

Planning for Action

Activity 10. What are the Issues?

Purpose: To help young people clarify which rights issues are priorities in their communities.

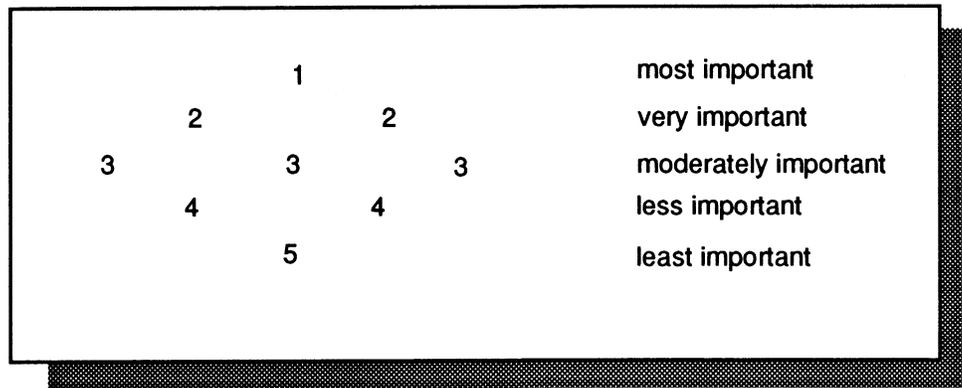
Materials: Copies of the **CRC Clustering Cards** (pages 19-27), glue, and one sheet of large paper per group.

Procedure:

Step 1: Have the young people form groups of four, and distribute a set of the materials to each group.

Step 2: Ask the groups to look over the **CRC Clustering Cards**, select nine articles which they think are most relevant and important to young people in their community, and cut them out.

Step 3: Have groups form a 'diamond ranking' with the nine cards. While explaining a diamond ranking to the groups, draw or post this diagram for them to refer to:



They place the card with the most important rights issue on the large sheet of paper at the 'top' of the diamond. Below that, they place two cards describing issues which they judge to be of lesser, but still significant importance. On the next row they place three cards with moderately important issues, followed by a row of two cards of lesser importance. At the bottom of the diamond is the issue of least importance.

Step 4: When they reach agreement on their ranking, they can glue the cards onto the paper.

Step 5: Have one member of each group describe to the others the reasons for their arrangement of the cards.

The purpose of ranking activities is to help participants discover what their own priorities are. To encourage this process, the group leader should:

- allow participants ample time for discussion;
- encourage negotiation on the ranking and evaluation of various arrangements of the cards, rather than working for a quick solution;
- remind participants that there is no one correct answer.

Variations: For a simpler ranking activity, have participants arrange the cards on paper in a vertical line, with the most important issue on top and the least important on the bottom.

Rather than use the **CRC Clustering Cards**, young people may read the simplified text of the Convention, decide on nine articles that are relevant to their situation, write a summary of each one on a blank index card, and proceed with the ranking activity as described above.

Follow-up: Use activity 11, **What Can We Do?**.

Activity 11. What Can We Do?

Purpose: To encourage young people to think of a variety of ways in which they might take action on a rights issue.

Materials: Chalkboard and chalk, or chart paper and pens.

Procedure:

Step 1: Have the group recall the rights issue they felt was the highest priority from activity 10, **What are the Issues?**

Step 2: Ask them to brainstorm possible actions that could be taken to address this issue.

The purpose of a brainstorm is to generate as many ideas as possible.
To do this, it is helpful to:

- encourage young people to think creatively; even suggestions which seem far-fetched are acceptable;
- write down each suggestion, no matter how unlikely it seems;
- discourage others from making comments, criticisms or evaluations of any of the suggestions;
- allow young people to elaborate on the ideas of others.

Step 3: Once all suggestions for ways of taking action have been written down on the chalkboard or chart paper, review and evaluate the list with the group. Some suggestions will be discarded immediately as unrealistic.

Step 4: Ask the group if they can anticipate any difficulties in carrying out each suggestion on the list. Discuss the types of difficulties — time required, money or other resources needed, danger, community resistance, etc. Decide with the group if these difficulties would make the project impossible to carry out, or whether there might be ways to overcome them.

Step 5: Try to reduce the list of possible action projects to one which seems most practical. Sometimes there will be two or three possibilities. The group leader can decide whether to evaluate them in more depth with the group and settle on one course of action, or to allow small groups to work on different projects.

Variation: Young people can carry out the brainstorm in small groups.

Follow-up: Read the case-study from India, *A Restaurant Run by Street Children* (page 61), for an example of how a group of young people set priorities and brainstormed an original plan for action.

Use activity 12, **Action Projects Around the World**, to expose young people to the variety of ways in which their peers in other countries have addressed issues raised by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Activity 13, **Project Time Line**, can help with the initial planning of an action project. With older groups, activity 14, **Force Field Analysis**, or activity 15, **The Planning Tree**, may be used. The panel 'Guidelines for Carrying Out a Children's Rights Action Project' (page 70) can be consulted throughout the course of the action project.

How Can Young People Promote the Convention on the Rights of the Child...

...On a Local Level?

- Find out about the services for children and young people in your area — does every child have equal access to education? Health care? Recreation facilities?
- Volunteer to work with or fund-raise for a local organization that provides services to children.
- Take part in local action — environmental clean-up days, cultural festivals, building playground equipment, etc.
- Write letters to the editor of the local newspaper to express your ideas on children's rights.
- Lobby local councillors to provide better services for children and families in your area.

...On a National Level?

- Find out if your government has signed/ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Find out who in your government has responsibility for seeing that the Convention is implemented, and whether any changes in the law, in social services, and/or in educational services have been brought about in your country.
- If there is a UNICEF office or National Committee in your country, contact them to find out how you can participate in the promotion of children's rights.
- Write to your local elected representatives if you feel that more could be done to implement the Convention in your country.
- Make the Convention a live political issue. Before elections, ask candidates for political office what they intend to do about implementing it. Get the Convention put into party platforms.

...On a Global Level?

- Find out about places in your part of the world and in other countries where children's rights are infringed.
- Join an international human rights organization; campaign or fund-raise for it.
- Use your role as a consumer to express your opinions: avoid buying products from companies that, for example, use child labour, pollute the environment, discriminate against minorities, etc.
- Lobby your representatives in international organizations — the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization of American States, etc. — to draw attention to the infringement of children's rights. Give them your support in their support of action for children's rights.



A Restaurant Run by Street Children

Manoj ran away from home when he was five; now nine years old, he barely makes a living by carrying goods through the streets. Nizam, aged 16, spent the past seven years unloading trucks. Gorakh, aged 14, recalls being beaten and forced to share his meagre earnings with older men. For these and other boys who live and work on the streets of New Delhi, a harsh life was transformed by an organization called 'Butterflies'.

'Butterflies' provides educational programmes and self-help projects for street children. The organizers believe that, since these children are already self-reliant, they must be helped to develop skills that will improve their ability to support themselves, rather than make them dependent upon charity.

During one of 'Butterflies' monthly meetings, the fact that street children spend almost 75 per cent of the money they earn on food was discussed. The children thought that if they could open their own restaurant, they could both support themselves and have the security of knowing they would always have nutritious food to eat.

With funds from the Netherlands office of the Caritas agency, 'Butterflies' was able to rent a space in the Inter State Bus Terminus. Twelve boys between the ages of 7 and 17 then went through an intensive 10-day training on cooking, nutrition, cleanliness, looking after customers, and book-keeping.

The boys enthusiastically opened their restaurant in 1990. At first, the restaurant attracted few customers. Fully aware of their monthly expenses for food and rent, the boys decided to take only half their sala-

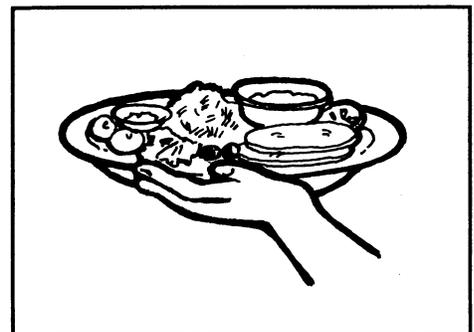
ries until they began making a profit. As one of them said, "You can't expect to be an overnight success in this business, one has to bear losses for a while... and try very hard."

Now, business is improving; some of the boys have begun to learn Chinese cooking, having decided that more variety in their menus would improve business. Not only do they have reliable jobs, but they also have a place to live — a room behind the restaurant. And they are taking advantage of two hours of education per day, provided by 'Butterflies'.

The boys also decided to feed several other street children each day, free of charge. They dream of raising money to buy a van, so that they can bring food they cook to parts of the city where there are large numbers of street children. They plan to finance this project by selling snacks in public places in the evenings.

Running a restaurant has not only given these children skills they will have for a lifetime; it has given them their first taste of control, accomplishment and pride.

(This story is based on an article in *The Times of India*, 17 September 1990.)



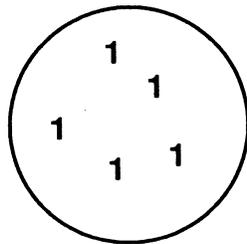
Activity 12. Action Projects Around the World

Purpose: To familiarize young people with examples of children's rights action projects being carried out around the world; and to encourage them to reflect on the steps that are required in order to implement an action project.

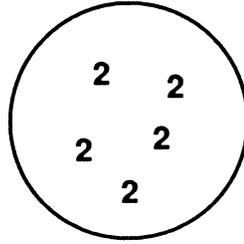
Materials: For a group of 30, five copies of each of the six case-studies of action projects, on pages 15, 34, 49, 61, 66 and 74.

Procedure:

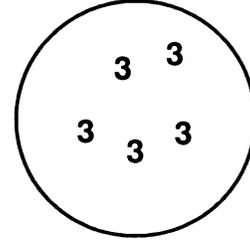
Step 1: Have young people form six groups. Give each member of the first group a copy of the case-study 'Taking Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina'; give each member of the second group a copy of the case-study 'Taking Action in Brazil', etc., until all the case-studies have been distributed. (All members of the same group should have the same case-study.)



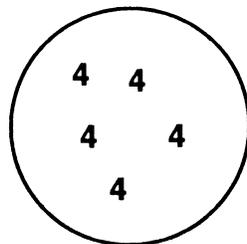
Bosnia and Herzegovina



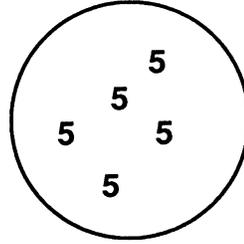
Brazil



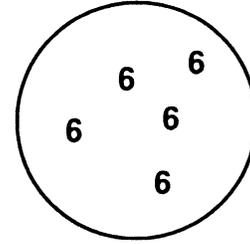
India



Uganda



U.K.

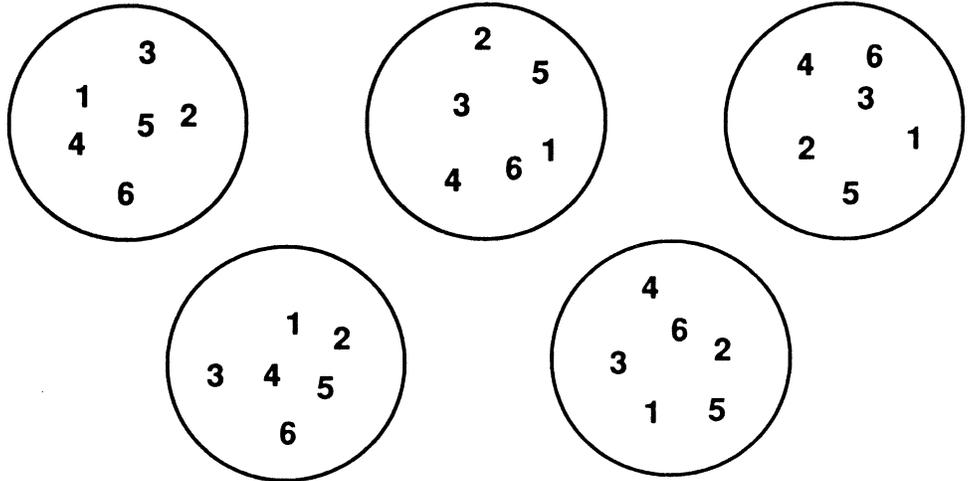


U.S.

Step 2: Instruct the groups to read over their case-studies and discuss them together. They should particularly focus on the following questions:

- What article or articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child were the young people in this case-study addressing?
- What was the sequence of steps that was followed to carry out this action project?
- What do you think the effect of this project has been on those who were involved?

Step 3: Have the young people form new groups. One person from each of the original case-study groups should be in each new group. (In a group of 30, this will mean that there are five new groups with six members each.)



Each person in turn should give a brief summary of the case-study read, covering each of the three questions above.

Step 4: Finally, the new group should discuss these two questions:

- What are the characteristics of a good action project?
- What are some of the steps which most or all of the young people in these countries followed in order to carry out their action project?

Discuss the responses in a plenary.

Variation: The size of the small groups and the number of case-studies used may be varied according to the number of young people in the total group. If limiting the number of case-studies used, be sure to include some from both industrialized and developing countries.

Follow-up: Use activity 13, **Project Time Line**, activity 14, **Force Field Analysis**, or activity 15, **The Planning Tree**, to design an action project that the group can carry out.

Activity 13. Project Time Line

Purpose: To encourage young people to think about the sequence of steps necessary to carry out an action project.

Materials: Large paper, felt-tip pens, blank index cards and glue for each group.

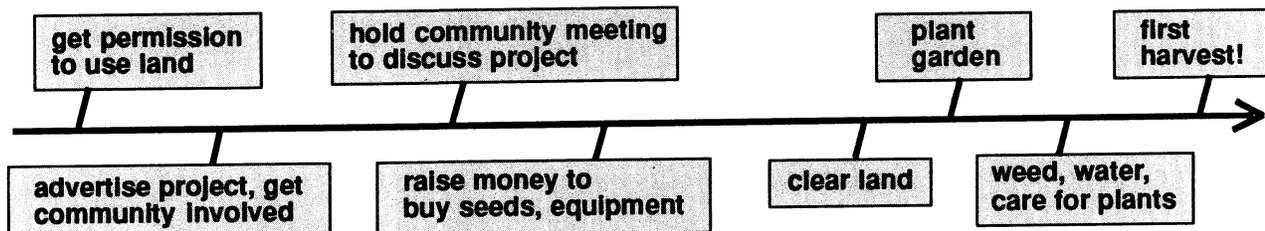
Procedure:

Step 1: Have young people form groups of four to six, and ask them to select one of the action projects brainstormed in activity 11, **What Can We Do?**

Step 2: Ask the small groups to think together about the steps necessary to carry out this project, and to write one step on each of the blank cards. To do this, it may be helpful to have them consider the following types of questions:

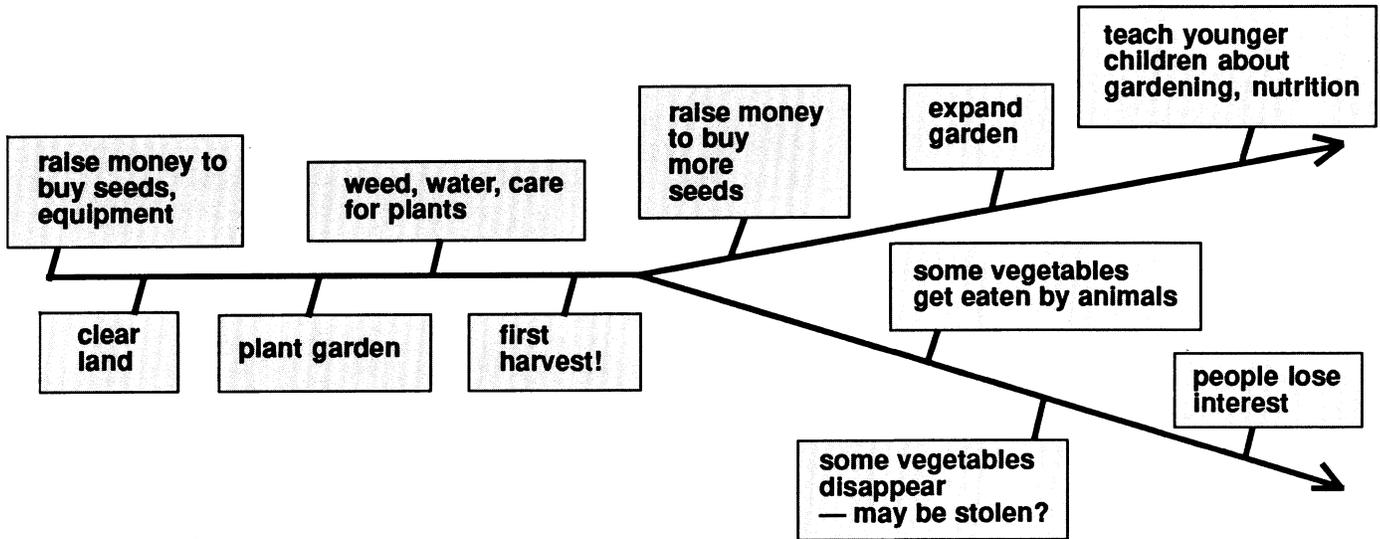
- Will you need to get permission from someone?
- How will you contact that person or persons?
- Will you need to raise money? How will you do it?
- Will you need to learn a new skill?
- Who will help you to learn it?
- Who needs to be informed about the project?
- How will you inform them?
- Will you need any special materials or equipment?
- How will you get it?
- Do you need a special place to carry out this project?
- How will you get access to it?
- How will you keep a record of what happens?
- How will you know if your project has been a success?

Step 3: Have the groups draw an arrow across the width of the paper. They are to lay the cards along the arrow from left to right, with the first step of the project on the left and the final step on the right. Encourage young people to discuss among themselves the ideal sequence of steps. Below is a sample project time line made by a group whose project was to start a community garden in which local families could grow fresh vegetables for their own use:

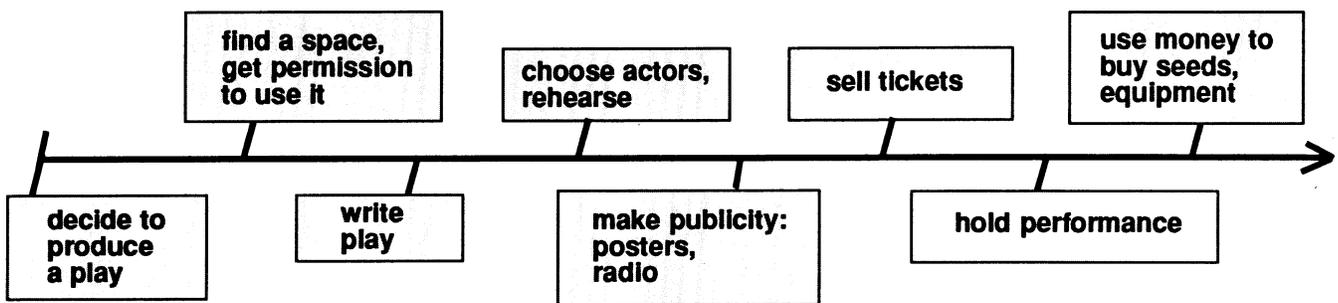


Step 4: Once groups have completed their time lines, they can move around the room to view and discuss each other's work. Cards may be added or deleted, and the sequence adjusted. When each group is satisfied with its time line, they may stick the cards down with glue.

Variations: The time line may be extended by splitting it into two branches, one that represents the ideal outcome of the project, and one that represents a less than ideal outcome. For example, the time line below shows the possibility of a successful community garden, as well as one which runs into serious problems. The group can use these alternative scenarios to analyse why certain problems might occur and to take steps to avoid those problems.



The time line may also be used to explore one aspect of the project in greater depth. In the example above, the group needed to raise funds to buy seeds and equipment. If they decided to hold a theatre performance to raise funds, they might create a time line showing the sequence of steps needed to bring about a successful performance. Such a time line might look like this:



Follow-up: Read the case-study from Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Broadcasts for Peace* (page 66); try to create a time line that would show what some of the long-term impacts of this action project might be.

Older groups might use activity 14, **Force Field Analysis**, or activity 15, **The Planning Tree**, to consider their action plan in greater depth.



Taking Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Broadcasts for Peace

In war-torn Sarajevo, some children no longer have a school to go to. For others, opportunities for recreation and leisure are severely limited by the dangers of unpredictable shelling. All too many children struggle with the painful emotions that follow the death or injury of a family member or friend — anger, grief and fear.

But since the summer of 1993, a radio programme called 'Colourful Wall', planned by young people and supported by UNICEF, has been bringing education, entertainment and psychological support to children whose lives have been disrupted by war.

To produce 'Colourful Wall', 18 young editors, aged 10 to 13, meet on a regular basis with the adult editors of Radio ZID. Whenever possible, the young people conduct polls of other children in the city. Their needs and interests determine each segment of the programme. 'Press centres' have been created in 15 areas of the city. Children bring news of interesting neighbourhood events to the nearest press centre and, when phone service is operating, items are phoned in to the radio station and selected for broadcast.

Together, young people and adults also plan educational segments. These have included children's literature, geography, astronomy, art, health and English language. A broadcast on environmental issues explored the effects of war on urban ecosystems. And a special daily segment presents information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, linking it both to the conditions of children in Sarajevo and UNICEF activities to promote children's rights.

In the psychosocial segment, the special emotional needs of children in war zones are explained by counsellors. A 'Col-

umns' feature helps young people deal with problems they are having in personal relationships.

The entertainment portion of the broadcast is extremely popular. Young disc-jockeys shape this segment to the musical tastes of their listeners. A weekly quiz show is also being organized.

Despite obstacles such as the frequent and widespread lack of electricity, surveys indicate that 80 per cent of the citizens of Sarajevo — adults and children — listen to 'Colourful Wall'. The eager editors have plans to expand the education segments to meet the needs of children who no longer have a school to attend. They intend to improve communication with their audience through the use of special mailboxes to be placed throughout the city. And they may begin taping programmes to send to other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

No one is in a better position to understand the needs of children in times of war than the children themselves. The young editors of 'Colourful Wall' have refused to let their spirits be crushed by war and are reaching out every day to their peers, offering learning, recreation, emotional support and hope.



Activity 14. Force Field Analysis

Purpose: To help young people (especially groups aged 16 and older) analyse in depth the forces that can either promote or hinder change; to encourage them to use that analysis as a way to refine the planning of an action project.

Materials: Two or more large sheets of paper per group; a red, green and black felt-tip pen for each group.

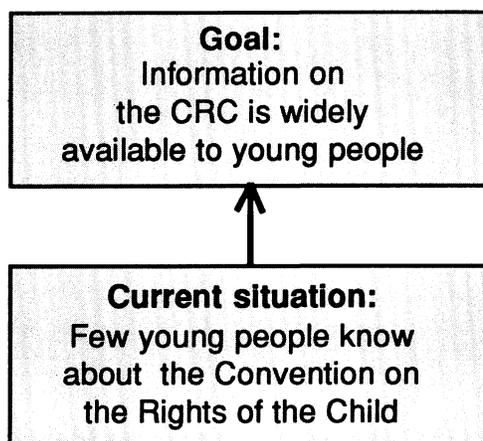
Procedure:

Step 1: Have young people form groups of four to six. Ask them to think about a plan for a potential action project (perhaps one that they considered during activity 11, **What Can We Do?**). Explain that they are going to create a diagram that explores the forces that could either help change occur, or block change.

Step 2: Have the groups use the black felt-tip pen to draw a box at the bottom of a large sheet of paper. This box represents the current situation, before the start of the action project. A phrase or sentence describing this situation is to be written inside this box.

Another box should be drawn at the top of the paper. This box represents the goal that young people hope to achieve as a result of the action project. The groups write a phrase or sentence describing this goal inside the second box. A vertical arrow is drawn from the first to the second box, indicating movement towards the goal.

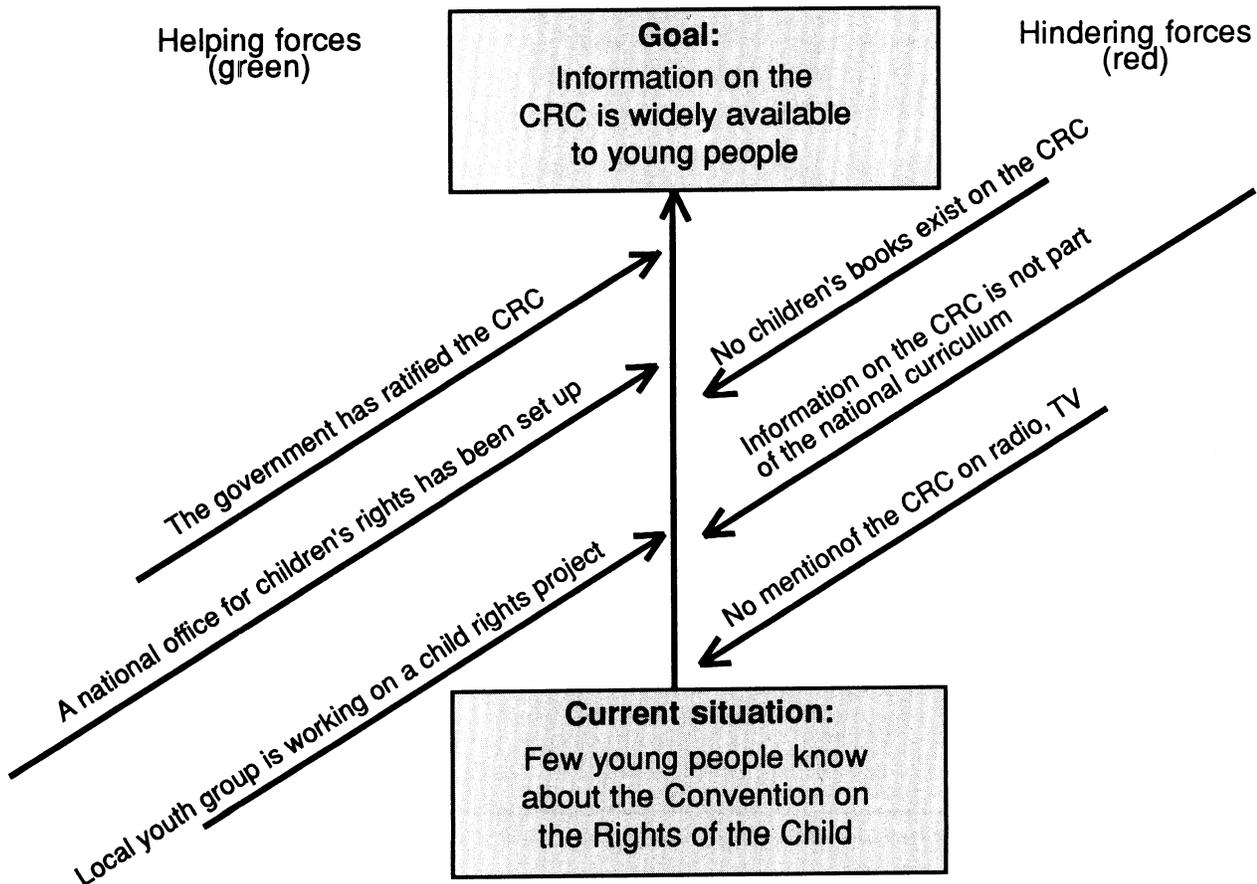
The example below illustrates this step of the activity. A group is creating a diagram around the issues raised in article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which deals with children's right to access to appropriate information.



(This diagram may be drawn on a chalkboard during the explanation of the activity.)

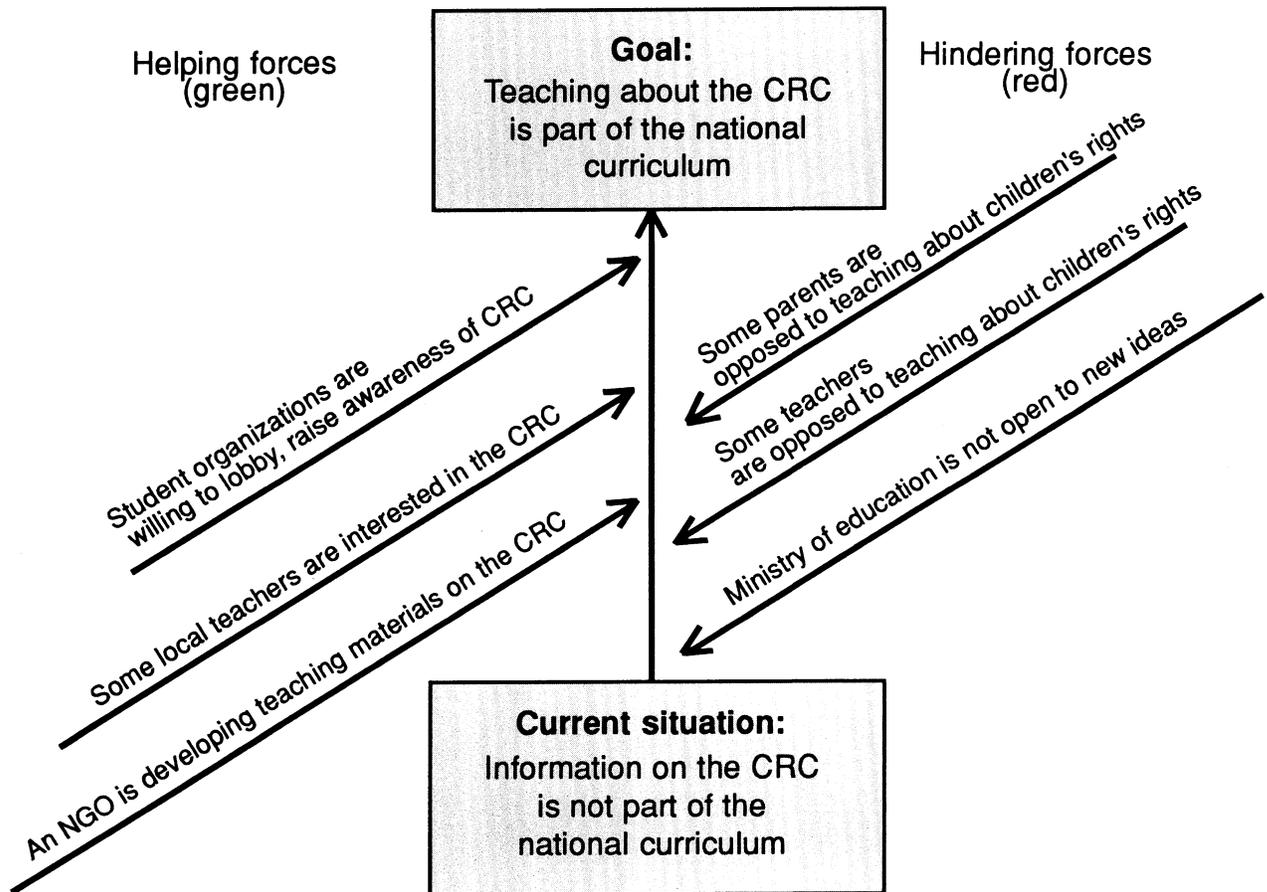
Step 3: Young people then consider the actual forces at work in their society which can be of help in reaching the goal. (These should be **real** forces — individuals, organizations, events or trends — not forces that participants **wish** were in place.) These are represented by arrows which slant diagonally upward, drawn on the left side of the vertical arrow, using the green felt-tip pen. Green arrows should be of varying lengths: longer arrows represent more powerful helping forces, while shorter arrows indicate weaker ones. Each arrow should be given a brief descriptive label. (See diagram below.)

Step 4: Groups then think about forces that might hinder progress towards the goal. These are represented by arrows which slant diagonally downward, drawn on the right side of the vertical arrow, using the red felt-tip pen. Again, the red arrows should be of varying lengths, longer arrows representing more powerful hindering forces, and shorter arrows indicating weaker ones. Brief labels should accompany each arrow. (See diagram below.)



Step 5: When groups have completed their diagrams, explain to them that progress towards the goal can be brought about either by strengthening one of the helping forces or weakening one of the hindering forces. Have groups select one force which they feel is most significant, either because of its strength, or because it is one which could be easily influenced.

Step 6: Groups then decide on a new 'present situation' and 'goal' with respect to this force, and create a new **Force Field Analysis** diagram around it. For example, if young people decided that a particularly significant force in the diagram above was 'Information about the CRC is not part of the national curriculum', the second **Force Field Analysis** diagram might look something like this:



Step 7: The activity can be stopped at this point. Young people can display their diagrams and discuss them.

However, the activity can continue by selecting a significant force from the second diagram and creating a third **Force Field Analysis**. This can be done until a clear priority for an action project emerges.

Follow-up: Young people may wish to revise plans that they created in activity 11, **What Can We Do?**, based on this process. Activity 15, **The Planning Tree**, can be used to anticipate the consequences of the action project that is decided upon.

Source: This activity has been adapted from *Training for Transformation*, by A. Hope and S. Timmel (Mambo Press, Gweru, Zimbabwe, 1984).

Guidelines for Carrying Out a Children's Rights Action Project

A. Identify a rights issue: It is often best for young people to work for change in their own community, rather than to focus on rights violations that are occurring in places where they can have little impact.

B. Brainstorm possible courses of action: Encourage young people to think creatively. Solutions that might seem unrealistic often inspire fresh ideas that turn out to be practical.

C. Identify any obstacles to these courses of action: After brainstorming, ask the group to think realistically about the results of their brainstorm. What resources would be available to them to help them overcome possible obstacles?

D. Select a project: Eliminate impractical suggestions, and ask the group to select one that they feel is practical and will meet their goals. Consider whether the project addresses an immediate, short-term problem, or a more underlying, long-term problem. Both types of projects can provide valuable learning experiences, but it is useful for young people to be able to distinguish between the two.

E. Identify key people, resources and skills needed: Which people are in a decision-making capacity with regard to the issue selected — elected representatives, local business people, school officials or members of community groups? What resistance to change might they have, and how might students enlist their interest and support?

Who will be affected by the project — other children, parents, local businesses, certain disempowered groups? What role will they have in the planning and evaluation process?

What resources — money, equipment, or consumable supplies — will the project require? Will these be borrowed or donated? Will young people have to fund-raise? If so, how?

Will the project require young people to develop new skills — writing business letters, speaking in public, conducting an interview or survey? Who can be called upon to teach these skills?

F. Draw up a detailed plan: It is often helpful to think of the plan as a time line; this helps young people see the sequence of steps necessary to achieve the goal.

G. Carry out the plan: The adult's role during this phase is to trust the young people to manage the project with as little interference as possible, and allow them to develop a sense of empowerment and responsibility. The adult can act as a facilitator, pointing out actions which are working effectively, helping to anticipate unexpected consequences, and serving as a resource person.

Keep a record of the project — diaries, journals, drawings, photographs, audiotapes or videotapes. These can serve not only as a basis for reflection and evaluation, but as a way of communicating about the project to the school, the community and the media.

H. Evaluate: Evaluation prepares young people to take more effective action in the future.

What was successful about the project? Did it achieve its goals? Did it create lasting change?

Was anything about the project unsuccessful? Did it inadvertently create new problems?

Were any failures experienced due to inadequate planning or to factors beyond the group's control?

If you were to repeat this project, what would you do differently?

How effectively did the group work together? Did everyone have a sense of full participation?

Activity 15. The Planning Tree

Purpose: To help young people anticipate the consequences, both positive and negative, of potential action projects.

Materials: A large sheet of paper and pens for each group of four; blue, green and yellow index cards, glue.

Procedure:

Step 1: Explain to the group that carrying out an action project can have many consequences, both positive and negative, on a number of different groups of people. They are about to create a 'Planning Tree' to look more closely at those consequences. A tree diagram is used because the impact of a project can grow in many directions, like the branches of a tree.

Step 2: Form working groups of four. Ask each group to select one possible children's rights action project that they would like to consider carrying out. This could be one of the projects brainstormed in activity 11, **What Can We Do?**

Step 3: On the large paper, have the groups sketch the trunk of a tree. On the tree-trunk, they write a few words summarizing the action project they are going to consider.

Step 4: Next, brainstorm a list of all the possible 'impact groups' — people who might be affected by this project. These could include:

children	business people
parents	religious leaders
teachers	local media producers
elected officials	health care personnel
police	social workers

Step 5: Have the young people select the four impact groups that they feel would be most significantly affected by this project. They draw four short branches radiating from the trunk of their tree, and write the name of one of these groups on each branch.

Step 6: Give each working group twelve green index cards. Ask young people to focus on **one** impact group at a time and think of at least one, or as many as three, **immediate** consequences of the action project for that group. Stress that the consequences can be either positive, negative or neutral. When this is done, the cards should be placed on the paper at the end of the appropriate branch.

Step 7: Then distribute a number of blue cards to each group. Tell the young people to look at each immediate consequence (the green cards) and decide on at least one **secondary** consequence that would arise from it. Each secondary consequence should be written on a blue card. The blue cards are then laid on the paper with a branching line connecting them to the corresponding green cards.

Step 8: Once this is done, distribute the yellow cards. These represent **third order** consequences. Have the young people follow the same procedure, this time looking at each blue card, deciding on a third order consequence that could arise from it, and laying it on the planning tree with a branching line connecting it to a blue card.

Step 9: Give the working groups time for reflection and discussion of their planning trees. They may stick down their cards with glue if each group member is satisfied with the arrangement. They may draw dotted lines between consequences from different branches that seem to be related to each other.

Step 10: Allow young people to move around the room to look at all the planning trees.

Step 11: Finally, discuss the planning trees and help young people decide about the practicality of an action project which they will actually carry out.

A **Planning Tree** is a complex activity to describe and carry out. Use the sample **Planning Tree** (page 73) diagram that follows to help explain the activity. This shows a planning tree which was created by a group of teenagers who wanted to start an AIDS education programme in their youth group. They decided that the four most important impact groups would be other young people, parents, local religious leaders and health care personnel.

The diagram may be reproduced and given to young people as a model, drawn on a chalkboard or large paper for the whole group to see, or placed on an overhead transparency.

Variations: Small groups can be assigned only one branch of the tree (parents, teachers, health care personnel, elected officials, etc.) to work on. Groups can then combine their work to make one large collaborative planning tree.

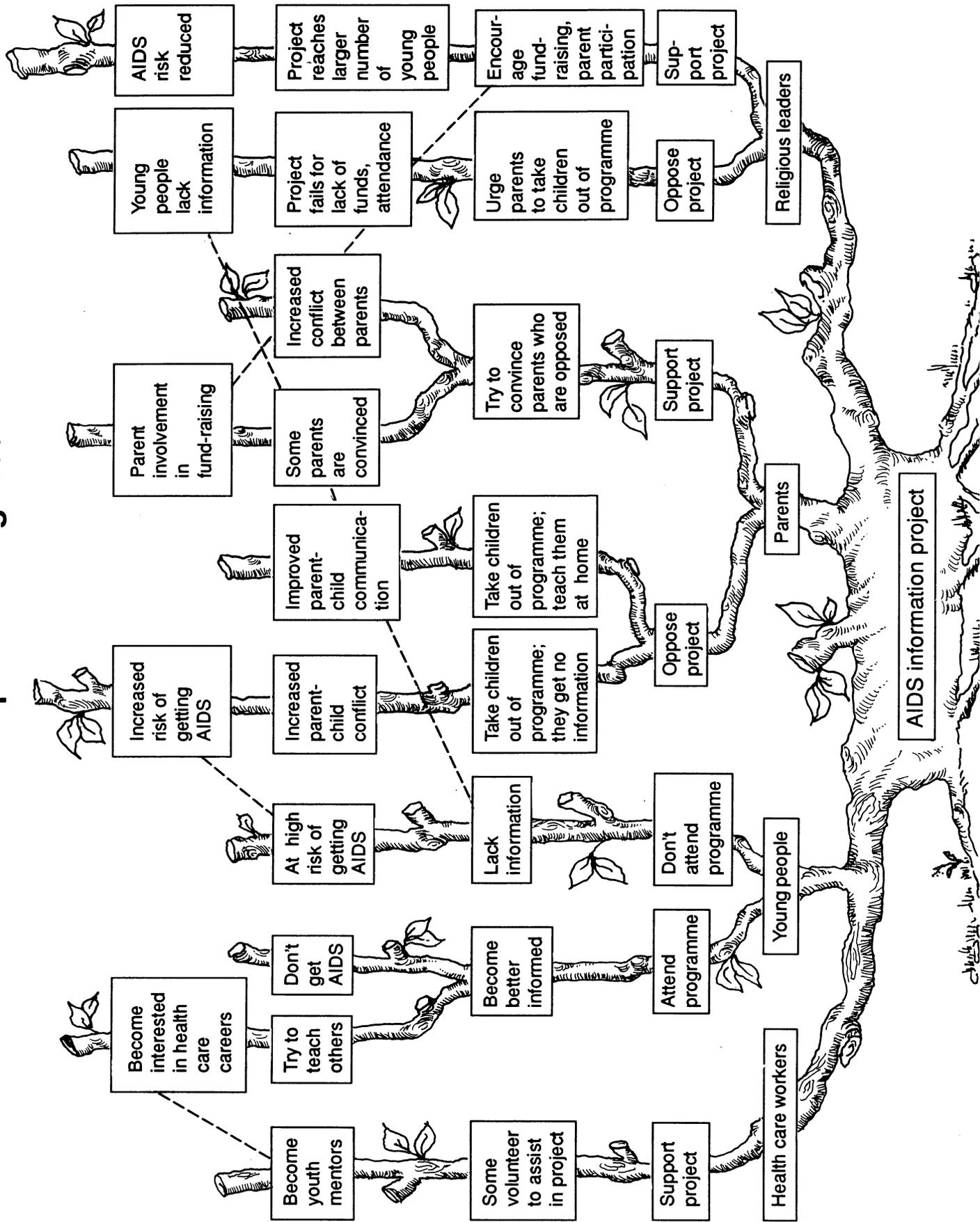
The number of branches of the tree need not be limited to four.

If index cards are in short supply, young people can simply draw the consequences onto the large paper.

Follow-up: The planning tree can extend indefinitely, beyond three levels of consequences.

Read the case-study from Brazil, *Health Messages for Girls at Risk* (page 74), and consider what some of the groups that would be affected by this project might be.

A Sample Planning Tree





Taking Action in Brazil

Health Messages for Girls at Risk

In Brazil, an estimated half a million girls under the age of 20 make their living as prostitutes. These girls, many of them undereducated, living in poverty or recently arrived in the cities from rural areas, have often been forced to resort to prostitution as a way to help support their families. Others have fled their homes because of sexual and physical abuse they experienced there.

But in Recife, a city in north-eastern Brazil, some of these girls are being given an opportunity to learn skills that will lead to safer forms of employment, and to become health educators for other girls living on the streets. All this comes about through the programmes of *Casa de Passagem* (Passage House).

Passage House attempts to reunite girls with their families. It provides shelter, medical care and psychological counselling for those who have nowhere else to go. It teaches them skills such as dressmaking, weaving and catering. The staff works in collaboration with the girls, involving them in making decisions about and running the programmes. This is especially evident in the work that the girls do on the Health Theatre.

The Health Theatre is composed of a group of girls who meet to discuss their concerns about the dangers of prostitution, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. They then develop these ideas into scripts that provide much-needed health information. They review these scripts with the staff and finally create a play around the issues. The play is performed on the streets and at various locations in the community. Following the play, they hold open discussions with the audience, reaching out to other girls who are either prostitutes or at risk of becoming prostitutes. Performances

have also covered issues such as drug abuse, housing, unemployment, civil rights and neighbourhoods organizing for action. This is in keeping with Passage House's broad definition of health:

"Health means the right to life. Health means knowing, preventing and educating. Health means taking action. Health means fighting for your rights and winning them."

The girls have also been involved in conducting surveys on such topics as violence against young girls in Recife and the nature of street life. The surveys assist Passage House in planning future programmes and give the girls a chance to develop interviewing and writing skills.

The girls have done extensive research on AIDS, interviewing health care workers, and producing educational pamphlets and posters. They have completed an illustrated handbook on AIDS which they have distributed to other teenage prostitutes and street girls, and hope to get published.

Through these contributions to their community, the girls have developed an appreciation for their own worth; they are learning the practical means to create a safer and more hopeful future for themselves and others.

