

## 17. Most Important for Whom?

Your priorities may not be the same as mine!



Themes	General human rights
Level of complexity	Level 3
Age	10-13 years
Duration	60 minutes
Group size	12-24 children
Type of activity	Prioritizing, consensus building, discussion
Overview	Children decide which CRC articles to eliminate and discuss the consequences and the interdependence of rights
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce the CRC</li> <li>• To understand how rights are universal, inalienable and interdependent</li> </ul>
Preparation	Prepare Children's Rights Cards.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper and pens</li> <li>• Flipchart and markers</li> <li>• Enough Children's Rights Cards for half the number of children</li> </ul>

### Instructions

1. Begin the activity by brainstorming children's rights to determine how familiar the group is with the CRC and/or reminding them of what they may previously have learned about children's rights. If the group is unfamiliar with children's rights, begin with the adaptation suggested below.
2. Divide the children into small groups of two to four and give each group two Children's Rights Cards, paper and pen. Explain that each card describes a right in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Ask them to read aloud the two articles on the cards and decide which right is more important to children. They should then write down their reasons for choosing one right over the other.
3. Collect the cards for 'less important' rights. Ask each group of four to take their chosen Children's Rights Card and join another group. In this larger group of eight, repeat Step 1, deciding which of the rights on their two Children's Rights Cards is more important for children and writing down their reasons.
4. Again collect cards for the 'less important' rights. List them all on a flipchart, labelled 'Less Important Rights'.
5. When groups have made their final choice, ask someone from each of the groups to read aloud the single Children's Rights Card they have chosen as most important and explain the reasons for their choice. As each is read, list it on a flipchart labelled 'Our Rights'. Only two to four rights will remain, depending on the size of the group.
6. Discuss these choices:
  - a. Did you have difficulty making these choices? Why?
  - b. What factors made you choose one right over another?
  - c. Did your ideas about which rights were most important change during this activity?
  - d. Do you agree with the reasons other groups gave for their choices? Why or why not?
7. Give out the cards for the 'less important' rights at random and ask the children to read them aloud. Discuss what would happen if we really rejected these rights.
  - a. Choose several specific 'less important' rights and ask the children to imagine what would hap-



pen without them (e.g. right to adoption and alternative care, right to family life, right to play and cultural activity).

- b. How would really losing any of these 'less important' rights affect you personally?
- c. What affect would losing these 'less important' rights have on the chosen rights?

### Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Remind the children of the fundamental principle of universality: everyone has all rights, and discuss:
  - a. Why is it important that every human being has the same human rights?
2. Can human rights be taken away from some people? Why?
  - a. Discuss the importance of having the full complement of children's rights. Although you need not use terms such as 'inalienability' or 'interdependence', help the children understand that everyone needs all human rights.
  - b. Illustrate the interrelation of rights with specific examples (e.g. the right to education and the right to information; the right to family and the right to non-separation from parents).
3. Ask the children for examples of how they need all their rights.
  - a. Discuss how choosing one right over another depends on individual priorities (e.g. "I've never been arrested," or "I live with two parents") but the CRC takes into consideration the needs of all children in the world.
  - b. Ask the children to think of situations where each of the 'less important' rights might be crucial to the survival or well-being of a particular child.

### Suggestions for follow-up

- The activity 'A CONSTITUTION FOR OUR GROUP', P. 56, relates rights to responsibilities.
- Other activities involving the CRC are 'BOARD GAMES', P. 70, and 'RABBIT'S RIGHTS', P. 141.
- The activity 'SAILING TO A NEW LAND', P. 152, also asks children to prioritise among rights.

### Ideas for action

- Encourage the children to bring in examples in daily life where children enjoy the rights they have discussed.
- Look for and/or research stories about children's rights, either being violated or protected, especially situations such as child labour that may not be familiar to them.

### Tips for the facilitator

- Younger children may need further explanation of some rights.
- The facilitator should accept all group decisions without comment. Any objections to a group's decision should come from other children.
- Children do not need to use legal terms such as 'interdependence' and 'interrelation' to understand the concept.
- In the debriefing discussion, be prepared to give concrete examples of what could happen if a particular right were taken away.
- Be sure children understand that not everything is a right.

### Adaptation

This activity assumes some previous knowledge of the CRC. If children are unfamiliar with the CRC,



begin the activity by introducing children’s rights and then having the children make the Children’s Rights Cards themselves. Divide the children into pairs and give them the text of one or two CRC articles in the child-friendly version, heavy paper cards and art supplies. Ask them to write each article out on a separate card and illustrate with a picture it. When the cards are complete, have each pair read their rights, explain what it means and show their illustration to the whole group. Then follow the Instructions starting with No. 2. The facilitator may need to help the children understand what their articles means.

## HANDOUT: RIGHTS CARDS

<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 7</b></p> <p>Right to Name and Nationality</p> <p>All children have the right to a legally registered name, and nationality. Also the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for, by their parents.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 3</b></p> <p>The Child’s Best Interest</p> <p>In all actions and decisions concerning children, the best interest of the child shall be the major consideration.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 6</b></p> <p>Right to Life, Survival &amp; Development</p> <p>The right of every child to life, care and development for a fuller life in society.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12</b></p> <p>Right to Expression</p> <p>Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.</p>
<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 9</b></p> <p>Right to Non-separation from Parents</p> <p>Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good (if a parent is mistreating a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents. Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move and get back together as a family.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 27</b></p> <p>Right to Adequate Standard of Living</p> <p>Parents have the responsibility to provide adequate living conditions for the child’s development. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 28</b></p> <p>Right to Education</p> <p>Children have a right to an education that fosters the development of the personality and talents, and respects human rights and the cultural and national values. Primary education should be free. Discipline in schools should respect children’s human dignity.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 13</b></p> <p>Right to Access to Information</p> <p>Children have the right to get and to share information from the media. Television, radio, and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could cause harm or damage to them or to others.</p>



## HANDOUT

<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b> Articles 24 &amp; 26</p> <p>Right to Health &amp; Social Welfare</p> <p>Children have the right to good quality health care, to social security services, to clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment, so that they will stay healthy and well.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b> <b>Article 40</b></p> <p>Right of Juveniles</p> <p>Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b> <b>Article 16</b></p> <p>Right to Privacy</p> <p>Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b> <b>Article 15</b></p> <p>Right to Free Association</p> <p>Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.</p>
<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b> <b>Article 18</b></p> <p>Right to Family Life</p> <p>The family has the primary child rearing function. Both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing of the child and should always consider what is best for each child.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b> <b>Article 14</b></p> <p>Right to Freedom of Belief, Conscience and Religion</p> <p>Children have the right to think and believe what they want, and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b> <b>Articles 30 &amp; 31</b></p> <p>Right to Play and Cultural Activities</p> <p>All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of recreational, cultural and artistic activities.</p>	<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b> <b>Article 9</b></p> <p>Right to Adoption &amp; Alternative Care</p> <p>It is the obligation of governments to provide children with alternative care, respect the child's religious, cultural, ethnic background, and to ensure that only authorized bodies carry out adoption.</p>

