. Invite group discussion and further debate.

Facilitator note: Record the ideas and views during the discussion.

AUDIENCE & INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

Power Up, Power Down

Purpose: To get participants to explore who has the power in children and young people's lives.

Resources needed: Yellow and red cards

Method:
- Ask participants to sit in a circle.

- Explain that the group is going to think about who has the power to make decisions in their lives.

- To do this there will be a short role play element to get them thinking about what it feels like to do things based on how "powerful" you are. Everyone does not have to take part in the role play if they do not wish to – look for volunteers who are happy to participate.

- When you hold up a card and call out an action, the participants must perform the action – when the card is red the action should be performed as if they were the most powerful person in the room (link power to confidence); when it is a yellow card, they should perform the action as if they were the least powerful person in the room.

Choose from the following actions:

Drink a cup of tea

Enter the room

Meet a person for the first time

Try to order some food

Group Discussion: Ask the group to describe how it felt to perform the actions with more or less "power" than usual. Ask the people watching the role play what their thoughts are about how the actions were performed.
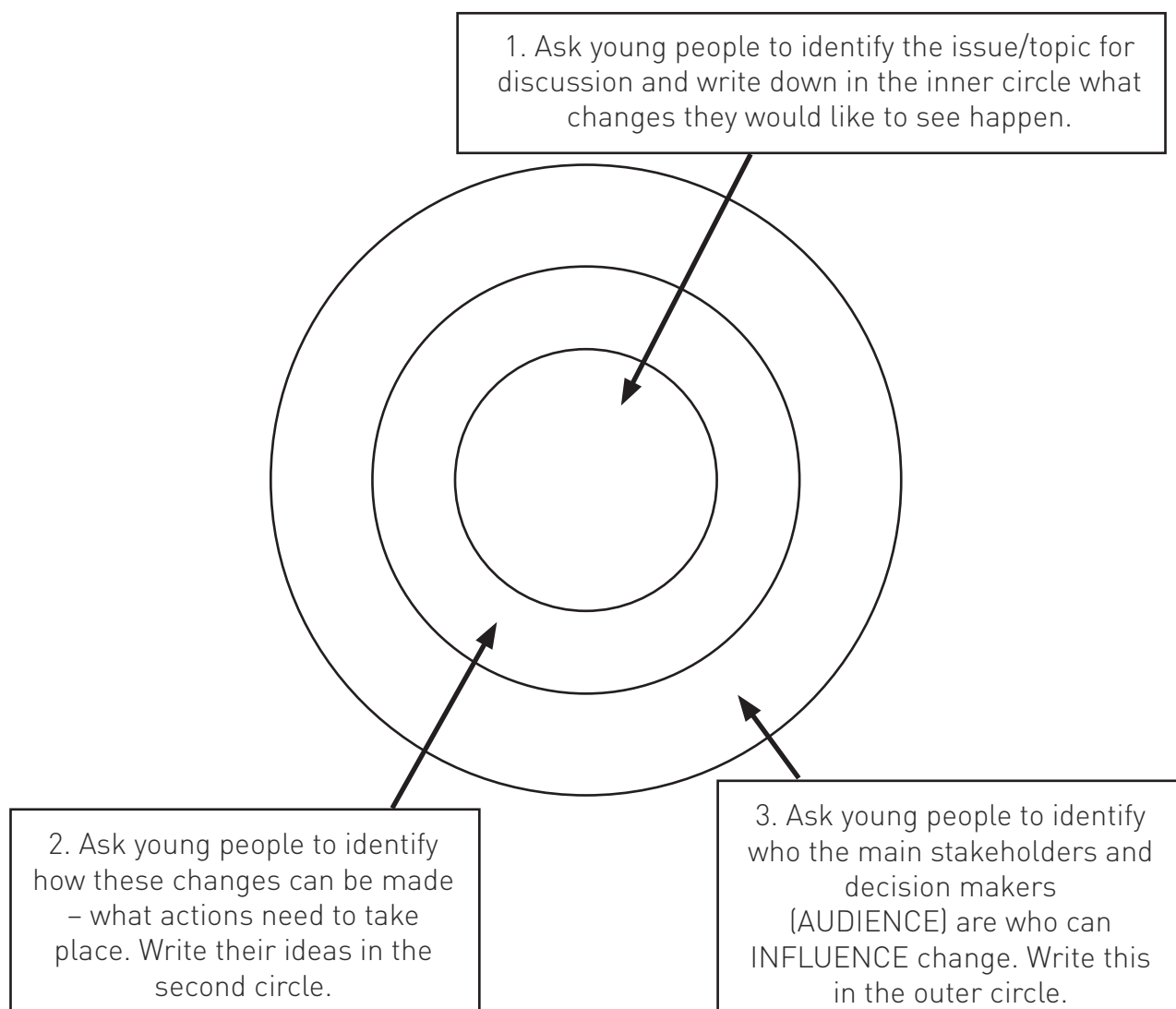
Table Mat Activity

Purpose: To identify changes/solutions to a topic or issue and to identify who the key stake holders are in effecting positive change.

Resources needed: Flip chart paper, markers

Method:
- Divide the group into smaller groups of 4 or 5.
- Give each of the groups some markers and a sheet of flip chart paper.
- Ask them to draw the following diagram on the paper.

1. Ask young people to identify the issue/topic for discussion and write down in the inner circle what changes they would like to see happen.

2. Ask young people to identify how these changes can be made – what actions need to take place. Write their ideas in the second circle.

3. Ask young people to identify who the main stakeholders and decision makers (AUDIENCE) are who can INFLUENCE change. Write this in the outer circle.

Group Discussion: Ask each group to share their ideas. As a large group ask participants to think of ways in which they can be kept infomed of the outcome of their recommendations once they have been passed on to the relevant decision maker.

Facilitator note: Record all ideas to go along with the initial flip chart ideas. This can then form a report or presentation to inform decision makers and stakeholders about the views of the participants.

Workshops – open space and round table discussions

Time Needed: 30-40 Mins

Purpose: To engage with and record the views of young people on a particiular topic

Resources needed: Markers, pens, post-it notes, flip chart paper.

Method:
- This workshop method of getting the views of young people is similar to that of the table mat activity. You may have already identified a topic for discussion in your workshop or you may decide to leave it open to suggestions from your participants. This method is called "Open Space" wherby participants are asked to suggest topics and issues for dicussion.

Open Space:
- Ask participants to think of a youth related topic they would like to be discussed in the workshop.

- They should then write it on the post-it.

- The post-its are then grouped to form a certain number of themes.

- You can then assign one theme per table in the room and ask paricipants to move around the room giving their views on each of the themes/topics.

- Allow ten minutes per theme or topic.

- Ask each table to feed back on the topic discussed at their table.

Facilitator Note: Assigned one person at each table to faciliatate the discussion (If they are happy to do so). Adult facilitators in the room can move from table to table offering support if needed. Record all ideas/views for reporting to identified stakeholders.

> **TOP TIP**
> *With all AUDIENCE and INFLUENCE activities it is important to identify who the information should be passed on to – who are the stakeholders, the decision makers – ensure your participants know that you will pass on the information or that you will support them to pass on the information in the relevant way. It is also important to discuss how the information on decisions will be fed back to the young people who gave their views.*

As the staff person/facilitator is it your responsibility to support the young people through the full process of meaningful participation

Incentives and rewards for participation

It is important that the participation of children and young people is acknowledged at the time. If possible it is a good idea to provide refreshments for the participants, for example, pizza, juice, fruit, tea and coffee).

This shows your appreciation for the time and commitment that they have given to the project. You could also consider the following:

- A group outing or activity to thank.
- A certificate of participation
- A celebratory public event

Foroige's CRIB Youth Project And Health Café Sligo

Investing in Children has been commissioned to introduce and develop a Quality Assurance process across Tusla to ensure that the collective voice of children and young people is embedded in rights based practice. Investing in Children Membership gives national recognition for good practice and active inclusion of children and young people in dialogue and change. The Investing in Children Membership Award recognises and celebrates examples of imaginative and inclusive practice. Investing in Children members are those services that can demonstrate a commitment to dialogue with young people that leads to change.

Foróige's CRIB Youth Project and Health Café, Sligo received the Investing in Children award at the Tusla National Conference in April this year. The award was received in recognition of the involvement of children and young people in the refurbishment of their youth space. Young people participated in every aspect of the project with the support of staff in the project. Staff used workshops, meetings, social media, questionnaires and visual displays to get the views of the young people using the space. They worked closely with the young people to ensure the outcome was what everyone wanted. Tusla representatives interviewed the core group of young people involved in the project to hear first-hand their involvement and the outcomes of their work.

Leitrim Comhairle na nÓg

Leitrim Comhairle na nÓg carried out a very successful campaign against antisocial behaviour and violence: 'Use your brain, not your fist'. This is a campaign to make teenagers more aware of violence in social settings and how to control their emotions. The campaign launch took place in the Bush Hotel, Carrick on Shannon on 27th April 2018 which featured the first screening of an educational video highlighting the effects a fight can have on both the victim and the perpetrator. **#Useyourbrainnotyourfists** The content is powerful and thought-provoking and has been inspired and motivated by the death of Andrew Dolan from Carrick and the catastrophic injuries suffered by Shane Grogan from Tuam, following senseless and unprovoked attacks.'

Andrew's mother, Rosie Dolan, and Shane and his parents, Joe and Joan Grogan, feature in the video and share their heartbreaking experiences following their sons' attacks. Other contributors to the film include former footballer and League of Ireland legend, Joseph Ndo as well as Garda Noel Lee and Sgt. Kelvin Courtney. The film was facilitated by Sinéad Dolan of Loch Bó Films, who worked with the Comhairle na nÓg committee members who created the content, story-boards, operated camera and audio equipment and conducted interviews with the participants. The video was launched by Rosie Dolan & Joe Grogan and will be promoted nationally in all second level schools, as well as through sporting organisations and youth associations through-out Ireland. The program is being supported by Leitrim County Council, North Connaught Youth Service, North West Drug and Alcohol Task Force and Creative Ireland.

Tusla National Conference 2018

Sligo Leitrim CYPSC were invited to present a workshop on the Youth Participation Lab at the Tusla National Conference. The workshop was delivered by young people from Sligo Comhairle na nÓg, Leitrim Comhairle na nÓg and The CRIB Youth Project and Health Café, Sligo (Pictured above). The young people brought the 45 workshop participants through their own participation journey as young people engaged in their youth groups and clubs using examples of the Lundy Model of Participation, 2007. The workshop was interactive and informative with the young people taking the lead role in its facilitation.

Pictured Back row: Kornel Dabek, Joey Kearney, John Heslin, Emmet Kieran, Eoin McIntyre, Kaillum Burns, Ross McCarrick RIP, Elaine Granaghan Front row Alex Richardson, Adam Walsh

Conclusion

The observed practice obtained from carrying out the visits to each group participating in the development of the local practice guidelines was central to a key finding from the overall 'Participation Lab' project itself. It is apparent that children and young people ARE involved in decision-making in relation to the service they engage with.

A more comprehensive piece of work clearly remains for Sligo Leitrim CYPSC to consider in that the practice observed was not, in some cases, named by staff or children and young people as "youth participation" and it was not formally given its full recognition and merit.

This focus and priority that Sligo Leitrim CYPSC has created through this project has been another effort to bring child & youth participation into 'concious' practice in the services that were involved and the children and young people now have a better understanding of what it is to have their voices and opinions heard. They were also shown examples of how their views influenced the outcome of activities and services they were involved in and receiving. This aspect of the project brought Lundy's Model of Participation to life as both staff and children and young people became more aware of the four quadrants of the model – Voice, Space, Audience and Influence.

Recommendations and summary points

- To ensure meaningful participation, it must be embedded in policies and supported through formal structures from a whole-organisation point of view including managers and key stakeholders.

- Further investment is needed to ensure youth participation structures are in place.

- Conversations and continued dialogue with children and young people is essential to ensuring that youth participation practises are achieving the desired outcomes.

- Children and young people should be supported to recognise their voice and contributions as "Youth Participation".

Appendices

Appendix 1

Sample Ideas for Consent Form and Information For Young People

If the children and young people that are participating are regular users of your service, you should already have consent forms for them that contain medical information and alternative contact numbers for them. This consent is only for additional programmes, consultations or event that may be taking place. However, please note if you are going on an outing with the group it is important to have details of medical conditions and their family doctor included.

Consent Form for Parents/Guardians of Children and Young People

You should provide the following information:
- The type of programme/consultation/event you are inviting the child or young person to participate in.
- The reason why it is taking place and the expected outcomes.
- Where and when it is taking place.
- Who the

Please tick the boxes below as appropriate

I am happy for my child to take part in the (add details of the programme) taking place on (date) in the (venue).

I understand that taking part is voluntary and my child can change his/her mind at any time.

I understand that the event will be recorded and/or photographed for promotional purposes.

I understand that my child will be supervised during the times stated above only.

Name of child/young person _____

Name of parent/guardian (Please PRINT) _____

Relationship to child/young person _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Information sheet

Your child is invited to take part in ……………………………….
Please read this sheet which will give you more information about the research. It is very important that you know what the study is about and what it will involve before you decide whether or not you want your child to take part. The Consent Form should not be signed if your child does not wish to take part.
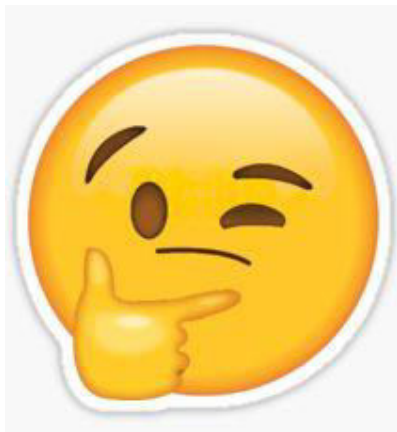
You should include the following information:

- Why should the child/young person take part?
- What will they have to do?
- Do they have to take part?
- Are there any risks to taking part?
- Who is the researcher/facilitator?
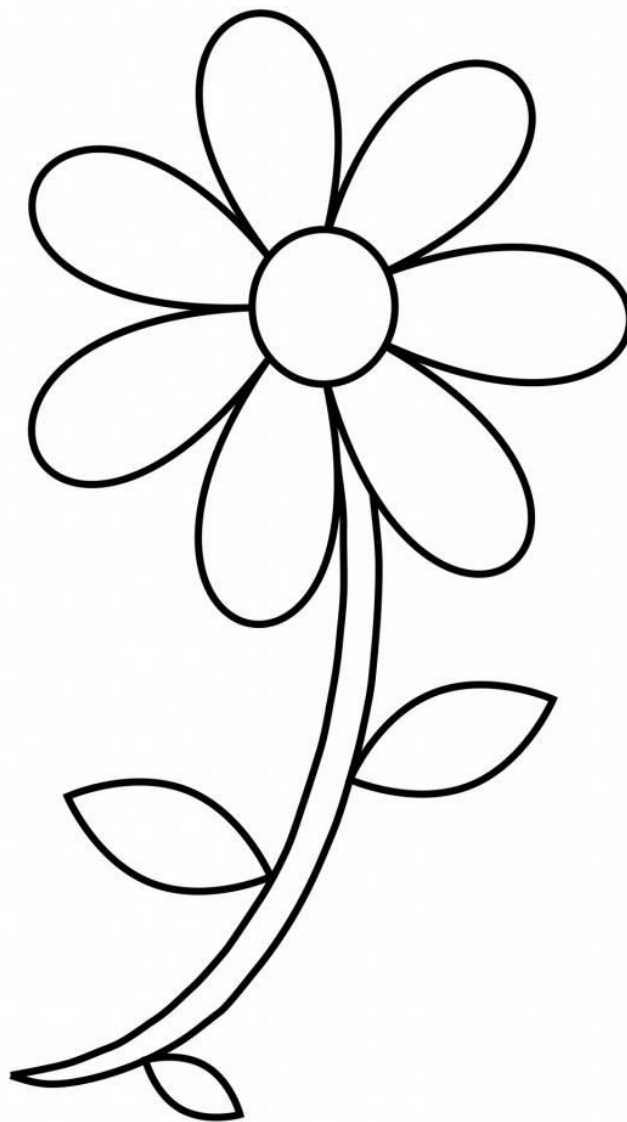
Appendix 2
Our Space, Our Place!

Print the emoji's onto sticky back paper. Alternatively, participants can use bluetack to stick the emoji's around the space.
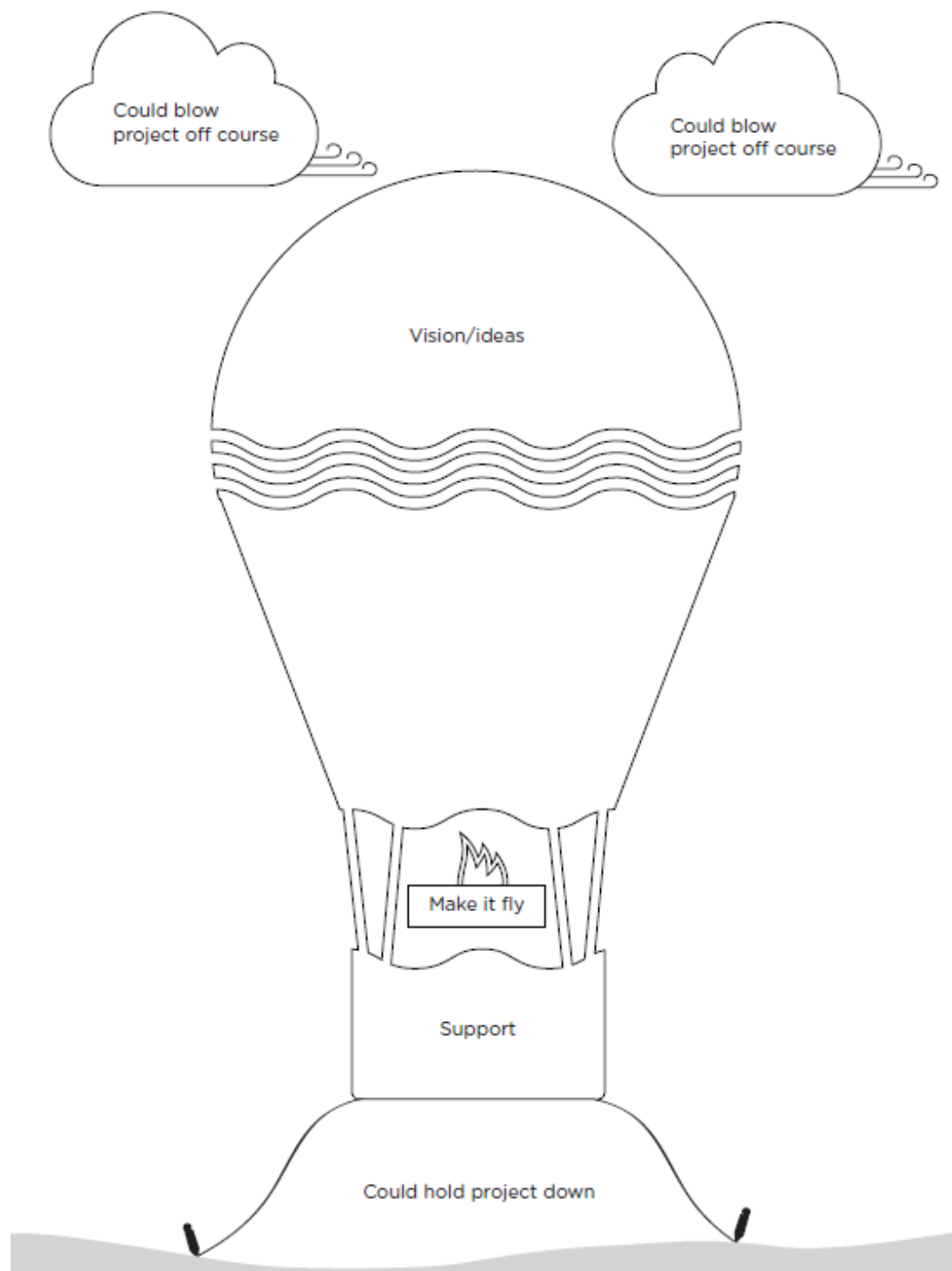
Appendix 3

Flower Power

Appendix 4

Balloon Activity

Adapted from: *Involving Children in Decision Making: Your quick practical guide. 2013 Commissioner for Children Tasmania http://www.childcomm.tas.gov.au*

Appendix 5

Making things happen

Look at the diagram below. Circle the people or organisations that you think would be most helpful to your project and the best to develop a relationship with. In the blank circles, write anyone who you think may be able to help.
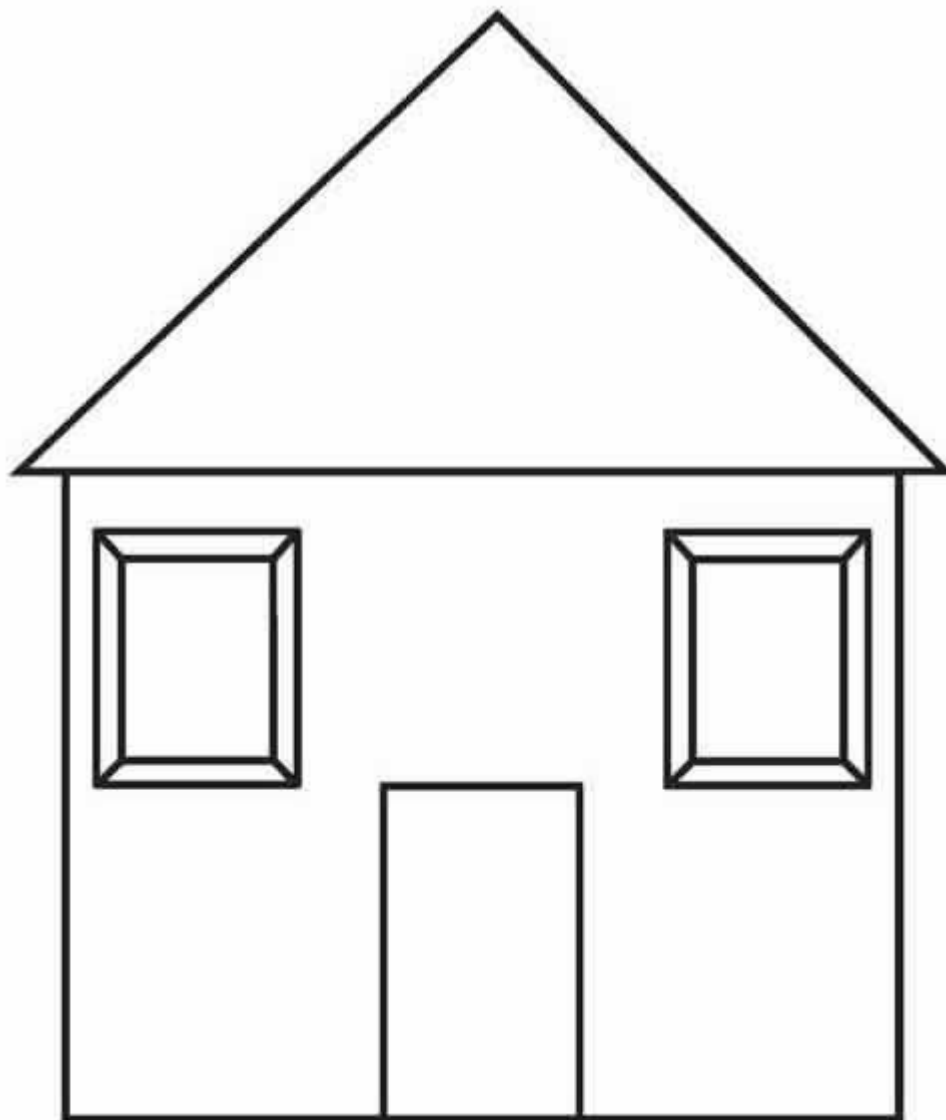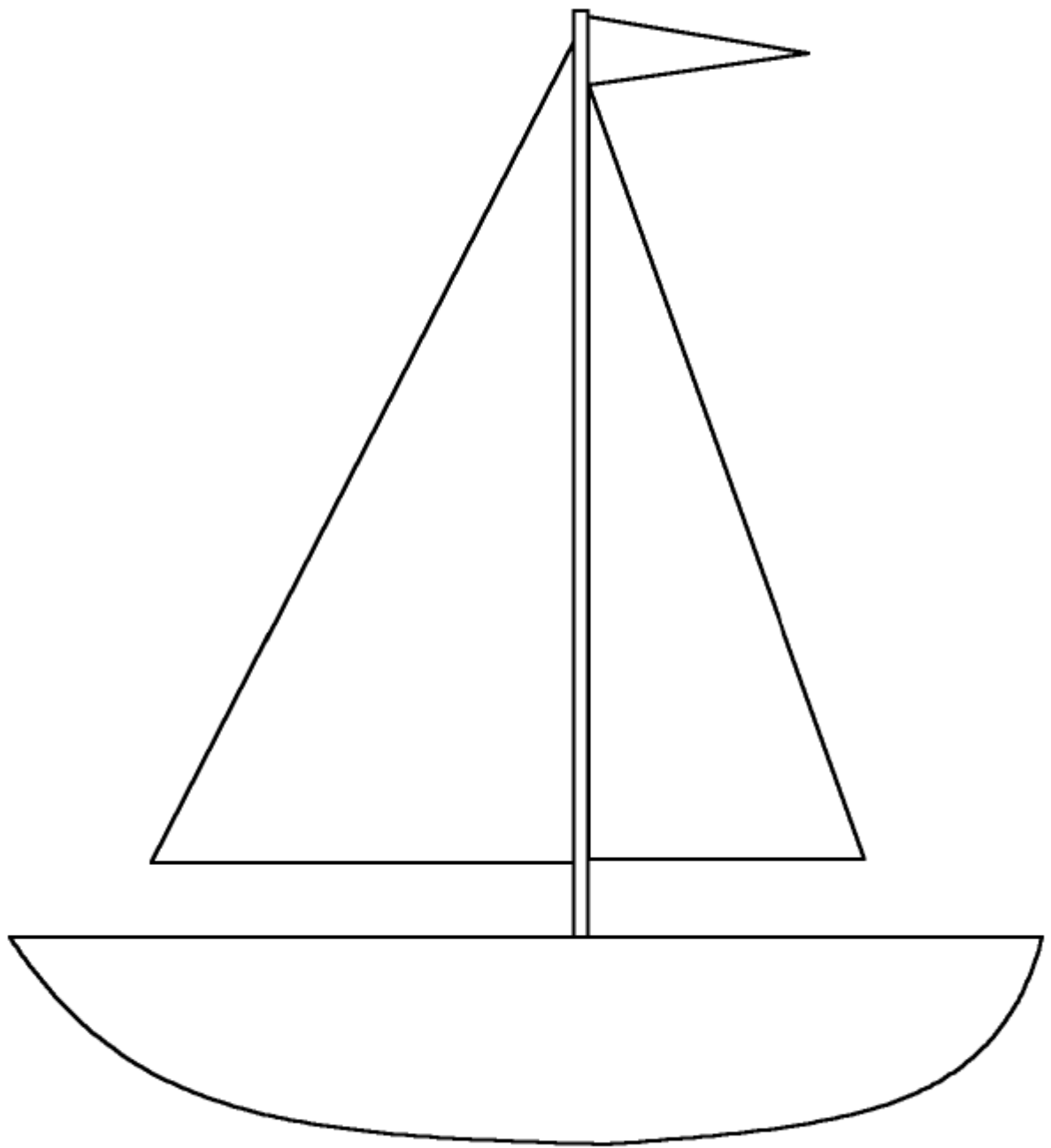
Local Press

Local Council

Local Business

Your Project

Gardaí

Youth Groups

HSE
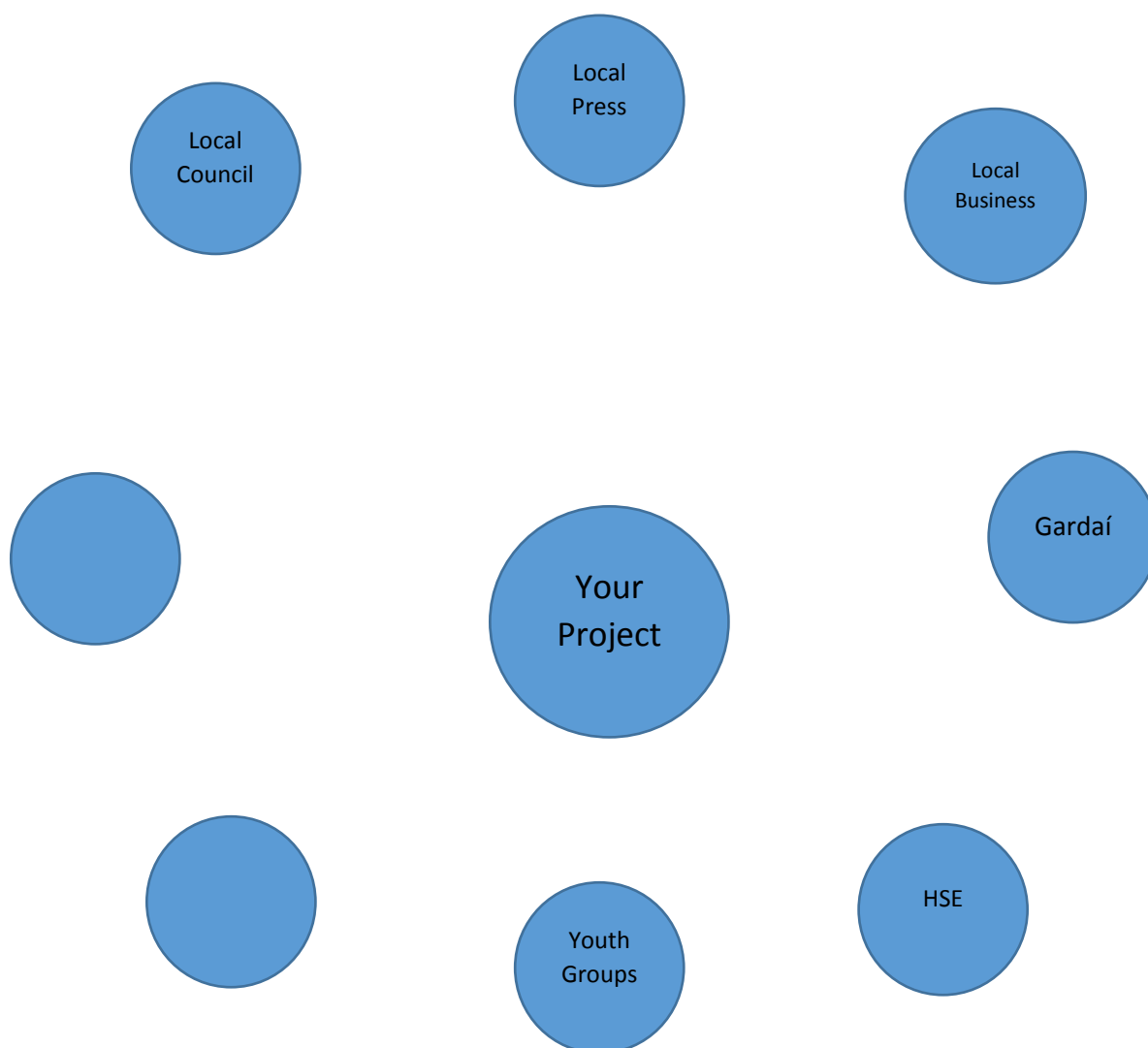
Top 3 groups/contacts:
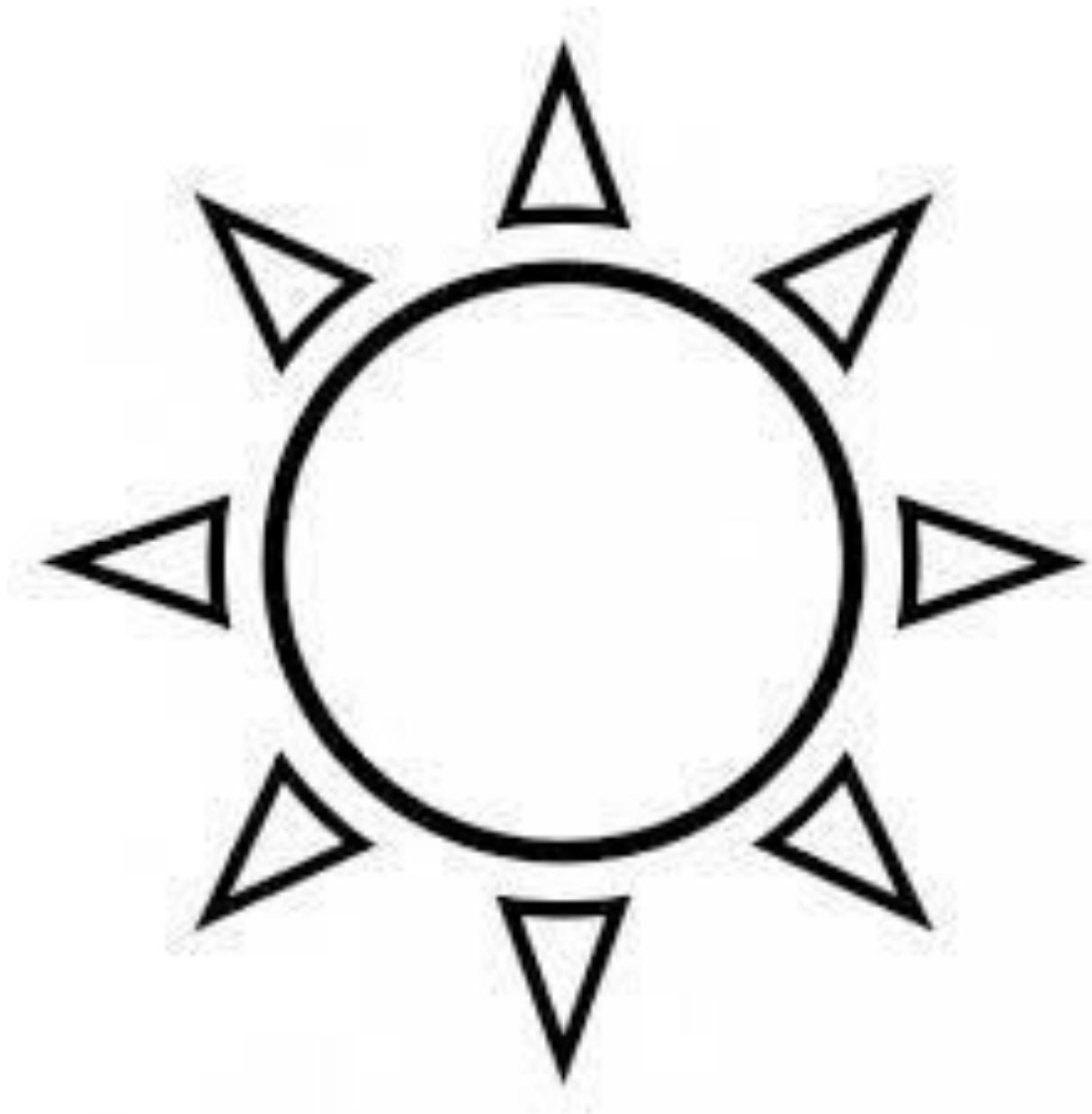
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Appendix 6

Are you listening?

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References

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2014) *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014 -2020.* Dublin: Government Publications. Available at www.dyca.ie

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making, 2015 – 2020.* Dublin: Government Publications. Available at: www.dcya.ie

Hart, R. (1992). "Children's Participation; from Tokenism to Citizenship" UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. Florence, Italy. www.unicef.org

Involving Children in Decision Making: A Quick, Practical Guide, Commissioner for Children Tasmania http://www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Guide-to-making-decisions-booklet.pdf

Lundy, L. (2007) "Voice is not enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child", British Educational Research Journal, Vol. 33, No. 6 pp. 927-42

McEvoy, Olivia. (2015) *A practical guide to including seldom-heard children and young people in decision making.* Dublin: Government Publications. Available at: www.dcya.ie

Tusla (2015) Towards the development of a Participation Strategy for Children and Young People, Tusla Child and Family Agency.

Tusla (2016) Child and Youth Participation Toolkit, Tusla Child and Family Agency.

Useful Websites and Resources

Involving Young People in Conference Planning: A model for action (HSE, 2006) http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/yourhealthservice/SUI/Library/Guides/ConferencePlanning.pdf

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.dcya.gov.ie/documents/publications/31267_Young_Voices_.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

www.dyca.ie

www.hubnanog.ie

BUS SCOILE