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YES WE PARTICIPATE!

PRACTICAL TOOLS AND
GOOD PRACTICES ON PARTICIPATION
WITH MIGRANT CHILDREN CROSSING
THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA



Save the Children

Italia ONLUS

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“It was awesome because I was able to express how I feel and what I want in the present and in future”.

J. Gambia – Apulia, 17 years

“I like this meeting for many reasons because it will enhance my ability towards becoming great in life. I will like to seek your help about my life determination into football because that is my life”.

E. Nigeria – Sicily, 16 years

Messages written by some unaccompanied children who took part in the activities carried out, within the Praesidium project, in first reception centres and care facilities for children.

Foreword

There are more than 14 thousands unaccompanied children registered in Italy (date 31 December 2014). More than three thousands of them have made themselves untraceable. The most urgent question we need to ask ourselves is why does this happen. Do they have a planned migration strategy aimed at reaching family members in other European countries? Do they not feel safe in Italy? It is clear that a civilised country cannot let the river of foreign unaccompanied minors flow freely or even become wider: losing track of them means not ensuring their safety and their entitlement to reception which are granted to them by Italian law. All of this leads to an inevitable repercussion: the chances that their “journey” crosses with even more difficult and negative experiences rises and there is an increasing risk that they become easy prey to criminal groups. It is true that our reception system does not always adequately respond to the needs of the growing number of children arriving in Italy: running after the latest emergency is the predominant approach, to the detriment of an intervention strategy that reflects the complexity of the migration phenomenon. Furthermore, there is a deep need to align practices to regulatory guidelines. This is at the top of my priorities.

At the same time, I wonder how many of these children ‘on the move’ are aware of the opportunities that the Italian reception system could offer them and I wonder: if receiving the right information and meeting operators able to listen to their needs, would they still choose to make themselves untraceable?

The task of Save the Children is to ensure that children arriving by sea receive correct information and are listened to. We try to do it with competence and care, working with many operators and services. In doing so, we have to face many difficulties due to the increasing number of arrivals and a reception system that has several flaws.

Trying to build with these boys and girls an informed and shared path, based on listening to them and their participation, is a fundamental right, but it is not only that. Although these rights are granted by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Committee in several General Comments, we believe that only through the participation of boys and girls in defining their path of reception and inclusion in the Italian context it will be possible to respond to their needs, build individualised plans that take into account the needs and aspirations of each of them, and prevent errors that could create problems to the children and overburden our reception system.

This publication offers tools and useful ideas to pursue this path, because only working together with each boy or girl we can make choices that respect their interests, those of today, but especially those of tomorrow.

Vincenzo Spadafora
*Italian Ombudsman
for Children*

Introduction

Save the Children promotes and spreads the culture of participation and practices related to it at all levels, be them institutional or informal. Its aim is to root in our society the idea that the participation of children is not a privilege to be granted them by adults, or to be conquered by them, but it is a method of intervention that enhances, strengthens and empowers children and adults as rightful agents. Such promotion of children's participation in society and institutions requires a constant and patient work in very different contexts; it entails the exchange of expertise and best practices related to the work done on a daily basis with the children, it also requires support in the development of materials and techniques to be adapted to specific contexts and objectives.

With the present work Save the Children wants to promote and disseminate good participatory practices with migrant children arriving by sea, as they have been already tested in the southern border areas within the Praesidium Project. Our aim is to offer to all those working with unaccompanied children tools and concrete ideas developed by Save the Children. This approach and methodology could support them in creating participatory programmes and activities and protect the right to be heard, in the spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The target group includes unaccompanied children aged between 12 – 17 years.

Indeed, Save the Children believes that, on the one hand, it is vital that care workers who run these important services pay a particular attention to listening to the children and, on the other, that they develop stable participatory tools and/or that they have proper tools and techniques that help them carry out structured and fixed-term programmes with the various groups of children. In fact, this approach is crucial to affirm the principle that it is good that children are not only recipients of a service, but also become active builders of their integration path, carriers of instances and opinions that deserve to be taken into account. Children should be considered leading experts for the resolution of the problems that affect them.

Thanks to the long-lasting experience developed in our work in the southern border areas with the Praesidium Project, as well as to the linkage with other programmes in this field, Save the Children has increased awareness of the positive impact that participation can also have in the first reception centres and in the care facilities for migrant children. In particular, in 2014 Save the Children promoted participatory activities in 8 first reception centres of the Region Sicily¹ and involved 32 operators of 21 care facilities for children in Sicily, Apulia and Calabria², enhancing the issue of participation during training and discussion meetings, and promoting the creation of 20 participatory programmes, thus being able to reach more than 600 unaccompanied children.

To this end, Save the Children staff specialized in participatory activities with children in risk situations³ was involved. The staff has supported the implementation of participatory activities at the southern border (Sicily, Apulia and Calabria), in the places where unaccompanied children find the very first reception.

This collaboration has formed the basis for the creation of valuable and significant material, rooted in the experience of the specific realities and therefore useful for a real and important change in the lives of unaccompanied children living in Italy. This is the material that has been collected and presented in this document.

Save the Children believes that it is only by interacting with care workers who work there and by testing these practices in the single realities that we can establish a factual basis for thinking, planning and promoting pathways and practical activities, measure their effectiveness and start a serious reflection on the prospects that participation can develop in such contexts.

This document is divided in four chapters:

- The **first chapter** presents and explores **what is meant by “participation”**⁴, that is interpreted not only as a “right,” but also as an “intervention method” aimed at the promotion and protection of the right of children to be involved and to be heard in all matters affecting them;
- in the **second chapter** we examine the realm of application of **participation with migrant children in the border areas**. This section starts with a presentation of the area of intervention, where it is necessary to distinguish between first reception centres and care facilities for children, according to the features and length of stay of children. We then clarify what are the aims and the specific objectives of participatory activities in the border areas, and we illustrate the ways in which you can engage and make unaccompanied children the main actors in participatory activities;
- The **third chapter** contains **10 participatory activity cards** than can be carried out in the first reception centres with unaccompanied children. These cards, illustrated according to a structured chronological order, are accompanied by valuable methodological guidance, operational tools and practical advice, useful to ensure an ethical and meaningful participation of all targeted children;
- The **fourth chapter** is a guide for care workers to the implementation of **participatory processes with unaccompanied children staying in care facilities**. It contains an operational tool designed to guide and support care workers in developing a participatory process card sheet and methodological guidance for efficient participation.

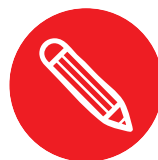
In the **conclusions** are highlighted the most critical aspects in the development of participatory activities and in the promotion of a “culture of participation”.

Finally, the appendix includes:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in child friendly language
- Useful materials to be used in the implementation of participatory activities.
They can be cut out or photocopied
- Bibliography and Links for further in-depth information.



REGULATORY AND
PHENOMENOLOGICAL
IN-DEPTH STUDY



ACHIEVED
ACTIVITIES



IN-DEPTH
METHODOLOGICAL
ANALYSIS

¹The participatory programmes, carried out under the project Praesidium, involved first reception centres in eastern Sicily. These were identified based on the following criteria: long waiting period before the transfer to the care facilities; registered conflicts between children and between children and care workers; inability to carry out any type of activity; presence of volunteers who for various reasons come into contact with children; high number of nationalities characteristics of children on the move (Egyptians, Eritreans, Somalis). The first reception centres concerned were Ispica (RG), Priolo (SR), Porto Palo (SR), Scuola Verde of Augusta (SR), the sports hall and CPSA of Pozzallo (SR), Le Zagare (SR) and Caltagirone (CT).

²The Project's Coordinator, the Territorial Teams and the Child Participation Expert have identified for each region the care facilities meeting specific criteria, such as: authorized care facilities; number of children hosted; stability of the care facilities and of the reception of unaccompanied foreign children; care facilities receiving only children; care workers availability; the presence of a cultural mediator or of a communication flow between care workers and children; high or low turnover. The activities were carried out in 21 care facilities for children of which six were located in Calabria, Gruppo Appartamento "Velonà" (Botricello - CZ), Sprar "Centro Myriam" (San Pietro Apostolo - CZ), Sprar "Il Vivarium" (Squillace - CZ), CORISS "Villa Fabrizia" (Fabrizia - WV), Comunità Educativa "Lo Scoiattolo" (Sanginetto - CS) and Fondazione "Unitas Catholica" (RC). Nine care facilities were located in Sicily, Comunità Alloggio "L'Albero della Vita" (Pachino - SR), Cooperativa Sociale "Prospettiva" (San Giovanni Galermo - CT), Comunità "Cinque Palme" (Grammichele - CT), Comunità Alloggio "Luigi Monti" (SR), Comunità Alloggio "Futura 89" (CT), Sprar "il Nodo" (Acireale - CT), Comunità Alloggio "Il Giovane Anchise" (Palagonia - CT), Associazione "Aironè" (San Giovanni La Punta - CT), Comunità Alloggio "Edera" (Canicattì - AG) and seven in Puglia (Apulia), Gruppo Appartamento "Passo dopo passo" (FG), Comunità Educativa "RondineA" (Oria - BR), Comunità Educativa "San Giuseppe" e "Santa Lucia" (Borgo Tressanti - Cerignola), Comunità educativa "Esedra" (Triggiano - BA), Comunità educativa "Un Senso" (Noicattaro - BA), Comunità educativa "Un Altro Senso" (Noicattaro - BA), Comunità "San Francesco" (Cerignola - FG).

³Specifically: Child Participation Expert and the Child Participation Officer.

⁴Some passages of the section are taken from the Save the Children Italy publication (2010) "Tu partecipi, Io Partecipo" (You participate, I participate), which summarizes the most significant experiences of the organization in terms of participation and the results of the analysis methods used in various areas of the Europe - Italy programs (free download from www.savethechildren.it).



CHAPTER I

PARTICIPATION: THEORETICAL REFERENCES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

PARTICIPATION AND
THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD:
WHAT DOES "PARTICIPATION"
MEAN AND WHY IT MATTERS

PARTICIPATION AND THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD: WHAT DOES "PARTICIPATION" MEAN AND WHY IT MATTERS

1989 was a turning point in the conception of children: with the approval of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** (CRC), for the first time, all persons under eighteen are recognized as rights-holders (and not only as beneficiaries of adult protection) and a new principle is established as a fundamental human right: the principle that children are and should be respected as active agents in life-making processes, that they are the bearers of skills, knowledge and abilities which they are able to transfer in society, and that they must be involved in decisions which affect them.



Specifically articles 5, 12, 13 and 17 of the CRC declare that:

- parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, have to recognize that the children growing up acquire knowledge and abilities and are, therefore able to assume responsibilities measured to their maturity concerning matters that involve them. (art. 5 CRC);
- all children shall have the right to freedom of expression, religion, conscience, assembly, privacy and information (art. 13 to 17 CRC);
- Any child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. (Art. 12 CRC).

This set of rights is conceptualized with the word **“participation”**: a term that, while not expressly contained in the CRC, was adopted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and many other international organizations that deal with children’s rights, to describe the implementation of all these rights (art. 5, 12, 13 and 17 of the CRC), on whose respect depends the implementation of all other rights. This means that all the rights of children, including the *best interests* of the child (art. 3 CRC), can be fully achieved only if what children have to say is heard and duly taken into due account.

Effective participation allows to:

- enhance the personality of each child, promoting recognition and self-awareness;
- put at the centre of life development the child as protagonist, helping form an autonomous and critical person;
- make children aware of their rights and the responsibilities these entail;
- recognize and respect the different points of view of children, which are different from those of their interlocutors, encouraging socialization and the ability to defend and/or change their ideas;
- take joint and therefore more effective decisions, making children responsible for their compliance;
- encourage the personal and active involvement of the child, motivating interest in his/her growth process.

Participation is, therefore, important because it gives all children the opportunity to be heard, to influence the actions and decisions that affect their lives and to become active citizens. It gives them the opportunity to promote attitudes, behaviours and skills that are essential to achieve the well-being necessary for a child to become an active component of society for the rest of his/her life. In fact, children who are able to express their ideas and are

involved in decisions that affect them, develop and increase their skills also in the assumption of social roles.

In its work with children, **Save the Children** adopts an approach to participation which is based not only on the recognition of their right to freely express views, ideas, feelings and needs, but also on the need that all children – even those who are in situations of social malaise – are given the opportunity to participate in decisions which affect them and to be heard and seriously considered for what they say.

This choice entails the adoption of a specific methodology of intervention that is embodied in:

- understanding and developing theories and concepts underlying the participation of children;
- including participation in the different areas of the programs and individual projects;
- developing and supporting innovative approaches and pilot projects;
- sensitizing and training key actors;
- supporting initiatives and organizations of children.

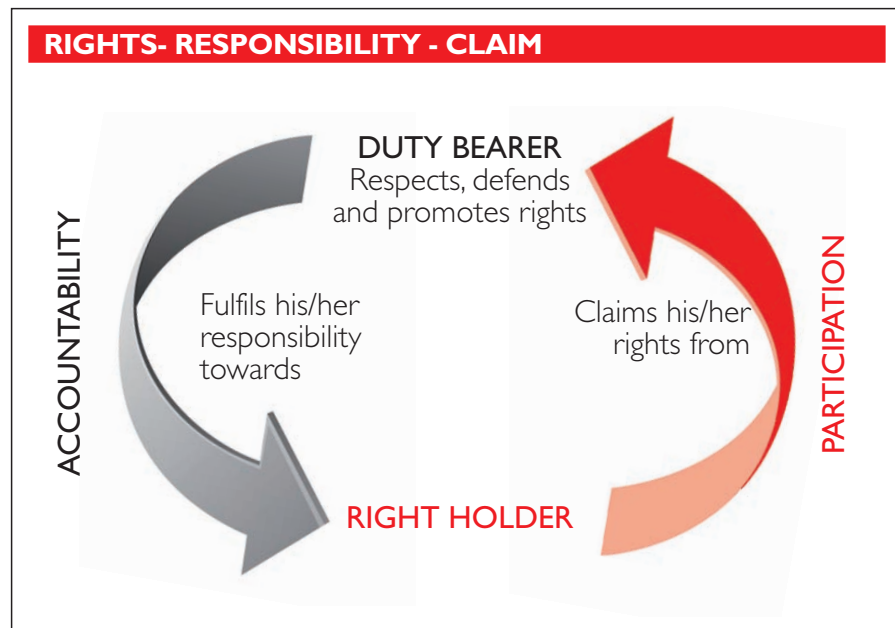
The fact that participation is a right of which all children are **rights holders** implies, on one hand, that all adults are “**duty-bearers**”⁵ towards children and must therefore be “**accountable**”, that is they have to fulfil their responsibilities towards children. On the other hand, it also implies that the children have to learn, exercise and, if necessary, claim their rights through participation. Participation, therefore, is not “to do something nice with children”, but it means enabling children to be responsible individuals and active members of the community and the society they live in, and to have an impact on decisions that affect them.

In order to “influence” the decisions that affect children through the opinions expressed by them, it is necessary to establish a process of continuous and sustained dialogue, based on mutual trust between children and adults. To facilitate this **empowerment** process of children, Save the Children believes that it is essential that adults are prepared to listen to them with commitment and seriousness and to consider them not only as vulnerable subjects, but also competent people.

For this reason, to facilitate the participation of children, in the family sphere, at school and in society in general, we must first develop the ability of adults to facilitate their expressiveness and to seriously listen to their opinions, informing and training them to use participatory tools. We must also develop the children’s ability to access information, to claim their rights and to build partnerships with the adults (duty bearers). In this process, the duty bearers become part of a relationship based on the recognition of children and young people as rights holders and on the possibility that they can, through specific activities and courses, know and exercise those rights.

The work of Save the Children revolves around two elements: on the one hand it urges the duty bearers to fulfil their obligation in respect of the rights holders, i.e. children; on the other it supports these children, as rights holders, in learning, exercising and claiming their rights.

The diagram below presents some major elements of this process⁶:



As part of the right to participate and all related operational forms, Save the Children has **seven standards that have been developed at international level to ensure an ethical and meaning ful participation.**

In summary⁷, they are:

1. An ethical approach;
2. Children's participation is relevant and voluntary;
3. A child-friendly, enabling environment;
4. Equality of opportunity;
5. Staff are effective and confident;
6. Participation promotes the safety and protection of children;
7. Ensuring follow-up and evaluation

These seven standards are the starting point, and are a guide for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any activity involving the participation of boys and girls. The whole organization is committed to meeting these standards in its activities involving the participation of children, making them known and promoting them within the associations and institutions it works with.

⁵Duty bearer: the term refers to adults -parents, teachers, institutions- who have the responsibility of protecting the rights of children and young people and to promote their active participation

⁶ Source: Save the Children UK (2012) "Child participation handouts – Core learning". For further information see Save the Children Italia (2010) "Tu partecipi, Io Partecipo".

⁷ For a detailed description of each standard:

www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/practice_standards_participation_1.pdf



CHAPTER II

PARTICIPATION WITH MIGRANT CHILDREN

GIVING VOICE TO MIGRANT CHILDREN
CROSSING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA:
THE AREA OF INTERVENTION

AIMS AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
OF PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

HOW TO IMPLEMENT PARTICIPATORY
ACTIVITIES IN BORDER AREAS

GIVING VOICE TO MIGRANT CHILDREN CROSSING THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA: THE AREA OF INTERVENTION

Consistency between the theoretical framework so far traced and practices regarding the participation of children is of the utmost importance. For this reason Save the Children promotes and is committed to ensure participation as a right, but also to use it as a method of intervention, **particularly within the protection programs for children** - be them foreign-born or of Italian nationality - who live in situations of social exclusion and at risk of exploitation and abuse.

In order to involve such vulnerable groups of children in the decisions that affect them, we processed *ad hoc* participatory processes (i.e. consultation, peer support and peer research⁸), aimed at a more precise finding out of the risk and social exclusion factors that involve them and improving opportunities and protection.

Since we believe that through participation children can become active and aware actors - and thus to be able to fight and overcome the poverty, discrimination and inequality they experienced – ensuring this right to particularly vulnerable children is a priority and requires strategies and practices in order to work in the most appropriate manner.

This is the direction of the participatory processes described in this document, designed to be effective and meaningful; that is truly accessible (timing, spaces, subjects, results), flexible, relevant with respect to their lives and that they take into account the specificities of the participants and their contexts of belonging and origin.

These processes are designed to be opportunities of/to:

- Social inclusion;
- Alleviation of difficult living conditions;
- Expression and valorisation of the children's experiences and knowledge;
- Influence decision-makers.

Among the protection programs implemented by Save the Children, of great importance are those aimed at **migrant children**, that is children who move for various reasons, either voluntarily or against their will, with or without parents or adults (duty bearers), within a country or from one country to another, and who are at risk (or at increased risk) of economic or sexual exploitation, abuse and violence because of this move.

Within this group, the most vulnerable are the **unaccompanied children**, i.e. children who arrive in Italy alone, without an adult (duty bearer); for them Save the Children Italy has planned targeted protection interventions. In particular, since 2008, Save the Children has been intervening, within the Praesidium Project⁹, in all places where migrants arrive by sea, to offer protection and support to children by providing: legal information, cultural mediation, monitoring of procedures and reception conditions, as well as supporting the authorities in the identification of specific vulnerable people.



CHILDREN ARRIVED IN ITALY BY SEA IN 2014

In 2014, 26,122 children arrived in Italy by sea. Of these 13,026 were unaccompanied, for the majority (3,394) Eritreans, Egyptians (2,007), Somalis (1,481) and Gambians (1,208).

The number is threefold the number of unaccompanied children who arrived in 2011, the year in which the Italian government declared a state of emergency because of the massive influx of migrants arriving by sea. By 31 December 2014, the unaccompanied children who have been reported to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy was 14,243. 3,307 of them were untraceable (for the most part Egyptians, Eritreans and Somalis).

Many years of experience with this type of activity have highlighted, with increasing strength, the need of migrant children, especially if unaccompanied, to share their experiences, often traumatic, and to tell their stories, to describe the difficulties they had experienced or were experiencing at a given time (as when the period of stay in the first reception centres lasted much longer than expected, awaiting to be transferred in the care facilities for children, living in totally inadequate conditions), and to explain the aspirations tied to their migration. For this reason, Save the Children has increased its efforts to ensure they are heard, also by the institutions, and to ensure that their views are taken into due consideration. This was done by testing activities and structured consultation processes in the CPSA of Lampedusa and in the first reception centres in Sicily, but also by supporting residential care facilities for children in the elaboration and implementation of best participatory practices.

Save the Children believes that the first reception centres that host unaccompanied children are an important resource in the complex system of reception of this particularly vulnerable group of migrants, whether they decide to settle in our country or they are just in transit waiting to reach other European countries.

Care facilities for children, in particular, may be the decisive factor for a successful integration process in the society; furthermore, they are the right places where to respond to the fundamental rights of children, both on a bureaucratic and sustenance level, and at an affective and emotional level.



“FIRST” RECEPTION AT THE SOUTHERN BORDER

Italian legislation declares that unaccompanied children cannot be expelled and must be placed in a safe place¹⁰. After their arrival or after being traced near the landing areas, the unaccompanied children are hosted in structures that give them first aid and first reception, while waiting to find them a place in the care facilities for children.

In the absence of stable structures for the initial reception¹¹ of migrant children traced along the coast, places like gyms and schools, made fully available by the Prefecture or by the municipal administration of the landing/arrival place, are occasionally used for such purposes.

According to Save the Children’s monitoring activities¹², such structures are totally inadequate to ensure essential protection and reception standards, especially in cases of prolonged stay. This is caused by the lack of inadequacy of toilets, showers, beds, as well as of procedures that ensure basic goods and services to the migrants. Furthermore, in places where the facilities are not intended exclusively for the reception of children, there is a worrying lack of suitable space to ensure adequate separation of children from adults.

This situation has been exacerbated by the prolonged stay of children, due to the difficulty in finding places in care facilities. Due to the lack of a national reception system¹³, it is not easy to know if and where there are vacancies¹⁴, and even when such information is available, the transfer is not always automatic, because often there are no resources to afford the burden of the hosting.

As a result, the structures used as first reception centres, which should be “transit” places and host children for the time strictly necessary to carry out the first aid and assistance operations, become places where it is possible (useful and necessary) to carry out educational, participatory and learning activities. Even though such activities should be the prerogative of the host care centres and of other services where migrant children are hosted once they are transferred from the place of arrival.

In the structures used as first reception centres in which participatory activities were carried out, Save the Children has found a tangible improvement of the reception conditions, and of the relationship among children and between them and care workers, thereby reducing conflicts and removals.



THE CARE FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN IN ITALY

These are residential facilities designed to accommodate people with limited personal autonomy, without the necessary family support or for whom staying in the household is either temporarily or permanently in contrast with the individualized care plan. Such structures, as well as having to comply with the structural requirements provided for housing intended for residential use, must be equipped with specific organizational requirements, adapted to the education-care needs of children: these requirements are, however, set on a regional basis.

The monitoring, carried out by Save the Children in 2008, on the conditions of reception of children arriving by sea in the care facilities of Sicily, Apulia and Calabria, highlighted that the main problems is the lack of legal assistance and the absence of cultural mediation; the children therefore have difficulties in communicating and in completing the legal process required to obtain the residence permits, even after the age of 18¹⁵.

AIMS AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES

In these contexts, the participatory activities were developed in order to support, on one hand, the information and legal advice activities and, on the other, to promote Save the Children's approach and methodology focused on migrant children's participation and right to be heard in all contexts of reception. All this through the design and construction of recreational spaces, structured decompression and listening spaces which make it possible to improve the reception of unaccompanied children by planning targeted activities and participatory processes.

These activities and processes, whether they are carried out in the first reception centres or in the care facilities for children, must have the following specific objectives, which must be identified on the basis of a careful assessment of the arising needs.

Objective 1 – listen and answer to the demands of migrant children hosted in the facilities used as first reception centres and care facilities for children

The first objective of the participatory activities is **to bring out the expectations and feelings of the unaccompanied children, but also to generate concrete proposals to improve their reception conditions and give them concrete answers and support**. Achieving this goal allows, on one hand, to satisfy their needs and to improve their reception and living conditions and, on the other, to gather suggestions, opinions, best practices and to highlight critical issues raised by those to whom the hosting, protection and participation policies are addressed.

This will guarantee them the opportunity to express an opinion, to influence decision-makers, and to enable change in all the places where they are located and welcomed.

In this regards a significant participatory experience, was the one carried out by Save the Children in Lampedusa in 2011, during the so-called North African Emergency.

See the following operation of this consultation called "The place we are is not suitable for us".



THE PLACE WE ARE IS NOT SUITABLE FOR US ¹⁶

Consultation of unaccompanied children hosted in the island of Lampedusa (July 2011).

On the 30th June 2011 Save the Children issued a press release entitled: "A new child emergency in Lampedusa: more than 400 on the island. Their appeal to the authorities for a better reception", covering the plight of unaccompanied children in Lampedusa. The statement declared that, during the period which saw a worsening of the situation of unaccompanied children hosted on the island, a group of them wrote an appeal, to highlight the serious conditions in which they are forced to live and to ask to be transferred as soon as possible. Save the Children not only collected and sent the appeal to the institutions directly involved in the management of the *Piano accoglienza minori* (Children reception plan) (Dept. Civil Defence and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Interior), but pledged to ensure that children were directly involved in this process, primarily by helping them identify what actually could make their stay on the island bearable, while waiting to be transferred to other facilities better suited to ensure their rights. With the aim of promoting the participation of children in decisions affecting them (Art. 12 CRC), which is part of the culture and activities of the Organization, it was decided to build a **structured consultation** with children also through the activation of *ad hoc* professional figures (a participatory expert and an educator with experience in emergency).

Activity length: 5 days (13-17 July 2011)

PARTICIPANTS – The consultation was held inside the two structures that housed the **343 unaccompanied children who arrived in Lampedusa with the landings that took place from the 11th of June to the 12th of July 2011**: the First Aid and Reception Centre (CPSA), with 244 unaccompanied children, and the former military base Loran, which housed 99 unaccompanied children. The consultation was carried out with all the children living in the two structures (343), involved both directly and indirectly. Those who actively participated in the structured activities were 135 (65 Anglophones and 70 French speaking). The ages of the participants ranged from 13 to 17, and the countries of origin were mainly: Mali (100), Ghana (56), Ivory Coast (30) and Nigeria (28).

OBJECTIVE – To involve all unaccompanied children hosted in the two structures and making them voice their concrete proposals on how to improve their reception conditions. The purpose is to discuss, in a following step, the implementation of the requests made with other organizations, with relevant institutions and with the managing body of the first reception centres, and to be able to ensure to the children - both those participants, currently present in the structure, and those who were going to arrive after - a significant improvement in quality of life. Another objective of the consultation was to loosen tense situations registered among the children: in fact in the last period tension had increased, due to the prolonged forced stay in the facilities, evidently, scarcely tailored to their needs.

METHODOLOGY - The **amount of time** spent by the children on the island was taken into consideration when creating the programme: we assumed, in fact, that the children who had been there the longest, waiting to be transferred, were better equipped to represent their needs and the needs of others, having more experience, and would be more aware and better informed. Therefore we decided to create work groups that took into account the date of arrival. In addition, the need was to create communicative exchange, both with the facilitators and among the children: this is why it was decided that another criterion for the formation of the groups would be the **linguistic** one. We believed it was better to create a clear work pattern, with a simple involvement mode in order to make the activities accessible to children who possessed very different linguistic/cognitive and relational abilities.

PRODUCTS - All proposals which emerged during the group activities were collected and summarized in a report that formed the basis for the proposals for immediate action on behalf of children hosted in first reception centres.

Objective 2 - to make the voice of migrant children be heard outside the places where they are hosted

Another goal, achievable through participatory methodology, is to create a listening channel for the children even outside first reception centres or the care facilities in which they are, so that the public opinion's and the institutions' attention is re-focused on their situation and the necessary decisions to respond to the urgent needs of children are taken rapidly. An example is the need to be transferred quickly from the first reception centres, because these are not suited to an extended stay, or the ability to gain access to work or training grants once welcomed in the care centres.

To achieve this goal, it is possible to create consultations or structured participatory processes that put in relation the children with the duty bearers, in order to influence the latter's decisions and guidelines on issues that concern the children. This, in turn, increases learning opportunities, empowerment and communication of the needs of migrant children recipients to whom local, regional and national policies are destined.

To this end, one of the proposed activities was to invite the children to write an appeal/letter, in which they could give voice to their experiences, desires and difficulties. This may prove a valuable tool when the emergency conditions of the facilities are high and there is a risk of a lack of attention from the institutions and media.

See the following operation card of this consultation called "Give Rights For Us".



GIVE RIGHTS FOR US! ¹⁷

Consultation of unaccompanied children hosted in the CPSA of Lampedusa (January 2013)

Between 24 and 26 November and 15 December 2012, a high number of migrants from Libya arrived on the island. The Centre of Lampedusa had to host about 1,000 people, in a structure designed for 250 people (of which only 50 reserved for women and children). A few days of calm sea, which allows the crossing, were sufficient to undermine the reception system. Between the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, the transfers from the island to other centres in the country intensified, but on the 9th of January 2013 in Lampedusa 261 migrants were still present, and had been there for more than three weeks already. 33 were women and 36 unaccompanied children (26 from Eritrea, 1 from Somalia, 2 from Gambia, 2 from Guinea Bissau and 5 from Mali) aged between 15 and 17. Given the difficult situation of the children, who were still guests of the centre, and in order to create real possibilities for their voice to be heard, with the prospect of promoting the participation of children in decisions affecting them (Art. 12 of the CRC), Save the Children organized a **consultation of children** present in the centre. It was a three-day event, conceived and structured in order to be accessible to all children living there and suitable for the specific context.

PARTICIPANTS - 28 of the 36 unaccompanied children aged between 15 and 17 present were directly involved (18 from Eritrea, 1 from Somalia, 2 from Gambia, 2 from Guinea and 5 from Mali).

OBJECTIVE – To involve children in writing a letter of appeal that would give voice to their experiences, desires and difficulties; to create a listening channel for their voice so that the focus could be directed on the situation of the children in Lampedusa; to create decompression and involvement moments for the kids.

METHODOLOGY - We worked with two groups divided per country of origin and language. This enabled us to facilitate communication among the children and between children and the course facilitators. We believed it was better to create a clear work pattern, with a simple involvement mode, in order to make the activities accessible to children who possessed very different linguistic / cognitive and relational abilities. All work was carried out with the facilitation of professional activated *ad hoc* a mediator of Eritrean origin and a participatory expert. The groups were thus divided: children from the Horn of Africa (Eritreans and 1 Somali) - Tigrinya and Arabic; children from South Saharan countries (Mali, Gambia, Guinea Bissau) plus a Somali- English Arabic boy.

SCHEDULE - two sessions of four hours for each group, plus two return sessions distributed in three days.

PRODUCT - Preparation of a letter addressed to the Italian Government and the UNHCR. The letter became the subject of a Save the Children Italy press release and subsequently published in a national newspaper (shown to the children involved).

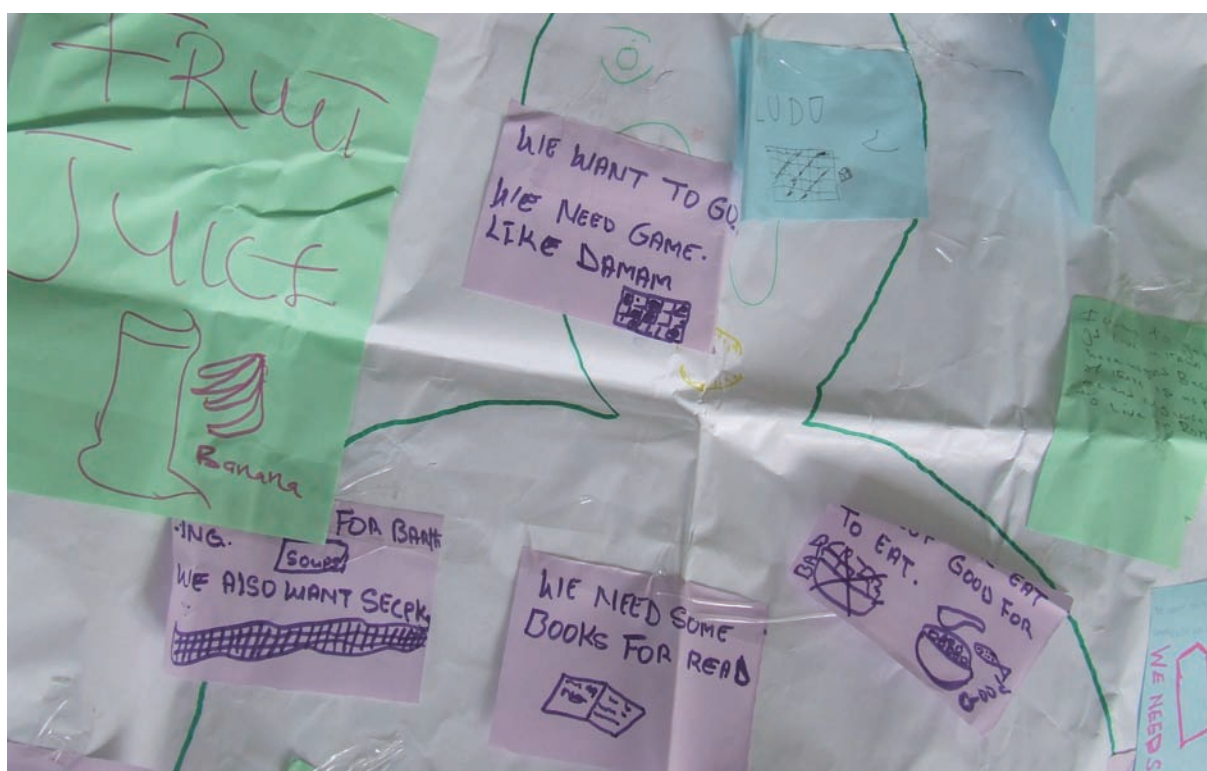
Objective 3 – facilitate the understanding of the legal information on their status

Participatory activities are very useful to facilitate the migrant children's understanding of the complex legal concepts. One of the main activities carried out by Save the Children within the first reception centres as part of the Praesidium project is the legal assistance for unaccompanied children. The aim was to make them understand what it means and what it entails to be a children arriving in Italy alone, without an adult (duty bearer). Through the creation of recreational and structured listening spaces, Save the Children has proven that there is the real possibility to create a positive and informal exchange atmosphere between the team's operators and migrant children. This objective can also be achieved within the care facilities by creating structured opportunities for further explanations and information on the main content of the legal note.

Objective 4 - create a decompression and structured listening space

Participatory activities and programmes **help to ease tense situations** that could be generated within the reception structures. Situations that could arise for different reasons: the difficult reception conditions caused by overcrowding, the prohibition to leave, the insufficient response to their primary needs, a prolonged stay, the lack of play and recreational opportunities. More specifically, these activities are useful for listening to the children's desires, fears and needs and moods.

The activities carried out have highlighted the fact that migrant children involved in participatory activities have benefited from efficient decompression spaces, compared to the difficult living conditions faced in the first reception centres or when trying to be integrated in the care facilities. This is due to the fact that they feel their point of view is taken into account and that they receive answers to their requests and problems. It has also been noted that, following the implementation of participatory activities within the first reception centres, there has been a drastic reduction in the conflicts and riots (even violent) among the children and between children and the care workers, with the added benefit of a significant decrease in the number of removals of children from the first reception centres.



"Messages written by some unaccompanied children during participatory activities carried out within the CPSA of Lampedusa in January 2013 to ensure the emergence of their needs."

HOW TO IMPLEMENT PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES IN THE BORDER AREAS

Whether they are carried out in the structures used for the first reception of children or in the care facilities for children, the participatory activities and processes must have not only specific objectives, but they also have to provide specific methodologies for the context in which the activities take place.

For example, in the first reception centres the activities can be strongly affected by many factors, including:

- a) the time and space available;
- b) internal regulations in force to ensure public order;
- c) the complex conditions related the co-existence with the police;
- d) the presence in the same structure of people with different backgrounds, languages and ages.

Care workers should therefore have, or learn to have, a “flexible, open, helpful and communicative” approach in thinking such activities according to the place where they will take place.

When working in reception centres, one inevitably encounters many critical and uncertain elements. For this reason the activities should be designed and operated in a flexible manner depending on the external conditions (time and space available), the number of operators and cultural mediators who can be involved and the specificities of the group of children involved (number of participants, languages spoken, expressed needs, moods and particular vulnerabilities).

Furthermore, **the involvement of children who arrived in Italy after experiencing a difficult and often traumatic voyage, coming from different places and with diverse backgrounds, and who have a wide variety of cognitive and social skills, requires a special and specific attention.** There are, in fact, difficulties in obtaining high involvement of migrant children, since their precarious and unstable situation does not always allow a serene and conscious participation. With regard to this, it is important to create targeted activities on themes proposed by them giving them simple and understandable tools to be protagonists of these activities and enabling them to manage their mode and content.

In order to give all children the opportunity to participate in activities or courses in a relevant and motivating manner, it is essential that staff are efficient and knowledgeable, but, more importantly, that they are prepared to work in an environment as complex as that of the reception of unaccompanied children.

See below a scheme that gives some tips for an efficient facilitation:



TIPS FOR AN EFFICIENT PARTICIPATION

da Karkara, R. (2002) Resource Book on Facilitating Children's Organisation and Children's Citizenship and Governance

- ☞ Be aware
- ☞ Be flexible
- ☞ If you do not know something, just say it
- ☞ Trust the resources of the children's' group
- ☞ Respect each child
- ☞ Be yourself
- ☞ Keep you intervention to the minimum
- ☞ Monitor energy levels
- ☞ Do not be too attached to your interventions/positions
- ☞ Welcome (and valorise) all that happens of relevance
- ☞ (use): Improvisation/flexibility/creativity
- ☞ When in doubt, control
- ☞ Search for agreement
- ☞ Use questions and suggestions
- ☞ Negotiate and contract
- ☞ Be culturally sensitive
- ☞ Start well
- ☞ Use conflict resolution
- ☞ Send feedback
- ☞ Recognize and affirm
- ☞ Have a sense of humour



"Message written by an unaccompanied children during a participatory consultation carried out at the CPSA of Lampedusa in July 2011".

⁸ As an example, we quote two programmes implemented between 2012 and 2013: a consultation of 12 unaccompanied children who live in care facilities in Italy, to create awareness material for their peers on the safe use of new technologies as part of the European project Interact <http://www.interactonline.eu/ita/>; two participatory researches that involved 22 peer researchers in Naples and Palermo to study the phenomenon of child labour in the qualitative - quantitative survey project Child Labour

[http://images.savethechildren.it/IT/img_publicazioni/img211_b .pdf](http://images.savethechildren.it/IT/img_publicazioni/img211_b.pdf).

⁹ The Praesidium project, carried out by Save the Children, along with IOM, UNHCR and the Red Cross, in coordination with the Ministry of the Interior-Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration, is aimed at capacity building of the Italian authorities in the management of mixed migration flows that affect the regions of Calabria, Apulia and Sicily. For more information about the project: http://www.savethechildren.it/IT/Page/t01/view_html?idp=335

¹⁰ Art. 19 T.U. Immigrazione; Art. 403 Italian Civil Code

¹¹ In January 2015, the Italian Ministry of Interior - Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration published a call for the submission of projects aimed at improving the reception capacity in Italy of unaccompanied children through the implementation of temporary accommodation activities for unaccompanied children (800 places per day) in highly specialized facilities, equitably distributed throughout the country (maximum 2 per region).

¹² By mandate of the Ministry of the Interior -Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, Save the Children, as part of the Praesidium Project, is monitoring the reception procedures and standards for unaccompanied children and for families with children hosted in government centres for immigrants, in-first reception centres and in care facilities for children localized in the project area.

¹³ The 25 July 2013 Save the Children presented a bill proposal to improve the protection and reception of unaccompanied children. The text was submitted to the Chamber of Deputies, the 4th October 2013 (AC 1658) and to date the text is to be examined by Parliament. Among the main measures contained in it is the creation of a national system for the reception of unaccompanied children (Art. 13).

¹⁴ At the national level there are practices that differ from the institutional subject that sees to the identification of places in reception and to the placement of unaccompanied children in the care facilities. In addition, in order to identify the places available in the reception facilities the authorities which have to provide placement in a safe place are forced to search a contact with the host care facilities, often without even having their phone number.

¹⁵ For further information please see the monitoring reports published since 2009 and available at: http://www.savethechildren.it/IT/Page/t01/view_html?idp=335

¹⁶ Participatory process carried out in the CPSA of Lampedusa in July 2011 with the unaccompanied children hosted in the centre at different times and in different environmental conditions.

¹⁷ Structured participatory process carried out in the CPSA of Lampedusa in January 2013 with the unaccompanied children hosted in the centre at different times and with different environmental conditions. These case studies want to be examples of the different purposes for which it is possible to implement participatory activities at first reception centres and the different tools used for this purpose.

The detailed presentation of the programmes and various work sessions and activities aims to be a reference point for those who want to plan similar activities in other places of first reception.



CHAPTER III

PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES IN FIRST RECEPTION CENTRES

HOW TO USE
THE ACTIVITY CARDS

ACTIVITY CARDS

This chapter presents some participatory activities that can be implemented in first reception centres with unaccompanied children. These activities can be carried out by care workers and educators who use as reference the general-technical theoretical model that follows. These activities have been developed in order to support the information and legal assistance activities given to unaccompanied children but also to promote Save the Children's participatory approach and methodology and the right of migrant children to be listened in all contexts of care reception, through the design and construction of recreational, structured decompression and listening spaces which make it possible to facilitate the reception of unaccompanied children by planning targeted activities and participatory processes. These should be considered processes to generate contact, support and social inclusion.

Their direct participation enables:

- the focus and redefinition of migrant phenomena;
- better knowledge of risk and effective protection factors;
- the improvement in the children's ability to protect themselves (or support each other);
- the creation of tools and opportunities to raise awareness or active intervention;
- the improvement in services, programs and policies for the children;
- the promotion of opportunities, protection and acquisition of skills and abilities for children, both girls and boys;
- the promotion of the right of citizenship.

All activities have been developed and adapted to the specific contexts; they can therefore be used directly in such context. They have been tested and experimented by Save the Children's participatory specialists with at least **610 unaccompanied children and 32 care workers (and cultural mediators) in 8 first reception centres in eastern Sicily and one in Apulia, from August 2013 till December 2014.**



In operational terms, these participatory activities foresee: short involvement periods of the children; high number of participants; practicality and simplicity of content and methods of involvement through the use of representational techniques such as drawing and the use of tools such as posters and graphic illustrations; high degree of accessibility for children who possess very different linguistic/cognitive levels and diverse social skills; games and physical movement; promotion of peer support; facilitation by the programme staff and the cultural mediator. Working all together or in several subgroups is also encouraged.

HOW TO USE THE ACTIVITY CARDS

In the following pages it is possible to find **10 activities**: these are merely suggestions for care workers and they should be modified and managed in a flexible way according to the different external conditions (time and space available), the number of care workers and cultural mediators who can be involved and the characteristics of the group of children involved (number of participants, languages spoken, needs expressed, emotions and particular vulnerabilities). These activities can be divided according to the target group of unaccompanied children to whom they are addressed and according to the time spent by the children in the first reception centres.

They are differentiated by colour.

The activities in **light colours** are tailored for children who have just arrived or have spent little time in the first reception centres. Whereas the activities in **dark colours** are

for children who have been hosted in the first reception centres for a long period of time. More specifically the Blue, Brown and Purple cards explain activities tailored for unaccompanied children who have been for a prolonged period of time at the first reception centres and are still waiting to be transferred to care facilities for children but who have found stability and are therefore reluctant to be transferred. The purpose of these activities is to prepare children for the transfer. The aim is that this happens in a peaceful and conscious way informing them on what they will find, clarifying any doubts, answering their questions and sharing with them the character of temporary and precarious nature of the first reception centre in which they are currently housed. To this end, the three activities aim to: gather the opinions and perceptions of children on the issue of care reception, emphasizing the temporary and precarious nature of the first reception; know more about what they expect from living in Italy (or in Europe), what is a care facility for children and who are the people working there; let them know the risks that they run and in what ways the care facilities for children can provide protection from such risks. In this context it is essential that care workers (and the volunteers, if present) participate actively in the activities supporting the children in this delicate moment, because after living together for such a long time, these care workers - *de facto* - become duty bearers for the children. The activities are listed according to a chronologically structured order, oriented to the participatory approach and methodology.

The activities described in the **light colour cards** (white, yellow, orange, light blue and gray) aim at welcoming the child who has just arrived in the first reception centres. They are, therefore, characterized by a high recreational level (achieved through games), decompression, sharing the new reality in which they are placed and presentation/promotion of themselves, of their cultural background and skills.

The aim of the activities described in **dark colour cards** (green, red, blue, brown and purple) is to inform the children about the future steps they will have to face, inform them on the rights granted to them and on the responsibilities that derive from these. These activities are characterized by a high level of children's participation, allowing them to clarify questions, fulfil needs, and improve services promoting a peaceful atmosphere and reducing eventual frustrations.

Next, we would like to share and clarify the participatory logic that underlies all activities to ensure that they are carried out effectively and in compliance with ethical and meaningful participation of all children involved.



White Activity:

This is the first activity to be carried out with the children. It is very important to replicate it whenever there are new arrivals in the first reception centres. The activity introduces the staff working in the centres, the children who are already there, the space and the rules so that the new arrivals feel welcomed and involved - from the start - in the daily life of the first reception centres; to this end it is good to give them the opportunity to actively participate and contribute to the activities, for example, by involving them in establishing some of the rules of the structure. Guaranteeing their participation ensures that decisions are taken jointly and are, therefore, more effective, making the children responsible for their compliance.



Yellow Activity:

After the children have been welcomed and have had the chance to get to know the first reception centres they are in, it is very important to give them the opportunity to better understand where they are but also where they would like to go; addressing these issues through dynamic team play allows them to get to know the others, share their knowledge and give the care workers important information about their perceptions, expectations and future projects. The same results may not be achieved via individual interviews or addressing them as if they were adults.

**Orange activity:**

This activity is designed to better understand the migratory project of particular groups of unaccompanied children who want to continue their journey to other Italian cities or other European countries¹⁸. Based on the experience of Save the Children in this area, it is very important to know more about the migratory project of Egyptian children (headed to Rome and Milan) and children from Somalia, Eritrea and Afghanistan (headed to Germany, Sweden and Norway). This enables care workers and the organisations involved to protect the child during his/her journey enabling, as prescribed by law, family reunification with relatives living in Italy or in other European countries, reducing removals from the first reception centres and the risks to which a foreign unaccompanied children travelling alone in countries s/he does not know is exposed.

**Light blue Activity:**

This activity is crucial to understanding and sharing the child's perceptions and feelings after several weeks spent in the first reception centre. Becoming aware of such feelings allows care workers to intervene, where necessary with activities or interviews, to calm child, to provide answers and meet his/her needs within the limits of the real possibilities of the first reception centre. Addressing these sensitive topics can be facilitated through the creation of recreational activities during which children learn a few words in Italian that can be very useful in their everyday life.

**Grey Activity:**

After having introduced and shared with children the new reality in which they live it is very important to give them the opportunity to talk about their culture of origin. This activity can enhance their personalities promoting self-recognition and self-awareness. Children will feel involved and care workers can learn useful religious and cultural information that will allow them to better understand the attitudes, demands and habits of the children, thus improving the service and reducing potential conflicts and misunderstandings.

**Green Activity:**

The first of the "dark" activities is designed to bring out the feelings of children who have been in the first reception centres for a long time and allow them to take active part in the improvement of the standards of treatment guaranteed by the first reception centre. Because of the time spent there, children have understood very well "how" the first reception centres works, and therefore it is essential to involve them in its management; this will enable an improvement of the situation of those who have been in the first reception centres for a short time, as well as the situation of those who will arrive in the future. This investment will increase the children's peer protection and support, and will improve the services offered by the first reception centres.

**Red Activity:**

At this point of the process it is very important to guide the children through the different phases which will mark their presence in the host country. Making them aware of their experience of "integration" through games, will enable them to understand the road ahead of them, to avoid false expectations regarding their future and to be calm when they arrive in care facilities for children. Children have the right to be informed, and understanding the future increases their own esteem and reduces the frustration of facing an uncertain future.

**Blue activity:**

Children who live for an extended period of time in the first reception centres could still find the stability to accept this condition, which should be temporary, as something positive. In this case it is important to explain to the children the differences between what a first reception centre and a care facility for children can provide them. A reflection must be carried out with them on the difference between the two levels of care reception and, above all, on what the children want for their future. This allows them

to understand that life in the first reception centres cannot satisfy their present and future needs.



Brown Activity:

Following the activities carried out with the blue card it is necessary to share with the children what a care facility for children is and the reasons why it could be very important for their future and for their lives. It is always important to start from their perceptions (their idea of what a care facility for children is) to have an efficient discussion.



Purple activity:

Once it has been explained to the children what a community is, it is very important to explain the risks that they could encounter and the related protective factors, clarifying to them how a care facility for children can protect them. Such a level of participation allows children to become more aware of their rights and the responsibilities these entail;

All these activities should be carried out with a **child friendly approach**, taking into account the age and maturity of the group of participants so that each child has the opportunity to contribute and participate in a relevant way and in her/his fullest capacity. This approach encourages and facilitates in particular the phase of “engagement” and involvement of children in these activities, differentiating the time dedicated to the participation from any other moment of the structure’s everyday life.

The choice to distinguish the figure of the ‘facilitator’ and his/her intervention, from the figure of a supporter to the activities, is linked to the context in which the activities are carried out and to the different role which, a care worker / educator plays compared to that of a legal advisor and/or psychologist.

For the methodology it is very important, to distinguish the role and the involvement of the two figures. In the present case, by facilitator we mean someone who, during the activities with the children, facilitates discussion and rises questions. The person who supports, instead - even though present during the activities- intervenes only in specific phases (in particular during the sharing of the immediate results) facilitating the understanding and study of specific themes, through his/her professionalism and knowledge of the specific subject of the activity.

ACTIVITY SCHEME

Activity	
	<p>WHITE <i>Target group:</i> New arrivals</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> welcoming new arrivals, getting to know the group and the relationship between the group and the care workers, sharing rules and spaces.</p>
	<p>YELLOW <i>Target group:</i> Children who have been guests for a short time in the first reception centres</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> getting to know the group and the relationship between the group and care workers; sharing information about Italy and Europe and analysis of the migratory project of the children (share their expectations about their desire to remain in Italy or travel to other European countries).</p>
	<p>ORANGE <i>Target group:</i> Children "on the move" of specific nationalities such as Eritreans, Somalis, Egyptians.</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> getting to know the migratory project of this group of children and if they have family members in other European countries.</p>
	<p>LIGHT BLUE <i>Target group:</i> All children present in the first reception centres.</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> share keywords on greetings and feelings (in Italian).</p>
	<p>GREY <i>Target group:</i> All children present in the first reception centres.</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> getting to know customs and habits of the countries of origin.</p>
	<p>GREEN <i>Target group:</i> Children who have been for a long time in the first reception centres</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> to investigate perceptions on reception centre conditions and help children be part of the management of the structure's daily life in.</p>
	<p>RED <i>Target group:</i> Children who have been for a long time in the first reception centres</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> share keywords on the integration path in Italy and Europe</p>
	<p>BLUE <i>Target group:</i> Children who have been for a long time in the first reception centres</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> to assemble opinions, perceptions and experiences on the issue of reception care and what they expect from the future</p>
	<p>BROWN <i>Target group:</i> Children who have been for a long time in the first reception centres</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> focus on notions, perceptions and expectations of life in Italy in care facilities for children.</p>
	<p>PURPLE <i>Target group:</i> Children who have been for a long time in the first reception centres</p> <p><i>Aim:</i> to get to know better the risks children are exposed to and the protection to which they are entitled.</p>

All the activities have been designed following the participatory standards of Save the Children¹⁹, which also form the basis of the methodological indications that follow. They are to be considered as specific activities to be put in place when working with groups of children in complex contexts such as the first reception centres.



METHODOLOGICAL INDICATIONS

- Whenever activities are proposed to children, it is essential to share with them the sense and purpose of the activities (for example: the game is to spend time together, to heal the body and mind).
- All children should feel free to participate or not and to leave the activities at any time (not all of them at all times might feel like playing or communicating). In activities involving the expression of opinions or personal stories it is important not to force anyone to expose themselves. It is important to define with the children - possibly with their "spontaneous" leaders - times, types of activities, spaces.
- In order to make the activities accessible to all children wishing to participate, a time slot (e.g. from 4 to 6 pm), during the ordinary planned activities, is established and "advertised" each time. The spaces used should be defined with visible supports so that they are clear and accessible.
- The time /space of the activity is defined by a start and end time (doing, for example, small activities involving body movement or to mentally or physically warm up).
- During the activities, informal moments for feedback on the positive and negative aspects of them, and for proposals should be established. The activity is planned, as far as possible in advance, to allow adequate time for the preparation of material, its layout and to arrange the space (asking for the help of the children where possible).
- It is useful to create cards so that children and care workers can write their names and stick them to their t-shirts at the beginning of the activity (they may be collected in a basket and distributed each time).
- We suggest simple activities and exercises, always with the support of a language mediator or using a common language understood by all: in this way the participation of children with different cognitive/emotional and language skills is ensured. In general, each activity must contain the mode of approach and learning of the Italian language, which can be a key factor in motivating children who want to stay in Italy (i.e. games using a few key words in Italian, easy to understand like "front, back, happy, sad, hot, cold"). Particular attention should be paid to respecting the sensitivities of un-schooled children when presenting activities involving writing and / or reading.
- If tension arises among the children during the activities, it is important not to ignore them and, if needed, interrupt the activity and discuss with the children why this happened. In any event care must be taken not to force any situation / contact between children, or between groups of them.

The activities are tailored for groups of 20-30 children, who share one or two languages. If the groups are very large, it may be necessary to repeat the activity for two or more days.

ACTIVITY CARDS

All participatory activities have to comply with the work plan below for *ethical* and *meaningful* practice to be ensured. Participatory sessions must be discrete and set apart from the children's daily routines within the first reception centres. The following work plan can be used by the care workers as a useful activity tool, and presents children with the timeframe, spaces and means of the participatory methodology.

The work plan is organized into five consecutive stages. A **child-friendly** approach and environment should be ensured at each one of the following stages:



1. OPENING CIRCLE/WARM-UP

The initial stage for each activity. It should be performed in a formal, ritualistic manner, so as to differentiate the participatory sessions from other daily routines within the facilities. It should be tailored using a child-friendly approach in accordance with the age and maturity of the participants

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

The invited children must be unambiguously introduced to all the stages of the proposed activity: its aims and objectives, working methods, and expected outcomes. They are free to decide whether and how to participate.

3. ACTIVITY SESSION*

The central stage, when the proposed activities are carried out.

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Adult staff feedback and share with participants the outcomes of the activity. Children's questions are answered, their doubts are cleared, their perspectives and suggestions are respected and examined (in the event this does not happen, the motives for such rejections should be discussed).

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

The concluding stage. It should be performed in a formal, ritualistic manner, so as to differentiate the participatory sessions from other daily routines within the facilities.

* **Ice-Breaker/Name Game:** On the first day of activities, or when a new child joins the programme, this stage must start off with an introduction game helping participants to get to know each other, and participants and adult staff to introduce to one another.

WHITE ACTIVITY

Target Group: New arrivals (or first activity).

Aim: welcoming new arrivals, the group gets to know each other and the care workers, sharing rules and spaces.

Facilitator: care worker and cultural mediator

Length: 45 min.

Materials: posters, coloured pens, small cards, badge, post it

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Create a circle (which will also include care workers) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/ EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children the following information:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "Today we present the first reception centre in which you are in, the people who work in it, the spaces and things that you can use, the rules that we ask you to respect");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the workgroup works, which spaces and materials can be used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (GAME)

- Each child states their name making a gesture. Everybody repeats name and gesture (50 people max)
- Or each child says their name and its meaning (20 people max)

In small groups they take coloured pens and cards, write their name and a sign of recognition, and put them in the badge. Then with masking tape they stick it on their t-shirts.

Share with the participants the importance of the recognition badges and establish, with them, the rule that, whenever an activity starts, they will wear the badges; once the activities are completed the badges will be returned.

ALTERNATIVE:

The group gathers in a circle. The first person begins by saying his/her name accompanying each syllable with a rhythmic beat. (Example: RITA claps her hands on her thighs for RI and on the chest for TA). The whole group repeats. The person on her left says their name and does a rhythmic beat, and the whole group repeats both name and gesture; continue until everybody in the circle has introduced themselves (after 8 people start over).

Option 1: the rhythm/name is used to call someone else in the group who repeats the rhythm with his/her name and then does a new one to call someone else.

Option 2: everyone does a rhythm with his/her name and everybody repeats it several times. Then the activity starts again.

3. ACTIVITY SESSION

Explaining roles and the rules of the first reception centre:

- a) show drawings of the various figures/care workers working in the first reception centre asking the children if they know what these "figures" do and how they can help. Following the children's answers it is fundamental to clarify doubts and misunderstandings (for the specific figures see reference datasheets in Appendix).
- b) briefly review a typical day in the centre to explain rules (meal times and telephone, showers, space uses). If possible ask a child to write in a common language such rules on a poster that can be consulted in an area previously identified by the care workers, this will thus become the information point.
ATTENTION! It is essential to associate rules and spaces to graphic illustrations accompanied by captions in multiple languages and put them in the information point but also in the common areas. Children can participate in the creation of symbols and/or write the captions in their own language.

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Answer the children's questions about the role of care workers and what these can do for them. Clarify any doubts (for example on the time they could be required to spend in the first reception centre) and answer the questions that emerged during the activity

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge)

YELLOW ACTIVITY

Target Group: Children who have spent little time in the first reception centre

Objective: the group gets to know each other and the care workers; sharing information/knowledge about Italy and Europe and focus on the children's migratory project (share expectations about their desire to remain in Italy or travel to other European countries).

Facilitator: Care worker and cultural mediator with the support of the Legal Advisor

Length: 45 min.

Materials: posters, coloured markers, small cards, badges, Europe and Africa map, cut maps to create a puzzle, post it, ball

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Every child takes his/her badge. Create a circle (which will also include care workers) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "*Today we understand where we are and what we want to know about Italy and Europe*");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the workgroup works, what are the spaces and the materials used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

3. ACTIVITY SESSION

Working with maps

- Divide the group into two or more teams, divided by colour.
- Team game: give the children the puzzle pieces of two maps (Africa/Europe) with sell tape and cardboard. The teams must recompose the maps as quickly as possible (for the figures see reference datasheets in Appendix).
- After the allotted time a component of each team can say the name of a city or of a European country that they know standing up and pointing its position on the map; the team which assembled the map in the shortest time begins and then the others continue, following the map composition times.
- The conductor will take note of which team has been able to list the highest number of cities or countries, this one will be declared the winner.
- Focus on the geographical placement of the first reception centre (nation, region, province and municipality)
- At the end of this phase, children and care workers, arranged in a circle, exchange questions and answers about Italy and Europe throwing a ball; the person who has the ball will ask a question out loud and throws the ball to whom s/he requires an answer; calling them by name (for example, player A asks a question to player B and throws the ball. Player B receives the ball, responds and in turn throws the ball to another player with another question), continue until all players have asked at least one question.

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Answer the questions the children raised during the activity and clarify any doubt concerning the possibility of staying in Italy or moving to other European countries.

ATTENTION! In this phase the support of a Legal Advisor is fundamental

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge)

ORANGE ACTIVITY

Target Group: Children on the move, from specific countries (for example: Eritrea, Somalia, Egypt).

Objective: Get to know the migratory project of these specific groups of children and if they have family members in other European countries.

Facilitator: Care workers and cultural mediator with the support of a Legal Advisor

Length: 45 min.

Materials: family tree, buzzer or flags, posters, small cards, post it

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Each person takes their badge. Gather in a circle (including the care workers involved) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

Alternatively: the conductor does stretching movements and nominates the body parts and the direction where s/he moves (forwards, backwards, right, left), everybody repeats gestures and words.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "*Today we speak about our family and those who are part of it*");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the workgroup works, what are the spaces and the materials used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

3. ACTIVITY SESSION

Working on family relationships:

- a) Hang the drawing of a family tree with fictitious names.
- b) The participants are divided into teams and each team will have to appoint a spokesperson. The conductor asks questions about the family ties seen in the family tree drawing (for example, *who is Ismael for Abram? Answer: cousin*).
- c) The first spokesperson who rings a buzzer or takes a flag can answer. If the answer is correct, everybody repeats the guessed word in Italian. The team receives a card with the written word.
- d) Once all the words are finished. The team with the highest number of cards wins.
- e) All the participants can create their family tree; they can then, with the help of care workers, present to the group the names of family members specifying, in Italian, the degree of kinship (for figures see reference datasheets in Appendix).
- f) Leave some time at the end for any questions the children might have and to ask them if all the family members they have put in the tree are in their country of origin or whether some of them are in other countries.

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Answer in a clear and understandable way if there are any questions and follow up any messages or requests made by the children.

IMPORTANT! In this phase it is essential, if the children ask to be reunited with their families. the support of a legal advisor.

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge).

LIGHT BLUE ACTIVITY

Target Group: All the children present in the first reception centre

Objective: Share key words/greetings (in Italian) and moods.

Facilitator: Care worker and cultural mediator with the support of the psychologist

Length: 45 min.

Materials: big poster with faces drawn, word cards, post it, coloured pens

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Each person takes their badge. Gather in a circle (including the care workers involved) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

Alternatively: the conductor does stretching movements and nominates the body parts and the direction where s/he moves (forwards, backwards, right, left), everybody repeats gestures and words.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "Today we learn some Italian words that can be very useful");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the work group works, what are the spaces and the materials used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

3. ACTIVITY SESSION

Work on moods and keywords

- The participants are divided into small groups and the conductor assigns to each group a card on which an expression is written (eg *Good morning, good evening, how are you? Well thanks, bad, happy, sad, tired, scared, happy*). Once the expressions are assigned, the conductor indicates a group at a time asking them to repeat together the expression assigned. Then the conductor, like an orchestra conductor, indicates the groups linking questions and answers (for example, the group with the phrase "how are you?" With that of "good, thank you! And you?"). This activity can be repeated several times using more complex phrases/questions that can be established with the children themselves based on what they think is important to learn to speak Italian. It is important that the whole group responds in unison. *Good, you learned the words!*
- Hang a billboard with faces bearing different expressions. Each group sticks its word on the face that seems to correspond.
- Those who want to can, freely, share with the group how they feel at that moment using the words learned in Italian (you can ask this each time you open an activity).

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Answer in a clear and understandable way to the children's questions and discuss with them about the state of mind manifested.

IMPORTANT! If a particular state of mind or indicators of particular vulnerability arise, the presence and support of the psychologist is essential.

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge).

GREY ACTIVITY

Target Group: All the children present in the first reception centre

Objective: get to know and share habits and customs of the country of origin of the children.

Facilitator: Care workers and cultural mediator

Length: 45 min.

Materials: scoring poster, coloured markers, pencils.

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Each child takes his/her badge. Gather in a circle (including the care workers involved) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

Alternatively: the conductor does stretching movements and nominates the body parts and the direction where s/he moves (forwards, backwards, right, left), all repeat gestures and words.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "*Today you can introduce to the others your country and your culture and understand something more about different countries and cultures*");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the work group works, what are the spaces and the materials used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

3. ACTIVITY SESSION

Work on costumes and countries of origin

- a) the group is divided into teams that will do various games, each game has a score.
 - b) The games are explained at the beginning. Then the care workers help, each time, the teams. The teams have five minutes for each test.
 1. choose and eventually sing a favourite song
 2. draw three types of different houses/dwellings
 3. do a typical dance of your country
 4. describe the ingredients of a typical dish
 5. draw four flags
 6. greet in four different languages
 - c) When the time ends the teams have to present their results. The jury will score for each test.
- IMPORTANT! It is important to compare the different cultures (also the Italian one) based on some aspects that emerged during the activity (for example with respect to food, sayings or greetings, types of houses, way to play).

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Answer in a clear and understandable way if there are any questions and ensure they appreciate, without preferences, the richness of each culture.

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge)

GREEN ACTIVITY

Target Group: Children who have been a long time in the first reception centre

Objective: get to know the perception on the welcoming conditions and make the children be active participants of the daily organisation of the first reception centre.

Facilitator: Care worker and cultural mediator with the support of a psychologist

Length: 45 min.

Materials: paper; pens; poster; coloured markers

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Each child takes his/her badge. Gather in a circle (including the care workers involved) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "*Today we try understand what you feel and what means living in a first reception centre and what could be done to improve it, also for the children who will arrive after you*");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the work group works, what are the spaces and the materials used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

3. ACTIVITY SESSION

Working on moods and proposals on how to improve life in the first reception centre

- Divide participants into pairs or small groups (for example, you could divide the children by nationality and involve their spontaneous leaders to manage the work of the group): each group writes, in their own language, a letter or makes a drawing (in case of unschooled children) to a friend in their country of origin to describe how it is living in the first reception centre and what would be nice to have/do in it.
- those who want can read it and the mediator translates
- the main topics are pinned on a billboard

The ideas that emerge will be submitted to those involved in the first reception centre to tell them what the opinions of the children are.

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

The children's proposals/comments must receive a prompt response from the care workers of the facility.

IMPORTANT! Give visibility to the changes (even small ones) put in place in the first reception centre following the children's suggestions and actively involve them in these. In the event that some suggestions cannot be followed it is important to explain the reason to the children.

ATTENTION! Whenever significant elements or indicators of particular vulnerability emerge, the presence and support of the psychologist is essential.

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge)

RED ACTIVITY

Target Group: Children present in the first reception centre

Objective: share key words and "actors" of the integration process in Italy/Europe

Facilitator: Care workers and cultural mediator with the support of a legal advisor

Length: 45 min.

Materials: relay batons (cards with key words), paper tape to draw the obstacle course

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Each child takes his/her badge. Gather in a circle (including the care workers involved) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

Alternatively: the conductor does stretching movements and nominates the body parts and the direction where s/he moves (forwards, backwards, right, left), all repeat gestures and words.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "*Today together we understand the kind of road you will have to walk to live in Italy and in Europe*");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the work group works, what are the spaces and the materials used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

3. ACTIVITY SESSION

Working on the integration path in Italy

- Prepare an obstacle course: it should include some obstacles and different styles (for example: the first part of the course on one foot, then slalom, then jumping with two feet, then walking on all fours)
- Explain the various elements ("the relay baton") of the game which should represent, more or less in chronological order, the different stages that the children will have to face during their integration process (for example: 1 placement in the care facilities; 2 guardian; 3 starting the residence permit bureaucratic practice ; 4 school; 5 residence permit; 6 work). See reference datasheets in Appendix.
- Divide the children into three teams with the same number of players (or someone runs twice), possibly colour-coded and each team stand in single line behind the starting line.
- Explain the course.
- The teams start together: The first player in line starts by making the whole course, takes the baton given by the operator at the end of the trail and goes back. S/he passes the baton to the second player: This one runs the course and gets to the end where s/he gets the second baton (that accumulate).
- The team whose players are able to get all the baton first- running the obstacle course regularly - wins
- Explains the meaning of the game and the meaning of each "baton": *the path that you have to do to stay in Italy (but also in Europe) has several stages, there are sometimes obstacles (bureaucracy or etc.) and you must have patience.*

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Answer in a clear and understandable way to the children's questions correcting any distorted views about the integration process in Italy and the different "actors" who will be part of this process.

IMPORTANT! In this phase the support of legal advisor is essential

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge).

BLUE ACTIVITY

Target Group: Children who have been for a long time in the first reception centre

Objective: gather opinions, perceptions and experiences on the issue of care reception and expectations for the future

Facilitator: Care workers and cultural mediator with the support of legal counsel

Length: 45 min.

Materials: billboards, cards or post-it, coloured markers, ball.

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Each child takes his/her badge. Gather in a circle (including the care workers involved) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

Alternatively: the conductor does stretching movements and nominates the body parts and the direction where s/he moves (forwards, backwards, right, left), all repeat gestures and words.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "Today we would like to work with you to understand what is your meaning of the care reception and what you would like for your future");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the work group works, what are the spaces and the materials used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

3. ACTIVITY

Working on the first and second reception:

- Sticks a poster with the word "car reception" (translated in two or more languages)
- Handle to the participants (who can be divided into small groups according to their nationality) some cards and ask them to write (or draw) one or more words in their language to say "care reception".
- One by one the children (or the spokesperson of the group) explain to others what they have written and stick the card on the billboard. If need questions to clarify the concept may be asked.
- At this point ask the participants (individually or in groups) to list 8 elements that, in their opinion, are useful for a "warm reception" and sort them by importance.
- Attach two billboards that represent "first reception" and "second reception" which can be differentiated as "what I have today" and "what I want tomorrow" (or in the future), and ask the children to stick the 8 elements distributing them among the 2 billboards and explain why.
- At this point the care workers will stick on the two billboards cards depicting reception services guaranteed respectively by the first and second receptions presenting them in a simple and clear way, in several target languages starting from what the children have shared. For example in *the first reception*: a roof, affection, food, friends, people who care about you, legal assistance. In *the second*, in addition to the above mentioned points: enrolment in public school and the opportunity to attain a qualification, enrolment in the National Health Service and therefore the possibility of being cured if they get sick, the chance of having documents (such as identity card and social security number), the ability to access to work or internships grants like Italian children, the appointment of a guardian who will take care of them, an integration process that will help them be part of society, a lawyer who will give them all the information needed to understand their situation, a cultural mediator who will help them express themselves in their own language, the ability to convert the residence permit when they turn 18. (see reference datasheets in appendix).
- It is important to stress the difference between the two levels of care reception and the precarious and temporary nature of the first one even though some of the items presented are common to both.
- Arranged in a circle, leave time for the participants to ask some questions throwing each other a ball (the person who receives the ball can ask a question: when they get the answer they throw the ball to another person who will in turn ask a question or say something).

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Answer in a clear and transparent manner to children's questions, help the children understand the distinction between the first reception (temporary and not permanent) and secondary care (more stable and providing more safeguard to their integration and future).

IMPORTANT! It is fundamental the support of legal advisor to focus on the issues addressed

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge)

BROWN ACTIVITY

Target Group: Children who have been for a long time in the first reception centre

Objective: get to know the information, perception and expectations on life in Italy/ care facilities for children and focus on the legal aspects.

Facilitator: Care workers and cultural mediator with the support of a legal advisor

Length: 45 min.

Materials: billboard with drawing of the community, word cards, post it, coloured markers

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Each child takes his/her badge. Gather in a circle (including the care workers involved) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

Alternatively: the conductor does stretching movements and nominates the body parts and the direction where s/he moves (forwards, backwards, right, left), everybody repeats gestures and words.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "*Today we understand what a care facilities for children is and what you will find once you arrive there*");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the work group works, what are the spaces and the materials used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

3. ACTIVITY SESSION

Working on care facilities for children:

- a) Hang the billboard that represents an empty care facility for children; for example in the form of house
- b) Hand to the participants some cards (for example in the form of bricks) and ask them what is a care facility for children and/or what they imagine to find in it - people, things, activities, spaces.
- c) One by one the children explain to others what they have written and stick post its on the billboard. If need questions can be asked to clarify the concept.
- d) Share with the children what a care facility for children is, what and who they will find, starting from what the participants have written or think and using a few key words in Italian (eg care facility, care worker, guardian, school)
- e) Leave time for participants to ask some questions.

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Answer in a clear and understandable way to the children's questions specially those concerning the timetable of transfers and the reasons why some are transferred before others. Correct any distorted views about life in the care centre and the role of the care workers and/or other "actors" who will be part of this path.

IMPORTANT! In this phase the support of legal advisor is essential.

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge)

PURLE ACTIVITY

Target Group: Children who have been for a long time in the first reception centre

Objective: get to know better the risks they might run into and the protection factors children are intitled to.

Facilitator: care workers and cultural mediator with the support of a legal advisor

Length: 45 min.

Materials: billboards, risk and protection cards, cards, coloured markers, ball.

1. WARM-UP CIRCLE

Each child takes his/her badge. Gather in a circle (including the care workers involved) and greet each other in two or more languages, all participants repeat.

Alternatively: the conductor does stretching movements and nominates the body parts and the direction where s/he moves (forwards, backwards, right, left), all repeat gestures and words.

2. PRELIMINARY INTRODUCTIONS/EXPLANATIONS

Share with the children:

- Who are the care workers involved, and what will be their role in the activity;
- What is the purpose of the activity and what it consists of (for example: "*Today we try to understand the risks you might encounter and how you can be protected from these risks since you are underage*");
- What are the "rules of the game" (how you participate, how to intervene, how the work group works, what are the spaces and the materials used, which is the schedule).

These rules can be written simply on a billboard (in Italian and in other languages) possibly associated with a reference chart (design and/or symbol).

3. ACTIVITY SESSION

Working on risk and protection:

- a) Hang two billboards on which you write: "Risk" and "Protection" in two or more languages explaining the meaning to the participants;
- b) Split the participants into two teams or more (for example divided by common languages) and gives them some "Protection Card" explaining the meaning (for example: to participate, to be heard, work, school, health care, guardian, friends, home, lawyer, documents, care facility, kindergarten, contact the family). Explain to them that the care workers will put on the risk billboard some "Risk cards" (e.g. separation from family, war, abuse, exploitation, foreign language, not be informed or heard, racism, no possibility of going to school or being cured) explaining the meaning and each team will have to respond to these risks with the protection card it considers appropriate by sticking it on the "protection" billboard and explaining why (see reference datasheets in appendix).
- c) Give to the teams also four "Protection Cards" in white that each team can create the way they think most appropriate to meet the risk cards explaining the reason (for this purpose the number of risk cards will be higher than the protection cards already illustrated so as to stimulate the children in creating their own custom protection cards).
- d) The team that manages to connect the highest number of protection card to the risks cards, wins.
- e) It is important that all cards with drawings or illustrations are understood by all, and that their meaning is explained in two or more languages.
- f) Share with the children how the care facility for children (or Sprar *System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees* centre) realizes these protective factors.
(For example: the presence of a guardian, a lawyer and a cultural mediator who will assist and help them better understand their situation and what is best for them by listening to their opinion, the possibility to contact their family, the possibility to live with a small group of children like them, the possibility of being taken care of in case of illness and the possibility to obtain documents; the possibility of being enrolled in school, learn the language and get a degree; the ability to access work grants in compliance with the law and therefore without the risk of being exploited; the ability to have friends in and out of the care facility the possibility to have time to play and have fun).
- g) If needed question can be asked to clarify the concept.
- h) Arranged in a circle, leave time for the participants to ask some questions throwing each other a ball (the person who receives the ball can ask a question: when they get the answer they throw the ball to another person who will in turn ask a question or say something).

4. FEEDBACK SESSION

Answer in a clear and transparent way to the children's questions, in particular those concerning their rights in the care facility or in the Sprar centres and clarify again, if necessary, the timing of transfers contextualizing it to the current situation related to the very high number of arrivals.

IMPORTANT! The support of a legal advisor is essential in this phase.

5. CLOSING CIRCLE

Goodbyes, information on next appointment and final applause (return of badge).



"A moment of participatory activities with a group of 28 unaccompanied children of different nationalities held in a first reception centre in the province of Siracusa (Sicily), in November 2014".



"A moment of participatory activities with a group of at least 35 unaccompanied children of different nationalities held in the CPSA of Lampedusa, in July 2011".

¹⁸ Regulation “Dublin III”

¹⁹ Ethical approach, transparency, honesty and accountability, relevant and voluntary participation, motivating and child-friendly environment, equal opportunities, efficient and knowledgeable staff, participation promotes the safety and protection of children, follow-up and evaluation For a detailed description of each standard:
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/practice_standards_participation_1.pdf



CHAPTER IV

PARTECIPATORY PROCESSES IN CARE FACILITES

Save the Children Italy works to promote the rights of children to be heard and participate by encouraging and supporting opportunities for them to express their views, to be informed, to participate in decisions that affect them and to be heard and seriously considered for what they say. To this end, as part of the Praesidium IX project, 21 care facilities and Sprar for children²⁰ were involved in the elaboration and implementation of participatory processes geared towards the creation of spaces where children have the opportunity to make their voices heard, decide to whom make their voice be heard and become active promoters of change of their living conditions.

The activities were divided into four main phases:

1. a training day for each region (Calabria, Apulia and Sicily) involving care workers of the care facilities for children participating in the activities. During these days the first drafts of custom participatory path were designed with the support of *ad hoc* tools;
2. development and finalization of participatory processes in the care facilities for children which featured care workers who took part in the training, presentation and sharing with other care workers of their first reception centre of the participatory methodology and related tools. During this phase Skype calls took place between the children of the care facility, care workers, the Child Participation Expert and the Coordinator of Save the Children's Praesidium project. The scope was to present the paths, the objectives and results to the children involved.²¹
3. implementation and further development of participatory methodology in the care facilities, with the support and monitoring of the Save the Children participation expert;
4. a meeting to discuss and share good participatory practices. During these meetings the care workers of the care facilities involved in the activities had the opportunity to present the progress of their work, share achievements, weaknesses and strengths encountered but, in particular report the children's point of view as it emerged.

In general, these activities have achieved an increase in the level of active participation of unaccompanied children, an improvement of the right to be heard by their interlocutors and a valuable exchange of experiences and networking among care facilities and institutional partners involved in the project aimed at providing answers to the needs expressed by the children.

In light of what has been presented the following paragraphs present both materials and tools created to support the job of care workers for children involved in the activities, as well as participatory processes developed and tested by the same care facilities for children, which can be important tools and suggest ideas to those who work in this field.

PLANNING FOR A STRUCTURED PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

The development and implementation of a participatory process is premised on a clearly-defined engagement of all those involved in the range of activities, not least the participating children.

Save the Children regards children's involvement and consultation as a long-term commitment that must satisfy the internationally-recognized minimum standards²² and entails: a non-discriminatory approach to children participation; anticipating the appropriate

criteria for effective implementation (process); a degree of influence on duty bearers, i.e., the adults responsible for upholding the children's rights to participation and consultation; evaluating the extent to which participants' suggestions are taken on board and implemented by duty bearers; and their effect and positive impact on the children's own lives²³.

The aim is to facilitate and secure children right to participate in matters that affect their lives, as established by the UNCRC, in particular under Articles 12, 13 and 14.

Regardless of the reasons, the circumstances and the degree to which children are involved and/or consulted, it is important that their engagement be considered as highly meaningful, a form of self-empowerment and not a tokenistic gesture by adults.

When planning and implementing a participatory process, adults (care workers, educators, governments, international agencies, NGOs) should commit to the primacy of the child's best interest, their safety and well-being. They should always treat the child with respect and dignity and acknowledge their distinct set of rights.

They should define clear and transparent selection criteria for an inclusive approach to children's participation.

They should provide participants with relevant information regarding the process in which they are involved.

They should involve children in the planning stage of the process or activity and address follow-up and evaluation from the start, in order to develop, implement and, most importantly, inform participants on the outcomes of their involvement or consultation.

When a participatory process is mainly limited to consulting children (influencing duty bearers and their decision-making), it is still advisable to devise methods of involvement that acknowledge their role as active protagonists and their right to freedom of expression and access to information.

Save the Children Italy has supported the staff of care facilities for children in the implementation of participatory process with unaccompanied children.

The following questions can be used as guidelines for organizing a participatory process that is consistent with the theoretical framework presented above.

This guide – that has been experimented also in care facilities for children who did not attend a training meeting on its use- allows to design sustainable participatory processes, tailored on the targeted children and meeting the standards for an ethical and significant participation.

Care workers therefore have a tool that will support them in establishing the number and content of the meetings to arrange with the children, the level of involvement and participation of the latter, the resources required to attain the objectives, the means to achieve them and valuable information to ensure a high level of expected results taking into consideration challenges and strengths found in the course of the activities.

Finally the questions preceded by the word ATTENTION! allow, those who want to develop a participatory process, never to underestimate the participation and contribution of children in its realization.

Since this is a work in progress, please bear in mind that some elements of the path could change. It is therefore necessary to periodically check the project and make the necessary adjustments and inform the children of such changes.

GUIDE TO THE COMPILATION OF A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

NAME OF PARTICIPATORY PROCESS/ACTIVITY

What is the intended name of the participatory process?
Provide the name and a short description of the proposed process.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

What are the aims of the process/activity?
What objectives should be accomplished?
What needs should the process respond to with respect to children? How should these needs be addressed?
Provide a list of the specific objectives to be achieved.

TIMEFRAME

How many times will you meet with children? How long, and how often, will you meet?
The number of meetings must be commensurate with the time and availability of children and programme staff; most importantly, it must be sufficient to satisfy the proposed aims and objectives.

ATTENTION! Have you involved children in making decisions or informed them about the numbers, duration and frequency of the meeting sessions?

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

(Human and material resources): Who should be involved? What needs to be in place for the process to take off?

ATTENTION! Are the identified tools and resources sufficient to meet the proposed aims and objectives? Are they readily available?

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPATORY PROCESS/ACTIVITY

How will the process be developed? Can it be organized into successive stages? What kind of activities can be carried out at each of these stages? What tools and resources are needed?
E.g. A participatory process can include the following stages:

1) OBJECTIVE PHASE:	ACTIVITIES:	TOOLS AND RESOURCES:
What objective(s) should be achieved at this stage?	What activity(ies) should be designed in order to meet the proposed objective(s)?	What resources are available and/or needed? How are activities approached and implemented?
ATTENTION! Are this/these objective(s) in keeping with the children's needs? Are children informed of the proposed outcomes and their possible benefits?	ATTENTION! Do all children take part in the activity(ies)? Are they actively involved, collaborate with adults and share decision-making? Do they sufficiently understand its/their contents? Are they provided with relevant information regarding their involvement in such activity(ies)?	ATTENTION! Are meeting venues, length of meeting time, human and material resources adequate for developing the proposed activity(ies)? Are the resources in use child-friendly and in line with the children's capacities? Are children involved in making decisions on the tools, resources and methods to be used?
2) NAME: OBJECTIVES:	ACTIVITIES:	TOOLS AND RESOURCES:
3) NAME: OBJECTIVES:	ACTIVITIES:	TOOLS AND RESOURCES:

METHODOLOGY

What methodology is chosen in order to develop the designed activities? What are the reasons for using the current methodology? Does it meet the needs of the children, of the care workers, of both?

PRACTICE STANDARDS IN CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Standard 1 – *An ethical approach: transparency, honesty and accountability*

Does the proposed programme establish a meaningful environment for the participation of children? Are the limits and impact of the expected outcomes made clear from the start? Are the roles and responsibilities of all involved (children and programme staff) clearly outlined?

Standard 2 – *Children's participation is relevant and voluntary*

Are the decisions regarding timeframe and contents of the programme taken together with the participating children, in ways, at levels and at a pace appropriate to their linguistic competence, literacy skills, capacities and life conditions?

Standard 3 – *A child-friendly, enabling environment*

Is the participatory practice able to build the children's self-esteem and self-confidence, so that they feel they have valid knowledge and experience to contribute to developing a shared consciousness?

Standard 4 – *Equality of opportunity*

Is the programme open to the participation and involvement of all children and young people from the local community? Do all children have an equal chance to be actively involved in the proposed activities?

Standard 5 – *Staff are effective and confident*

Are the care workers provided with appropriate training in participatory practice?

Standard 6 – *Participation promotes the safety and protection of children*

Is the child's identity and confidentiality maintained? What are the safeguards to minimise the risks of abuse and exploitation?

Standard 7 – *Ensuring follow-up and evaluation*

Is there a commitment to involve children in evaluating the participatory experience and to give them the opportunity to participate in follow-up processes?

RESULTS

Provide a list of the expected outcomes.

(e.g. children's active involvement and participation at community level; improvement of children's quality of life; increase in sociability and peaceful coexistence.)

Do such outcomes match the children's needs?

KEY CHALLENGES

Provide a list of the challenges that may occur during the successive stages, or at the initial planning, of the participatory process.

What potential negative impact does the process have on the participating children and their local context? What are its shortcomings (in terms of mutual understanding, language barriers, willingness to participate).

KEY STRENGTHS

What is the added value of the programme for the children's local community? What are the key elements or factors contributing to the success of the project and promoting a higher level of children's involvement?

The methodology in the creation and management of these structured processes plays a key role in the level of children's participation in the road they must take.

The following table (Figure 2) presents substantial methodological indications that should be the basis for the development and implementation of any participatory process.



Fig. 2 METHODOLOGY OF A PARTECIPATORY PROCESS

- Allow the children to choose the themes and topics to be addressed;
- Establish with the boys and girls the principles that will guide the group during the activity (freedom of expression - the importance of listening, no discrimination, no offensiveness, respect for each other's culture, possibility to express themselves in their own language);
- Provide, for each proposed theme, very simple initial stimulus to help start a discussion that should be - as much as possible- original, focused on some issues but not steered in relation to content. The guide and the information and clarification given by adults have the aim of giving to the children the necessary tools, clarifying responsibilities and functions and substantiating reflections where necessary;
- Provide diversified expressive instruments, simple or more complex. These should be captivating (papers, textiles, computers, internet, colours, video camera), to promote freedom of expression through language and the chosen means, but also to maintain a positive and playful atmosphere;
- Facilitate the children during the discussions through workshop activities done in plenary or in small groups. These should ensure content emerges and is addressed, allowing everyone to find their own "place" (according to age, personal characteristics, level of knowledge of Italian, individual talents);
- Facilitate the compilation and synthesis of the proposals from the materials produced during the activities;
- Structure a form of participation that is effective, appropriate and not detrimental to other rights.

²⁰ 21 care facilities (six in Calabria -in the provinces of Catanzaro, Cosenza, Reggio Calabria, Vibo Valentia-, six in Apulia - in the provinces of Foggia, Bari, Brindisi- and nine in Sicily -in the provinces of Catania, Syracuse, Agrigento-) were involved. They were identified on the base of certain criteria such as: authorized care facility; recommended number of children to be hosted; stability of the care facility and of the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors over time; care facilities that welcome children; availability of care workers; the presence of the mediator or the ease of communication between care workers and children; high or low turnover; more than one care facility in the same province or in several provinces.

²¹ To this end some specific ad hoc tools have been created for the first two phases: a participative formative module for the operators of care facilities and a monitoring plan (consisting in periodical phone conversations during the implementation phase- between Save the Children's contact and the care facility' contact person - to discuss elements of the pathway) as well as a monitoring of the pathway in the care facility (halfway) to share information on how the activities were going.

²² The practice standards to ensure ethical and meaningful children's participation are: 1) an ethical approach (transparency, honesty and accountability); 2) relevant and voluntary participation; 3) a child-friendly, enabling environment; 4) equality of opportunity; 5) effective and confident staff; 6) safety and protection of children; 7) follow-up and evaluation.

For a detailed description of each standard:

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/practice_standards_participation_1.pdf

²³ Cf. "Paurismo e altre storie. Un percorso di consultazione - Accoglienza, tutela e partecipazione dei minori dal punto

Conclusions: the challenges of participation

Since the adoption of the CRC, there has been considerable progress in the research and application of the concept of children's participation. Associations, organizations and institutions which, like Save the Children, work for the protection and safeguard of children's rights have devoted considerable efforts and resources to promoting the participation of children in a wide range of sectors, including health, education, protection, reducing the risk of disasters, using new media and governance. However, much remains to be done: there is not yet a real socio-cultural change to help promote the affirmation of children as protagonists.

This lack of change can be attributed to the fact that the civil rights of children are more difficult to understand than other rights (such as the right to survival, development and protection) and their implementation continues to pose a challenge for adults, who feel they are in a superior position in relation to children: children are not always encouraged to express their opinions or ask questions, nor are they recognized for their ability to do so, furthermore their presence in public contexts and roles is mostly "decorative". There are also other particularly relevant factors, among which:

a. Lack of clarity on the meaning of participation:

the term "participation" is still used to describe a wide range of different activities, which are often short-term, or individual processes that offer only limited opportunities for children to understand their civil rights. Probably much attention has been paid to Article 12 of CRC and insufficient attention to other aspects of participation enshrined in the CRC - for example, the right to information and the right to respect the evolving capacities of an individual in the exercise of their rights.

b. The lack of adult education:

the initiatives to promote participation are often unsuccessful because the adults who work with children do not have the skills and experience necessary to carry out these activities. There are cases in which adults do not really understand how to give up their power and control over the children in favour of an approach based on partnership and cooperation.

c. Lack of tools for monitoring and assessing participation:

if we want to achieve the right to participation of children, it is important to develop standards and indicators in order to monitor and measure what has been done and why. Despite a long debate on the development of tools and indicators to help monitor and measure what is being achieved through participation and how, these have yet to be agreed upon and applied in a systematic way.

To trigger real change it is therefore necessary that a number of fundamental actions are carried out, such as:

- a. provide adequate and accessible information on the right of children of all ages and abilities.** Children cannot exercise their rights if they do not have access to information in a format and a mode that they can understand and use easily.

b. invest in raising awareness in adults and in enhancing their understanding.

It is necessary to sensitize and educate more adults about the right to participation of children and all its associated benefits. In fact, participation requires cooperation both with adults and with children, and this implies a specific training for professionals working with and for children, as well as sensitization of parents, media and other influential groups.

c. introduce systematic mechanisms to influence public decision-making processes at all levels.

This includes: the promotion of access to information and training in support of the right to participation of children, with the aim of promoting and developing collaborative public services that are suitable for children, supporting peer education and organizations led by children, facilitating access to the media, encouraging communities to mobilize and involve themselves in a constant dialogue with the government on all the most important aspects of the development of related policies.

d. improve the quality of the programs and initiatives for the promotion of children's participation.

This refers to the promotion of ethical practices that are sensitive to the needs of children: these must be significant, inclusive, safe, supported in an appropriate way and understood in the targeted children's' families and communities.

e. demonstrate commitment to assess and monitor progress in the promotion and implementation of the right to participation of children through the development of indicators that measure the work done in support of the right to participation of children.

Through the participatory activities that have been carried out and described in this document Save the Children has sought to make its contribution in achieving these goals with the hope of spreading and developing participatory methodology and the protection of the right to be heard, even in the most difficult situations, like those at the borders.

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD IN CHILD FRIENDLY LANGUAGE

Article 1

Everyone under 18 has these rights.

Article 2

All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3

All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

Article 4

The government has a responsibility to make sure your rights are protected. They must help your family to protect your rights and create an environment where you can grow and reach your potential.

Article 5

Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected.

Article 6

You have the right to be alive.

Article 7

You have the right to a name, and this should be officially recognized by the government. You have the right to a nationality (to belong to a country).

Article 8

You have the right to an identity – an official record of who you are. No one should take this away from you.

Article 9

You have the right to live with your parent(s), unless it is bad for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Article 10

If you live in a different country than your parents do, you have the right to be together in the same place.

Article 11

You have the right to be protected from kidnapping.

Article 12

You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.

Article 13

You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms or offends other people.

Article 14

You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

Article 15

You have the right to choose your own friends and join or set up groups, as long as it isn't harmful to others.

Article 16

You have the right to privacy.

Article 17

You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspaper, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

Article 18

You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) if possible.

Article 19

You have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind.

Article 20

You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your parents.

Article 21

You have the right to care and protection if you are adopted or in foster care.

Article 22

You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country), as well as all the rights in this Convention.

Article 23

You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability, as well as all the rights in this Convention, so that you can live a full life.

Article 24

You have the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.

Article 25

If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are the most appropriate.

Article 26

You have the right to help from the government if you are poor or in need.

Article 27

You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should not be disadvantaged so that you can't do many of the things other kids can do.

Article 28

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

Article 29

Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.

Article 30

You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right.

Article 31

You have the right to play and rest.

Article 32

You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

Article 33

You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.

Article 34

You have the right to be free from sexual abuse.

Article 35

No one is allowed to kidnap or sell you.

Article 36

You have the right to protection from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of).

Article 37

No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.

Article 38

You have the right to protection and freedom from war. Children under 15 cannot be forced to go into the army or take part in war.

Article 39

You have the right to help if you've been hurt, neglected or badly treated.

Article 40

You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in the justice system that respects your rights.

Article 41

If the laws of your country provide better protection of your rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

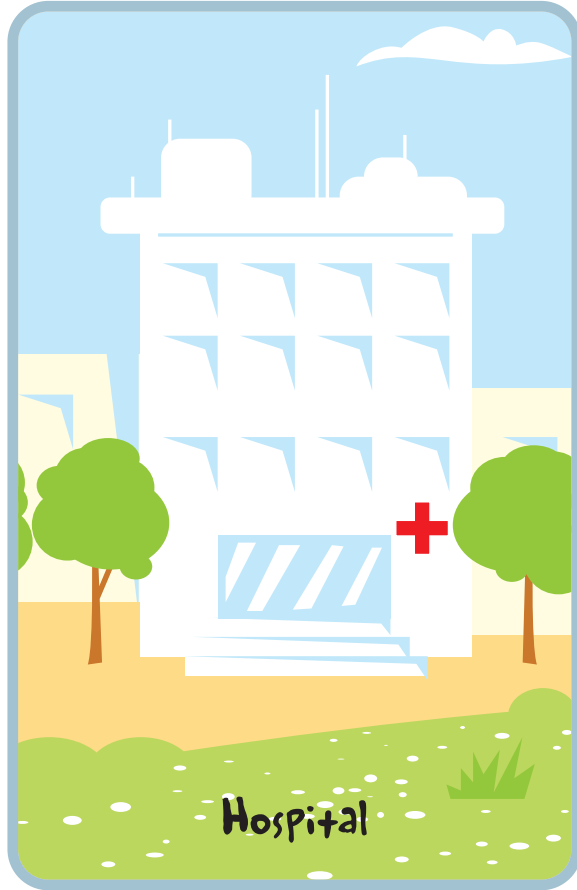
Article 42

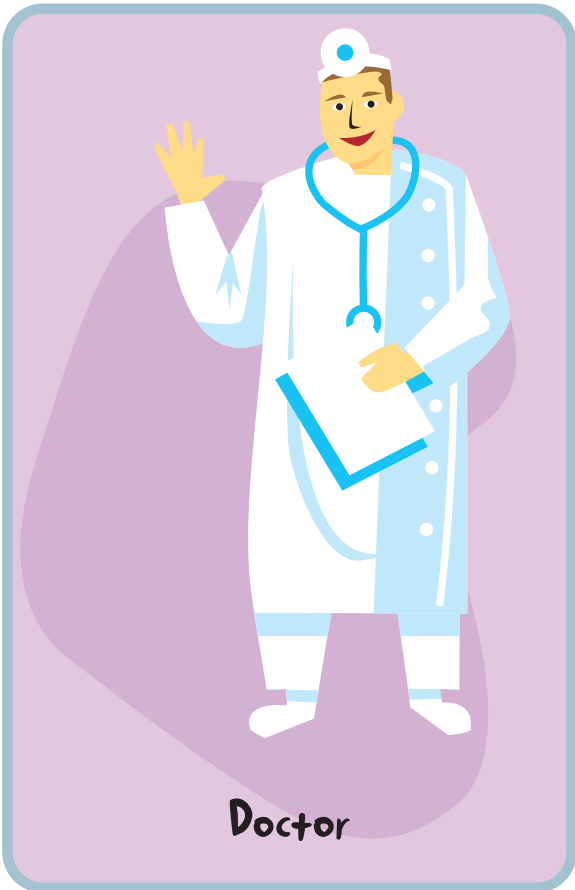
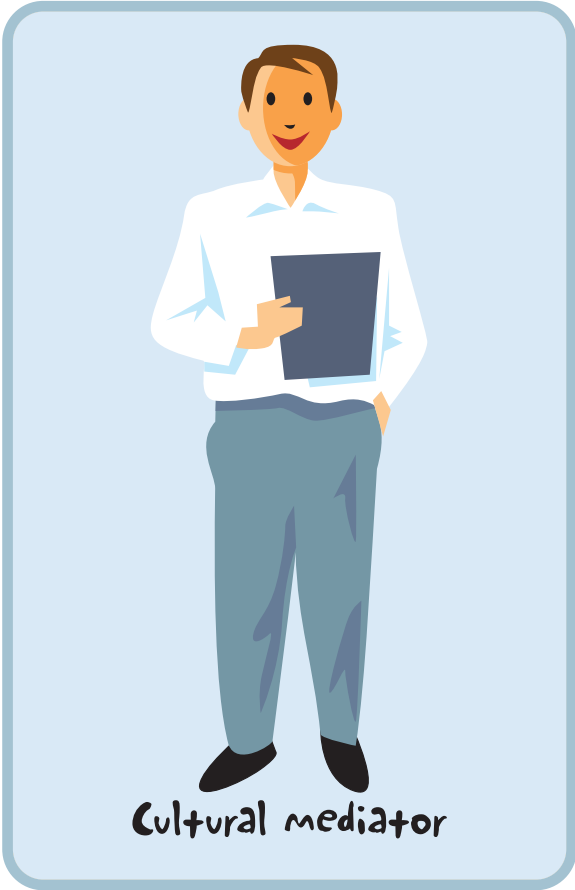
You have the right to know your rights! Adults should know about these rights and help you learn about them, too.



USEFUL MATERIALS TO BE USED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES.

Illustration can be photocopied
and used in the implementation
of some of activities shown
in this volume







School



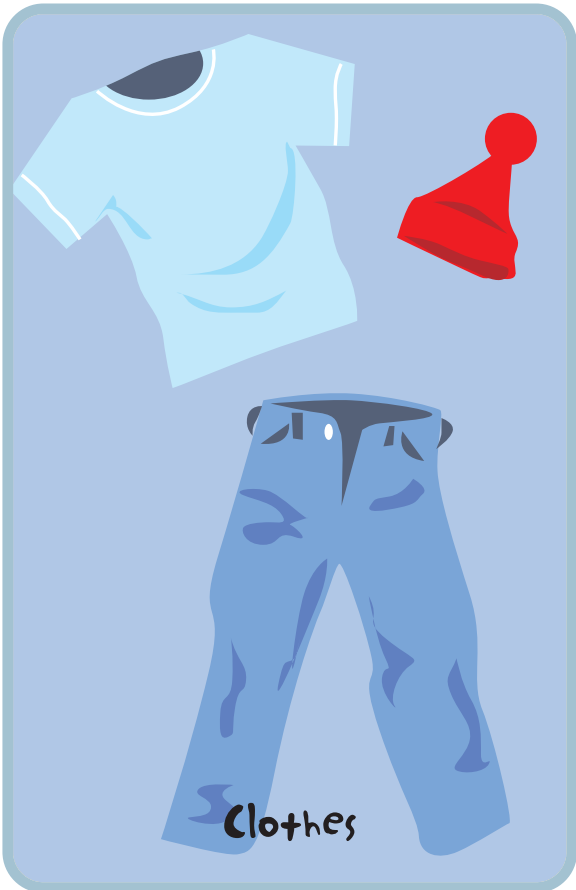
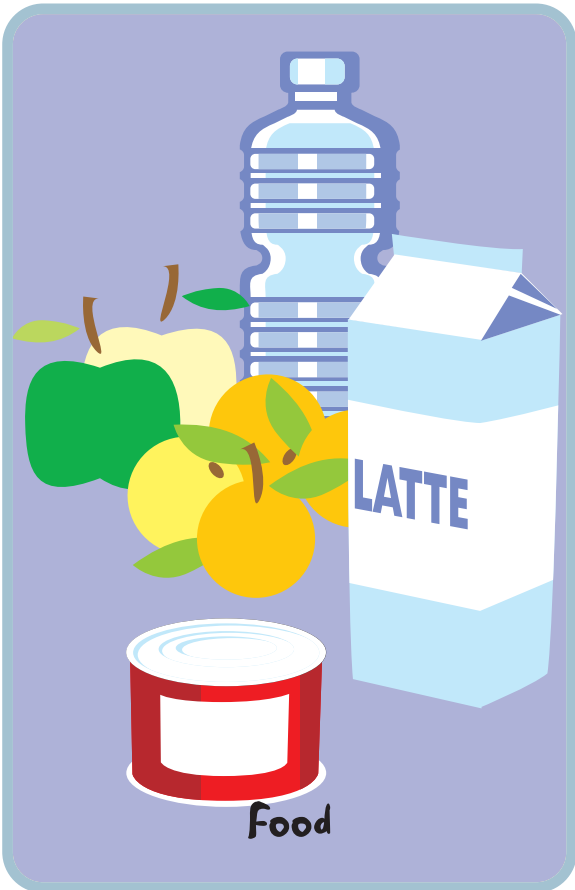
Play



Work



Documents







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www.garanteinfanzia.org

LINK

www.savethechildren.it
www.savethechildren.org

www.interactonline.eu – Raising
participation and awareness for the
safer use of new technologies. The
overall goal of the Interact project is to
protect children without parental care
against media violence, in particular
children living in institutions or care
facilities.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiQ3hTqyPos

The Italianaire; video cartoon made
with the participation of five children,
residing in Italy and coming from
Egypt, facilitated by Save the Children.
The aim is to inform and raise
awareness among Egyptian children
living in three governorates with a high
rate of child emigration in Egypt
(Alexandria, Beheira and Gharbeya)
about the living conditions of Egyptian
migrants children in Italy.

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organisation for children. We work in 119 countries to achieve breakthroughs in the way the world treats children.

Our vision

A world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

Our mission

To inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.



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