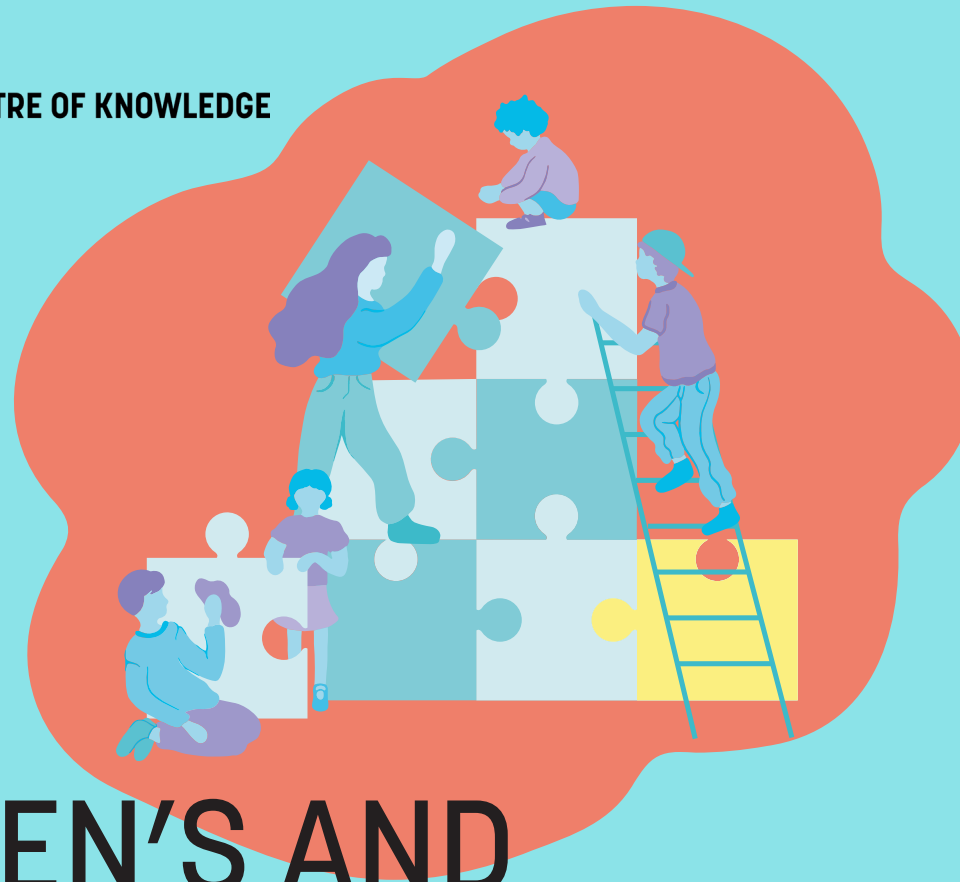


BARNAFRID - NATIONAL CENTRE OF KNOWLEDGE

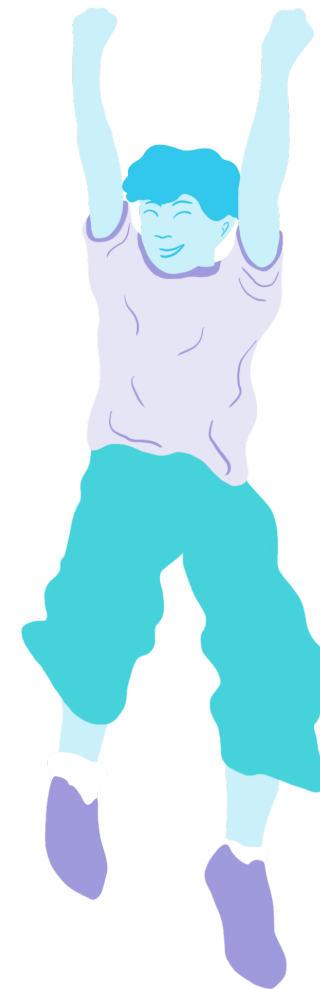


CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES

A handbook for participation and inclusion

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook is aimed at those who work with children and young people, or who aim to start working with children and young people to increase their participation. It provides answers to why you should include children and young people in your activities and how you can do it in practice. The model invites active co-creation and presents six steps, from assignment and analysis to evaluation and feedback, with the intention of including and engaging children and young people as partners in the work. The model is adapted to children and young people between 12 and 18 years old.

Barnafrid's mission includes highlighting and analysing differences between children's vulnerability from a clear gender equality and children's rights perspective. In our work we should particularly highlight how Barnafrid takes children's and young people's views and experiences into account. The model is developed within the framework of Barnafrid's work and is based on influences from participatory action research, Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) and Sociology of Childhood. It has been tested and adapted based on workshops conducted with children and young people in

research at Barnafrid and through Barnafrid's Youth Council, which has contributed with suggestions and tested methods to awaken children's and young people's interest in participation and inclusion. At the time of writing this handbook, work is still ongoing to adapt the model for younger children, young adults and children and young people with disabilities.

Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children and young people have the right to be included in decisions that affect them. Our hope is to inspire you to allow children and young people to become co-creators of issues relevant to your organisation and themselves, in a safe and secure way.

Linköping October 2024

Natalie Söderlind, Analyst Barnafrid

(The translation to English was done using DeepL and has subsequently been manually reviewed.)



BACKGROUND

Children's and young people's participation in various phases

In line with the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, children and young people should be included in matters that concern them and be made participants throughout the entire process (Alderson, 2000). In essence, it's about focusing on their perceptions and understanding of the world we live in (Sommer et al., 2010). The participatory approach involves working 'with' or 'by' the participants, rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them. This is based on the fundamental idea that children are experts on their own lives, with diverse experiences and insights into what it means to be young today (James, 2007).

Working together with children and young people can be carried out in different phases. The participants collaborate in various processes towards a common goal, which is anchored in a value system based on respect and meaningfulness (Chawla, 2001). They are then included as actors in their own lives, with competences and the same rights as adults (Shier, 2001, Sinclair, 2004). Participation can vary depending on where in the process the work is situated. Several researchers have pointed out different ways of building and promote participation (Hart, 1992, Shier, 2001).

Hart's ladder of participation was one of the first attempts to measure and describe participation. The ladder includes eight levels: three levels of non-participation in the form of manipulation, decoration and symbolic participation, and five levels of increasingly active participation. The levels of active participation range from the lowest meaningful participation to the highest, where decision-making is shared with adults. The model was later extended by Shier, who presents a practical tool to promote children's participation through five levels, each of which can be evaluated based on the degree of respect and meaningfulness.

- 1** Children should be listened to.
- 2** Children are supported in expressing their opinions and views.
- 3** Children are involved in decision-making processes.
- 4** Children share influence over decision-making.
- 5** Children share responsibility over decision-making.

Another way to categorise participation is: consultative, collective or children and young people leading the work themselves (Lansdown, 2011).

What level can or does your organisation wish to work with?

1

Consultative participation

- Adults lead and start the process.
- Adults manage the process.
- Children and young people are invited to make suggestions for development.

Examples: Government proposals for policies, legislative changes or other reports.

2

Collective participation

- Greater degree of partnership between adults and children.
- Adults initiate the co-operation but work with children as partners.
- Children's and young people's autonomy increases over a period of time.

Example: Advisory group of children and young people acting as a reference and support body.

3

Children and young people lead the work themselves

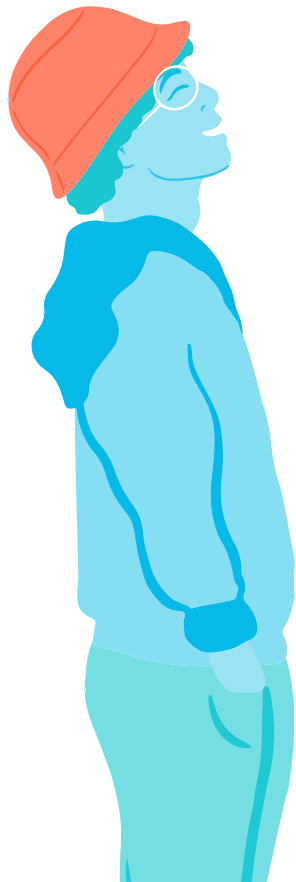
- Space and opportunity for children and young people to identify issues that concern them.
- Children and young people initiate activities themselves and take charge of decision-making processes.
- Children and young people are supported in making their own choices, or creating their own structures or organisations, to decide which issues are important.
- Adults are given the role of facilitator and support person, allowing children and young people to focus and find their own solutions.

Example: Setting up a child or youth council that are free to work and take on their own tasks.

Working together enables children, young people and adults to learn new things in a process where children and young people can influence both their own lives and those of others. For the individual, it can also lead to increased self-confidence and well-being, as well as being an opportunity for personal growth (Fargas-Malet et. al., 2010; Larkin, et al., 2014; Larkins, 2022).

The common work can, for example, involve:

- Identify and/or prioritise issues.
- Create and contribute with content to questionnaires, brochures or reports.
- Analyse data.
- Participate in advisory bodies/children councils/youth councils.
- Conduct fieldwork.
- Contribute to disseminating developed materials.



Ethical principles for the participation of children and young people

Before starting to work with children and young people, it's important that the work is based on the rights of children and young people. We refer here to the UN's nine ethical principles for children's participation (United Nations, 2009). These principles will help you prepare the necessary steps for working with children and young people.

1. Inform

Informing is about the importance of providing children and young people with information. This can be in the form of oral or written information about the workshop or how materials will be collected and shared.

2. Voluntary

Remember that it should be clear that participation is voluntary. An important consideration as an adult is to encourage children and young people to participate without feeling forced, especially regarding children who are usually not invited. Voluntary participation also means that a child can withdraw from participation at any time without having to explain why.

3. Respectful

Everyone's opinions should be treated with respect, both by you as an adult but also by other participants. The group can together set up a framework to promote an environment of respect, caring and equal behaviour towards each other.

4. Relevant

In order to be involved, children and young people need to receive relevant and accessible information about the topic to be addressed, both to understand why the issue is relevant to them and why we are asking for their thoughts and ideas. They should also have the opportunity to identify issues that they themselves consider relevant and important.

5. Child- and youth-friendly

Adults working with children and young people should be responsive to their needs. This responsiveness ranges from facilities to working methods that are adapted and take into account individual needs, abilities, age, and diversity. Empowering children and young people to participate in planning is a way to ensure that working methods are child- and youth-friendly, while also creating good conditions for meaningful participation.

6. Inclusive

Remember that each child is an individual and that no child should be discriminated during their participation. Methods and approaches should be adapted in a way that allows everyone to participate on equal terms. As an adult, you also need to be able to manage any power imbalances, to the extent possible.

7. Education

Those who will work with children and young people should have a basic understanding of why children and young people should be involved and how. This means being able to maintain work based on the principles in this section. To uphold children's rights, children and young people should also have access to education on the specific topic relevant to the activity.

8. Safe and secure

Both adults and children should be aware that safety and protection against harm have been taken into consideration. The responsibilities includes taking precautions to minimise the risk of children and young people being exploited during the work process, or that negative consequences arise from participation. There should be an updated and relevant plan with procedures for reporting concerns, among other things (see page 14). The content of the plan should be communicated to both the participants and all other relevant staff, as well as to the legal guardians if the participant is under 15 years old.

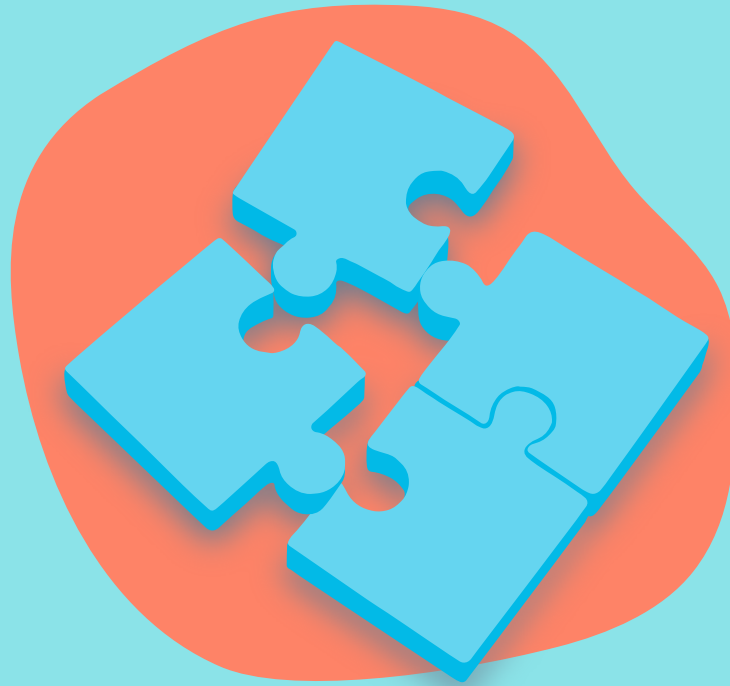
9. Responsible

Providing feedback to children and young people is a fundamental principle of their participation. They should receive information about how they will get feedback on their contributions and the process involved. Participation should not be seen as a one-time event, but rather followed up throughout the entire work process. This is beneficial for determining if further adjustments are necessary. All feedback should be given appropriately and in dialogue with the participants.



REMEMBER!

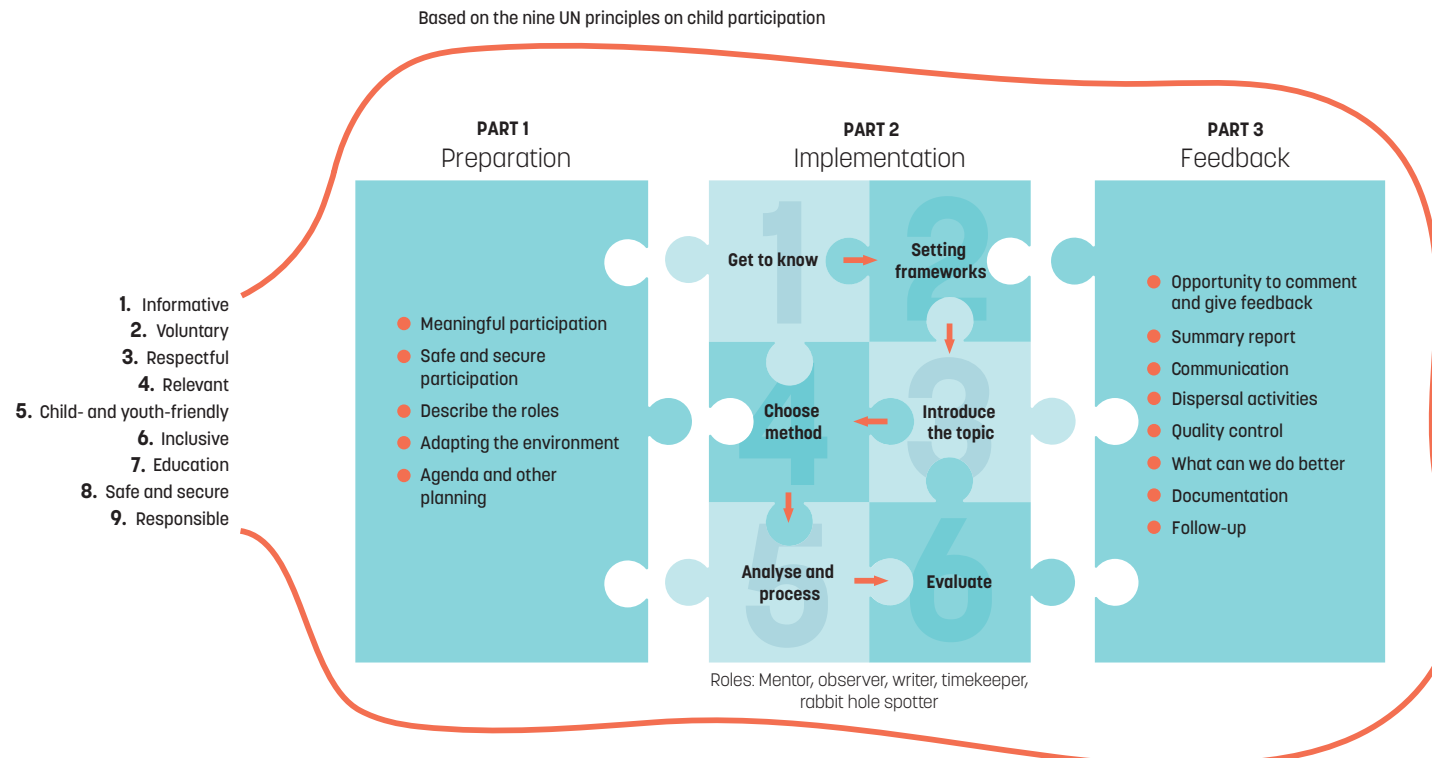
- ✓ **The purpose of children's and young people's participation** should be clearly described, both orally and written, and what their participation contributes to.
- ✓ **It should be made clear that participation is voluntary**, that they can withdraw at any time without explaining why.
- ✓ **Everyone's opinions should be treated with respect** by all participants.
- ✓ **Participation must be relevant**, meaning it should address topics that are relevant to children and young people.
- ✓ **Participation is child-/youth-friendly**. Methods and information should be adapted to age, maturity and needs (for example interpretation and communication support).
- ✓ **Participation should be inclusive**. Everyone should be allowed to participate, regardless of ethnic origin, language, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- ✓ **Participation should be supported by trained adults**. This means that those working with children and youth groups should be trained to lead children and young people.
- ✓ **Participation should be carried out** in a **safe and risk-minimising manner**.
- ✓ **Participation should be responsible**. Adults are accountable to the group. Participants should receive feedback on their participation.



CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S VOICES - A MODEL FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Participation and inclusion in three parts

The model for children's and young people's participation and inclusion is influenced by action research and co-research, Public and Patient Involvement, sociology of childhood and experiences from the non-profit sector. The model describes how the work can be done in practice in three parts: **preparation, implementation and feedback.**



Created by Laura Korhonen and Erica Mattelin, 2023.

1 Preparation

Meaningful participation

It's important to plan children's and young people's participation carefully. Meaningful participation requires reflection to ensure that it's useful and beneficial, both for the organisation and for children and young people themselves.

To create the conditions for meaningful participation, you should discuss the following issues with your working group - before starting your work:

DISCUSS!

1. When will children and young people be included? From the start, during or after implementation?
2. Will they have the opportunity to influence any questions, methods and results? How will we handle any disagreements?
3. Will there be opportunities to provide support based on each individual's needs, abilities and interests?
4. Will children and young people with disabilities and/or with interpretation needs be able to participate?
5. How can we share information so that children and young people can discuss, express their views and make decisions themselves?
6. How can we work to achieve an equitable power balance in our efforts?
7. How can we offer children and young people compensation?

Safe and secure participation

To be able to offer a safe and secure participation, the organisation needs to have established routines for the employees who will work with children and young people. If the organisation already has a plan for this, make sure to be familiar with the routines. If the organisation lacks a plan, the following routines need to be put in place:



Extract from the criminal record for all employees of the organisation.



Procedure for reporting concerns. In cases where a crime has been committed, always report it to the police.



If something has happened. Find out or create routines for reporting incidents and risks in your workplace.

GDPR

Manage personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Ensure that there are procedures for handling images and data about children and their guardians.

Describe the roles

Before the workshop, it's good to review the roles for the work and how they should look. Discuss how different roles can be adapted to maximise the participation of children and young people.

All roles can be fluid, so it's not only you as an adult who can have the roles below. Dare to pass the baton over and let the participants decide who leads, takes notes and does what in the work.

Some examples of roles that may be useful to consider are:



Mentor - the person leading the workshop.



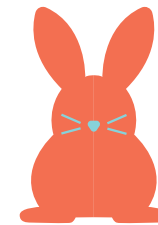
Observer - the person who ensures that everyone has their say.



Writer - the person who ensures that notes are taken.



Timekeeper - the person who keeps track of time, when it's time for a break, snack and/or lunch.



Rabbit hole spotter - the person who makes sure the group moves on to the next topic and doesn't get stuck on one topic for too long.

Adapting the environment

Adapting the environment where the actual work with children and young people will take place is another part of the preparations. Below, we will go through the things that are good to have in place before the actual implementation.

Venue

The venue should be child- and youth-friendly. There should be space for participants to move around in the room, be close to toilets and possible to enter the room with a stroller or wheelchair. It can also be good to have access to a dining area or similar, as well as a room where those who need to withdraw can do so. Consider whether a room is needed where accompanying persons can wait. Pay particular attention to the need to adapt for the safety of children and young people, such as fire safety or risk of falls.

Human resources

We recommend always having at least three adults present at all times. One person to lead the participation, one to observe the approach of the work and one to help if extra support is needed during the process. These needs may vary depending on the size of the group, their age and their specific needs.

Inclusive

It's important to consider what special needs participants may have. Being inclusive means that children with disabilities, those needing interpretation, or other alternative communication methods, have the opportunity to participate in the work on equal terms with other participants.

Information

Children and their guardians should receive written and/or oral information about the participation. Children and young people should be provided with easily accessible information and both participants and guardians should be able to ask questions in order to give informed consent.



Consent

Everyone who wishes to participate in the groups must give their consent. This may vary depending on the age of the child. If you are working with young people aged 15 and over, they can give their own consent. If the participant is under 15, the guardian must consent to the child's participation. The information should clearly state that consent can be withdrawn at any time, without having to explain why. If the meetings take place outside the home environment, where there are no adults in contact with the guardians, you should also obtain the contact details of people close to the child, regardless of age. This is to be prepared in case the child or youth falls ill during their participation, or in case of an emergency.

Compensation

A decision needs to be made on possible compensation for those involved in the work. For example, the payment could be in the form of a fee or a gift voucher. It can also include compensation for any travelling, as well as snacks, lunch and dinner depending on the duration of the work. Remember that all forms of payment may vary according to tax guidelines. Find out what applies to your organisation.

Ethical review

If children and young people are involved in the research, a decision on the need for an ethical review application is made (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014, Law 2003:460 on ethical review of research involving humans). However, if you are working to include children and young people in activities other than research, it's equally important to consider whether an authorisation should be sought to ensure that the implementation is ethically reviewed.

TIPS!

A preparation checklist is provided in appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1: Preparation checklist

Safe and secure participation

- ☐ Extract from the criminal record for all employees.
- ☐ Established routes for reporting concerns, offences, incidents and risks.
- ☐ All employees have read and discussed Barnardo's handbook on child and youth inclusion.
- ☐ Make a budget (travel, food, venue and other compensation).
- ☐ Depending on the size of the group, three adults should be present, with one acting as an observer and resource person.
- ☐ Book and make sure the first venue is adapted for children and young people.

Review the logistics

- ☐ Collectible materials.
- ☐ Create a presentation.
- ☐ Arrange for the delivery of food, drinks and beverages.
- ☐ Visit the venue, note where emergency exits and toilets are located, or if further adaptations need to be made.
- ☐ Identify technical needs and aids.
- ☐ Check if there is a wireless network and whether the implementation requires technical resources.
- ☐ Test all technology on-site.

Invite participants

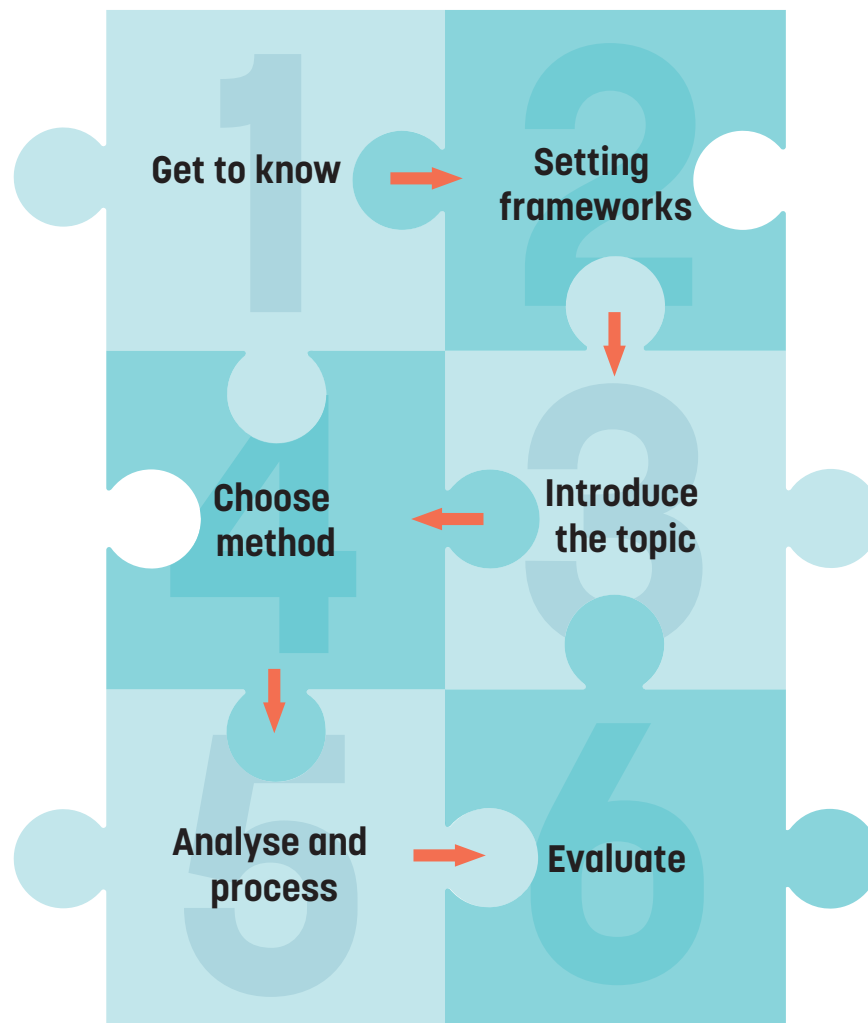
- ☐ Consider diversity and reflect on possible unintentional exclusion.
- ☐ Write a targeted invitation with date and time.
- ☐ Consider the need for an interpreter or other adaptations.
- ☐ Confirm participation.
- ☐ Send or distribute information sheets in advance, clearly stating the objectives and purposes of the participation.
- ☐ Write an agenda and share it with participants before the meeting, or decide the agenda together on-site.

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2 Implementation

With all the preparations in place, you are ready to conduct a workshop with children and young people. The model consists of a workshop in six steps, where you will be given suggestions for exercises, methods and approaches that you can draw inspiration from in your work. Our advice is that you carry out all the steps each time you meet a group for the first time. If you then meet the same group continuously, you can adapt the steps and even skip certain ones.

PART 2 Implementation



Get to know



Whether the group is new to each other or not, this step is as much about the participants getting to know each other as it is about getting to know you.

TIPS!

Make sure that you, as an adult, take part in the game, so that the participants can get to know you too!

EXAMPLES OF EXERCISES

The icebreaker - three claims

Time required: Approximately 10 minutes

Group size: 2-10 people

- Give participants five minutes to write/think of three statements about themselves. Two should be true and one should be made up.
- When five minutes have passed, let someone in the group say their statements. Then the others have to guess which one is made up.
- Continue around the entire group until everyone has had a chance to read their statements.

The icebreaker - highest common denominator

Time required: Approximately 10 minutes

Group size: 10-20 people

- Create small groups with 3-5 people in each group.
- Each group is given five minutes to try to find common denominators for the group. For example, maybe the group has a common hobby, they have seen the same film, they all have the same pet. Challenge the group to come up with as unexpected commonalities as possible!
- Break after five minutes and ask the groups to present their most surprising and highest common denominator.

Overview of practical matters

After the introduction exercise, it's good to go over practical things about the work, such as when it's time for breaks, snacks and lunch. Also, remind participants that they can ask questions at any time and that it's okay to withdraw from participation whenever they wish.

If the location is new to the participants, consider also going over:

- Where the restrooms are located.
- Route to emergency exits and assembly point, for example, a fire alarm.
- If available, tell where the extra room is, in case someone wants to step away for a moment.

Remember to introduce the person to whom participants can turn to if someone starts to feel unwell.

TIPS!

Use the practical overview to collect the consent forms!



Setting frameworks



Setting up a framework for participation is about empowering participants with knowledge about their rights and what participation means in practice. An introductory training session is one way to ensure that your workshop is in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the principles of child participation. Depending on the participants' age and prior knowledge, such training can address the practical implications of the Convention. It's important to tailor the training so that it adds value to your collaborative work. Therefore, consider focusing the training on the issues you have chosen. For example, it could be how social services operate or the legislation surrounding specific topics.

It's also important to create a safe space for participants, both in terms of the work itself and their ability to express themselves. Discuss what is important to them when working in a group, such as respecting when someone else is speaking, having fun, or achieving concrete results from their work.

In order to create a framework around this, we recommend that you carry out one or more value exercises. Participants could, for example, rank what they consider most important regarding the environment for the workshop. One way to do this is to use an exercise with value words to establish guidelines for the workshop.

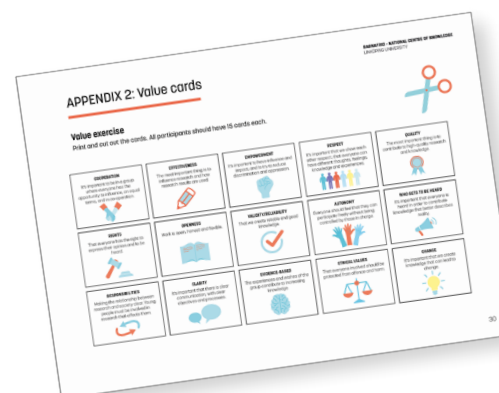
EXAMPLE OF EXERCISE

Value exercise

Time required: Approximately 10 min

Preparation: Print out appendix 2 and cut out the value cards. Each participant should have 15 cards.

- Distribute 15 value cards to each participant.
- Let each participants select three cards with the values they believe are most important for the group to follow.
- Then, have each participant take turns showing their selected cards. The cards that the most participants have chosen will be the group's strongest guiding principles for the work ahead.



The value cards can be found in appendix 2.

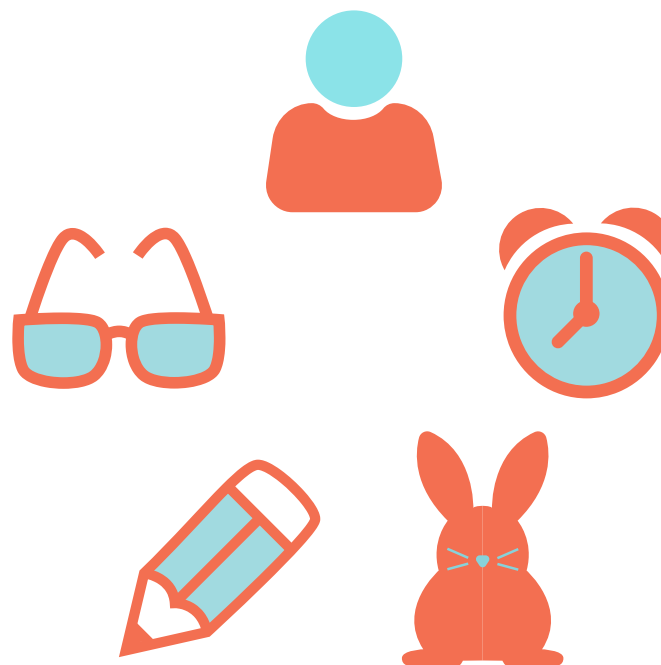


Introduce the topic



In step three, the mentor (and workshop leader) presents the objectives of the work and introduces the topic. The introduction may involve watching a film, discussing the chosen subject, or exploring concepts together. Introducing the topic is an important part of providing everyone in the room with a common foundation before starting work on the selected subject.

At this stage, it's also appropriate to negotiate mandates and roles. Is there someone in the group who wants to lead the discussion further, someone who wants to keep track of the time and goal of the workshop? Or should these tasks fall on the mentor? Over time, the group will be able to work more freely and independently.



Choose method



How should we work together? In this step, participants will choose a method for the work. To do this, you need to prepare some materials. Invite the participants to collectively select which method they wish to use, or ask if they have suggestions for methods. Sometimes, participants may need a few examples of methods. To the right, there are several methods to draw inspiration from.

Once the participants have chosen a method for gathering material, allow them to express their thoughts out loud or in writing (depending on the chosen method). Here, they can also decide on their level of participation. The discussion can be led by the participants themselves or, if necessary, by an adult.

Verbal methods:

1 2 3

- **Questions and answers:** Encourage to ask questions about the topic and give them time to think and answer.
- **Discussions:** Have open discussions where everyone can share their thoughts and ideas on the topic. It can help to see different perspectives.
- **Stories:** Use stories or anecdotes related to the topic.
- **Brainstorming:** Encourage brainstorming ideas and solutions related to the topic.
- **Case description:** Prepare your own stories for the group to discuss.
- **Interview:** Let the participants interview each other or others on the topic.

Visual methods:

- **Images and illustrations:** Use images and illustrations to talk about the topic.
- **Picture cards:** Picture cards with pictures and words are a great way to learn new words and concepts.
- **Videos and animations:** Collect material by creating short films.
- **Photos:** Let the participants take their own photographs symbolising the topic and then have them explain the picture.
- **Drawing with description:** Ask the participants to draw a picture related to the topic and describe in text what they have drawn.

Writing methods:

- **Mind map:** Let the participants start writing the topic in the centre of the paper and then draw branches representing different aspects and ideas.
- **Stories:** Let the participants write a story around the topic. By creating characters and a plot, they can explore the topic in a creative way.
- **Diary:** Ask participants to write a diary from the perspective of someone involved in the topic.
- **List:** Make a list of important points or facts about the topic.
- **Poem:** Write a poem on the topic.
- **Questions and answers:** Let the participants write down questions about the topic and then try to answer them.

Active methods:

- **Role play and simulation:** Let the participants play different roles or simulate situations related to the topic.
- **Games:** Make up games linked to the topic.
- **Music:** Let the participants describe the topic with the choice of music and lyrics.
- **Excursions and study visits:** Visit relevant places to gain practical experience and insight.
- **Experiments and practical exercises:** Discuss the topic by performing experiments or practical exercises.
- **Using technology and digital tools:** Interactive apps and educational games on the subject.

EXAMPLE OF EXERCISE

Brainstorming - post-it notes

Time required: 60 min

- Create small groups, preferably 2-4 in each group.
- The groups are asked to draw/write on post-it notes to discuss and document issues together.
- After 30 minutes, participants should bring the discussion to the whole group to collectively discuss what they have come up with.
- Then, allow the participants to review the produced material, discuss, and work together to reach a common understanding of the intended product.

IMPORTANT!

Be attentive to when focus shifts. Make sure to plan for breaks, but also allow participants to have a say in when the group needs to take a break. Perhaps the group needs a longer pause where you can go outside and do something together?

Analyse and process

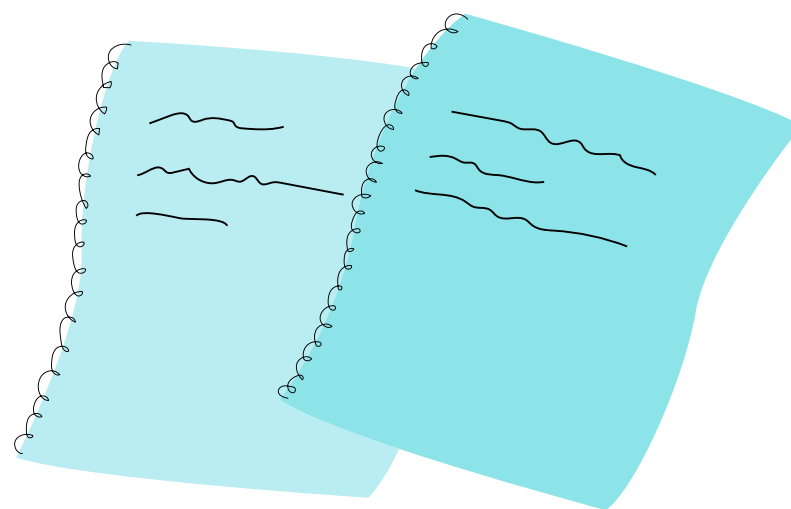


In this step, there is a lot of material to analyse. The data may have been collected in the form of surveys, discussions, photos, or other methods. The material may need to be coded and structured, for example through qualitative or quantitative analysis methods.

Coding and thematising content means reviewing the incoming material, reading it multiple times, and organising it into different themes. Therefore, invite the participants again to review the proposed themes. By allowing the group to participate, you can ensure that the analysis of the material is accurate. Perhaps new themes will emerge after the participants have had another look at the material?

TIPS!

Invite a new group of children and young people to participate in the analysis. Perhaps the new group will observe something that you have not noticed before. This way, the work gains further depth while also allowing the analysis to be tested from different perspectives.



Evaluate



After the workshop, you can effectively quality assure the work. By evaluating the implementation, you can learn more about the quality of the collaborative effort, whether the work was conducted in a safe and respectful manner, if the method worked for all participants, and so on.

One way to evaluate the work is to discuss the participants' expectations before the work began, whether those expectations were met, and what the group could have done differently. It can be beneficial to give participants the opportunity to respond anonymously, for example, through a questionnaire tailored to their age. Appendix 3 contains an evaluation template for children and young people that you can use for inspiration or adapt for your specific project.

The adults who participated in the work should also take part in the evaluation. Appendix 4 includes a template you can use to evaluate your own work. Be sure to also plan time for discussion so that you can collectively create even better conditions for the next session.

APPENDIX 3: Evaluation children and young people

Read the following statements. Mark the answer that you think fits best.

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
I was informed about the workshop beforehand and could decide whether I wanted to participate or not.			
I understood that the workshop was voluntary and that I could withdraw my participation whenever I wanted.			
We have discussed things that are important for the lives of children and young people.			
My needs were respected, such as the need for a break.			
The workshop was conducted at a level where I could understand what we were doing.			
The workshop has been inclusive (everyone was able to participate).			
I felt safe during the workshop.			
I felt that others listened to me.			
I think the level of discussions and methods was good.			
I have been informed about how the group gets feedback on what we have developed in the workshop.			

How many YES and NO answers did you put?

And finally, please describe what has been good and what we can do better for next time?

APPENDIX 4: Evaluation professionals

Read the following statements. Mark the answer that you think fits best.

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
We have included children and young people from the start.			
Children and young people have been able to determine the level of participation, and have had the opportunity to influence.			
We have reflected on the situation to create an environment as equal as possible.			
We have taken time to develop a relationship with the children and young people.			
We have been able to accommodate roles where adaptations for children have been necessary.			
We have provided enough information for participants to give active consent.			
Participants have been informed that they can withdraw at any time without explaining why.			
Children and young people's views have been taken seriously and supported in their development.			
We have created children and young people as equals to the best of our ability.			
We have had enough adults on site.			
We have compensated children and young people for their participation.			
Children and young people have actively been informed about what their involvement could lead to.			
We have provided information on how and when participants will receive feedback on what they have produced.			
We have made a plan for possible adaptations of the results, such as easy-to-read reports to share with the group.			
Children and young people themselves have had the opportunity to respond to an evaluation.			

1. Add up your YES and NO votes in the working group.
2. Discuss what went well and what you can improve for next time.

The evaluations can be found in appendix 3 and appendix 4.

3 Feedback

Once participants have completed their work, it's important to share the results with them. Make sure to repeat this information so that it's clear to the group what their input will lead to and how the results will be used. The feedback to the group should also describe how their views will be taken into account and how their involvement has helped to make a difference. The feedback can be in the form of:

- A summary report (if the material is part of a larger report), written in accessible language tailored to the participants' age and maturity.
- A follow-up visit with the group to share how the work has been received and is progressing, as well as any reactions to the work.
- Allowing the group to see the final product.

It's also important to provide information on how the results will be disseminated, how they will be used to improve the situation of children and young people and any concrete changes achieved as a result.

REMEMBER!

It's equally important to provide information if the effort has not led to change and to give participants an explanation as to why.



CONCLUDING WORDS

Working together with children and young people is both an obligation and an investment. Through their participation, we gain access to their unique thoughts, experiences, and visions. In this handbook, we have explored a possible path toward a more inclusive society, where children and young people are active co-creators rather than mere recipients of decisions. By including them in our processes and projects, we create added value not only for themselves but for the entire community.

Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that all children and young people have the right to be included in decisions that affect them. This is not just a right– it's an opportunity. When we actively listen to children and young people and take their perspectives into account, we gain new ideas, creativity, and insights. In return, we provide them with the tools to help shape their future.

We hope you feel ready to work with children and young people and that this handbook will guide you in your efforts to ensure the right to participation for all children and young people.



APPENDIX 1: Preparation checklist

Safe and secure participation

- ☐ Extract from the criminal record for all employees.
- ☐ Established routines for reporting concerns, offences, incidents and risks.
- ☐ All employees have read and discussed Barnafrid's handbook on child and youth inclusion.
- ☐ Make a budget (snacks, food, venue and other compensation).
- ☐ Depending on the size of the group, three adults should be present, with one acting as an observer and resource person.
- ☐ Book and make sure the that venue is adapted for children and young people.

Review the logistics

- ☐ Collect/Buy materials.
- ☐ Create a presentation.
- ☐ Arrange for the delivery of food, snacks, and beverages.
- ☐ Visit the venue, note where emergency exits and toilets are located, or if further adaptations need to be made.
- ☐ Identify technical needs and aids.
- ☐ Check if there's a wireless network and whether the implementation requires technical resources.
- ☐ Test all technology on-site.

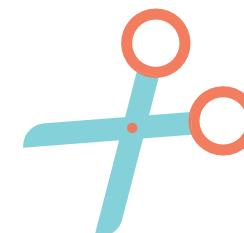
Invite participants







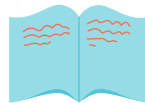








- ☐ Consider diversity and reflect on possible unintentional exclusion.
- ☐ Write a targeted invitation with date and time.
- ☐ Consider the need for an interpreter or other adaptations.
- ☐ Confirm participation.
- ☐ Send or distribute information sheets in advance, clearly stating the objectives and purpose of the participation.
- ☐ Write an agenda and share it with participants before the meeting, or decide the agenda together on-site.

APPENDIX 2: Value cards

Value exercise

Print and cut out the cards. All participants should have 15 cards each.



<p>COOPERATION</p> <p>It's important to be in a group where everyone has the opportunity to influence, on equal terms, and in co-operation.</p> 	<p>EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p>The most important thing is to influence research and how research results are used.</p> 	<p>EMPOWERMENT</p> <p>It's important to have influence and impact, and to try to reduce discrimination and oppression.</p> 	<p>RESPECT</p> <p>It's important that we show each other respect; that everyone can have different thoughts, feelings, knowledge and experiences.</p> 	<p>QUALITY</p> <p>The most important thing is to contribute to high-quality research and knowledge.</p> 
<p>RIGHTS</p> <p>That everyone has the right to express their opinion and to be heard.</p> 	<p>OPENNESS</p> <p>Work is open, honest and flexible.</p> 	<p>VALIDITY/RELIABILITY</p> <p>That we create reliable and good knowledge.</p> 	<p>AUTONOMY</p> <p>Everyone should feel that they can participate freely without being controlled by those in charge.</p> 	<p>WHO GETS TO BE HEARD</p> <p>It's important that everyone is heard in order to contribute knowledge that better describes reality.</p> 
<p>RESPONSIBILITIES</p> <p>Making the relationship between research and society clear. Young people must be involved in research that affects them.</p> 	<p>CLARITY</p> <p>It's important that there is clear communication, with clear objectives and processes.</p> 	<p>EVIDENCE-BASED</p> <p>The experiences and wishes of the group contribute to increasing knowledge.</p> 	<p>ETHICAL VALUES</p> <p>That everyone involved should be protected from offence and harm.</p> 	<p>CHANGE</p> <p>It's important that we create knowledge that can lead to change.</p> 

APPENDIX 3: Evaluation children and young people

Read the following statements. Mark the answer that you think fits best.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
I was informed about the workshop beforehand and could decide whether I wanted to participate or not.			
I understood that the workshop was voluntary and that I could withdraw my participation whenever I wanted.			
We have discussed things that are important for the lives of children and young people.			
The workshop was conducted at a level where I could understand what we were doing.			
My needs were respected, such as the need for a break.			
The workshop has been inclusive (everyone was able to participate).			
I felt safe during the workshop.			
I felt that others listened to me.			
I think the level of discussions and methods was good.			
I have been informed about how the group gets feedback on what we have developed during the workshop.			

How many YES and NO answers did you put?

And finally, please describe what has been good and what we can do better for next time?



APPENDIX 4: Evaluation professionals

Read the following statements. Mark the answer that you think fits best.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
We have included children and young people from the start.			
Children and young people have been able to determine the level of participation, and have had the opportunity to influence.			
We have reflected on the situation to create an environment as equal as possible.			
We have taken time to develop a relationship with the children and young people.			
We have been able to accommodate cases where adaptations for disabilities have been necessary.			
We have provided enough information for participants to give active consent.			
Participants have been informed that they can withdraw at any time without explaining why.			
Children's and young people's views have been taken seriously and supported in their development.			
We have treated children and young people as equals to the best of our ability.			
We have had enough adults on site.			
We have compensated children and young people for their participation.			
Children and young people have initially been informed about what their involvement could lead to.			
We have provided information on how and when participants will receive feedback on what they have produced.			
We have made a plan for possible adaptations of the results, such as easy-to-read reports to share with the group.			
Children and young people themselves have had the opportunity to respond to an evaluation.			

1. Add up your YES and NO votes in the working group.
2. Discuss what went well and what you can improve for next time.



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