

# A Long Journey

*The world is my country*



Complexity



6-13 years



60 minutes



6-30 children



Migration



Discrimination



Human Rights

## Type of activity

Group discussion, drawing, writing

## Overview

Children develop a story about a family about to migrate, and imagine the needs and challenges along the journey.

## Objectives

- To appreciate the difficulties that migrants are likely to face at different stages of a journey to a new country.
- To develop empathy and solidarity with migrant communities
- To raise awareness of the rights of migrant children, and develop ideas for protecting and respecting them

## Preparation

Familiarise yourself with migrant rights in general, and with conditions in your country in relation to migrants. See the useful resources below, and the chapter on Migration.

Prepare three pieces of A3 paper: write 'BEFORE' at the top of the first page, 'DURING' at the top of the second, and 'ARRIVAL' at the top of the third.

## Materials

- Coloured pencils and A3 paper for each small group.
- Flip chart and markers

## Instructions

1. Ask children if they know what migration means. Encourage them to share examples of friends or families with migrant stories. Then provide them with the following definition of migration: "movement of people to a new area or country in order to find work or better living conditions" (Oxford Dictionaries)
2. Tell them to imagine a family consisting of two adults and three children who are going to move (migrate) to this country from Country X. You can name a particular country but be careful not to choose one that might trigger strong reactions from the group. Ask the children to imagine everything that the family will need to think about and do at three different stages:
  - Before leaving
  - During the journey
  - On arrival in the new country.
3. Discuss with the group and agree on the names of each member of the family. Write the names on a flip chart or on a board so that children can easily remember.
4. Divide the children into three groups with roughly equal numbers of participants. Give each

group a piece of A3 paper with one of the key stages written at the top, and some coloured pencils. One group will be responsible for thinking about the group's needs BEFORE leaving; another for DURING the journey; and the third group will assess the ARRIVAL.

5. Tell the children that they should draw the family and write down or draw all the things that this family will need to think about, including what they will need to make the journey safely. Remind them again that the family consists of two adults and three children. Tell them to make sure that all children in the group are able to contribute drawings or ideas.
6. Give the groups time for discussion and to complete their drawings. Encourage them to include anything that seems important.
7. When the groups have finished, ask each group to present their work to everyone else. Begin with the group thinking about BEFORE, then proceed to DURING and then ARRIVAL.
8. After the presentations, stick the drawings on the wall as a "fresco". Briefly summarise the journey, adding anything essential that the children might have missed out, e.g. visas. Ask for clarification if there is anything in the drawings which is not clear to yourself or other children.

## Debriefing and Evaluation

Discuss the activity by using questions such as these:

- Was it easy to work together in a group? Why, or why not?
- Were there any ideas which the group could not agree on?
- Are you surprised by any of the things in the other groups' drawings? Are there things you would not have thought about including?
- How did you decide on the things that the family should think about and what they would need to do?

Relate the activity to issues of migrant rights and discrimination, asking questions such as these:

- Do you think it is easy for a family to migrate? Why, or why not? What do you think would be the hardest thing for the children in the family?
- Do you think migrants should have the same rights as everyone else in the hosting country? Why or why not?
- Should migrant children be entitled to any specific support in the new country which becomes their home?
- Some children have to migrate to a new country without their parents or other adults: what are the particular difficulties that such children might have to face? Think about the journey, the arrival, and the life afterwards in the country.
- What can we do to make sure that *all* migrants in our country / region / school feel welcome, and that their rights are respected?

## Suggestions for follow-up

In a later session, or if you have more time, you could give each small group a set of CRC cards and ask them to make links between the needs and rights at each step of the journey.

The activity 'What is in my bag?' can be used to work more on the issue of refugees and asylum seekers.

The activity 'Take a Step Forward' can be used to initiate a discussion on why many people – including children – are forced to leave their country or region.

## Ideas for action

If there are migrant children or children from migrant families in your group, you could invite members of their family to meet the group and view the “fresco”. Ask them to give feedback on the children’s ideas and explain what it was really like for them – before, during and after their journey to this country.

The website <http://iamamigrant.org> from the International Organisation for Migration provides testimonies from migrants from all over the world in several languages. Use these testimonies to create a drama piece or to speak about the rights respected and violated in the process of migration.

## Tips for facilitators

For the country of origin of the ‘family’, you could decide this beforehand or ask children to decide. Be aware of any children in your group with histories of migration in their family.

If the group is big, divide them into six small groups: two groups can work on the same part of the journey in parallel.

If you have migrant or refugee children in your group, be very sensitive towards their needs and emotions, and tell them about the activity beforehand so they can choose whether or not to participate. See if you can make use of their experiences, if they are willing to participate. Be aware that some of their experiences may be traumatic.

Bear in mind that children are likely to repeat in a session things they hear at home, and some of the answers from members of the group may be racist or discriminatory. Migration is not an easy issue. Try not to judge or block opinions: it is better that they are aired so you can discuss them.

You could give children larger pieces of paper for their drawings: tape pieces of A3 paper together or give them flip chart paper instead.

While the children are working in groups, circulate among them to facilitate the process, and use questions to support the children to think about other aspects or obstacles arising during the journey.

## Adaptations

For younger children, just ask them to draw, without using words.

## Useful resources

The Council of Europe adopted in 2019 a Recommendation on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood – CM/Rec(2019)4. This Recommendation recalls the rights and specific needs of young refugees. You may want to consult it as background information relating to the particular needs and rights of migrant children.

- UNESCO Convention of Migrant Rights: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001435/143557e.pdf>
- International Organisation for Migration: [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)