

Activities of Learning About
The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Activity 1. Wants and Needs

Purpose: To help young people make the distinction between wants and needs; to introduce the idea that basic needs can be considered rights.

Materials: A set of **Wants and Needs Cards** (pages 11-14) for each pair of participants. For the Variation, several pairs of dice are needed.

Procedure:

Step 1: Have the participants form pairs, and give each pair a set of **Wants and Needs Cards**, cut into individual cards.

Step 2: Ask them to imagine that a new government is being set up in their village, town or city. This government wants to provide all young people with the basic things that they want and need. The cards represent the list of wants and needs that the elected officials have drawn up. The officials would like young people themselves to add any items that might be missing; ask the pairs to decide together on four additional items, and to write them on the blank cards.

Step 3: Announce to the group that the new government has found that for political and economic reasons, it can provide young people with only 16 of the items on the list, rather than all 24. Ask the pairs to decide which 8 items they are willing to give up. Have them actually return these cards to the facilitator.

Step 4: When all pairs have completed step 3, announce that still further cuts in what can be provided to young people must be made. Ask the pairs to eliminate another 8 items.

Step 5: Discuss the following questions with the entire group:

- Which items were most commonly eliminated in the first round? Why?
- Was the second round of eliminations more difficult than the first? Why?
- Did you and your partner have any disagreements over the items to eliminate? Which ones, and why?
- What is the difference between wants and needs? Which items on the list were wants, and which ones were needs?
- Do wants and needs differ for different people? Why or why not?

Explain to the group that the most basic needs are sometimes referred to as 'rights'. Rights can be defined as those things that it is fair and just for a person to have, or to be able to do.

Variation:

Step 1: Divide participants into groups of four, and give each group a set of **Wants and Needs Cards**. Allow several minutes for them to decide on four things to add to the list.

Step 2: Explain that each small group is going to be able to get only **some** of the things that they want and need. Give each group one die; each member can roll the die once. The sum of the four rolls indicates the number of **Wants and Needs Cards** that group will be allowed to keep. Have each group go through their cards and eliminate the required number.

Step 3: Have each group report on:

- what number of needs and/or wants they were allowed to keep;
- which cards they decided to keep;
- how they came to their decisions;
- what, if anything, was difficult about the decision-making process.

Step 4: Discuss these questions:

- Do all groups in society get their needs and wants met equally?
- If not, what accounts for the differences?
- Is it fair for these types of inequalities to exist?

Follow-up: Ask young people to come up with their own definition of 'rights'.

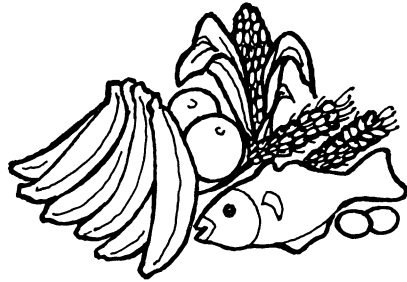
Have them draw up a list of rights that in their opinion are basic for people of their age, using the **Wants and Needs Cards** as a starting-point.

Have them compare this list with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

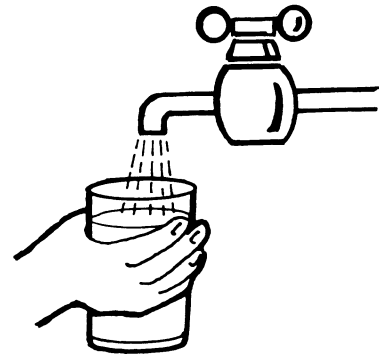
Read the case-study *Clean Water for the Village* (page 15), to see how a group of children in Uganda dealt with meeting one of their basic needs.

Activity 1. Wants and Needs

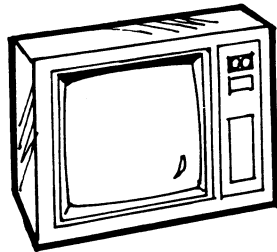
Wants and Needs Cards



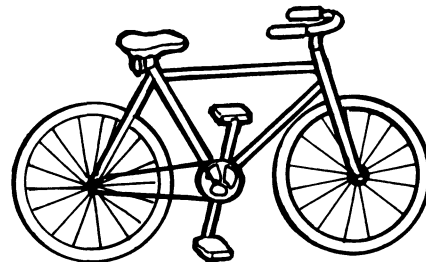
Nutritious food



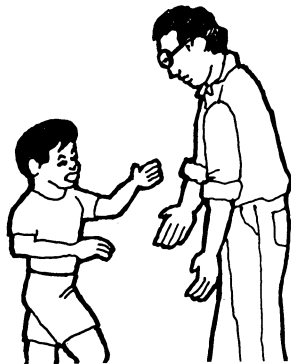
Clean water



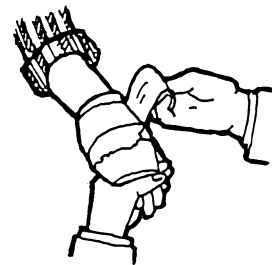
A television set



A bicycle



The opportunity to express your opinion and be listened to

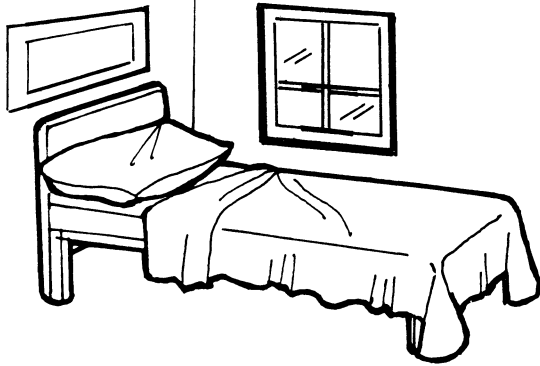


Medical care when you need it



Activity 1. Wants and Needs

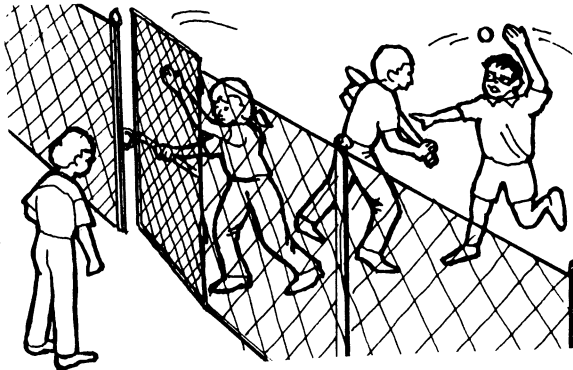
Wants and Needs Cards



Your own bedroom



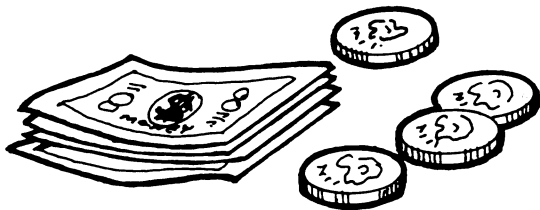
Sweets



Protection from discrimination



Education



Money to spend as you like

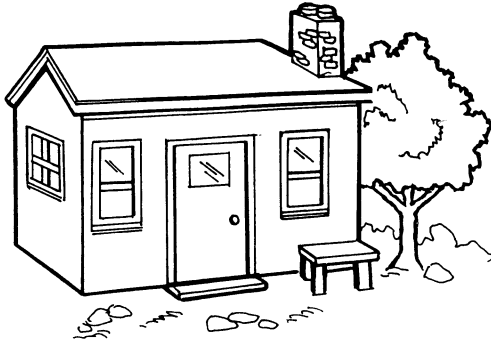


Holiday trips



Activity 1. Wants and Needs

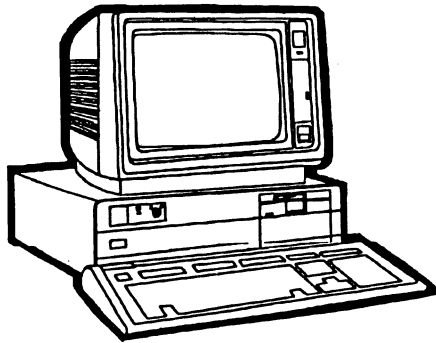
Wants and Needs Cards



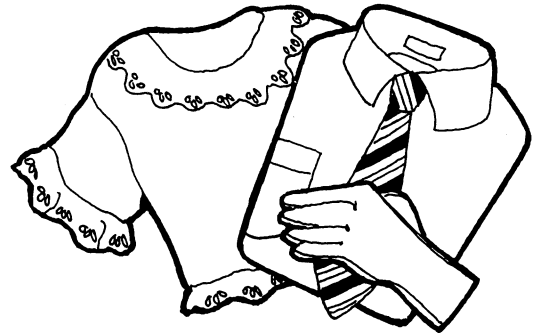
Decent shelter



The opportunity to practise your own religion



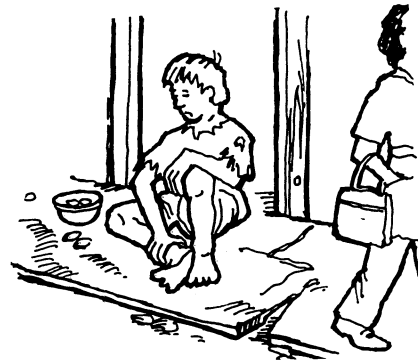
A personal computer



Clothes in the latest style



Clean air

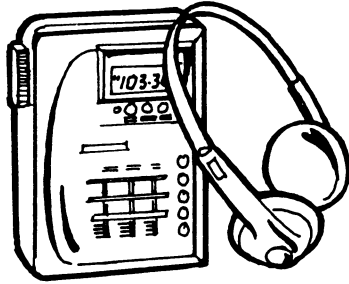


Protection from abuse and neglect



Activity 1. Wants and Needs

Wants and Needs Cards



A personal stereo



Playgrounds and recreation centres





Taking Action in Uganda

Clean Water for the Village

In the village of Bbira, north-west of Kampala, a major source of drinking water is a well fed by rainwater. After the rains, water runs off the nearby hillsides and accumulates in a low-lying area. Each day, people from the village bring containers to this well to collect water for cooking, drinking and washing. Until recently, it was not uncommon to find livestock and poultry standing in and drinking from this water source, which is shared by the community and the 600 children of Bbira Primary School. But then the schoolchildren decided to do something about this health hazard.

The children were involved in a Child-to-Child health education project. In their school, they learned about health issues such as community hygiene, nutrition, road safety and the use of traditional medicine. With their teachers, they identified the need for clean, safe water as a priority for their village. Then they began making a plan of action.

First, they met with the community leader, and discussed the risk of water-borne diseases that can result from drinking contaminated water. The leader then called a village meeting. At this meeting, the children made presentations — poems and dramas that carried messages about the importance of clean water:

*Little creatures and plants, hunting for
hours and hours —
Water, where are you?
Water, water, water,
When clouds and moisture dance with gusts
in the air:
Water, water, water!*

The whole community talked about what the children's presentations meant for them. As a result, adults and children set aside time to work together on clearing the well of plant growth and litter. They then built a secure fence to keep out animals. When the entire project was finished, adults and children celebrated together with music and songs.

Working alongside adults, children had the opportunity to pass along information about sanitation issues. The parents enjoyed seeing their children as competent and involved members of the community. And in a part of the country in which children often have more education than their parents, the role of youth as health educators is an important one.

This role did not end with the clearing and fencing of the well. The children of Bbira have decided that they have an on-going responsibility for educating adults and younger children about how to use the well in a way that keeps the water clean for everyone. By identifying a local health priority and taking practical action, the children are making a life-saving contribution to their community.



Activity 2. Clustering

Purpose: To encourage young people to examine the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in depth, and to reflect on the different types of rights it deals with.

Materials: Copies of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Clustering Cards** (pages 19-27), a large sheet of paper, scissors, glue. Full copies of the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be available for reference.

Note for the group leader: for the purposes of this activity, only 36 articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child have been included. These are the articles that deal with concrete situations that young people will immediately recognize as relevant to their own lives. The articles that have been excluded deal with implementation issues and definitions.

Note that the articles of the Convention are paraphrased on the cards.

The layout of the **CRC Clustering Cards** below is not in strict numerical order. This is to facilitate photocopying for activity 5, **Linking Rights**.

Procedure:

Step 1: Cut out the 36 **CRC Clustering Cards** and give one to each member of the group. (If the group is larger than 36, some participants may work in pairs. If the group is smaller than 36, eliminate an appropriate number of cards.) Make sure participants read and understand their cards.

Step 2: Instruct them to stand up, move around the room and meet with other participants. As they do so, they should explain the right their card describes. If two participants feel that their cards have something in common or belong together, they form a 'cluster'.

They continue walking around the room together. They may add any number of additional people to their cluster if they feel that their card describes a right of a similar type.

Step 3: As the activity proceeds, young people may switch to a different cluster as they refine their thinking about the categories of rights covered by the Convention. Some young people may find that they 'stand alone' and do not belong to any of the clusters. Encourage discussion and negotiation. Stress that there is no one 'correct' answer to this activity!

Step 4: Once the clusters are finalized, and there is no further movement around the room, ask each cluster to decide on a name for itself; for example 'Health', 'Education' or 'Expression', etc.

Step 5: Have the clusters sit down together. Call on one cluster at a time to tell the group its name, and summarize the articles that belong to this category. As this is being done, the teacher, group leader, or several of the participants can glue the cards onto the large sheet of paper in their appropriate clusters.

Step 6: Discuss the following questions:

- Were some rights more difficult to categorize than others? Which ones, and why?
- What seem to be the main types of rights protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child?
- Do some types of rights seem to be given more emphasis than others? If so, why might this be?
- Are there some types of rights that you feel should be given more emphasis? If so, which ones?
- Have any rights been left out of the Convention that you feel should have been included?
- Are there some types of rights that should be given priority, or are all rights equally important?
- Are there types of children's rights that you feel your community/country does particularly well at upholding? Are there types of rights that should be given more attention?

Variation 1: A less active version of the same activity can be done by forming groups of four to six. Give each group a large sheet of paper, scissors, pens, glue, and a complete set of **CRC Clustering Cards**.

Have young people arrange the cards on the paper, clustering similar types of rights together. They may draw lines indicating links between the clusters, or between various articles. Have the groups name each cluster. Then, post the large sheets of paper around the room and allow the participants time to circulate and see the work of other groups.

Finally, discuss the questions listed in Step 6 above.

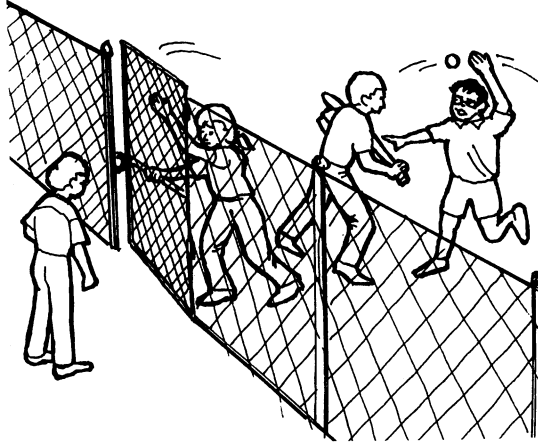
Variation 2: Explain that the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are sometimes categorized according to whether they deal with survival, development, protection or participation (see Introduction, page 2), and discuss the differences between these four categories.

Give groups new copies of the **CRC Clustering Cards** and ask them to sort the articles under the headings of survival, development, protection and participation. If differences of opinion arise as to the classification, encourage participants to discuss and negotiate these, rather than only concern themselves with getting the 'correct' answer.

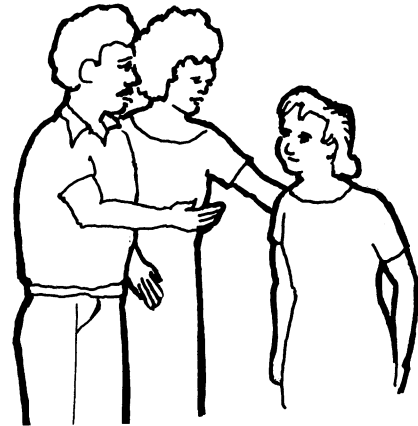
When the small groups agree on the classification, they may then stick the cards onto paper. If appropriate, discuss how this classification scheme compared with the one devised in the original procedure.

Activity 2. Clustering

CRC Clustering Cards



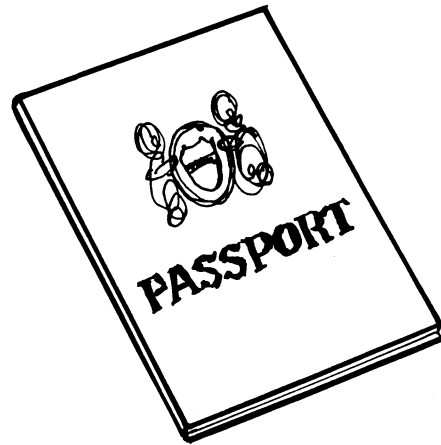
Article 2: All rights apply to all children, and children shall be protected from all forms of discrimination.



Article 5: The State must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to provide guidance for the child that is appropriate to her or his evolving capacities.



Article 6: Every child has the right to life, and the State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

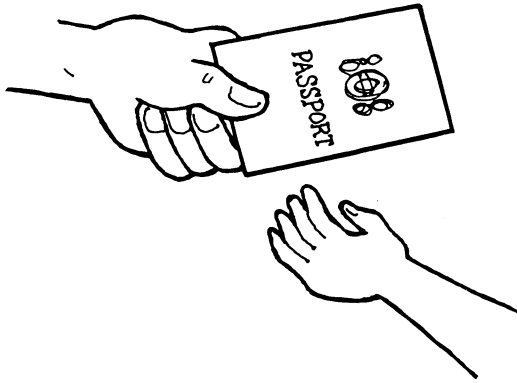


Article 7: Each child has the right to a name and nationality, to know his or her parents and be cared for by them.

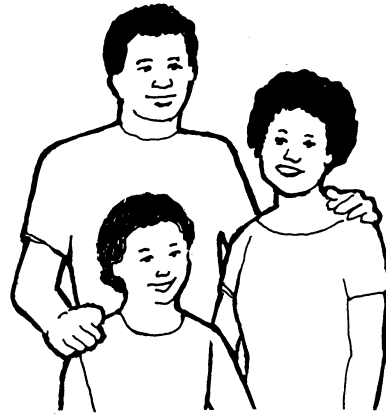


Activity 2. Clustering

CRC Clustering Cards



Article 8: The State has an obligation to protect, and if necessary, to re-establish the child's identity. This includes name, nationality and family ties.



Article 9: The child has a right to live with his or her parents unless this is not in the child's best interests. The child has the right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both.



Article 10: Children and their parents have the right to leave any country or enter their own to be reunited, and maintain the parent-child relationship.

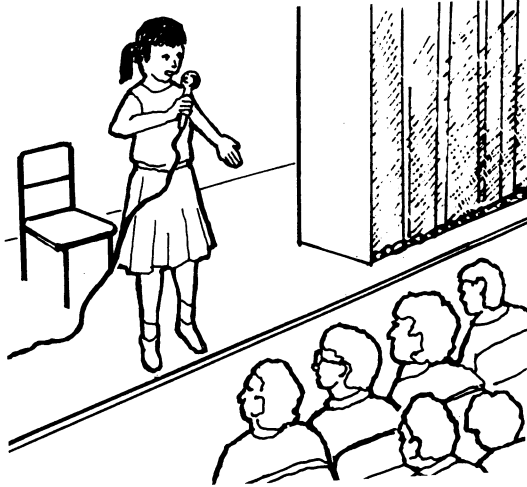


Article 11: The State has an obligation to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or holding of children abroad by a parent or third party.



Activity 2. Clustering

CRC Clustering Cards



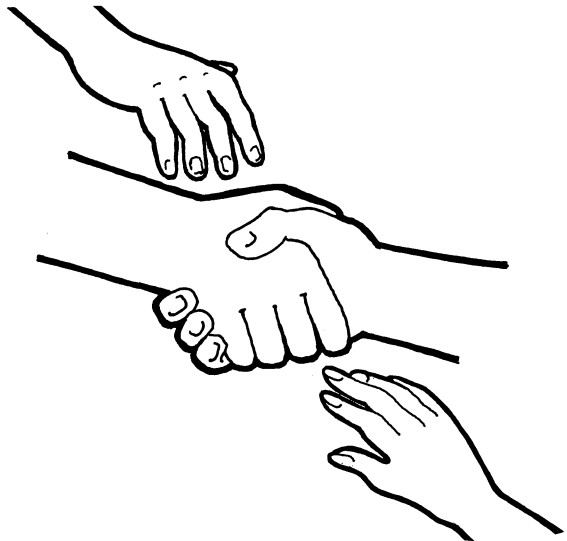
Article 12: Children have the right to express their opinions freely, and have their opinions taken into account in matters that affect them.



Article 13: Children have the right to express their views, obtain information, and make ideas or information known, regardless of frontiers.



Article 14: Children have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance.



Article 15: Children have a right to meet with others, and to join or form associations.

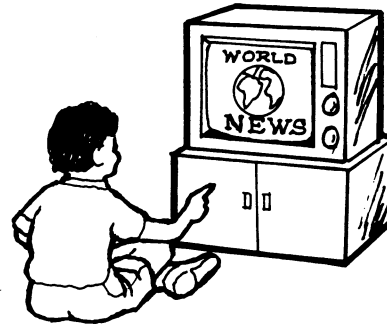


Activity 2. Clustering

CRC Clustering Cards



Article 16: Children have the right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from attacks on their character or reputation.



Article 17: Children shall have access to information from national and international sources. The media shall encourage materials which are beneficial, and discourage those which are harmful to children.



Article 18: Parents have joint responsibility for raising the child, and the State shall support them in this.



Article 19: Children shall be protected from abuse and neglect. States shall provide programmes for the prevention of abuse and treatment of those who have suffered from abuse.

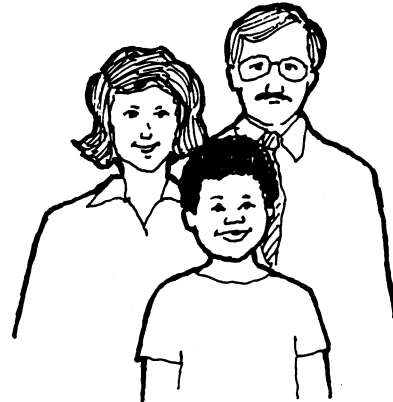


Activity 2. Clustering

CRC Clustering Cards



Article 20: Children without a family are entitled to special protection, and appropriate alternative family or institutional care, with regard for the child's cultural background.



Article 21: Where adoption is allowed, it shall be carried out in the best interests of the child, under the supervision of competent authorities, with safeguards for the child.



Article 22: Children who are refugees, or seeking refugee status, are entitled to special protection.

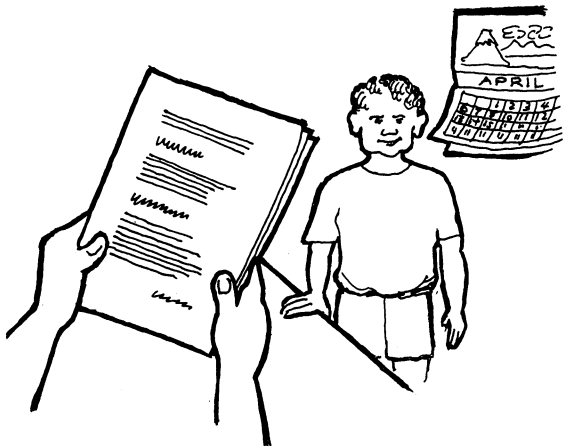


Article 23: Disabled children have the right to special care, education and training that will help them to enjoy a full and decent life with the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration possible.



Activity 2. Clustering

CRC Clustering Cards



Article 25: A child who is placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health is entitled to have that placement evaluated regularly.



Article 26: Children have the right to benefit from social security including social insurance.



Article 29: Education should develop the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities. Children should be prepared for active participation in a free society, and learn to respect their own culture and that of others.

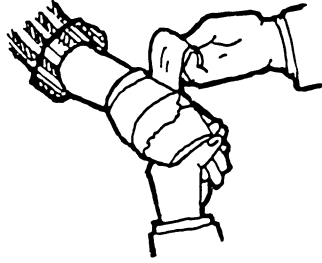


Article 34: Children shall be protected from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.



Activity 2. Clustering

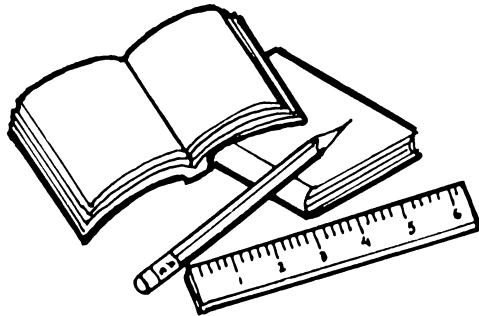
CRC Clustering Cards



Article 24: Children have the right to the highest possible standard of health, and to access to health and medical services.



Article 27: Children have the right to a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that the child has an adequate standard of living. The State's duty is to ensure that this responsibility is fulfilled.



Article 28: Children have the right to education. Primary education should be free and compulsory. Secondary education should be accessible to every child. Higher education should be available to all on the basis of capacity. School discipline shall be consistent with the child's rights and dignity.



Article 30: Children have the right, if members of a minority group, to practise their own culture, religion and language.

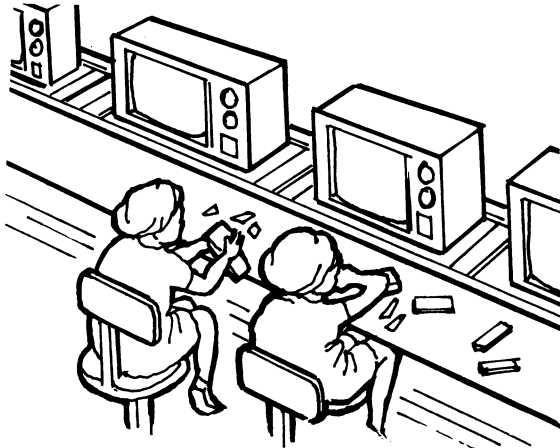


Activity 2. Clustering

CRC Clustering Cards



Article 31: Children have the right to rest, leisure, play, and participation in cultural and artistic activities.



Article 32: Children have the right to be protected from economic exploitation, from having to participate in work that threatens their health, education, or development. The State shall set minimum ages for employment and regulate working conditions.



Article 33: Children have the right to protection from the use of drugs, and from being involved in their production or distribution.



Article 38: Children under age 15 shall have no direct part in armed conflict. Children who are affected by armed conflict are entitled to special protection and care.

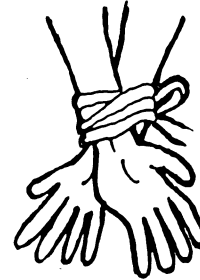


Activity 2. Clustering

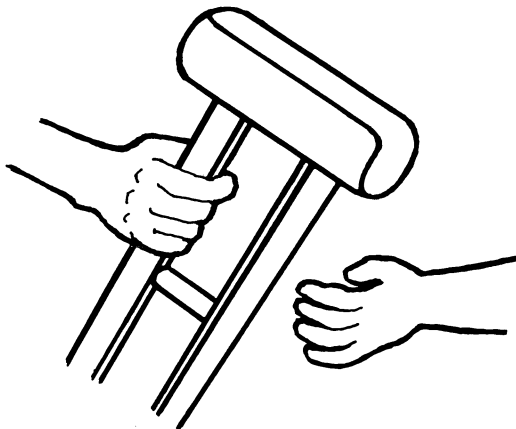
CRC Clustering Cards



Article 35: The State shall take all appropriate measures to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.



Article 37: No child shall be subjected to torture, cruel treatment or punishment, unlawful arrest or deprivation of liberty. Capital punishment and life imprisonment are prohibited for offences committed by persons below 18 years of age. A child who is detained has the right to legal assistance and contact with the family.



Article 39: Children who have experienced armed conflict, torture, neglect or exploitation shall receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.



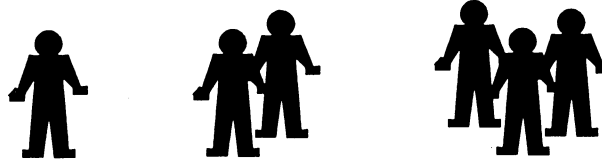
Article 40: Children in conflict with the law are entitled to legal guarantees and assistance, and treatment that promotes their sense of dignity and aims to help them take a constructive role in society.



Activity 3. Statistics Line-up

Purpose: To familiarize young people with statistics concerning health, education and standard of living, basic rights from the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Materials: A line divided into 10 sections 1 metre in length, either drawn or marked with masking tape, on the entire length of a chalkboard, across the length of a wall, or on the floor. The sections should be labelled 0%, 10%, 20%, and so on up to 100%.



Procedure: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Step 1: Explain to the group that you will be reading some statistics that are relevant to children's rights. Each statement will be followed by a question involving percentages. After the young people hear the statement and the question, they are to stand next to the place on the line that indicates what they think the answer will be.

Sample questions are shown on the next two pages.

Step 2: Once they have taken a place on the line, read the actual answer to the group. Take a few minutes to discuss whether their guesses were accurate or not, and why. What statistics came as a surprise?

Note: Some of the questions are intended to show that progress has been made in improving children's health and education, while others are intended to show areas where improvement is still needed. The final five questions aim to provoke discussion about how funds could be reallocated to address children's rights.

Variations: In a very large group, young people can be asked to work in pairs and decide on the answer to each question. Then one person from each pair can stand on the statistics line.

Statistics on children's rights issues from the participants' country can be added. Group leaders may wish to update the statistics using information from annual reports such as *The State of the World's Children* and *The Progress of Nations*, available from UNICEF.

Follow-up: Young people can do research on progress being made in their own countries on immunization, primary education, girls' education, access to clean water, standard of living, etc. Graphs can be made using the statistics.

They can learn about the local, state or national agencies that are responsible for the various types of rights they have learned about. They can invite speakers from those agencies to talk about what is being done to protect children's rights.

Statistics Line-up Questions

1. Fifty years ago less than 10 per cent of rural families had access to safe drinking water. What percentage do you think has access today?

Answer: Almost 60 per cent.

2. UNICEF set a goal of immunizing 80 per cent of the children in developing countries against preventable diseases by 1990.

a. What percentage of children in sub-Saharan Africa do you think is immunized against measles today?

Answer: 46 per cent.

b. What percentage of children in South Asia do you think is immunized against measles today?

Answer: 79 per cent.

c. What percentage of children in Italy do you think is immunized against measles today?

Answer: 50 per cent.

3. In Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, 10 per cent of the children live in poverty. In France, the Netherlands and Sweden, less than 5 per cent of the children are living below the poverty line. What percentage of the children in the United States do you think live below the poverty line?

Answer: 20 per cent.

4. In Syria in 1960, 39 per cent of girls were enrolled in primary education. What percentage of girls do you think are enrolled today?

Answer: 94 per cent.

5. In the Middle East, three countries allocate over 40 per cent of their central government expenditure to defence. What percentage of central government expenditure do you think goes towards health in these countries?

Answer: Between 1 and 7 per cent.

6. On average, what percentage of their annual budgets do the governments of developing countries spend on nutrition, clean water, health care and education?

Answer: 10 per cent.

7. What percentage of exports of goods and services goes towards repaying foreign debt in five major South American countries?

Answer: Between 25 and 33 per cent.

8. What percentage of the aid industrialized countries send to developing countries is given specifically for nutrition, clean water, health care and education?

Answer: 10 per cent.

9. In Europe, people spend the equivalent of US\$ 50 billion per year on cigarettes. What percentage of this amount do you think would be required in order to immunize children against preventable diseases, cut child malnutrition in half, bring clean water and sanitation to all communities, make family planning services available to all, and give every child a basic education?

Answer: 50 per cent.

Sources of statistics:

The Progress of Nations, UNICEF, 1993

The State of the World's Children, UNICEF, 1993

Activity 4. The Test

Purpose: To give young people a simulated experience of being discriminated against in their right to education (article 28).

Materials: One sheet of paper and a pencil for each participant.

Procedure:

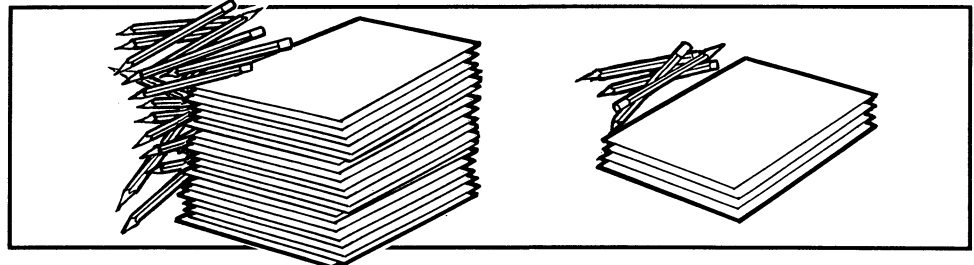
Step 1: Have young people mark with chalk or tape a rectangle on the floor of the room equal to one eighth of its area. (This can be quickly done by measuring off a rectangle whose width is one half the width of the room, and whose length is one quarter the length of the room.)

Optional: If the room contains movable furniture, have the group move one eighth of the total number of desks, tables or chairs into the area that is one eighth of the floor space, and leave the rest in the larger area.

Step 2: Ask the group to make two piles with the sheets of paper; one pile should contain one eighth of the total number of sheets, and the other seven eighths. Have them do the same thing with the pencils.

Step 3: Have participants divide themselves into two groups, representing one eighth and seven eighths of the whole group, respectively.

Step 4: Tell the **smaller** group to take seats in the **larger** area of the room. The **larger** group takes seats in the **smaller** area of the room. (It should be left to the young people to decide how to do this. If they object, tell them firmly that these are the conditions under which the activity is going to be carried out.) **Do not distribute papers and pencils yet.**



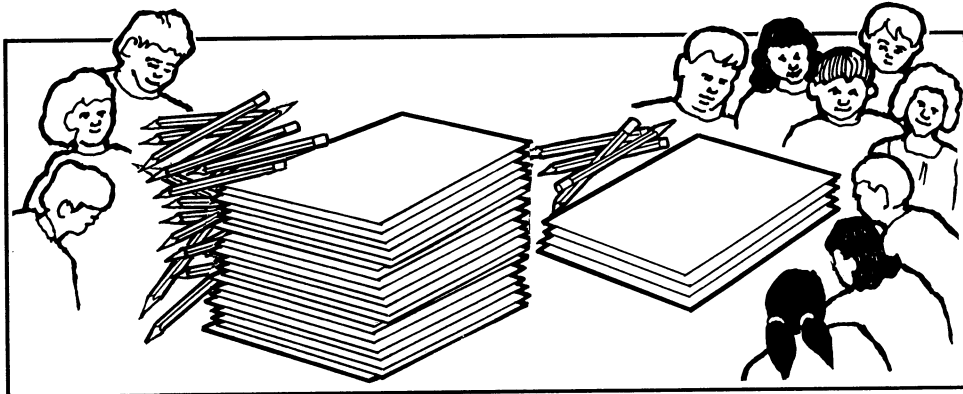
Step 5: Tell the entire group that they are about to take a spelling and mathematics test. This is a very important test, as their scores will determine whether they will be allowed to continue on to higher education. (Alternatively, they can be told that their scores will determine whether they advance to the next class, will qualify for a job or make them eligible for a promotion, depending on what is most appropriate for the group.) They must score at least 70 per cent or better on the test to qualify. Explain that you will dictate 10 spelling words, and 10 mathematics problems, and that they must write the answers on their own sheet of paper.

Step 6: Distribute the **larger** pile of paper and pencils to the **smaller** group, and the **smaller** pile of paper and pencils to the **larger** group.

For example, in a group of 32 participants:

Four participants would be seated in the larger area of the room, and would get 28 pencils and 28 sheets of paper.

Twenty-eight participants would be seated (or standing!) in the smaller area of the room, with four pencils and four sheets of paper.



Any objections should be ignored or dismissed by saying, "Just do the best you can with what you have." Young people from the larger group should be forbidden to leave their assigned area, or take materials from the smaller group.

Step 7: Begin dictating spelling words at a fairly rapid pace, but one which the participants in the smaller group can keep up with. Then quickly move on to dictating mathematics problems.

Suggested spelling words; any words appropriate to the level of the group can be substituted:

education	fairness
equal	group
share	problem
cooperate	protest
justice	culture

Suggested mathematics problems; again, any problems can be substituted, depending on the skill level of the group.

$14 + 14 = ?$	$32 - 4 = ?$	$8 \times 4 = ?$
$13 + 87 = ?$	$100 - 25 = ?$	$25 \times 3 = ?$
$50 + 27 = ?$	$28 - 14 = ?$	$7 \times 9 = ?$
$21 + 7 = ?$		

Step 8: Collect the papers, and check them to determine who has passed and who has not. In all likelihood, all of the young people in the smaller group will have passed, while few, if any, in the larger group will have a score of 70 per cent. Announce the names of the participants who have passed — praise them for their excellent work, and congratulate them on being able to go on to further education.

Step 9: At this point, participants will probably have strong feelings about the activity that they will want to express. Explain that this has been a simulation, and its purpose was to get them to reflect on the impact of discrimination in education. Discuss the following questions with the group:

How did the larger group feel during the activity? Why?

What strategies did the larger group use to attempt to complete the test?

How did the smaller group feel during the activity? Why?

What, if anything, did members of the larger group think about doing in response to the unjust situation? What did they actually do about it?

What, if anything, did members of the smaller group think about doing in response to the unjust situation? What did they actually do about it?

How would this type of distribution of resources interfere with educational success for the larger group in the long term?

How would this type of distribution of resources place the smaller group at an advantage in the long term?

Let the participants know that this simulation is based on statistics on South Africa under apartheid laws in the mid-1980s. At that time, whites made up just over one eighth of the population. The per capita school expenditure for black South African schoolchildren was approximately one eighth the amount spent on white children.

Variation: Any subject matter can be substituted for the test as long as it involves the use of resources which can be unfairly distributed.

Follow-up: This activity can be used as a basis for researching the effects of apartheid on black South Africans. Are resources for education unequally distributed among racial or ethnic groups in other countries? Among girls and boys?

Read the case-study from the United States, *'Unequal Education': Using Video for Social Change*, page 34. Then, look into how funds for education are allocated on a local or national level in your own country. Is the allocation equal? If not, what groups are potentially disadvantaged by the present system? What might the long term impacts of this be?



Taking Action in the United States

'Unequal Education': Using Video for Social Change

In James's middle-class New York City school, the science rooms have plenty of microscopes, the music department has a full band, and the gym has an outdoor track and field. At Lonnie's school in a working-class neighbourhood only a few miles away, inadequately trained teachers struggle with large classes, outdated facilities and little equipment. Which student is receiving the better opportunity to develop his potential?

Such inequalities are repeated in cities across the United States. Recently, a group of six teens decided to make a video documentary, 'Unequal Education', about the situation. The young people had learned about video production at the Educational Video Center (EVC) in New York.

They began in 1991, when EVC was asked to produce a segment for a national television series on democracy in the U.S. The video makers, all 'graduates' of a term of EVC training, met to brainstorm what democracy meant to them. When they found themselves reflecting on the impact that race, class and tracking had on their own schooling, they planned a video that would raise issues of injustice in education.

They found two schools to focus on and began by observing and making friends with the students. Then they brought in the cameras. This posed no problem at the middle-class school. But at the working-class school, the principal halted the project, not wanting his school to be held up as a bad example.

With the help of parents and school board members, the young people found a principal who was committed to equity issues. Work resumed in his school, and resulted in a documentary detailing the daily

experiences and hopes of Lonnie and James, learning in starkly different environments. It leaves viewers with no doubt as to the hurdles that Lonnie, from the poorer school, will have to overcome to achieve his ambition — to become a lawyer.

The video caused an uproar when it was completed. School board members walked out when it was screened at a closed board meeting, and refused to allow it to be shown at a board meeting open to the community. The young video makers proceeded to screen it with parent and educational reform groups, and to discuss the issue of educational equity on national radio and television.

'Unequal Education' has had a real impact on the debate about how education is funded. It has also had an impact on the young people who made it. They went on to write a handbook called 'A Guide to Video for Students by Students'. One of them is now teaching video to youth in a community centre. Others are in college, but still speak to groups about 'Unequal Education' upon request. They all realized that they too have suffered from an unjust educational system, and that they were not necessarily inadequate students. Most importantly, they have come to believe that they can have an active role in building a more equal society.

