III. HOW TO USE COMPASITO

"No child can learn about human rights in an environment that does not itself respect and promote a culture of human rights. The most important contribution a facilitator can make to a child's understanding of human rights is to create that environment."

Getting started with COMPASITO

This chapter is intended to support you, the facilitator, with practical information about using COMPASITO. However, do not let so many 'how-to's and 'should's discourage you. No-one knows your context and your children better than you do. Take the information and advice that is helpful to you and run the activities with your group. When you have questions, you may find some helpful answers here. If you create an environment that respects and promotes the human rights of a child, that child is learning about human rights!

Unlike lesson plans for use in a school curriculum, COMPASITO was designed to be as adaptable as possible to the many settings where children can learn about human rights, from summer camps and out-of-school programmes to youth groups and field trips, as well as the formal school classroom. Although many COMPASITO activities require some preparation, they can be run almost anywhere and anytime. Finding the moment when children are most receptive to human rights learning – which could be when a conflict occurs in the group, but also when the group is feeling celebratory – is part of the art of facilitation: your art!

This chapter covers the following topics:

- The goal of COMPASITO
- Experiential learning
- Facilitation
- Thinking and leaning styles
- Children' developmental levels
- What is in a COMPASITO activity?
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child as a foundation
- Selecting activities
- Adapting activities
- Tips for promoting participation
- Tips for facilitation
- Practising human rights education

You will also find further discussion of human rights education in CHAPTER II, SECTION 1, P. 25.

The goal of Compasito

Compasito seeks to develop in children the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they need to participate in their society, knowing and protecting their rights and the rights of others. In this way children can actively contribute to building a culture of human rights.

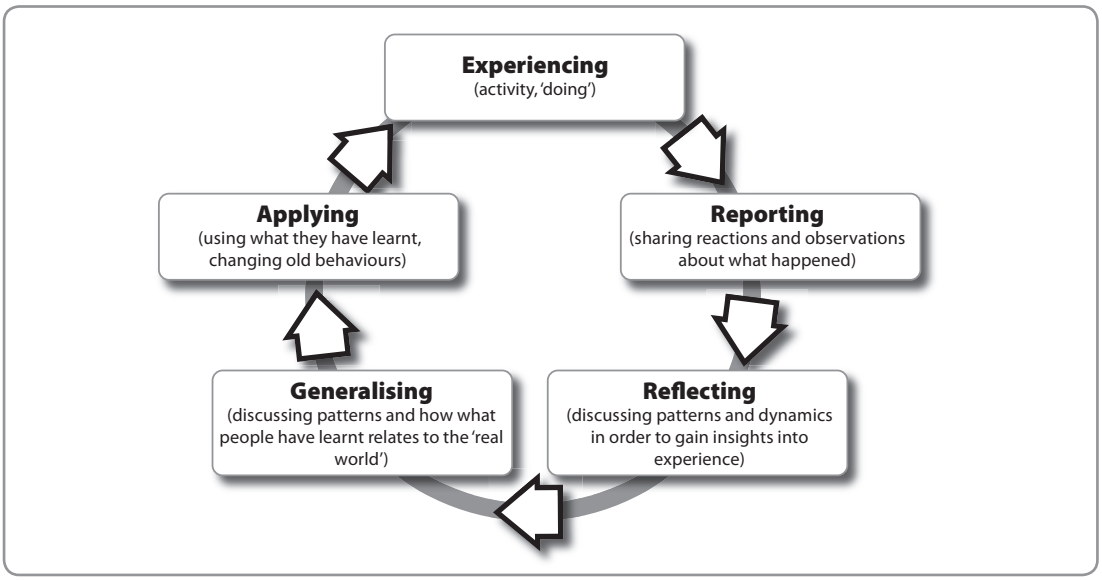
To accomplish this goal, Compasito learning activities are designed to

- start from what children already know as a basis for exploring new ideas and perspectives;
- encourage children to participate actively in discussion and to learn from each other as much as possible;
- inspire and enable children to put their learning into simple but meaningful and appropriate action in support of justice, equality and human rights;
- reflect the core values of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (CRC) and encourage a culture of human rights among children.

Attitudes and values related to communication, critical thinking, advocacy, responsibility, tolerance and respect for others cannot be taught; they must be learned through experience. For this reason the activities in Compasito promote cooperation, participation and active learning. They aim at a holistic engagement of the child's head, heart and hands. Only a child who understands that human rights evolve from basic human needs and feels empathy for other human beings will take personal responsibility to protect the human rights of others.

Experiential learning

How do we create that understanding and empathy in a child? Human rights education is about education for change, both personal and social. To accomplish this change, the activities of Compasito are based on a learning cycle with five phases:



Although all these phases may not always be obvious or occur in this order, they are implicitly present in every Compasito activity.

This methodology of experiential learning permits children to develop and change knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in a safe environment that is both challenging and fun. Because it validates the child's

experience and encourages children to take responsibility for their own learning, experiential learning enhances participation, self-reliance and self-confidence. Each phase of this cycle honours children's lived experience while challenging them to articulate, observe, reflect, question and draw conclusions.

Experiencing

Phase 1 does not aim to generate 'right answers', but to stimulate each child's own opinions, theories and feelings. In most cases these responses are drawn from the child's previous experience rather than school learning. For example, in the activity 'Once Upon a Time...', p. 125, children grasp gender stereotypes from hearing a well-known story with the sex roles reversed. In 'World Summer Camp', p. 205, children confront their unconscious prejudices through the familiar process of selecting playmates.

Reporting

Phase 2 encourages children to articulate their feelings and reactions. For example, in the 'Debriefing and evaluation' section of each Compasito activity, children respond to questions such as "How was this activity for you?", "How did you feel during this experience?" or "What happened during this game?" Such open-ended questions invite a wide range of personal opinions in a non-judgmental context.

The importance of the debriefing stage cannot be overstated. Without adequate time to discuss children's responses and explicitly make a link to human rights, an activity is at best just a game, a period of fun that can be quickly forgotten. At worst, it can reinforce negative attitudes and stereotypes, mislead or confuse children, or even arouse and not deal with painful emotions. If you do not have time for a thorough debriefing, do not run an activity.

Reflecting

Phase 3 moves children beyond the experience of the activity to its conceptual implications. For example, the discussion that follows a very active game such as 'The Invisibles are Coming', p. 171, leads children to consider that the game can be seen as a metaphor for xenophobia. In the activity 'Cookie Monster', p. 95, for example, children experience the value of working cooperatively, but the subsequent discussion asks them to articulate this discovery. Asking questions such as "Have you experienced something like this in your life?" or "Do you know someone like this?" helps children make these connections.

Generalising

Phase 4 connects the experience of the activity to the 'real world' in general and especially to the way human rights are experienced in everyday life. For example, after a simulation activity such as 'Blindfolded', p. 67, or 'Silent Speaker', p. 160, children discuss how physical disabilities can limit a child's enjoyment of human rights. Phases 3 and 4 are especially effective in eliciting independent thinking and creating opportunities for children to learn from each other. Learning is highly individualized, however: not every child will derive the same learning from participating in the same activity and discussion, and these differences responses need to be respected.

Applying

In Phase 5 children explore what they themselves can do to address human rights issues. Taking action is not only a logical outcome of the learning process, but also a significant means of reinforcing new knowledge, skills and attitudes which form the basis for the next round of the cycle. It is also a key element in developing active citizenship in a democracy: individuals can make a difference, even as children. For

example, the activity 'A Constitution for Our Group', p. 56, leads the group to develop its own rights and responsibilities, to refer to them to resolve conflicts and to revise them democratically as needed, and 'Every Vote Counts', p. 103, challenges children to find democratic methods for making group decisions.

Although the activities in Compasito are intended to engage children and be fun, they are also purposeful, offering children a chance to apply what they have learned to their social environments. Most activities have a section of 'Ideas for action'. Such action might be individual and find expression only in the child's private life, such as a new attitude toward siblings. Action might also be collective and result in developing new classroom rules or ways of handling playground conflicts. The Internet also offers new and simple ways for children to 'take action' on global human rights issues. For example, check the websites of human rights and environmental non-governmental organisations for action ideas.

Whatever its level and type, however, the action that children take should be voluntary and self-directed. The facilitator can encourage and assist children to find an appropriate action to achieve their goals. However, the motivation to take action must come from children themselves. Otherwise children are not learning to become active citizens but to follow the directions of an authority figure.

Even in a small group there may be great differences in children's readiness and willingness to take action. Not everyone who wants to do something will want to take the same action. The facilitator needs to help children find a range of options for action that meet the diversity of their abilities and interests.

The facilitator also plays a crucial role in stimulating children to think through their experiences and especially to relate their concerns to human rights. For example, children may decide independently that their school should be more welcoming to newcomers, but they may need the facilitator to connect their action to the human rights principle of non-discrimination.

Facilitation

Compasito uses the word *facilitator* for the people who prepare, present and coordinate the activities and create an environment where children can learn, experience and experiment with human rights. The facilitator sets the stage, creating a setting where human rights are respected but the children are the main actors on this stage. There is, however, no perfect environment for human rights education. Even situations where children violate each other's rights can become learning experiences. The success of any activity, however, depends principally on the tact, skill and experience of the facilitator.

Many people who work with children are unfamiliar with facilitation and find it challenging and even uncomfortable. They take for granted their traditional role as 'leader' or 'teacher'. Most children are also conditioned to depend on an adult to impart information; however, children accept responsibility for their own learning more readily than adults give up their role as authority and expert. Facilitation is not difficult, however, and most facilitators 'learn by doing', provided they understand and accept the shift to a child-centred, experiential approach to learning.

The art of facilitation requires not only a shift in focus, but also a high degree of self-awareness. Because children are powerfully influenced by the behaviour of adults in their lives, facilitators must take care to model the human rights values they wish to convey. An activity on gender stereotyping, for example, will be useless if the facilitator habitually displays gender bias. For this reason, facilitators must recognize, acknowledge and conscientiously address their own prejudices and biases, even more so if they are directed against children in the group.

QUESTION: *Every human being has prejudices! What are yours? Could some of your prejudices affect the children you work with? What can you do to address these prejudices?*

Thinking and learning styles

To excite the talents and interests of a variety of children, facilitators benefit from a familiarity with the different ways that people think and learn, including themselves. Although everyone uses a mixture of thinking and learning styles, every person has a preferred or dominant style.

Which is your thinking style?

- **Visual learners** tend to represent the world to themselves in pictures. They may use phrases such as "I see what you mean".
- **Auditory learners** remember more of what they hear and may use phrases like "That sounds such as a good idea".
- **Kinaesthetic learners** tend to remember things through feelings, both physical and emotional. They tend to use terms such as "I love it. Let's go for it".

Which is your favorite or dominant learning style?

- **Activists** learn best from new experiences, problems and opportunities from experience. They love games, teamwork, task and role-playing exercises. They react against passive learning, solitary activities like reading and independent research, and tasks that require attention to detail.
- **Reflectors** learn best when they can think over an activity. They enjoy research, reviewing what has happened and what they have learned. They react against being forced into the limelight, having insufficient data on which to base a conclusion and having to take short cuts or doing a superficial job.
- **Theorists** learn best when what they are learning about is part of a system, model, concept or theory. They like structured situations with a clear purpose and dealing with interesting ideas and concepts. They often dislike participating in situations that emphasize feelings.
- **Pragmatists** learn best from activities where the subject matter is clearly linked to a real problem and where they are able to implement what they have learned. They react against learning that seems distant from reality and 'all theory and general principles'.

QUESTION: *Try to remember a favourite teacher, trainer or facilitator. What was it about the way that person communicated that helped you learn?*

Is there a correspondence between that person's communication style and your own style of thinking and learning?

Most people naturally teach and work with groups in a way that matches their own thinking and learning style. Is that true for you?

- *With what kinds of learners would you be most effective?*
- *What kinds of learner would have most difficulty learning from you?*
- *How can you adapt your communication style to reach more learners?*

In practise everyone uses a combination of ways of thinking and learning. And every group of children presents the facilitator with many different learning needs and styles. Keep this in mind when selecting activities from Compasito, balancing the types of activities to match the differing needs and learning styles of the children you work with.

Differences in thinking and learning can also account for the way activities run and how children debrief and evaluate them. You will notice that the same activity produces different levels of participation and different results in different children. Some children are more likely to respond to debriefing questions

than to others. Remember too that thinking and learning styles may account for only part of these differences. Because of a whole range of factors beyond your control, the same children may react quite differently to the same activity on a different day! As you become more familiar with COMPASITO activities, you will be better able to account for these differences.

Children's developmental levels

The activities in COMPASITO are developed for children between the ages of six and thirteen, although many can be easily adapted to younger and older children as well as adults. Childhood is the ideal time to introduce human rights education, for although young children already hold strong values and attitudes, they are also receptive to new perspectives and experiences. Developing values like respect for others and tolerance of difference or skills like empathy and critical thinking requires years. It is never too early to begin!

At the same time children are still very dependent on the guidance and support of adults, especially their families, caregivers and teachers, as well as their peers. Some of the human rights values and attitudes that COMPASITO endorses may clash with those children encounter in other parts of their lives. Explaining the goals and methods of COMPASITO to parents, teachers or community leaders can help prevent potential conflict. Facilitators need to be sensitive to such potential conflicts both within the child and with the child's home, school or community environment. In every case, a child at any level of development should not be made the focal point of such conflict.

While each child is unique, the lists below summarize the main characteristics of these age groups. A skilled facilitator needs to understand the developmental level of the group and select and/or adapt activities to match their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development.

6 to 7 years olds:

Physical development

- enjoy outdoor activities with brief but energetic spurts of activity
- prefer simple manual tasks, especially combined with developing a particular physical skill

Cognitive and emotional development

- like to talk but have a short attention span and have difficulties listening to others
- are very curious
- learn best through physical experiences
- have difficulty making decisions
- can read and write, but these skills are still in the emergent stages
- are highly imaginative and easily become involved in role games and fantasy play
- like stories about friendship and superheroes
- enjoy cartoon figures

Social development

- are very competitive
- sometimes find cooperation difficult

8 to 10 years olds

Physical development

- seem to have endless physical energy

Cognitive and emotional development

- like to learn new things, but not necessarily in-depth
- become more aware of differences and inequalities among others
- enjoy problem solving
- enjoy question-answer games
- can be very frustrated if their work does not meet their expectations

Social development

- enjoy more independence but still need support
- like to talk and discuss things with peers
- can be very critical of both self and others
- are better able to cooperate
- like to belong to a group
- start to idolize real heroes, TV stars and sport figures instead of cartoon figures.

11 to 13 years olds

Physical development

- mature a lot physically although these changes vary greatly among children and may cause self-consciousness and uncomfortable feelings

Cognitive and emotional development

- mature greatly in their ability to think in a more abstract way
- enjoy arguing and discussing
- find some games predictable and boring; prefer complex activities that involve creating unique strategies and products
- tend toward perfectionism in what they do
- begin to perceive that a story or event can be seen from more than one perspective
- show an increasing interest in social and current events

Social development

- have a growing interest in a wider social and physical environment
- enjoy testing the limits of self and others
- can combine playfulness and seriousness at the same time
- get more concerned about how they appear to others
- like to learn from role models
- start developing more advanced play in groups and teams
- like to cooperate for common goals
- are strongly influenced by attitudes and behaviour of peers.

What is in a Compasito activity?

The activities in Compasito have been designed to promote experiential learning about human rights for a wide variety of settings, learning styles and developmental levels. Compasito activities start with an abstract, imaginative situation that engages children as a group, but their debriefing and evaluation section moves to a more personal and individual level. Many specialists consider the debriefing and evaluation to be the most important part of any activity. Without it, a Compasito activity is just an activity. Much more significant than missing an opportunity for human rights learning, however, omitting the debriefing can do real harm, reinforcing stereotypes and trivializing the emotions an activity can evoke in children.

Because non-formal education of this kind appeals strongly to the emotions, certain human rights topics may come uncomfortably close to the reality of some children's lives. Facilitators need to be mindful of this potential when they choose or adapt any activity for their group.

Every activity in Compasito is presented in a format designed to help the facilitator select and run the activities that best fit the need of the group. There are sample discussion question, tips for facilitating and adapting the activity, and suggestions for follow-up activities the group could take on the human rights issues involved in the activity.

Activity title descriptive Subtitle	
Themes	The human rights themes addressed in the activity (See Chapter V., p. 213, for a discussion of these themes). Three themes are proposed for most activities, permitting facilitators to emphasise the issue closest to the children's concern or interest. Themes also suggest the interdependence and correlation among different human rights issues.
Level of complexity	A rating 1,2 or 3 based on factors such as the degree of children's knowledge or competences required, learning objectives, sophistication of subject matter, complexity of rules time frame, potential risks and group dynamics. A higher level of complexity reflects more difficulty in reaching the learning objectives. However, many activities can be adapted to change the level of complexity. Complex activities are also usually richer in dynamics, issues and therefore results.
Age	The appropriate age group for this activity
Duration	The estimated average time for running and debriefing the activity. The actual time may depend on many circumstances such as the size and maturity of the group.
Group size	The optimum number of children for running the activity
Type of activity	The kind(s) of engagement the activity calls for (e.g. role play, drawing, discussion, board game)
Overview	A brief summary of what happens in the activity
Objectives	The intended outcomes of the activity in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and action or behaviour about/for human rights
Preparation	A list of preparations necessary before running the activity
Materials	A list of materials needed to run the activity
Instructions	Step-by-step instructions on how to organise and run the activity
Debriefing and evaluation	Discussion topics for reflecting on the activity, articulating and generalising its main ideas and relating them to human rights. Debriefing is the most important part of any activity and should never be omitted!

Suggestions for follow-up	Further group action or other activities in Compasito that could complement this activity
Ideas for action	Suggestions for ways to respond to the issues raised by the activity
Tips for the facilitator	Suggestions for improving and/or adapting the activity or for avoiding potential problems
Further information	Additional information useful for the activity
Handouts	Materials needed for the activity (e.g. role cards, situation cards, drawings, maps)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child as foundation

Every activity in Compasito relates explicitly or implicitly to the Children's Convention. Some introduce children to the document (e.g. 'My Universe of Rights', p. 122; 'Rabbit's Rights', p. 141; 'Sailing to a New Land', p. 152). Others build on this introduction to make children more familiar with their rights (e.g. 'A Human Rights Calendar', p. 64; 'Human Rights in the News', p. 110; 'Putting Rights on the Map', p. 138). Some more advanced activities ask children to decide what is or is not their human right or to name specific rights (e.g. 'Board Games', p. 70).

Because the CRC is central to Compasito, facilitators need to be familiar with the document themselves and be able to explain its meaning to children. Compasito provides a child-friendly version of the CRC (Appendix 4., p. 296). As this document is called for in many activities, you may want to laminate copies for frequent reuse. You may also want to make a poster-sized version to hang in the place where you meet the children so that you can refer to it easily.

The CRC contains some complex concepts that will almost certainly need some explanation for children to understand:

Dignity: The equality and inherent dignity of every human being is a fundamental concept of human rights. Children may need help in defining this concept in concrete terms.

Discrimination: Freedom from discrimination is another fundamental tenet of human rights included in all principal human rights documents. Article 2 of the CRC prohibits discrimination in several specific areas, which children may not fully understand:

- Race
- Ethnic or social origin, property ('social or economic status')
- Birth, which includes children born inside or outside of marriage.

Evolving capacities ("Growing maturity"): This phrase in Article 5 refers to the child's increasing ability to exercise rights as he or she becomes older and more capable of responsibility and independent judgment.

Refugee ("you have come to a new country because your home country was unsafe"): Article 22 refers to refugees. Most children (and many adults) do not differentiate between an immigrant, who has come to make a new life in a new country, and a refugee, someone who has left the home country because of a well-founded fear of danger or persecution. Unlike immigrants, most refugees want to return home when they are no longer under threat and are entitled to support from the government of the country where they have taken refuge. You may also need to explain that people who are forced to leave their homes but remain in their country are not considered refugees but 'internally displaced persons'.

The following terms used in the child-friendly version of the CRC may need discussion, both for what they mean and why these concepts are important to human rights. Some terms may have several mean-

ings, not all of which are known to children (e.g. that 'violence' can be both physical and psychological, actual and threatened; that a 'disability' can be physical, mental or psycho-social). Other terms may be only vaguely understood and need concrete examples (e.g. 'exploitation', 'culture,' 'abuse', 'neglect'). Ask the children to provide examples from their own experience.

- Abuse / mistreatment / neglect
- "Accepted everywhere as a person according to law"
- Association
- Cultures/traditions
- "Develop physically, mentally, spiritually, morally and socially"
- Disability
- "Exercise your rights"
- Exploitation
- Government
- "Have your birth registered"
- "Have your situation reviewed"
- Health professionals
- "Honour and reputation"
- Identity
- Juvenile justice
- Leisure
- Loss of liberty
- Media
- Nationality
- Nutritious food
- Pornography
- Privacy
- Prostitution
- Rehabilitation
- Social security
- Trade union, union
- Violence
- Warfare
- War zone

When you are introducing children to the CRC, they do not need this level of detailed information. As they become more familiar with human rights, however, look for opportunities to refine their understanding or correct misunderstandings when you observe them. Keep an eye out for the 'teachable moment'.

Selecting activities

The facilitator has a variety of factors to consider in determining which activities from COMPASITO to use. Most important of these considerations are –

1. **Your children**: Before selecting activities, the facilitator first needs to know the children involved.
    a. What are their levels of development, interests, concerns and learning styles?
    b. Are there conflicts and problems within the group?
    c. Do these children face particular issues or problems within the community?
    d. How much do the children already know about human rights? Some COMPASITO activities assume prior introduction to the CRC, for example.

However, don't feel you must wait to use COMPASITO activities until you know the answers to all these questions. Often playing activities is the most efficient way to learn about your group!

2. **Your learning objective**: Some activities can be run to increase general understanding of human rights or even just for fun, but most can and should be directed to themes that are close to the children or are an issue in the group, the community or the world. COMPASITO activities focus on these human rights themes:
    a. Citizenship
    b. Democracy
    c. Discrimination

d. Education and leisure
e. Environment
f. Family and alternative care
g. Gender equality
h. Health and welfare
i. Media and Internet
j. Participation
k. Peace and human security
l. Poverty and social exclusion
m. Violence

For a full discussion of COMPASITO's human rights themes, see CHAPTER V., P. 213.

3. **A learning sequence**: Lasting knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are never achieved in a single activity. Select activities that form a series, whether based on a particular human rights theme or the development of certain competencies. This series might extend over a month, a school term or even a whole year. You may want to choose activities that fit into subject areas of the school curriculum or that address current issues in the group or community.

   In every case, seek a balance of activity types and make the needs of children your first priority. Methodological diversity not only makes activities more fun, but also enables children to learn through their senses and emotions as well as their minds. For this reason COMPASITO offers you a wide choice of techniques and methodologies (e.g. discussion, debate, story telling, simulation, drama, board games, artistic activities, active group competition).

To further assist selection, a chart showing pertinent information on all the activities in COMPASITO can be found on p. 52.

Adapting activities

Use COMPASITO as you would a recipe book. Like good cooks, facilitators should feel free to change the 'ingredients' of an activity to fit available time and materials and the size, competence and circumstances of their group. Most activities offer tips on adaptation.

Be aware that every group of children presents you with many different learning styles and different levels of ability. It is easier for you as facilitator to offer children a variety of ways to learn than for a child to adapt to a single method required by you. For example, an activity that is based on real-life problems, such as 'HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE NEWS', P. 110, may delight the 'Pragmatists' but frustrate the 'Theorists.' You could adapt the activity to extend the analytical aspect by comparing how a problem is reported differently in different media. Similarly, many activities can be adapted to accommodate different levels of reading and writing skills. For example, the facilitator could take over all the written aspects of an activity such as 'RABBIT'S RIGHTS', P. 141 or 'WHO'S BEHIND ME?', P. 195. Be creative in providing ways for children to respond to what they have learned. For example, in addition to group discussion, children might draw, mime, write in a journal or share their ideas in pairs.

Careful selection and adaptation of activities is especially important to ensure the inclusion and equal participation of children with special needs, such as homeless, migrant, refugee and institutionalized children. Avoid exposing what may be painful differences amongst the children.

Be especially sensitive to the needs of children with disabilities and avoid putting them in the position of 'agreeing to' an activity in which they cannot participate equally. Instead when you know a child in your group has physical limitations, adapt the activity to the child rather than expecting the

child to accommodate the activity. For example, some adaptations for children with disabilities might include–

- Avoid using red and green in an exercise. Children with daltonism (colour-blindness) have difficulty distinguishing them.
- Include explanations and handouts in Braille for visually impaired children.
- Position non-mobile children to allow them maximum participation.
- Use visual images and written instructions to encourage participation of hearing-impaired children.

Tips for promoting participation

Skilled facilitators can ensure that every child participates fully, even the shy and disengaged. Here are a few suggestions:

- Rephrase your questions several times to ensure everyone understands.
- Use clear language that children understand; avoid jargon.
- Take responsibility for clear communications (e.g. ask "Did I say that clearly?" rather than "Did you understand?").
- Ask open questions that cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no' (e.g. not "Did you enjoy that activity?" but "How did you feel about that activity?").
- Establish ground rules for discussion (e.g. no interrupting but raising hands to speak).
- Draw out silent children, asking them to report or share experiences, but never put pressure on a child to participate.
- Create different roles for group work to ensure equal involvement (e.g. time keeper, materials manager, reporter, scribe).
- Emphasize that every child has something to contribute to the activity.
- Summarize regularly or ask children to do this.
- Explain an activity clearly before beginning so that children know what to expect.
- Connect present activity to previous and future activities.
- Be careful that an activity does not expose any child to ridicule, embarrassment or repercussions at home.
- When possible, seek the support of other facilitators, thus increasing the chance for children to connect with facilitators and be exposed to different teaching and learning styles.
- Acknowledge that no facilitator can control everything that happens or be aware of every child at every moment. Just be attentive without being over-concerned.

Tips for facilitation

Every facilitator needs a repertoire of short techniques and activities for special purposes. These are often helpful to motivate the group, to engage the children in a process, to draw their attention, to break tension or resistance, to gain their confidence and interest or simply to break the ice or to have a bit of fun!

Here are a few proven favorites. A treasury of others can be found on the Internet at sites such as Salto-Youth Support Centre: www.salto-youth.net

Icebreakers / Warm-ups / Starters

For getting a group started and building solidarity.

- **Group Still Life**: Ask children to bring an object from home that has special significance to them. Each child explains the object as it is added to a group display.
- **Me Too!**[1]: Explain that children must locate others who share the same characteristic. Then call out some categories (e.g. birth month; number of siblings; kind of shoe fastening). Under the right circumstances, use more sensitive categories (e.g. religion, language spoken, skin colour).
- **Musical Chairs:** Arrange chairs in a close circle and ask children to sit down. Stand in the middle of the circle and explain that you are going to state your name and make a statement about yourself. When you do, everyone for whom that statement is also true must change chairs. (e.g. "I am X and am left-handed," "I am X and I have a cat" or "I am X and I dislike eating ___"). Try to get a chair for yourself. The person left without a chair then makes a similar statement about herself or himself. Continue until most children have had a chance to introduce themselves in this way.
- **Portraits**: Divide children into pairs and give each plain paper and a pen. Explain that each person is to draw a quick sketch of the other and to ask some questions (e.g. name, hobby, a surprising fact) that will be incorporated into the portrait. Allow only a short time for this and encourage everyone to make their portraits and names as large as possible. Then ask each child to show his or her portrait and introduce the 'original' to the group. To facilitate learning names, hang the portraits where everyone can see.
- **Teamwork**: Divide children into small teams and allow them time to discover the characteristics they have in common (e.g. culture, appearance, personal tastes, hobbies). Ask each team to give itself a name based on their shared qualities. Each group then introduces themselves to the others and explains their name.

Energizers

For raising or refocusing the group's energy.

- **The Chain**: Ask children to stand in a circle with their eyes closed. Move them around, attaching their hands to each other so that they make a knot. Then tell them to open their eyes and try to untangle themselves without letting go of their hands.
- **Fireworks**: Assign small groups to make the sounds and gestures of different fireworks. Some are bombs that hiss and explode. Others are firecrackers imitated by handclaps. Some are Catherine Wheels that spin and so on. Call on each group to perform separately, and then the whole group makes a grand display.
- **Group Sit**: Ask children to stand in a circle toe-to-toe. Then ask them to sit down without breaking the connection of their toes. If culturally appropriate, the children could also stand in a circle behind each other with their hands on the shoulders of the child in front. In this way, when they sit down, each one sits on the knees of the child behind them. Of course, neither version is suitable for groups in which any child has physical disabilities.
- **The Rain Forest**: Stand in the centre of children and ask them to mimic you, making different sounds and gestures for aspects of the forest (e.g. birds, insects, leaves rustling, wind blowing, animals calling) by snapping fingers, slapping sides, clapping hands, and imitating animals. The results sound like a rain forest.
- **Silent Calendar**: Ask the whole group to line up in order of the day and month they were born. However, they cannot use words to accomplish this. You could do the same with shoe sizes, number of hours spent watching TV per week, or any other interesting personal data.
- **The Storm**: Assign different sounds and gestures to small groups of children (e.g. wind, rain, lightning,

thunder). Then narrate the soft beginnings of the storm, conducting the various sounds like an orchestra (e.g. "And then the lightning flashes! And the thunder roars!") to the conclusion of the storm.

- **Three Circles:** Ask the children to stand in a circle, and silently to choose one other child in their mind, without telling anyone whom they chose. Explain that when you say, "Go", they will have to run three times around the child they chose. The result will be a complete chaos, but very funny, as everyone is running after someone and being run after at the same time.
- **To the Lifeboats!** – First demonstrate a 'lifeboat': two people hold hands to form the boat; passengers stand inside the circle of their hands. Then explain that everyone is going on a voyage: "At first the sea is calm and everyone is enjoying the trip. Then, suddenly, the ship hits a rock. Everyone must get into a lifeboat in groups of three (or one, or four, etc.)." Children then scramble to form 'lifeboats' and take in the proper number of passages. Usually someone 'drowns.' Then tell children to get back on the ship and take up the narrative again. "Now the ship continues peacefully … but suddenly a hurricane begins. The ship is sinking. Everyone to the lifeboats in groups of two." Continue like this through several 'shipwrecks'.

Evaluation and reflection opportunities

For ending a day or a session.

- **Ball Toss**: Children toss a ball from one to another. Each person who catches the ball states one thing she or he learned or can use from the activity.
- **Collective Summary**: Pose a summarizing question (e.g. " What will you especially remember from today's activity?" or an open-ended statement (e.g. "Try to think of a word or phrase that sums up your feelings at the end of today" or "I still wonder…"). Ask children to respond in turn.
- **Group Bulletin Board**: Each child in turn adds one word or picture to a group display and explains why it represents something important he or she is feeling or has learned.
- **Releasing the Dove of Peace**: The facilitator mimes holding a significant object (e.g. bird, newborn baby) and invites each child to say something to it as it is passed from one child to another. After the 'object' has been passed to everyone, they draw into a tight circle and collectively let it go.

Managing conflict

For addressing conflicts within the group and within individual children.

Conflicting feelings and values are inevitable when dealing with a topic like human rights, especially when engaged in a non-formal activities like those in COMPASITO that intentionally address children's emotions as well as their intellects. Such conflict, which may arise between children but also within an individual child, is not necessarily negative and with skill facilitation can even be transformed into a constructive experience. Learning to deal with conflict is one of the most important life skills children can acquire and an essential one for developing a culture of human rights in the world around them. Here are some ideas:

- **Anticipate conflict**: When preparing an activity, think about possible conflicts it might evoke in the group or in individual children. Is the topic, the rules or terminology too sensitive for some or all of the children?
- **Do not provoke conflicts but also do not step aside when they arise**.
- **Don't assume conflicts are your fault – or anyone's fault**. They are normal and inevitable within every group. Help children accept that fact and avoid blaming. Focus on managing conflict, not fault finding.
- **Do not ignore bad feelings in the group**. Acknowledge their reality and help children address them.

- **Taking plenty of time for debriefing and discussions** after each activity so that children have a chance to express how they are feeling, both about the activity and each other. This is perhaps your important opportunity to model conflict management.
- **Talk to children individually**: Often a child's feelings are too personal or painful to be discussed within the group. When you sense this, make an opportunity to speak privately about what may be causing this distress. Let the child know you are ready to listen whenever he or she is ready to discuss the problem.

See also the discussion of peace education, CHAPTER V., P. 213.

Practising human rights education

No child can learn about human rights in an environment that does not itself respect and promote a culture of human rights. The most important contribution a facilitator can make to a child's understanding of human rights is to create that environment.

Model the principle of the child's best interest. For example, deal with the conflicts that inevitably arise among children in a manner that emphasizes everyone's right to participation and to express an opinion, as well as everyone's responsibility for the welfare and harmony of the group. Engage children in actively resolving conflicts.

Practise the non-discrimination you want the children to learn. Be aware that even the with the best intentions, we all reflect the biases of our own culture. These prejudices and stereotypes are especially true in the area of gender equality. Research shows that without knowing or intending to do so, most teachers give boys more attention and encouragement than girls. Make a special effort to see that girls participate equally in all parts of an activity. If necessary, practise positive discrimination.

COMPASITO can only be as effective in promoting human rights as you, the facilitator, are!

References

1 All different – All Equal, Education Pack on ideas, resources, methods and activities for informal intercultural education with young people and adults, Council of Europe, 2004. p. 122.