

Supporting Participation: Learning from Experience

Fedia

Barcelona

September 2009

ear2theground





Aims

- Consider how together we can create the conditions that
- support *meaningful* participation and develop a culture of respect
- by reflecting on our and your experience

Meaningful Participation

is a rolling process where

Children and young people's voices and choices have a

Positive impact on decisions actions, structures and cultures.



How we will meet this aim

- Breathing Fire into Participation (2002)
 - Examples from three projects working with marginalised children and young people
 - The Participation Wheel of supportive conditions
1. **What is Participation?**
 2. **The Example Projects**
 3. **What is the Wheel?**
 1. **Conditions where we have less influence**
 2. **Conditions where we have more influence**
 4. **Making the wheel roll**
 5. **Key messages**



1. What is Participation?

- A Ladder, a Degree a Pathway (Hart, Treseder, Shier)
- Involvement in and influence on decision making
- In a wide range of locations e.g. home, play, school, youth councils

Think about maximizing

Locations

Stages

(and processes within these)

Levels

Where we can support participation



Participation stages and levels

Project Stages

- Initiation
- Direction
- Idea generation
- Activity creation
- Lobbying for goals
- Enacting the goals
- Learning

Influence Levels

- Not involved
- Involved, understand and engaged
- Listened to, heard and respected
- Having a say but the leader has the final choice
- Having choice within limits agreed by leader
- Having control, limited only by socially agreed obligations to others





2. The Example Projects

1. **Children and Young Peoples Audit of Particaption**
2. **Children, Citizenship and Europe: Listening to the voices of marginalised children in Wales and Languedoc Rousillon.**
3. **Your Health - Your Rights**



Save the Children
Achub y Plant



Swansea Children and Young People's Participation Audit

Aim

For children and young people receiving support from Social Services to judge for themselves the extent to which they had opportunities to participate and be listened to

How

Meet together and speak out about experiences

Offer support and training to enable them to carry out peer research and consultation

Lobby/influence the Social Service department to make improvements

Who?



Swansea Children and Young People's Participation Audit

Used Participation Strategy key themes

Information
Decision-making
Being listened to
Support
Access to complaints procedures

Peer led consultation

Written report

Impact / Outcomes

Presentation to Managers
Presentation to Children's Commissioner
An action plan
Written information for young people
A permanent forum
Inclusion in Training Manual

Children Citizenship and Europe

Aims

For marginalized children to define for themselves what citizenship means and what they want to change

To use these ideas to bring about change

Who?

6 groups

Disabled

Gypsy Travellers

Young Carers

Refugees

Looked After

Minority Ethnic

55 children aged 5 –13

How?

4- 6 sessions of

Performance/Video - Art -

Groups discussions - Site Tours -

Reflection

Children Citizenship and Europe in Wales

Group	Goal	Action Taken	Impact ?	A Rolling Process?
GT	<p>“Stop them calling us names” Improve our sites</p>	Report was presented to an MEP	School was visited by an Assembly member	Group have subsequently made their own film and book.
YCs	<p>Homework passes at school More power</p>	<p>Lobbying for pass Presented at Conference</p>	<p>3 schools have passes Who knows what else?</p>	The group run by peer-led steering group
DC	Be able to come to play scheme every day	Not known because of communications resulting from staff turn over at the project		

Children Citizenship and Europe in France

Group	Goal	Action Taken	Impact ?	A Rolling Process?
ME	More Play Change the President!	Report to management by me	Workers trained More play time Report used for funding	I'm struggling with this
LA	Play more More time at home Be more polite	Report and video presented to staff team	More staff time being allocated to creative activities.	Already had children's meetings.
Ref	Let us have a proper home	I reported their views to EU conference	France is still locking up refugee children	Children have some say about activities at centre.



Your Health – Your Rights

Aim

To develop information for children and young people receiving health services, about their rights under the UNCRC

Raise awareness

When

Children's rights awareness week

Who?

Children and young people

- on adolescent and child hospital wards
- on adult wards
- in the community

How?

- Creative methods to prioritise rights
- Reviewed and amended by others



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Children's Health Rights Week



Your Health – Your Rights

Rights prioritised

Not just the rights to life and good health – art 6, 24 and 23

But rights are for everyone

Rights to

- respect
- privacy and confidentiality
- education, play and leisure
- information, to speak out and asked for your consent
- have your family with you

Outcome/Impact

Child friendly leaflet

Consent and confidentiality

Information on health conditions, access to files

Having own space and a young peoples space

Staff attitude, knowledge and confidence in CR

Child friendly complaints process

3. The Participation Wheel

QU: What builds a culture of meaningful participation and respect?

A Participation Wheel ... that needs to keep on turning.

The spokes of the wheel are elements children have told us are important and which we have observed in our work.



3. The Participation Wheel

Spokes of longer term conditions



- **Institutional Commitment**
- **Pre-existing Empowerment**
- **Evaluation and Planning**
- **Resources**
- **Staff Quality and Quantity**
- **Training and Support**
- **Independent Checks**

3. The Participation Wheel

Institutional Commitment



- **What participatory structures or strategies do you have in place?**
 - **WAG UNCRC commitment**
 - **Swansea Participation Strategy**
 - **Project listening culture?**
- **What will you do with the ideas that children and young people give you ?**
 - **Get a firm commitment so you can give clear messages**

3. The Participation Wheel

Empowerment



- **What experience do the children and young people have of their ideas and decisions being put into action?**
 - Peer-led young carers took control on the first night
 - Work particularly with disempowered
- **What level of control and influence is the organisation prepared to give? What are the limits?**
 - Where to get control and influence
 - How to let go of our control and influence

3. The Participation Wheel

Evaluation and Planning



- **What opportunities will there be for you to use their ideas to influence your planning and development ?**
 - Local Authority training manual and action plan
 - CCE review, plan and resource every session
- **What opportunities will there be for children and young people to plan and evaluate the impact of their views?**
 - Requires rolling process
 - GT to be involved in Welsh Assembly Strategy Consultation

3. The Participation Wheel

Resources



- **What resources do you have that children and young people can use?**
- **How much control can they have over deciding what to do with these?**

3. The Participation Wheel

Staff, Training and Support



- **What staff (experienced young people) are available to support this project? What is their experience of participation?**
 - **Staff disempowerment is a barrier to children having a say (and vice versa)**
 - **Have to demonstrate ability to listen**
- **What skills do they have, what roles can they take on?**
 - **Don't need to be facilitators, can respond to children's request for organisers, designers, speakers**
- **What training and support can you / young people offer to skill up the staff/ young supporters/ young people?**

3. The Participation Wheel

Independent Checks



- **What independent checks exist to make sure that the children's ideas will result in putting change into action?**
 - **UN Committee**
 - **Children's Commissioners and Ombudsmen**
 - **Named Local Authority Lead Councillor and Lead Manager**
 - **Group and Individual Advocacy Services**
 - **Listening, Independence and Enforcement**

3. The Participation Wheel

Spokes of Shorter Term Conditions



- **Time**
- **Space**
- **Fun**
- **Inclusion and Access**
- **Feedback and Dialogue**

3. The Participation Wheel

Time



- **Go at children's chosen pace**
- **Gives experience, builds confidence and capacity**
- **Whose time scale?**
- **One-off events only if other trusted adults support and continue relationships**

And so we ask

- **What is the timescale for the piece of work?**
- **Will you adjust it to meet the needs / pace of children and young people?**

3. The Participation Wheel

Space



- Some children and young people have difficult group experiences and emotional barriers to co-create a space that is:

Participative and Permissive

their choice to be there, their rules

Physically ours

Emotionally Safe

in every changing moment

3. The Participation Wheel

Fun



- Fun as defined differently by children.
- All participate more when we enjoy.

Use fun consultation methods Participatory, Play, Art, Games

- **Develop ideas, views and analysis**
Value Continuum, Opinion Finders, Paper Carousel, Diamond Ranking
- **Express feeling, overviews, criteria**
Draw model worker, map, make puppets, photography, board games
- **Give children and young people control**
Peer (video) questioning on own themes



Once you get here you can choose which way to go



If you land on a dice say something you want to change



The Citizenship Mystery Game

The Scooby Doo team have to solve the Citizenship Mystery. What does this mysterious word mean? Collect one of each Scooby Snack to help solve the mystery. Everytime you land on a Scooby Snack pick up and answer a card. If you land on a Snack you already have, choose any other card. If you land on the magnet, move the last person forward 2 squares. You must stop at every circle and answer these challenge cards.

Check out your cards to solve the mystery



3. The Participation Wheel

Access and Inclusion



Participation needs to be facilitated for all children, not just those who are easily included and accessed.

Who gets excluded?

Practical difficulties

Vulnerability

Cultural and Geographical reasons.

‘Relatively Easy to Identify but Harder to Reach’

‘Easier to Identify but Harder to Engage’

3. The Participation Wheel

Access and Inclusion



- **No one approach fits all.**
- **May not participate because of discrimination or disengaged**
 - **Challenge discrimination**
Create a culture of respect
 - **How to reach out**
Get support from specialist organisations
Ask children and young people what they need
Alter organisations processes to encourage inclusion
Use fun, non formal, variety of communication methods

3. The Participation Wheel

Feedback and Dialogue



➤ **Feedback**

➤ **Dialogue**

Look for mechanisms to apply pressure for change

4. Making the wheel roll

QU: With all this activity,

have we achieved a culture of respect and participation for children and young people?

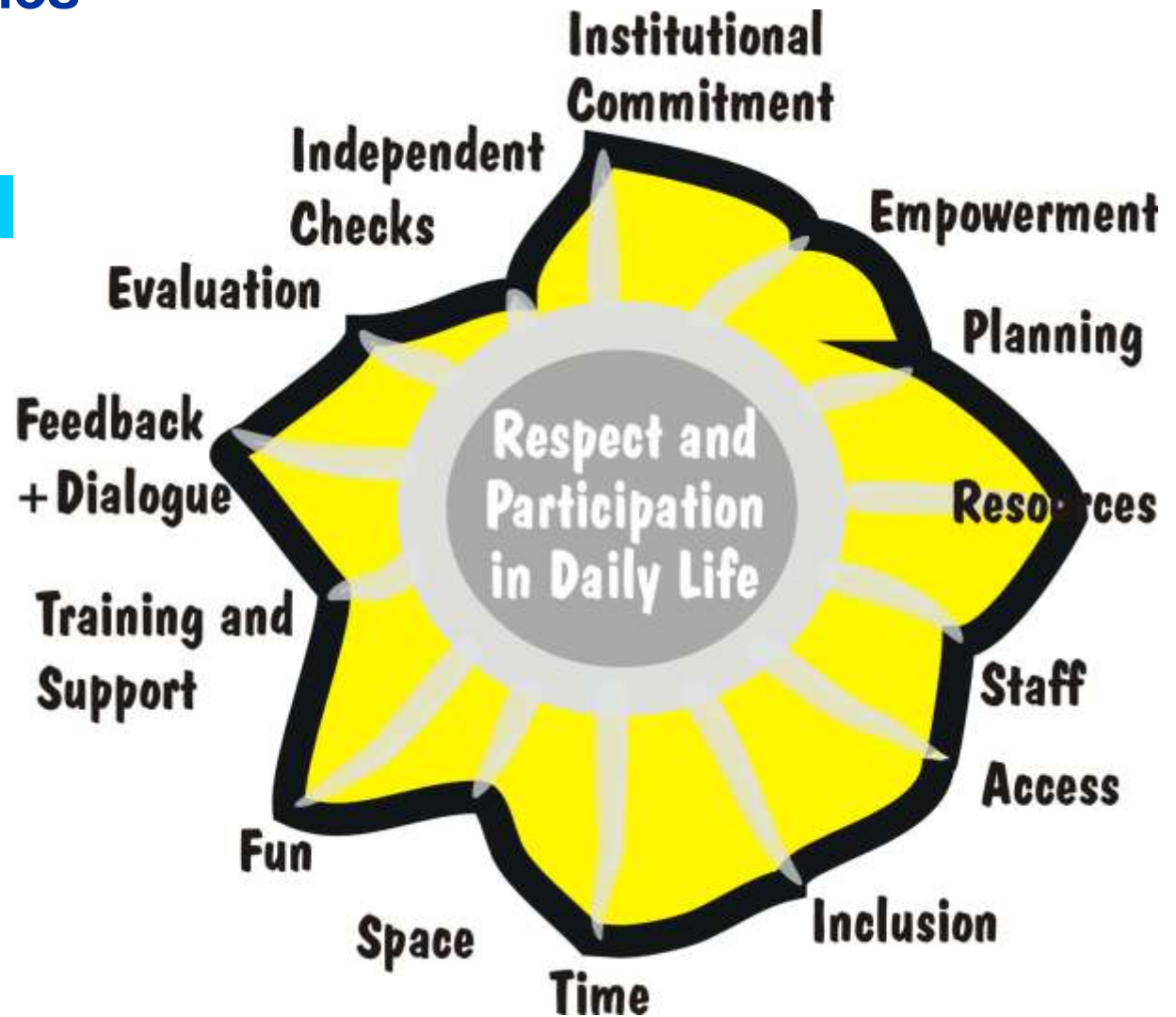
Have we built a participation wheel with strong spokes?



4. Making the wheel roll

ANS: Sometimes better than others.

Sometimes our wheel looks like this



4. Making the wheel roll

We would like your help to suggest

what can we do to strengthen these spokes?





5. Key Messages

- 1. Participation is meaningful when it has an impact**
- 2. Participation can be maximised in our own practices if we ask ourselves HOW? at every stage**
- 3. Participation can be maximised AND have more impact if it is a rolling process that develops a culture of respect and participation**



5. Useful References

Reflect on your experiences

Visit our website www.ear2theground.net

Read

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